

# GATHER PONDER SHARE

STORIES MEANT TO BE TOLD

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**RESURRECTION  
LIVING**



# RESURRECTION PEOPLE



Through the weeks of Lent, we explored at length our *identity*—who we are by God’s grace. In that Lenten devotional study, we talked about what it meant to be the image of God, to be the Beloved Child, to be one who belonged, to be one who is accepted. Easter arrived, and we took up a new devotional called the Easter Challenge. And what do you think was the title of the reading for that first day—Easter Day?

You guessed it! “The Evidence of a New Identity.”

That first short devotional quoted St. Paul from Second Corinthians: Therefore, *if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come; the old is gone, the new is here!* (2 Cor 5:17).

In truth, all our talk about identity rests on one fact: Jesus is risen from the dead. There is nothing that can stop our Lord and his good, loving purpose for you or me. The Resurrection changes everything! All the things to which we “ordinarily” give our lives, such as our achievements, our possessions, our status or anything else we might think of become of secondary importance. The things to which we’d be tempted to cling, to fight over, or to seek more of fade in significance. We belong to Jesus! We are his Resurrection People!

Many people dream about winning the PowerBall. Would winning a massive lottery jackpot change where and how you lived, where and how you traveled, or how and with whom you spent your time? Would you want people to see your good fortune?

As a Resurrection Person, how do you let others know who you are? What would that mean in your life, to live as you are—a child of God, an heir of eternal life? What would people see in your habits, your attitude, your priorities? What would you want others to know

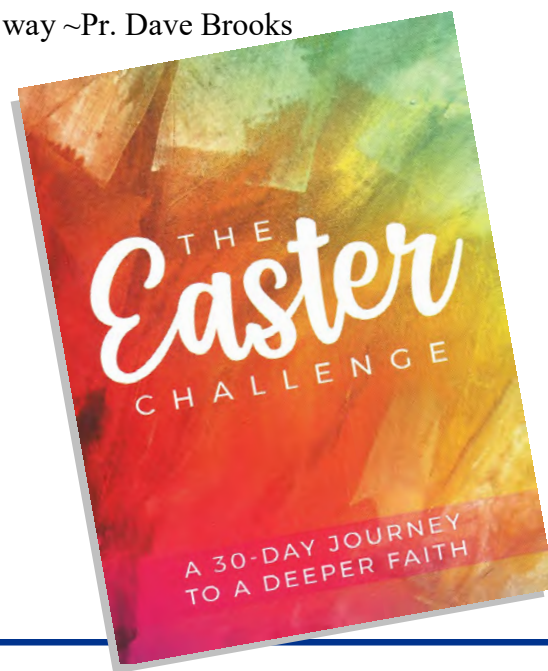
about Jesus, the person who has made your identity possible?

In this issue of GPS, we explore some of the possibilities around being Resurrection People—how we live, where we go, what we do. What’s more, we are sharing with you what it means for Grace Lutheran to be a gathering of Resurrection People—how we as a congregation of Jesus followers are living into our identity. Jesus Christ has called each of us to walk with him on the Way of GRACE, and welcome others to come along! Our parish is emerging from the pandemic time with new possibilities, new habits, new ways of being, because we are Resurrection People who Walk the Way of GRACE. Jesus is Risen! And we are the evidence.

Walking the way ~Pr. Dave Brooks

Therefore, if anyone  
is in Christ,  
the new  
creation has  
come; the old  
is gone,  
the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:17



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# A Commitment to Hope

By Chris Wethman



I once read that the growth of human hope happens when you promote inquiry into high human ideals – notions of truth, rationality, progress, freedom and democracy. Hope multiplies exponentially when the motivation is to enhance the human condition.

How many times does the word “hope” appear in the Bible? Depends on the translation. In the King James Version (Old and New Testaments) it appears 316 times. One theologian

wrote “**Biblical hope** is a confident expectation or assurance based upon a sure foundation for which we wait with joy and full confidence.” A sure foundation? What sure foundation? Feel free to sing...

*“The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord;  
She is His new creation by water and the Word.  
From heav’n He came and sought her to be His holy bride;  
With His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.”*

Having hope is not naïve wishful thinking, as it is often described. Hope unifies and goes to work transforming the future. When there are plans, wishes, dreams, visions, ideals, we think about a future that we one day hope to build, inhabit and enjoy.

Billy Graham said five things about hope:

- Hope is never lost.
- We can be confident in hope.
- True hope comes from God.
- Hope is a gift.
- Hope endures.

I think hope endures because it helps generate new images and possibilities for the future and it mobilizes the resources necessary to transform vision into action. In other words, we get to practice what we believe.

Thomas Aquinas claimed that hope:

Has as its object good – not evil. That seems true when examined in the light of Jeremiah 29:11: *“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”*

Hope always influences some possible future, not the present. *“Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever. Psalm 131:3*

Hope is obtained through patience, perseverance and courage. Romans 5:3-5 *“And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”*

Hope can be a primary motivating force for action – to hope is to DO, not merely to yearn for. When we join with each other in hope, we can influence the future. When we feel anxious about the future, first determine if hope – with its enduring qualities -- is absent.

If it is, then it’s time to affirm our hope that is born, nurtured, and sustained in relationship. Influence another person’s hope through the gift of presence. Communicate positive expectations to that person or express confidence in their ability to overcome difficulties.

We have a common understanding about what (faith) and who (Jesus) unites us. That binds us together as the people of God in this time and place. Did you know that the word “synod” means walking together? In that context, Grace Lutheran Church is a synod within a Synod as together we Walk the Way of GRACE.







On Easter Sunday we sing, “Because He lives, I can face tomorrow...” And on Monday morning, I’m back at Walltown Neighborhood Ministries, facing the reality of so many neighbors who are mistreated, taken advantage of, and lied to. In a world where death presses in on us from every side, the resurrection makes all the difference.

Because Jesus is alive, I know I have a relationship with God through Him. When I wake up in the morning, I can talk to God and sing with God and just sit and let God’s love flow over me. That love is powerful, and I don’t have it because of anything I have done. It is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, and it lives inside of me. Because of this resurrection power, I can face the constant stream of needs and pain that people bring to Walltown Neighborhood Ministries.

Before anything else, resurrection power helps us face the forces of death. So many people feel abandoned and alone in our city because no one will face their problems with them. They are being evicted and they do not have anywhere to go. Their children are hungry and they have to decide whether to pay the light bill or buy groceries. They feel like they are about to lose their minds, but they have to hold on one more day of they will lose the job that barely pays them enough to stay one month behind.

There are so many needs in this work. People need food. They need help with their rent or their utility bills. They need some place to stop and catch their breath before they go back to fighting for a place where their children can lay their heads at night. People need more than I can offer them. They need more than any of us have to offer. This is also where resurrection power comes in. When I have nothing left to give, God raises up resources that I couldn’t imagine.

Matthew’s Gospel says that when Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem, a whole host of people who had been dead got up and were seen in the city. I have seen resurrection power at work in the volunteers who appear from our partner churches to shop for food, sort bags and deliver them on distribution days, and find new spaces to store and distribute food. Yes, we look forward to the great getting up morning when we will all go up to meet Jesus in the air. But we also give thanks for the forces God is raising up now to do the work of justice and mercy in Durham today.

Most of the 100 families who we serve at Walltown Neighborhood Ministries do not attend services at any of our partner congregations. But they are members of God’s family with us, and they invite us into their lives week after week. Because He lives, we can face tomorrow with them, and they can help us see what it means to trust the God who raised Jesus from the dead and promises to raise us to eternal life.

Rev. Sylvia Belcher  
Associate Minister,  
St. Johns Missionary Baptist Church  
Coordinator, Walltown Neighborhood Ministries



<https://www.walltownneighborhoodministries.org/>

Back in August of 2013 Pastor Bryan asked me to attend an organizing meeting at St. Paul's to offer support to those who are grieving. That night we spelled out how it would work, who would be the sponsors, who we would serve, and so forth. Bill Dahl had just retired as Lutheran Campus Pastor, and he was fingered for the leadership position. He served until he retired again at the end of last year. Jan Huntley has taken the leader's role.

What makes us unique is that we offer education and small group support to those who have lost a loved one year-round, except for major holidays. We meet each Tuesday from 4-6 pm. Small group conversations are the centerpiece of our service. Our meetings begin with a presentation by a speaker. Then we break into small groups, led by two trained facilitators, before returning to the large group for a closing.

To start this service, we needed to put together the organization's framework, train facilitators, publicize our efforts, and invent a way to document how it would work behind the scenes. Bill was the star in getting everything started. We are also indebted to Betty Morton, who fully supported GtG. When we held our first meeting in October, she led the first six-week "Introduction to Grief" sessions.


Bill and Scott Anderson put together the basic structure of our organization—our board of directors, the responsibilities of our facilitators, the lists of each Executive Committee members' tasks, etc.

At first our small groups were small—about five or six people; many weeks there was one group. Then word spread, and we grew and grew. Sometimes today we have five or six small groups, even when we meet on zoom. The pandemic forced us to switch to zoom meetings—and we learned a lot in the process, though we look forward to returning to in-person meetings. We have served close to 1,000 people over the years. Some come a few times and others, for months or years. Our facilitators are the key.

Several people from Grace have attended GtG, and two are currently serving as facilitators—Kathy Pittman and Virginia Harris. Virginia is also our treasurer, while I'm Grace's representative on the Board of Directors and a member of the Executive Committee.

Each sponsoring organization contributes \$300 a year, and that, plus some donations, makes up our budget. There is no charge to attend. Some 15 organizations are our sponsors: Beth-El Synagogue, The Congregation at Duke Chapel, Eno River Unitarian

# What is Growing thru Grief about?



Universalist Fellowship, First Presbyterian Church, Hall-Wynne Funeral Home, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Jewish for Good Helping Services, Judea Reform Congregation, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Duke University, Pilgrim United Church of Christ, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Westminster Presbyterian Church, and Grace Lutheran Church. We are also grateful for the support given by Duke HomeCare and Hospice.

One thing we are especially proud of is our sister organization, Grief Oasis, in the Pittsboro area. We knew this type of organization works—and we were happy to help them get started. They meet later in the day and that helps those who can't get off work at 4. We'd like to see this type of service spread across the country.

Growing thru Grief has been a blessing. People who have been devastated by their loss come, meet with others, receive encouragement and support, and in time arrive at a turning point in their grief. They begin needing a blessing; they find they are a blessing to everyone who has been a part of their journey.

~ By Joyce Rea

Find out more about Growing thru Grief here:

<https://www.growingthrugrief.org/>





# •THOSE LITTLE• CARDBOARD BOXES BRING HOPE •TO THE WORLD•

Based on the Biblical account of the widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4), the Mite Box is intended for regular contributions of 'mites' – offerings above and beyond the support given to congregations and the LCMS.

Mite box contributions amount to millions of dollars that fund district and national mission grants and implement the LWML program.

Mite boxes are available to every member of the congregation. Local groups submit Mite Box offerings to the appointed district officer.

## ***How they began***

Perhaps inspired by the various "cent" or "mite" societies of the early 1800s, the Woman's Mission to Woman (Baptist) urged members in its first circular letter in 1871 to use their new Mite Box to raise funds. The entire family was encouraged to contribute.

## ***LWML Mite Boxes***

Over the years, many Lutheran Ladies Aid societies used a box to gather funds in support of local and synod ministries. Under the original 1928 Lutheran Women's Missionary Endeavor organizational plan, each woman in every congregation would receive a Mite Box if she participated in the Ladies Aid. Receipts from the 92 Ladies Aid societies totaled \$6651.31 in 1930.

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League, formally recognized by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in 1942, required by the newly adopted constitution and bylaws, that 25% of all missionary contributions be

given to the national organization, shared from the districts.

The first Mite Box design had space for districts to imprint local messages. In publications and speeches, Leaguers were reminded not to just tuck their Mite Box away out of sight and then on the day of the meeting take out a dollar bill, put it in an envelope, and hand it to the secretary. Among the suggestions offered were:

Put your pennies in the box at the end of each day

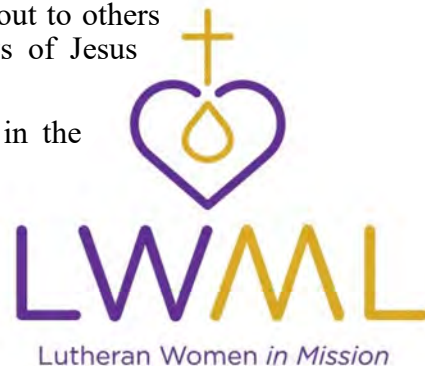
Say "thank you" with an appropriate amount whenever calamity or misfortune has been averted

Empty all your loose change from your kitchen coin bowl into the box on meeting day

Throughout the decades, Lutheran women have stepped out in faith, setting goals and trusting God to move the hearts of His people to give generously to LWML to proclaim the Gospel.

Mite boxes have changed in color and design over the years, but what has never changed is the dedication of freely given offerings for the purpose of reaching out to others with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Boxes are available in the Narthex for your use. Return the contents to the large LWM box.



# The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML)...

## ...At Grace

For over four decades, the Grace LWML has been supporting missions around the world. Recently, 61 of their handmade quilts were delivered to the warehouse of Lutheran World Relief for distribution. In addition, five quilts were sent to Hurricane Ida Relief, six were donated to the Angel Tree project, two went to High School students and one was presented as a farewell gift.

Nearly every bit of fabric that is used is donated. Some members of Grace have donated quilt tops, or parts of quilts assemble elsewhere. Donations of any fabric, and especially all the sheets that are used for the backs of quilts, are welcomed. 2 Corinthians 9 tell us that "God is able to make all grace abound in you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." God supplies all that this group needs. It's amazing how it seems fabrics or sheets just seem to "show up" as needed. It happens again and again.

The COVID pandemic did not stop this group from quilting. Instead of working on one quilt, the ladies spread out to keep a safe distance and worked on two quilts. This helped them finish nearly twice as many quilts than last year.

More than \$850 was donated on LWML Sunday in October.

Thank you to all who donated fabric, thread, sheets, or just stopped by the church kitchen on Wednesday mornings to offer encouragement, tie a few knots, or just to admire the work of some very dedicated ladies. There's always room for more hands around those two tables!

### ...Individuals

Women in a congregation, with or without a local group, who wish to support the mission and ministry of LWML, but cannot, for a variety of reasons, attend group meetings, may become individual members. LWML district presidents may be contacted for more

information. Individual members have the same rights and privileges as members of groups, may serve on committees, and hold elective office at the zone, district, and LWML levels.

For additional information: Individual Membership

Guidelines are available as a free download at [lwml.org](http://lwml.org).

### ...Local Groups

Women who are members of a local group affiliated with the Lutheran Women's Missionary League are members of the LWML. Members of a group may hold elective office and are entitled to full voting privileges at the zone and district levels in accordance with the bylaws of its subordinate organization.

The structure of the local group depends upon the needs of the women involved. The LWML website has options for structure and officers on its website.

An LWML Group will:

- Support the aims of the LWML;
- Fulfill the LWML Mission Statement;
- Promote the Object of the LWML;
- Encourage use of the official LWML publication, the *Lutheran Women's Quarterly*;
- Distribute Mite Boxes and gather funds for the support of district and LWML mission grants; and
- Be an open, welcoming group that encourages participation and new ideas from women of the congregation.

### ...Nationally

#### The LWML Mission Statement

As Lutheran Women in Mission, we joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and equip women to honor God by serving others.

#### The LWML Vision Statement

The LWML is the leading group for LCMS women where each woman is welcomed and encouraged to use her unique God-given gifts as she supports global missions and serves the Lord with gladness.

#### The LWML Motto

Serve the Lord with Gladness (Psalm 100:2)

#### LWML Purpose

A woman's involvement in LWML usually begins through the local organization. Local groups:

*LWML continued on page 9*



# A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Chris Wethman

In advance of the 39<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Southeastern District LCMS, Presidential Candidate, Rev. Dr. William Harmon shared some thoughts that are worth repeating here. I was amazed how much his words were in alignment with this issue's chosen theme, **Hope**, that I knew it was a God Wink.\*

The title of Pastor Harmon's pre-convention letter is "**Immeasurably More.**" Notice how he weaves this promise of God throughout his message.

*"The early church in Acts was small, outcast, and faced persecution in a society that rejected its witness. Yet, the church found **hope** in community, purpose in witness, and strength through a God who enabled them to do **immeasurably more** than they could ask or imagine."*

As I read this, I was reminded that the Church today is in a much similar situation. Many churches throughout the cities are small, feeling like outcasts, and face persecution in today's society. Nothing new under the sun.

Pastor Harmon continues, "*Martin Luther stood before the Holy Roman Emperor rejected, an outlaw, and forced into hiding. Yet, he found hope in God's Word, purpose in the conviction of grace, and strength to persevere, through a God who enabled him to do **immeasurably more** than they could ask or imagine.*"

At this point I had to admit that the phrase I needed to concentrate on and hold up before you and this entire

Grace community is the promise that God is able to do **immeasurably more** than we could ever ask or imagine. They way things are, are not as they always will be. God has a plan.

*"Today we are faced with the notion that somehow division is acceptable, decline is the future, hatred is the norm, and fatigue is the way. And yet we find hope*

*in the witness of the early church, purpose in the truths laid before us by Luther and the Confessors, inspiration from the generations of people who have come into our district, and strength through a God who gifts us with Word and Sacrament and enables us to do **immeasurably more** than we could ask or imagine."*

Pastor Harmon's words were starting to pierce my heart. There have been more conversations about division, decline, death, disunity, departure, disappearance, and disengagement than there

have been about God being able to do **immeasurably more** than we could ever ask or imagine. Has **Hope** been a casualty of COVID? That's a question to you, "Is your **hope** gone? Have you **hoped** for things to happen at Grace that have never materialized? How many times have you **hoped** for a sanctuary full of worshipers as it was "back then?" Talking to a friend, have you ever **hoped** 'they' would do this or 'they' would do that at Grace? I confess freely.

Holocaust survivor, Elie Wiesel wrote, "Just as man cannot live without dreams, he cannot live without **hope**. If dreams reflect the past, **hope** summons the

"Hope is called the anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19) because it gives stability to the Christian life. But hope is not simply a 'wish' (I wish that such-and-such would take place); rather, it is that which latches on to the certainty of the promises of the future that God has made."

- RC Sproul

\* God-wink. An event or personal experience, often identified as coincidence, so astonishing that it is seen as a sign of divine intervention, especially when perceived as the answer to a prayer.



LWML continued from page 7

Help each woman draw closer to the Lord;

Encourage and equip women to use their God-given talents in sharing God's love; and

Provide opportunities for service within the congregation and for outreach to the community and world.

## 2021-2023 PRIMARY FOCUS

### Proclaiming Christ

*Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all peoples.* (Psalm 96:3)

### Supporting Missions

*And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."* (Mark 16:15)

### Equipping Women

*Now may the God of peace...equip you with everything*

*good that you may do his will.* (Hebrews 13:20-21)

### Serving Others

*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another.* (1 Peter 4:10a)

### FINANCES

LWML mission grants and programs are supported by voluntary offerings, generally contributed through Mite Boxes. Mission grants to be funded by LWML at district and national levels are selected by voting delegates to the district and national conventions, respectively. It is essential that the members at all levels of the organization be united in their efforts to meet the commitments made to fund the adopted mission grants. Each group may choose its own methods of raising funds for other purposes.



### A Note from the President continues

future." Our **hope** is not built in a building, the desired outcome of a meeting, a leader or teacher, a program or club, the genre of music, the color of the flowers... You get the picture. Why...

*"We are **Resurrection** People, baptized in the waters of grace, empowered by the Holy Spirit. We have received and we preach Jesus Christ and His transformational love in a world of hate. We seek a united purpose in a time of division. As the voices of decline increase, we proclaim growth through the power and the presence of the Spirit of the living God. In our fatigue we cling to the promises of God to be our rock and fortress."*

Transformational love instead of hate. Unity instead of division. Growth instead of decline. Renewed spirits overshadow our fatigue. Clinging to the solid rock instead of the sinking sand. Hope summons the future.

*"God will do **immeasurably more** as our churches, schools, and service organizations find a renewed purpose in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. God will do **immeasurably more** as we take on a missionary mindset and seek new ways to launch faith communities. God will do **immeasurably more** in our cities, in our suburbs and in rural areas as we love our neighbors and give witness to the Light that is in us. God will do **immeasurably more** through digital platforms as we set the path for community and witness online and in*

*person. God will do **immeasurably more** as we celebrate the uniqueness of every worker, every mission statement, every vocation, every member of our communities, lifting each other up and supporting the call to go to the ends of the earth with the joy of the Gospel."*

*As we enter this new season, let our focus be this prayer: "Now to him who is able to do **immeasurably more** than all we ask or imagine according to his power that is work within us, to him be glory in the church in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21)*



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# TELL US YOUR STORY

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## MARIE HAMMOND



“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” These are the opening words of my favorite Bible passage, Philippians 4:4-9, reflecting either my optimistic outlook on life, or my blood type (oh, positive!). However, over the past three years, it has been somewhat more difficult to follow Paul’s directive to rejoice, as my husband’s health was in steady decline. Coronary disease led to two heart attacks, and my dear Sam died in February of 2021. While there are still many sad moments, I now find new things in which to rejoice, some of the most notable being my membership at Grace, the new friends I have made, and the opportunity to sing God’s praise in the choir.

When we married, Sam adopted 3-year-old Christopher (my son from an earlier marriage) and raised him as his own. Christopher now lives in Connecticut with his wife and four children and teaches mathematics at a small college in New London. Younger son John was organist and choir director here at Grace during his last two years of high school, starting around the year 2000. He developed a very close relationship with Pastor Jim Knuth and his wife Connie, which might have influenced his decision to become a clergyman. John converted to Roman Catholicism while in college and is now pastor of St. Patrick’s Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

Though raising children and acting as “chief cook and bottle washer” at home was my primary vocation, I also spent some years teaching and tutoring math, worked on various writing projects, and served as a community volunteer, often in connection with the Methodist church I was attending. Other denominations with which I have been affiliated as I moved around the country and the world include the Presbyterian and Episcopal churches. Now I feel I have come home, since my mother’s kinfolk were Lutherans from north Germany. To honor my father’s Jewish roots, I have sung for more than a decade with the Triangle Jewish Chorale. We are truly an interfaith family!

If my life has a theme, it would be the text of the hymn “He Leadeth Me” (green hymnal, #501). From childhood to old age, I have seen evidence of the Lord’s hand guiding me onward. Excellent Sunday school and confirmation teachers, thoughtful and inspirational pastors, good Bible classes, and faithful friends have helped me through sorrow and happiness, trials and triumphs, bad and good times. My best teacher was Sam, a devoted Christian who was kind, generous, forgiving, and always willing to laugh at himself.



# EHS AND GRACE PARTNERING TO BRING HOPE TO FAMILIES

One of our goals as Home Visitors in the Early Head Start Home-Based (EHS HB) program at the Center for Child and Family Health (CCFH) is to connect the families we serve to community resources that can help with their needs, whether that's health needs, social needs, or material needs. Through the partnership between the EHS HB program and Grace Lutheran we have connected many families to resources that have provided for them in tough times and given them hope for a better future. The mutually beneficial partnership formed over many years of partnering together has allowed for new relationships to be built and, as a result, new opportunities to give hope to families in need.

We believe that when we build trusting relationships with families in our program they will then trust others to access resources for their families. By having the ability to access these resources through trusted connections instills hope for creating a solid foundation for their families to be successful in life.

Often there can exist a distrust between families with fewer resources (financial and social) and social service support agencies, especially for families who are not from this country and don't speak English. As a result, these families sometimes opt not to receive these supports that they qualify for, such as, WIC and food stamps to name a few. We are in the business of relationships. With each family we serve, we aim to get to know them, to create a trusting relationship that will then enable connections to be made and resources to be provided. Grace Lutheran has partnered with us to make that happen. As our partnership has evolved over the years, new events and resources have been created to offer the community, such as numerous Touched By Grace Health Fairs and the vaccination clinic held last year. The safe and welcoming environment offered by Grace Lutheran helps families know and trust they can come there for help (when they might not choose to otherwise).

The Miss Mollies food pantry has allowed Home Visitors to take a bag of food to a family in need. On one snowy winter day, an EHS HB family was worried

about providing for their children because the working parent was out of work due to the weather conditions. The Home Visitor was able to pick up food from the church and diapers from another community agency to deliver just at the right moment. The gratitude that this parent expressed was priceless.

For two years, a previously enrolled EHS HB child was granted a scholarship to attend Miss Mollies. EHS HB had supported this child's single mother through life-threatening mental health challenges. Before being offered the opportunity to attend Miss Mollies, she was taking her daughter to work with her and this arrangement was no longer working. By receiving childcare assistance from Miss Mollies, she gained peace of mind knowing that her child was being cared for in a safe place while she earned an income.

Another characteristic of many families that we serve is isolation frequently exacerbated by lack of transportation and lack of a social network. Grace Lutheran is well located in the community, such that families can access the church by bus or walking. EHS HB hosts twice per month playgroups at Grace House. This space is cozy, welcoming, safe and has all the amenities that families with young children need. Several years ago, we served a family who was isolated in their home, didn't have social support or transportation, and had a young child with special needs. The mother was delighted to be able to walk to Grace House for each playgroup, get a healthy snack, interact with other adults, and have playmates for her child. This opportunity supported her mental health and, by extension, her child's.

Hope is something that gives people motivation and energy to keep fighting, to keep moving forward to make things possible that weren't originally seen as possible. EHS HB and CCFH are grateful to be in partnership with Grace Lutheran to bring hope to our families.

~by Anna Pabon, Early Head Start Home Visitor

Find out more about EHS in Durham here:

<http://dpfc.net/our-work/durham-early-head-start/>

# Meet our Confirmands - Emerie Glifort & Anna Taylor



Emerie Glifort

Emerie is an eighth grader at Phillips Middle School in Chapel Hill. She lives with her mother and brother (Gail and Nathaniel) as well as a cat and a dog (Gizmo and Cassie). Emerie's favorite part of school is eating lunch with her friends. In addition to being confirmed, another big event is coming up in Emerie's life; Emerie will be attempting to earn her third-degree black belt in tae kwon do, a sport that she loves and has been doing for nine years. Emerie was named after her mother's friend, and her middle name - Aline - is her grandmother's name. Emerie's favorite Bible verse is Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."



Anna Taylor

Anna is a seventh grader at Triangle Day School in Durham. There she especially enjoys her science and math classes. Anna is both athletic and musical. Her sports are soccer, basketball, tennis, and volleyball. The piano, ukelele, and euphonium (which Anna describes as a "mini-tuba"), are Anna's instruments. Anna lives with her parents, Greg and Gwen, her brother, William, three chickens, two cats, and a gerbil named Harry. The story of David and Goliath is one part of the Bible that especially speaks to Anna.



# ROOMS FULL OF HOPE

*Miss Mollie's Discovery Team*

Earlier this year, the Parish Ministry Council (PMC) voted to form The Miss Mollie's Discovery Team. The Team was asked to explore potential usage of the space formerly occupied by the preschool. Functioning as an ad hoc team, Gary Stuhlmiller (Team Leader), Robert McElfatrick, Kayla Robinson, and Renee Gilman were appointed as team members. (Pastor Brooks and Chris Wethman, are ex officio members.)

The team has met on three occasions. Excerpts from their minutes follow:

- Reviewed demographics (within 3-mile radius) to gain a greater understanding of the neighborhoods surrounding Grace. The team thought it would be helpful to have additional information. Kirk Hymes, Southeastern District connection with Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), was going to be contacted for expanded information with a request to be present (virtually) at an upcoming meeting of the Discovery Team.
- The Team discussed CERF (held previously at Grace), Breathe, midweek activity prior to COVID, and identified them as potential opportunities to use the building and provide outreach opportunities.
- It was determined to explore the YMCA to see if what they offer in support of families might be helpful in considering what ideas might be possible for Grace. Robert McElfatrick will explore further.

There was a virtual phone conference with the staff of Early Head Start to discuss needs of their approximately 320 families.

- Some items mentioned, neighborhood medical assistance, cooking/nutrition classes, after school tutoring, and English as a Second Language (ESL).

- How do we continue to support Embrace Grace families and other families post-birth?
- Mental health issues and associated with COVID-induced isolation are also concerns as are using the space for senior gatherings.
- We will contact Sylvia from Walltown Neighborhood Ministries to discern if we can deepen our partnership.
- Are there ways to broaden prenatal support, i.e., breastfeeding and infant massage classes (offered by Early Head Start but limited due to available space)? This would coincide well with Embrace Grace.
- Families are also in need of nutritional counseling (preparing healthy meals), financial planning, immigration and legal services.
- Also being investigated is the need for helping individuals with job applications, resumes, and interviewing skills.
- The possibility of a reoccurring health clinic to provide basic health needs was also mentioned.

**The bottom line?** The rooms downstairs are a source of hope for people in our community. In any of these aspects (and maybe even others not mentioned here) we are blessed to be a blessing and have enormous potential to welcome others to Walk the Way of GRACE.



# “Once Upon a Time...”

Delightful fairy tales often start with the phrase, “Once upon a time”, and so shall begin this fairy tale come to real life. Once upon a time, there was a tiny child, less than 1 year old. The world knew her by the name Mollie Storck. Mollie’s life was spent in and out of doctor’s offices and hospitals. Diagnosed with a rare and deadly form of childhood leukemia, Mollie never knew “health.” She became the poster child for the Phoebe Foundation, a group dedicated to finding a lasting cure for this childhood killer. As Mollie’s disease took greater and greater control of her tiny body, she had one last hope: new bone marrow. So Mollie and her family came to the Duke University Hospital Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant Unit.

Mollie’s family lived in Michigan and were active Christians at a Missouri Synod Lutheran church. As Mollie, her Mom, Dad and younger brother, prepared to move and live in Durham for the year or more that treatment would take, their pastor contacted then Pastor James Knuth at Grace, asking that our congregation provide whatever help and support we could. It took only one worship visit by the family to Grace; we fell in love with this precious child and her loving family. We were all in, and willing to share our love and help with the Storck family.

After having lethal-dose chemotherapy to eliminate her own diseased blood cells, Mollie received her transplant, and the transplant was successful. The donor cells began to re-populate Mollie’s bone marrow and grow. Sadly though, before her new immune system was able to provide her protection, Mollie succumbed to a viral infection, leaving both her family and our congregation in grief.

But the story does not end there! An idea for a pre-school at Grace to be named in Mollie’s memory began to grow. The Storck family provided start-up funds, and continuing funding through a charity golf tournament over several years. The congregation at Grace voted to commit to Ms. Mollie’s as an outreach activity, separate from, but inherently part, of Grace’s efforts to our neighbors. The space recently vacated by the West Durham Seniors Center was dedicated for use of the preschool. A playground was also built in the front of the church building. Within a few years of her death, Miss Mollie’s Preschool of Grace welcomed its first students. For 18 years, Ms. Mollie’s has provided children not just a start to their educational lives but offered love from that comes from Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

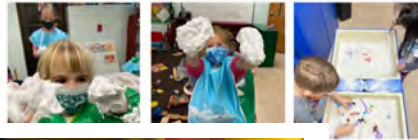
The story of Ms. Mollie’s began in an unwelcome death, but in our Lord’s care and keeping, the power of the Resurrection flowed to bring blessing, joy and possibility. As we look to the future, we look in hope, knowing that every ending given into our Lord’s care and keeping does not fall unnoticed, but brings forth new fruit. As it was for one little girl, so shall it be for us all.

~Gary Stuhlmiller





# Miss Mollie's School of Grace Through the Years





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Grace  
Lutheran  
Church



## Grace Lutheran Church

Our new logo tells a story. It reflects our purpose and our goal: we are walking the way of **GRACE** that we might share God's blessing in our **HOMES**, our **NEIGHBORHOODS**, our **CITY**, and our **WORLD**.

The four points of the cross remind us of the first four parts of **GRACE**:

We **GROW** with Jesus

We **REJOICE** in God

We **ANSWER** with hope

We **CARE** for our neighbors

Each of these points moves us to the circle where we **EMBRACE** community. When Jesus calls us to life with him, it is not alone or solitary, but rather a life with and among others.

Our paths may be varied, winding, wandering and twisting, but as we walk the excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:31) we find Jesus who is the heart of life. The circle and the heart work together to mark out the four areas where we practice the way and find the Lord: in our homes, among our neighbors, around the city, and out in the world.

The cross in Duke blue and the heart in Carolina blue reminds us of our commitment to be God's People in the Durham/Chapel Hill area, "between the Blues."

*<sup>31</sup> But earnestly desire the higher gifts.  
And I will show you a still more excellent way.  
~ 1 Corinthians 12:31 ESV*

**Mission Statement:** We are called to *Welcome Everyone to Walk the Way of **GRACE***, and walk in that way in our individual lives, in our shared life in our various communities, in our common life with our neighbors, and even to the world at large as God sends us. The *Way of Grace* is to: **GROW** with Jesus, **REJOICE** in God, **ANSWER** with hope, **CARE** for the neighbor, and **EMBRACE** community.

**Vision Statement:** God has a plan **FOR OUR LIVES**, and so we teach how to walk in the path of Jesus Christ; **FOR OUR NEIGHBORHOODS**, and so we work to build healthy and strong communities; **FOR OUR CITY**, and so we share life with our neighbors in Walltown, Trinity Park, Duke, and the Triangle; and **FOR OUR WORLD**, and so we go with Good News.

**Core Values:** Because God loves us first, we value worship rooted in Scripture and Sacrament, service to all people, and being a welcoming community that loves and forgives one another.