We continue to move through the story of Jesus’s life in the Gospel of Mark. Each Sunday (plus Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday), has a theme word that we will focus on in the service and the sermon.

Sunday March 6: Mark 12:28-44--- Love.
Sunday March 13: Mark 13:1-8, 24-37--- Watch!
Friday March 25 (Good Friday): Mark 15:16-39--- Forsaken.
Sunday March 27 (Easter): Mark 16:1-8. Go! Tell!

**LENTEN WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

Every year, we share Wednesday evening worship in Lent with our partner churches in the Two Rivers Ecumenical Ministry (TREM) group. Each of the churches takes a turn to host to worship services and invite to preach one of the pastors who is not their home pastor. As the theme for the services this year, each preacher will choose a person from their religious tradition and background, who has influenced and impacted their faith. The schedule of host church and preachers is as follows: (all worship services Wednesday night at 6:30pm)

March 2 at Emmanuel United Methodist; Pastor Jim Rasmus preaching
March 9 at Calvary Lutheran; Pastor Joan Frost preaching
Fellowship with TREM community with annual Soup Supper from 5:30-6:15.
March 16 at Zion United Methodist (in Mishicot); Deacon Paul Gleichner preaching
March 25 (Good Friday, worship at noon) at Calvary Lutheran Church

**WEDNESDAY EVENING LENTEN WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE**
Palm Sunday: March 20th worship at 8am and 10:30am
Maundy Thursday: March 24th 6:30pm
Good Friday: March 25th 6:30 pm
Easter Sunday: Sunrise service at Neshotah Beach at 6:30am
Worship at 8am and 10:30 am
Easter Breakfast 9am
Children’s Sunday School with Egg hunt 9:30am
MAKING SPACE FOR HOLY WEEK

Where ever you are right now, I’d like to invite you to get out your calendar—whether its hanging on the wall, on your smartphone, in a book, or on your brain—whatever you’ve got. Take a look at the week of March 20-27. For those affected by school calendars, you might notice that it is right before or just after Spring Break. Perhaps you already have a number things scheduled— you are already busy with this and that. Or maybe the week is completely open, nothing formally on the schedule, but there are daily routines that you’ll settle into once it arrives.

Now, if it’s not already marked, I encourage you to write across the whole week these words:

HOLY WEEK.

Holy Week, from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, is actually the high point of the Christian year. I know Easter doesn’t get as big of a buzz out there in the real world as Christmas (aside from all the bunnies and chocolate eggs, of course), but in terms of the Christian tradition, Easter is actually the highest holy day of them all.

Maybe some of us did not grow up in settings that celebrated or emphasized Holy Week. Perhaps you grew up in a church that didn’t do much, or perhaps you didn’t grow up in a church at all and are still trying to figure out how all these Christian seasons fit together! And, of course, some of us DID grow up in churches that called attention to Holy Week…and we might have positive or negative association with those memories.

Here is what I have discovered over the years: Easter is more than just a day to dress extra nice for church and go home to search for eggs. Easter is a force. It is this amazing, somewhat mysterious, celebration of renewal and new life that has the power (if I allow it) to resurrect my spirit in mighty and magnificent ways. But it seems to require preparation. If I’m just going through the motions without really thinking about it and then show up in church on March 27th and am taken by surprise (“Oh! It’s Easter! Aren’t the lilies pretty?”), it’s just not the same as actively and intentionally preparing myself for this event.

And so I invite you to look at Holy Week. Consider planning at least one thing you will do that week to walk into Jerusalem with Jesus. Will you be there on Palm Sunday to wave the branches and cheer his arrival? Will you join us on Maundy Thursday as we remember the last meal he shared with his friends? Perhaps you will come on Good Friday as we gather to stare death in the face and remember Jesus’s last moments. If you’re an early riser (or perhaps especially if you’re not typically one!) I invite you to join us on Neshotah Beach for our sunrise service Easter morning. Or maybe it’s something else entirely. Whatever it is (and I hope it’s actually even more than one of these things) schedule it now. Write it down or make a personal commitment.

Easter comes only once a year. And in order to allow our souls to fully sing, dance, play, rejoice—and be resurrected!—on Easter morning, we first must journey through that holiest of weeks together. I, for one, am thankful to have your company on the journey. Peace be with you as we continue through this Lenten season of self-reflection.

Pastor Colie
“And when I think of God, his Son not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in, that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to take away my sin. Then sings my soul; my Savior God to thee how great thou art, how great thou art.” (verse 3 of How Great Thou Art by Stuart K. Hine)

I find myself brought to tears whenever I sing those words. “God, his Son not sparing” How can we even imagine such a love for humankind? “God, his Son not sparing.”

The Gospel of Mark speaks of heaven being torn apart at Jesus baptism. “In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heaven torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” (Mark 1:9-11)

It is the radical and violent entry of the Divine into our world. Heaven is torn apart, and God speaks.

Later Mark tells of the time when Jesus breathed his last breath, “And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.” (Mark 15:38) The curtain divided the earthly temple from the “throne of God.” Again it is a radical and violent entry of the Divine into the world.

I have thought about that tearing of the curtain in two from top to bottom as an expression of anguish, God’s anguish. The Gospel of Matthew adds, “The earth shook, and the rocks were split.” Matthew tells us that, “From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.” (MT 27:45) The anguish was so great that even the earth and the universe shared in the sorrow.

By the end of this month we will be singing with joy, “Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia! All creation join to say Alleluia! Raise you joys and triumphs high, Alleluia! Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!” (Charles Wesley)

There is no other time in the Church Year where the meaning of Immanuel, God with us, is ever clearer. Holy Week brings into focus the radical love of God. A love that is so great, so radical, that Jesus endures death on the cross for humanity. Jesus was born, lived as one of us, and willingly obeyed his Father, giving His life for us. The heavens are torn open, the curtain is torn in two, God is with us!

I would like to say Thank You to Dr. Karl Kuhn for leading us in the study of Islam. We are blessed by his knowledge of both Christianity and Islam. We appreciate the time it takes to prepare for each session and the patient way you answer our questions.

A member of the congregation mentioned that I don’t share a lot about myself. It is funny because to me it feels like I talk about myself too much. Hmmm…

My favorite class in Seminary was UCC History and Polity. It turns out I must be a bit of a history geek because I loved reading about the denominations that have come together to form the UCC. I am old enough to list hymns like Just As I Am and Amazing Grace as favorites, but I also enjoy more contemporary songs like Dream God’s Dream. When I drive to school and back I play cd’s far too loud and sing along.

When I work with teenagers, I like to “give” them the gift of reading Matthew 6: 25-34. A Biblical, “don’t worry, be happy”, I think they need to hear that they are of great value to God.

I love to sit behind my garage and read. From that vantage point I can listen to the leaves rustling in the breeze and see the birds fly across the yard. Sometimes when they don’t know I am there, the birds fly so close to my head I can hear their wings beating. I also love to be in water and go snorkeling. When do I feel closest to God? In nature. And gardening- for me touching the earth and planting has a sense of the sacred.

You and the time we spend together has been a blessing in my life. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this church family. May God bless us as we continue this Lenten Journey together. Amen.

UPCOMING ADULT STUDY

The Study of Islam with Dr. Karl Kuhn concludes March 6th. Thank you to everyone who has participated. Your interest has been amazing.

We will return to the Study in The Present Word on March 13th. The Spring Materials have arrived and Daily Bible Study will be available at the Information Center. March 13th is Simple Faith, March 20th is Struggling Faith, and March 27th is Resurrection Faith. Classes will meet in the Adult Study Room.

Book Study: We are reading The Way Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus. We will cover Chapter 4 on March 7th, Calming The Storm-The Sea of Galilee; Chapter 5 on March 14th, Sinners, Outcasts, and the Poor-Samaria and Chapter 6 on March 21st, The Final Week-Jerusalem; March 28th Epilogue-Your Defining Story.
**MISSION & OUTREACH NEWS**

Painting Pathways Clubhouse has been chosen by the Mission & Outreach Committee as the designated charity for our Lenten offerings.

**WHAT IS A CLUBHOUSE**

A clubhouse is first and foremost a community of people who are working together toward a common goal; recovery from mental illness.

A clubhouse is a community organized to support individuals living with the effects of mental illness. In a Clubhouse people are given the opportunities to rejoin the worlds of friendships, family, important work, employment, education and to access service and supports they may individually need.

A Clubhouse is a restorative environment for people who have had their lives interrupted and want the support of others who believe that recovery from mental illness is possible for all.

Universally, there are eight dimensions of wellness that describe what healthy people identify as the foundation of a strong recovery model. These are: Environment, Intellectual, Physical, Occupational, Spirituality, Social, Financial and Emotional. Painting Pathways Clubhouse addresses each of these components to ensure that all areas of wellness can be supported for better overall recovery.

You can contribute to the recovery of individuals with mental illness through your Lenten offering for Painting Pathways Clubhouse. (located at 1226-Washington Street, Manitowoc)

**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING (OGHS) OFFERING TO BE TAKEN 3/6/16**

Violent political actions all over the world—Syria, Iraq, Burundi, and Guatemala—have created waves of refugees and displaced people, unable to return home for fear of their lives. Natural disasters have disrupted communities too, displacing people from their homes and livelihoods and exposing human-caused injustices that make a “new normal” difficult. Lack of access to health care and the empowerment of women create conditions that prevent communities from thriving. Chronic hunger, exaggerated by climate change, forces the migration of families for the sake of survival. Life in a refugee camp or as a refugee in an urban setting is a permanent temporariness that defies the wholeness of individuals or communities. These statistics and realities of our world may lie beyond our comprehension, but the people who live them are not beyond our collective hearts. OGHS donations fund UCC sustainable development, refugee and disaster ministries. We go the extra mile to respond, to stay for the long term, and to work on root causes because we are walking with those who are forced to go many extra miles simply to survive and, along the way, to thrive.

Please give your support to One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC). Without you, none of this work would be possible. It all starts with your decision to give.

**GENERATION G**

Generation G has been meeting Wednesday evenings from 7-8pm in our youth room! We have been focusing in on 40 Acts this lent—discussing what it means to be at the table with Christ. (Inviting others, multiplying our gifts, forgiveness are just a few topics we have touched so far). It’s been a beautiful challenge to live out the scriptures we read and discuss every week.

We also have a daily devotion for youth now available in the high school youth room called “DEVO-zine”. It looks like a mini magazine—and has a bible verse each day—along with a short paragraph or even a sentence or prayer shared with our youth. Thank you for helping us grow our faith—not just on Wednesday’s but throughout the week.

Come join us: **Sunday March 27th**

Generation G’s **Annual Easter Breakfast**! We will make, serve, and clean up breakfast—but want to invite YOU—your family and friends to come join us!

**Tickets are $5 for adults and $3 for children 10 and under!**

Breakfast includes Pancakes with topping bar, scrambled eggs, sausage and juice/coffee/milk. Money raised helps support our high school youth group!

Breakfast will be served **from 9am-10:15am**.
CHILI SUPPER
Sunday, March 6, 2016
4:00 PM—6:00 PM
St. Peter the Fisherman Parish
3201 Mishicot Rd., Two Rivers
Chili, Dessert & Beverage
$6.00
Hamburgers also available
Sponsored by:
St. Peter the Fisherman
Council of Catholic
SUNDAY SUPPER

Grace will be hosting the Sunday Supper on **Sunday, March 20th.** We are asking for monetary donations to cover the cost of the supper. We did this for the November Sunday Supper and it worked out really well. We will have sign-up sheets for desserts as well as for the helpers we will need on that Sunday.

In November we served 94 people and our menu was: turkey sandwiches, hot dogs, cheesy hash-browns, fruit salad, baked beans, and desserts. We will be serving the same menu.

There will be sign-up sheets and a donation container at the information center on Sunday, March 6th and March 13th. Desserts may be brought on Sunday, March 20th to Grace UCC. Any help you can do is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact me at 645-1014 or csdresang@gmail.com.

Thank you for your support in this important ministry.

Charlene Dresang

HABITAT SUPPORTER

First Lutheran Church, located at 521 N. Eighth St. in Manitowoc will host the twelfth Annual **Spring Chili Warm-up & Bake Sale** on Saturday, March 5, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. All proceeds will benefit Manitowoc County Habitat for Humanity.

This year, the menu will include chili, dessert and a beverage. Hot dogs will be available as a substitute for chili dinners. The price for tickets is $6.00 for adults and $3.00 for children under 12. A one quart jar of chili for takeout will be available throughout the event and will sell for $7.00.

Habitat, in partnership with First Lutheran Church, is also soliciting baked goods for this event. We are looking for sheet cakes, cookies and bars of all kinds to accompany dinner orders. Any other baked goods – bread, fruit pies, cupcakes, etc. (no cream desserts) – will be sold in the Fireside Hall. If you can get a group of your members to provide baked goods it would be deeply appreciated. Baked goods can be dropped off at First Lutheran on Friday, March 4 between 12 noon and 3:00 p.m. or Saturday, March 5 after 8:30 a.m.

Again, thank you for all your cooperation and the efforts you will be putting forth. If you would like to help at the event or have any questions or suggestions, please call.

In Christian Partnership,

Tove Alecksen/Clara Mikkelsen
First Lutheran Church
686-3870/920-662-4818

Jean Wakefield
Manitowoc County Habitat
683-8466

ReSale Center Event

**Saturday, March 19, 2016**
8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
1909A Washington Street, Two Rivers
(behind Family Dollar)

10% for Habitat (dine in or take out)

**Buffalo Wild Wings**

**Monday, March 21, 2016**
11:00 a.m. to closing
4140 Harbor Town Lane, Harbor Town Center,
Manitowoc
LADIES OF GRACE

Afternoon Circle will meet for lunch on Tuesday, March 8th at 11:30am at Fork & Knife in Manitowoc. Ladies of Grace are welcome to attend this monthly luncheon. Bring a friend along too.

SPECIAL THANK YOUS

To Pastors and members You have made our past year so much better. Thank you for your visits, prayers and songs. Our residents Truly enjoy each of you. Blessings to all of you the Meadow View Living Center.

CRAFTING SCRAPBOOKING

will be March 12 from 9am-4pm here in the Fellowship hall! Bring a project to work on, a dish to share, something to drink— and join us! If you have questions— or want to let Nicole know you are coming you can email nlherda@yahoo.com or go on Facebook so we know how many to plan on.

Thank you ALL so much for your dedication and generosity to Hope House!!!! As a 24 hour, 365 day a year agency with only four paid staff, volunteers participation is crucial in allowing us to keep our doors open to those in need!! Without volunteers, we would not be able to serve the community!!! THANK YOU for allowing us and each other to live our personal missions of helping those in need and those less fortunate than us!

Hope House Volunteer Training

If you would like to participate in this worthwhile endeavor, mark your calendar for the next Hope House training session to take place on Saturday, March 12th, 10:00-11:30 AM at Trinity Alliance Church, 3121 Nagle Ave, Manitowoc. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Betty Becker, Mickey Veleke or Erin at Hope House.

Host Week

Next host week March 6th thru 12th. Shifts still available. Contact Mickey Veleke (609-8964) if you can fill a shift or prepare a meal. Thank You to all who have already volunteered.

BINGO

SENIOR GET-TOGETHERS are continuing and will be held in the Fellowship Hall March 2nd between 1:30 – 3:00pm

RSVP: Call the Church Office: 553-1222 or Sign up at the Information Center
10 January 2016

Dear Friends at Grace,

Thank you very much for your financial gifts in 2015 for supporting my work with Global Ministries here in Lesotho. Your gifts benefit our partner church the Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa (LECSA).

We have a number of projects that are being supported through the generosity of churches and individuals like you. We recently started a new one for providing basic school furniture (desks and chalkboards) for schools of the LECSA. There are many schools, particularly the primary schools, where the number of kids far outstrip the capacity of the desks. You find pupils tightly bunched together or just sitting on benches and using their laps as desks. The furniture is being made by a small manufacturing center of the church down near Masitise where I used to teach.

Another school-related project we began last year was providing new pit latrines for LECSA primary schools. Reaction from the students and teachers has been great! As one teacher put it, they are no longer embarrassed to show visitors their toilets!

Again, thank you for your generous spirit of giving that you have shown so consistently over the years. I've enjoyed my visits to Grace and appreciate the prayers, support and words of encouragement. On behalf of the LECSA, thank you!

God bless,

Mark Berdine
"I will praise the LORD God with a song and a thankful heart."

Psalm 69:30

Dear Sunday School and Confirmation Students,

I am very excited to announce the 2016 spring musical for Grace Congregational Church, **“The Kingdom Connection”!** It is a fun musical by the same people who wrote “Agape League” and “Back to the Cross”. To listen to the music and read about the musical, go to [www.wordmusic.com](http://www.wordmusic.com)

We will begin practices in March and will present the show to the congregation on **May 1st at both services.**

I would like to include everyone who is interested but I also realize families are very busy these days. I am looking at having rehearsals on Saturday mornings starting March 5 from 10:00am-11:00am but am willing to work around individual schedules.

Please fill out the form below if you are interested and I will do my best to find a place for everyone! A finalized schedule will be sent out by March 1 based on your availability.

Thank you so much for helping us to continue this Grace UCC tradition! It is a fun and memorable way to dig deep into Christ’s teachings!

God Bless,
Andrea Allington
920-242-6240 or romsosa@yahoo.com

Please fill out the bottom portion if you are interested and return to Grace UCC. Or you may contact Andrea by phone or e-mail.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Student Name ________________________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian names and phone numbers ________________________________________

Family e-mail _________________________________________________________________

Are you available to practice on Saturday mornings? _________________________________

Would one of these dates/ time work better for you?

**Wednesdays from 5:00 to 6:00pm**

**Sundays after 10:30am service**

**Mondays from 5:00 to 6:00pm**

Comments:

Parent/Guardian Signature __________________________________ date __________