

May 15, 2011



Grace Notes



Good morning everyone, what a wonderful time we are celebrating for the church.

Three weeks from today you and I will be worshipping in our new church building of **Grace Community Church** at 401 State Highway 38 North!

A lot has been happening. The stud walls are all up, the electricity and plumbing have been roughed in. We even have a floor covering!

Actually, the floor covering is just a protection because this week we will have the dry wall delivered and they will start putting it up! We don't want anything marred. Then they will tape the wall, mud it and paint it!

Now it doesn't go all that fast. It is a lot easier to write about it than actually do it. We have been blessed in so many ways in our building, recently, and as we go ahead in God's time, we will need some good drying weather for the mud and everything. There is a lot of surface area!

In God's time all of this will be done! In the meantime we have lots to plan! The first great day is June 5th! We will not be able to have all of our worship conveniences in place. In fact, we are asking that you bring **and take home** your own chair! We will carry over a few chairs for those who may forget or not have one. We will be bringing over the piano, and a table for an altar. We will have our Christ Candle and the hymnals. Most importantly we will have you, **our family together at the new church building for Grace Community Church**, and we invite you to bring your lawn chairs, or fold up chairs or whatever and worship with us at **10:15 a.m.!**

Yes, 10:15 a.m. ... finally, no more 8:00 a.m. worship time after June 5!

I want to thank the congregation members for celebrating with us during this time of building. Speaking good Minnesotan ... **It has been different**

Over the next few months we will be celebrating and dedicating our new church building. You won't want to miss the ride!

May 15, 2011 Grace Notes continued...

Check out these events:

- **Opening Sunday ... June 5th!**
- Vacation Bible School Kickoff ... June 12th
- Father's Day ... June 19th
- Special Worship Sunday ... June 26th
- The "Fourth" Weekend ... July 3rd
- **Dedication Sunday ... July 10th!**
- Date pending ... **The Polka Service! ... July 24th!**

Even though only three of these dates got bolded and exclamation points each and every Sunday will be a special gift to God. And we, in turn, will receive God's gift of Grace at **Grace!**

Pastor Ryan

Speaking of gifts:

Please return this portion with gifts

The Council is starting a **Needs List** for the new church building.

Gifts are being received for the following needs

- One share of the painting of our new church \$50
- One share of the tiling of our new church \$25
Tiling will be in the foyer and kitchen
- One share of the carpeting of our new church \$40
Offices and down the center aisle
- One share of the landscaping \$30
Flowers, Shrubs and accoutrements

Yes, Pastor Ryan, I would like to give the following gift:

\$ _____ for _____ shares of _____

For our new church building

Given in memory of: _____

Our Gift Given to God by: _____

May 8, 2011

Grace Notes



Just four weeks from today we will be in our new church building. **Please notice that I always use the word ... new church building.** The church has always been here, for the church, the body of Jesus Christ has been here worshipping, serving and loving all along.

But now we will have a new church building with exciting opportunities for ministry and serving the community. We have some great ideas to launch our worship with thanksgiving, prayer and song, but also remembering our traditions. **One way was introduced on Easter when we used the liturgy in the green hymnal** which was unavailable for several months. Next Sunday, May 15th we will return to the green hymnal liturgy which will be sung again. The joy of working with traditional and alternative ministries will keep us vibrant and growing even with nearly a century under our belt as a congregation. The liturgy will be sung occasionally (once a month?), but we also hope to have new leaders reading and bringing God's word to us in voice and song.

The church building itself is rolling along. The studs are up and the plumbing is roughed in. The electrical will be roughed in this week. All of these things need to be inspected before the dry wall is put in place, and then comes the taping, mudding and painting. It will be a very busy month, culminating in the move and opening worship June 5th at **10:15!**

Let's face it, 8:00 just got a little early ... especially when it was so dark and so cold outside. But in just four weeks that will all change!

You will note that I included an Easter offering envelope in the bulletin this morning. If you think I have got my weeks all mixed up, please remember this is still Easter ... Easter III to be exact. Even though you have heard me say that every Sunday is to be a little Easter, the seven Sundays of Easter help us focus on the **Power of Christ's Resurrection.**

As I announced in the bulletin I received word of our dear friend, **Lillian Holt's death on Easter Sunday.** Already, we have received a few memorials for the Building Fund in memory of Lil. We want to thank all who have remembered Lil in this way. Like I told Mike Holt, we will have

May 8, 2011 Grace Notes continued...

her memorial service just north of her old back yard in the new **Grace Community Church**. We will be setting the date of the memorial service according to the wishes of the family ... when they can gather in the Bigfork area. Blessed be the memory of Lillian Holt and her husband Chester. They were an important part of the lives of many in our church and throughout the community.

The Building Fund is one place where you can give memorials in the church. Soon the council will be setting up a needs/wish list for our new Building so that you can give to some specific needs and wishes of the congregation.

One of the exciting ministries that is always happening is the **Youth Fund**. Already several youth and adults are planning on taking the Servant Trip on The Synod Journey in 2012. The cost is expensive, but the youth realize that you are there with them. Two years ago Bubba, Kate, Kindee and Mike were led by Joey Jacobson and joined 450 youth from the Northeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA and represented our churches on the servant journey.

Gifts to this ministry are always welcome ... whether they are given as donations or memorials ... we give you thanks.

Finally, I want to wish a special **Happy Mothers' Day to all of our MOMS!** Blessed be the memory of my mom and your mom if she has died. And special love and hugs to all the moms here with us today and those not able to be here ... thank you for all that you have done in our lives and the lives of our children! Amen!

Pastor Ryan



May 1, 2011
Grace Notes



A blessed Easter II to everyone.

If everything is going as planned:

I am at the Northeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Assembly in Brainerd

My friend, Bob Affeldt is in the pulpit ... or close by preaching and leading worship in my absence.

Thank you, Bob!

Grace Community Church is about to move into its new gift to the community – the building at 401 State Highway 38.

Today we celebrate that new name by delving deeper into its meaning.

According to God's Word we are to **Grow in God's Grace ...**

Peter writes, "... Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen." We never reach the point in our Christian walk when we should let down our guard, or when we are able to make it on our own apart from God's enabling grace. The point is: don't ever stop growing in His grace. When you quit growing you stagnate. When that happens, you are no longer the winning influence for Christ that you should be in this world.

The Good Book says that we are to **Be built in the Word of Grace...**

In the Act of the Apostles, Luke writes, "... I commend you to God and to the Word of His Grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified." Spiritual growth only comes as we center our lives and ministries upon the sure word of grace. This needs to be our focus as we reach out to the community in which we serve.

The final word regarding grace I wish to share is that we are to:

May 1, 2011 Grace Notes continued...

Speak with Grace!

“Let your speech always be with GRACE, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” (Colossians 4:6) We are to remember that gracious speech attracts people – unbelievers and believers alike! It draws all people to Christ. And our speech as *a family of Grace* needs to always be centered on *GRACE*.

Peter writes that the Lord is called “the God of *all grace.*” God is not just the God of grace, but the God of *ALL GRACE.* And since the God of all grace lives within each believer in Christ, we are enabled (through HIM) to abound over sin by his super abounding grace that resides within us. Thank God that God is who and what God is ... especially the *God of all Grace.*

Grace Community Church ... let us live in our new name.

Pastor Ryan

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(Thanks again to Kristi Gustafson for doing the internet search for this word of GRACE – we celebrate our new name!)

April 24, 2011



Grace Notes



A yellow floor! No, that is not the color our floor will be, but when I walked across the floor to talk to Tim and Vern, that was the color. The insulation which will be under the cement, under the re-bar, under the in-floor tubing is yellow. As you can tell we are continuing to roll.

Grace Community Church will be a clarion call for the community. Kristi Gustafson did a little word search for us, and helped us see the Biblical Background for that powerful word of Grace!

Nearly all religions have one thing in common:

The belief that one's eternal salvation or acceptance by their god or gods is based upon one's performance in the World. In other words – their god or gods judge them by their good deeds, their good works or the sacrifices they make to their god or gods.

The one notable exception is Christianity!

We are accepted before the one true God ... by God's matchless and amazing GRACE ALONE!

If you ask people of other religions if they will go to heaven ... the usual replies are something like, "I hope so ...," "I think so ...," "If I have been good enough ..." or "only God knows."

For the Christian the answer is, "Yes, because of the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ!"

For by Grace you have been saved...

And if by Grace ... then salvation is no longer by your works!

What a promise for all Christians ... and our new church building will identify us as a part of the family that calls itself Grace Community!

On this Easter Sunday ... Easter 2011 ... I ask you to immerse yourself in the promise of that Grace.

For the next two Sundays ... Easter 1 and Easter 2 I will be taking some of the material Kristi found and sharing it with you. Celebrate the new name of our family ... and the new name of the building which is being built for the entire Community!

April 24, 2011 Grace Notes continued...

Justified freely by God's Grace: "Being justified freely by God's **Grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ..." Romans 3:24

Freely in this verse literally means "without cost." So there is no price that we must pay to gain right standing with God. But the cost of the gift for us came at a tremendous price for God ... the blood of his own Son, Jesus Christ. Because of God's grace we became sisters and brothers with Jesus himself.

We do not live under the rule of law, but under Grace: "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not living under law, but under **Grace**" Romans 6:14 Grace as the foundation for living conquers sin; law-keeping does not. Living under the law only makes us more aware of our sinfulness; it does nothing to produce victory over our lawlessness.

And what shows us that victory? ... **Easter Sunday, the Resurrection of our Lord!** What a festival we celebrate today!

Thank you God, thank you, for all the gifts that receive. But we especially thank you for the gift of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

For on this Holy Day we shout out the gift of **GRACE** that you gave to us in the promise of life today and life forever. Amen.

He is Risen He is Risen, indeed!

Pastor Ryan

April 17, 2011



Grace Notes



I've been singing in our new church. It doesn't sound like much, not just because of the quality of my singing, but there is absolutely nothing to bounce the sound ... but that will all be changing soon.

Lil Miller and I were in the church ... it is really nice and big. We both hope we will be filling it up ... again, very soon.

But in the meantime we have to wait. Waiting is difficult. This is all in God's time, not ours.

Our time for the Worship is now set ... starting June 5th with our worship at the new building. The time will be 10:15 a.m.

We are printing cards with our new time starting on June 5th. We will hand them out to everyone, and we will be asking you to pass them around so that everybody will know our **new worship time** at our **new church home** with our **new church name**.

Grace Community Church
401 State Highway 38
Bigfork, MN 56628
10:15 a.m. starting June 5th

Next Sunday we celebrate Easter Worship at 8:00 a.m. The youth will be serving a light breakfast following worship in the basement.

The youth are starting to talk about the 2012 Synod Servant Journey to New Orleans with stops along the way. We ask God to bless their plans.

Pastor Ryan

April 10, 2011



Grace Notes



We have had some great days to work on our new church home!

Thanks be to God!!

The frost is out of the ground. The plumbers have plumbed in all of the lines underground. Now we have the flooring to do. The next couple of weeks will be focusing on the in-floor heat and pouring of the cement. Once that is accomplished we will have lots of work happening all at once.

Framing interior walls
Roughing in the plumbing
Roughing in the heating and air-conditioning
Roughing in the electrical
Putting on the dry wall
Mudding and taping ... my least favorite!

By the time all of that is done, we will be past mid-May.

Today, at the council meeting, we will be talking about our plans for the opening events of the new building. Can we really be talking about that already? You bet!

June 5 is still our date of the first worship service at the new building. Look forward to the announcements of future events at Grace Community Church. We are very excited about other possibilities you will want to hear about.

Do you have some ideas? ... talk to your council members!

Pastor Ryan

April 3, 2011

Grace Notes



We are still on schedule after a month and a half

As I write this we have two huge furnaces drying pulling up the frost from the ground. We should have most of the frost gone by tomorrow (Monday, April 4th). They will be working on the plumbing and the HVAC in the attic and in the ground. Things will not change much on the outside, but on the inside there will be things happening all the time.

All the supporting walls are up and insulated! They have a vapor barrier on the walls and the ceiling. It is really looking like the church now.

We get the keys to the building on June 3rd. We are looking at our first worship service in the new building on Sunday, June 5th. Of course, things can change, but right now it looks like that is a super possibility.

Plans are being made as we speak.

- We are working with Effie for our new time of Worship
- We are planning when we will have our dedication of the building
- Dedication will be sometime after June 12th

I was talking to my pick-up the other day ... doesn't everybody talk to their pickup? Anyway, my pick-up is not sure how it will handle being inside again. It gave up its spot for all the material Mary and I have in the garage. It has had a very cold time outside, but

- It started every day!
- The car started every day!
- My snow-blower had a prime spot in the garage and I could walk it straight out into the driveway
- Lori was able to get to her file cabinets even in the garage!

Yes, we will like our garage cleared out soon.

Pastor Ryan

March 27, 2011



Grace Notes



Early yesterday morning, just as the Sun was coming up in the East and Elske was running around our back yard, I looked over to the new church building. There was quite a bit of movement and I checked out what was happening from the back deck...

No, it wasn't our workers getting a little extra work done

And no, those weren't parishioners coming to get some good pews

Lo and behold six beautiful white-tail deer were checking out Grace Community Church up close and personal. Are we a welcoming church or not!

The inside is starting to take shape. Tim and Vern have the inside cross beams all set ... you can see where the three large double doors to the sanctuary will be set in the wall to the Sanctuary. The windows to the west show portents of the view to come when we are worshipping. And the insulation and vapor barrier are up on the side walls all around the building except of course on the southern wall which has been left open for God's sunlight to come streaming in to the inner sanctum. All is ready for the inside work to start as April is almost upon us.

- Tim and Vern will be putting up the vapor barrier on the ceiling
- Ferrellgas will hook-up temporary heating
- 2 – 400,000 BTU units will draw the frost out of the ground
- Duct work will be put in the attic
- Once the frost is out
 - In-ground plumbing will go in
 - In-ground electrical will be installed
 - Then they can work on the in-floor heating
 - Topped with the cement floor

God's house is being finished ... thanks be to God!

Pastor Ryan

March 20, 2011



Grace Notes



I know that many of you realize this ... if you have computer capabilities please check out Susie Schmickle's photos on the website: www.bigforklutheran.org. Susie e-mails them to Lori and Lori puts them on the internet. It is our newest way to keep a historical record!

It is cold but very peaceful as I gather in the sanctuary of our new home. Sanctuary is a perfect name for the new church ... it is a very safe place to be. I pray for the church ... the real church ... *you the family of God, the Family of Grace Community Church* ... as I consider how in just a couple of months we will be worshipping in that new home of God.

I want to stop and pray for God's blessings on our cousin church, Jessie Lake Lutheran, as they begin worship in their new church home *today!* Mary and I had a personal walk-through with Pastor John Hanson on Friday. It is a beautiful church, and I was looking at all the little hidy holes and closets as well as their sanctuary and fellowship hall. May God bless their ministry at Jessie Lake as they look to the future. Our friend, Judy Kreun, has a baby grand piano which just came this week.

It got a little muddy out at the Grace Community site ... so be careful if you visit. The unseen ice under the mud makes it especially tricky. Inside the new building it is all dry and flat. The guys smoothed out the dirt floor, and it is ready for a new round of inside work before they close it in next week and fire up the heating elements to dry everything out in preparation of the underground plumbing and electrical, the in-floor heating tubes and the interior concrete. Then they can frame in the interior walls and start getting it ready for the opening which should be by the first week in June!

Continue to pray for God's presence and peace upon our project. I encourage you to talk to me if you have some ideas about our ministries that we are considering for offering to the community in our new church home. God bless all of you in the Grace Community! *Pastor Ryan*

March 13, 2011



Grace Notes



Lots of things are already done!

- The building pad was prepared
- The water and waste is installed up to the building
- The electricity is installed up to the building
- The propane is installed up to the building
- The wooden framing is up
- The steel roof is on!

Not only does it look like a church, but it looks like a church with a top!

As you drive by take note of the things that will be happening soon.

- The steel walls will be going up
- The sub contractors will be moving in to rough in the plumbing and heating and the electricity in the attic space
- Insulation and vapor barrier will be going in

In a few weeks they will be

- Putting in the underground plumbing and heating and electric
- The in-floor heat tubing will be installed
- The interior concrete will be poured
- The interior walls be framed
- The interior plumbing, heating, electricity and communication lines will be put into place

And then the sheet rocking, taping and all the rest can be done.

It is very rocky and rolyly ... literally ... and I am not talking about music! And every time I am out there, I feel God's presence and I feel the presence of the Family of God ... the church. For the building is only that, a building, it will never be complete without you in the building. Grace Community Church is waiting for it's new home with God.

March 13, 2011 continued

We celebrate our vision as we look to the future!

Strive to know Christ, and make him known.

How we carry out the mission is through the variety of ministries we offer through the new opportunities our church building offers.

Here are some strategies that make this possible. We cannot do all of them, plus we can add more as we determine what are the highest priority for our community.

Please read through the list and give feedback.

You may e-mail Pastor Ryan or Laurel

You can talk to us

We will have open discussions on these ministries

We want your feedback ***(and your new ideas!)***

Remember we are just starting our walk to determine our foci

- Offer a place for youth that is inviting and confidential
- Offer a place for the whole community to use
- Church should have an open invitation to visit and have a cup of coffee ready for all to talk and share
- We need to have good publicity for our events
- Consider offering transportation for young and old alike
- Offer parenting classes for the community
- Get a playground for our young people to feel welcome
- Make a renewed effort to invite people of the community
- Offer unique worship opportunities on Sunday morning
- Offer other worship opportunities at different times of the year
- Invite people to our continuing Bible studies
- Offer book clubs and discussion groups
- Offer a safe sanctuary for after school events for youth
- Train members to help show Christian love
- Offer a day care
- Continue to listen to the needs of the community

March 6, 2011



Grace Notes



For months we have been waiting for our property to sprout into something which fashions a building ... and in a couple of weeks we have gone from a sand pile to timber-henge to a structure with beautiful church windows outlined in the sanctuary. If you haven't been out there recently, please go out there today ... or follow the progress on our website.

Thank you, Susie Schmickle, for taking pictures, and when she sends them to Lori, Lori posts them on the web. Furthermore, Bob Duda is normally carrying his laptop around and would love to show his beautiful pictures! And now we can start looking ahead, because there will be a new **beginning**, **you could say a GENESIS**, very soon.

After meeting with AmeriBuilt we know more about the future. This next week we will start seeing lots of steel going up on the building! Our walls and roof will take shape and it won't be long before our sub-contractors come in to put in the plumbing, electrical and heating. No date is set, but our tentative full occupancy will be June 3 ... hopefully we will have some fun times out there before that date!

Speaking of fun times ... almost everyday I have been out at the site this past week early in the morning ... praying, walking and talking to our two builders, Tim and Frank. It is an amazing gift that we are starting to realize. This building will be one more resource for the community that offers so many important opportunities to its residents. Along with the Edge Center, the school, Bigfork Valley, and all our businesses, **Grace Community Church** will be key to the future of our area.

In the next few weeks this insert, "***Grace Notes***," will explore the ministry possibilities for the community which our council, WELCA and individuals have brainstormed about regarding future programs for our church family. Our family already has a lot of great ideas, and we look forward to hearing from you. We are on an exciting trip, and **thanks to you we are making this a reality not just for the future, but right now!**