

Habits

You've heard the saying,

"Old habits die hard."

Anyone who has tried to break a bad habit or just change an old habit knows how true that is. Once you get into a pattern of doing things, good or bad, it's hard to get out of it.

But aren't new habits just as hard to start? If you've ever made a New Year's resolution that you didn't keep you know how true that is. Doing something new, something that may even be a little difficult, fitting it into your schedule—that's not easy either.

Coming to worship every Sunday is an important 'habit' that is good for all of us. Being in the house of the Lord to praise and thank our God and to be built up through his Word and Sacraments should be tops on our list each week, along with daily devotions and personal time spent in God's Word. It is in God's Word where we learn of our true condition, that while we may struggle to keep a New Year's resolution or two, we utterly fail at keeping any of God's laws on our own. It is in God's Word where we find God's solution to our problem of sin—his Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is through that Word of law and gospel that the Holy Spirit works repentance and faith and declares our sins forgiven. In the Sacraments God comes to us in a visible way as water and Word wash away sin; where God's promise joins

the Savior's body and blood to bread and wine to forgive us and strengthen our faith. It is in the Lord's house that we gather as his people and receive the blessings he showers on us through Jesus.

Maybe you know someone who has fallen out of this habit of regularly coming to God's house, or never really made it a habit. Could you encourage them and offer support to help them make regular worship a habit? Is there someone at Grace that you have seen make worship a habit every Sunday? Thank God for them and let them know you appreciate their example. We have a number of new members and families here at Grace who are just starting to make this a habit. Take the time to encourage them, to let them know you are encouraged when you see them. Maybe it's time you start a new habit by adding our Bible Hour to your Sunday morning. Let's not just start off the New Year in God's house, but every week of the New Year as we come together to worship and grow.

Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (10:25)

May the Lord graciously build you up through his wonderful Word in 2012!

Pastor Pederson

council news

At their latest meeting the Church Council focused on two main issues. One was our plans for relocating Grace Lutheran Church. A separate committee was formed to properly address this and to help us keep moving forward. The committee consists of Claude Smith (chair), Jim Anderson, Bob Barnard and Randy Post. They welcome any comments or questions you may have and they plan on sharing more information with you at the Voters Meeting at the end of the month.

The other issue discussed dealt with our practice of fundraising and special offerings. What special ministries should we support as a congregation and how should we support them are questions being asked. The Council hopes to have the results of their study and discussion by the Voters Meeting as well.

Other items:

- the format for our congregational meetings will be discussed in the coming months
- upcoming Voters Meeting
 - * Council positions open for election: Elder and Stewardship
 - * When Stewardship is filled we will be reviewing opportunities for member involvement and service

As always, the Council would love to hear any questions or comments you may have. Please feel free to speak to any one of them or give them a call.

Home Visits to Start

Pastor will begin home visits with every family and member of Grace starting this month. These visits are an opportunity to listen to any comments or concerns you have or to answer any questions.

He has set aside every possible Tuesday morning and evening for these visits. Pastor will be working through the congregation alphabetically in the evening. If you can meet in the morning, that will be done at the earliest opportunity. Let him know as soon as possible if you are able to meet in the morning so that he can put a schedule together.

Pastor would prefer a chance to sit down with you in your home where you are most comfortable. If that is not possible, the visit may take place at Grace.

These meetings do take time but are very important as Pastor seeks to better serve you as individuals and a congregation. Please give him the courtesy of making time for a visit.

VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

On January 18th we will begin a Bible study titled, *What's in a Name? God's Amazing Grace Revealed in Some Amazing Names!*

The presenter will be Mark Zarling, former Seminary professor and current president of Martin Luther College, our worker training school in New Ulm, MN.

The lessons include:

- Jan. 18 - God Most High (Genesis 14)
- Jan. 25 - God Almighty (Genesis 17)
- Feb. 1 - The Eternal God (Genesis 21)
- Feb. 8 - The LORD Provides (Gen. 22)

The presentation starts at 7:30pm. Everyone is welcome.

Serving in **January**

Organists Sharon Draheim
Shari Larson
Al Poppo

Flowers
January 1 Chris & Patti Bernhardt
January 8
January 15 Mindy Post (18th Bday)
January 22 Julie Zimmerman
January 29 Bob & Bobbie Barnard

Ushers
Randy Post, Claude Smith, Erv Hinds,
Andy Maywalt

Cleaners
January 7 Draper
January 14 Gilbert
January 21 Hinds
January 28 Holt / Perry

Cleaners Needed!

One opportunity to serve at Grace is by volunteering to help with the cleaning of the church and preschool. Teams clean half the building each week; with more teams it means cleaning only a few times a year. If you'd like to help but don't have a teammate to work with, talk to Don Pudas and he'll get you working with someone.

January Birthdays

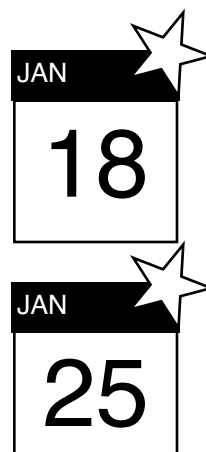
5 Lenore Krueger
5 John Pettit
13 Mindy Post
15 Corey Sirico
19 Andy Maywalt
22 Nancy Hoffman
24 Caleb Murray
27 Bobbie Barnard
28 Trevor Rose
29 Randy Post
30 Bev Perry

Happy Birthday!

January Anniversaries

10 Al & Donna Poppo

*May the Lord continue
to bless your marriage!!*



**Virtual Bible Study w/
President Zarling of MLC**
What's in a Name?
Lesson 1

What's in a Name?
Lesson 2