



“April showers, bring May flowers.”

“After the rain, the rainbow.”

“The darkest hour is just before dawn.”

John 5:24 Jesus said “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears My Word and believes Him Who sent Me, has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”

As I watched the news last week, the announcers were reflecting on this year of Covid. Lives have been forever changed and many, many lives have been lost. The death toll in this country alone is staggering. I could feel my heart being weighted down so I did what many people do. I switched the channel.

So, I clicked to another channel and an episode of NCIS was playing. I like NCIS so I settled down to catch up with the storyline and, lo and behold, Gibbs’ good friend Tobias had just discovered his daughter unconscious and she was whisked to the hospital. The doctors were unable to revive her and she died. Tobias tries to stand but dissolves into overwhelming sobs so Gibbs encompasses his friend in his arms and they weep together. The scene then goes to the NCIS office where the co-workers are somberly sitting at their desks. Director Vance walks into the office area with a coat over his arm and a piece of paper in his hand. He is obviously going somewhere. He is asked where he is going. He is going to the hospital –hopefully the hospital will let him in (Covid restrictions may keep him out.) But what is in his hand? It is a poem. Director Vance hopes to share this poem as the words brought him hope and comfort when his wife died. Coroner Jimmy says that poem brought him comfort when his wife died. The co-workers ask if Director Vance would read the poem aloud and he does. (by now I am thinking of all those of NCIS who have died...)

The poem read is by Merrit Malloy. It is called “Epitaph.” It begins: **“When I die, give what’s left of me away....”** By now my eyes are full of tears and I’m looking for a tissue. I hear bits and pieces **“...when you need me, put your arms around anyone and give them what you need to give to me.....I want to leave you something...look for me....you can love me most by hands touching hands....Love doesn’t die. People do. So, when all that’s left of me is love, give me away.”**

“So when all that’s left of me is love, give me away.”

As I wiped my eyes and blew my nose, I couldn’t help but think – that’s what Jesus wants us to do. Jesus is love. Love does not die. We are to give Jesus, Love, away! We are not to be stuck by the empty tomb crying and grieving. We are not to be boarded up in a room scared to show our faces. We are not to be like the two walking to Emmaus trying to get away from it all and wondering what we should be about. We are to give Jesus, His Love, away – over and over again. God loves this world. He sent Jesus to this world that we might know His Love. Jesus comes to live in our very hearts. His love is in us.....and we are to give it away.

So dear friends in Christ – take heart! Better yet, take the Love of Christ within you and generously and with great delight, give it away! Call those who are far away or isolated. Pray for one another. Serve as you are able. Lift up a cause. Lead when you can. Crochet. Sew. Quilt. Forgive. Encourage. Sing. Clean. Send cards. Paint. Write. Embrace. Wear your mask. Listen. Serve. Weep with those who weep. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Play. Color. Create. Be open to the leading of Christ’s loving Spirit. His list is endless!

I can’t say that I ever considered NCIS a spiritual show, but last week, God spoke to me through that episode and encouraged my heavy heart. May He speak to you in clear ways as well. You are loved. With an everlasting Love. Please, give it away!

Never flag in Spirit. Be aglow with the Spirit. Serve the Lord.

Vicki Marthaler

The Maria Circle – This Circle is our Spanish speaking Circle and has had the tradition of meeting **Wednesday nights** following Oasis. Again, Covid has disrupted this schedule. Stay tuned as the church begins to open up to its normal activities.

Alejandrina Oveido, Chair.

The Naomi Circle – The Naomi Circle meets the **first Tuesday** at 9:30am at the church to study the Bible Study found in the “Gather” magazine. Covid has given rise to Zoom meetings and the Naomi Circle has been meeting via Zoom these quarantined months. This Circle also picks service projects throughout the year.

Lori Schaefer, Chair.

The Rachel Circle – This Circle meets in the evening at **7 pm on the second Thursday** at the church to enjoy fellowship and a Bible Study of their choosing. The members are involved in service projects. One ongoing project is collecting pop-top tabs to support the young boy in Cherokee, NC, who can use them as credit when the back brace he needs to wear has to be updated. Transportation to and from the church for those who do not wish to drive at night is provided. The Rachel Circle is hoping to resume meeting at the church in May.

Lynne Wenz, Chair.

The Sarah Circle – The Sarah Circle meets on the **third Thursday** at 10am on Zoom, or, when the church opens, 9:30am at the church for refreshments and then a program at 10am.

On April 15 there will be a Zoom meeting and the speaker will be Jamie Wiener from the Children & Family Resource Center talking about its ministry. Along with the information, the Sara Circle is collecting diapers, formula, wipes and lotion for this Children & Family Resource Center. All donations can be received at the church during this month of April.

On May 21st there will be a speaker from Bethesda Lutheran Communities that provides services nationally for the developmentally disabled. This program will also be on Zoom.

Judy Stoltenberg, Chair.

The Quilting Circle – The Quilters are currently meeting in small numbers at the church every **Tuesday morning** from 9:30am – noon. Historically the Quilters have met every third Tuesday at the church so once the church is open that schedule may be restored.

Janet Harms and Irene Carlson, Co-Chairs.

Prayer Shawl Circle – The members of this Circle meet the **fourth Thursday** at 10am at the church. Covid restrictions have kept everyone at home crocheting and knitting up a storm! As the church opens up and resumes its normal schedules, watch for news on the Prayer Shawl Circle.

Sandy Brust and Lori Schaefer, Co-Chairs.

Again let me state, **EVERY WOMAN** of Grace Lutheran Church is a member of WELCA. Participating in a Circle is an opportunity, not a requirement, to grow in faith, fellowship and service.



- Plans are underway to schedule a September “Get Re-Acquainted” WELCA General Meeting at the church! Watch for details in future newsletters.
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- Abundancia is a program targeting our Hispanic neighbors experiencing food insecurities by providing native food once a month. Delia Jovel supervises this program. Every month 80 families are served through two distribution Fridays a month. There is a need for volunteers to help from 1-3pm on the distribution Fridays to fill bags with beans and rice. If you are interested in helping in this way, please contact Vicki Marthaler. The distribution Fridays in April are the 16th and the 23rd. vicki.marthaler@gmail.com
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- Our Council Liaison Joy Kiefer shared some of the details to the beginning of re-opening the church. Sunday, May 2, will be the first Sunday allowing in-person worship. There will be one worship, reservations required which can be made on-line or by phone on Monday, April 26. Those wishing to worship in-person must provide a one-time proof of vaccination, wear masks and follow all Covid protocols. All worshipping will enter through the front door and be ushered to a seat in the sanctuary. There will be no group singing and no bulletins. Following the service, ushers will excuse parishioners to leave through the side sanctuary exit. There will be a 100 in-person worship limit. The worship will continue to be streamed live. Special air handlers that ionize the air have been installed throughout the church to create a healthier environment. It’s a beginning!
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- Plans are also underway to video a “Children’s Readers’ Theater” in honor of Mothers Day and in recognition of Rachel’s Day which lifts up the needs of children and their families affected by violence and abuse. If you are interested in reading a children’s book for this video, please contact Vicki Marthaler. vicki.marthaler@gmail.com
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- Money issues. Our Grace Unit Budget relies heavily upon offerings received at Circle meetings. Needless to say, Zoom is not supportive of passing the basket! If you would like to support the Grace Unit, please send your donations to:



Treasurer Kathy Stancar, 1015 Carousel Lane, Hendersonville, NC 28792
 Make your check out to: Grace Unit WELCA
 Thank you for your generous support.

Your Grace Unit WELCA Board
 Wishes you a blessed, continued Easter!
 He is still risen!
 He is still risen indeed!!
 Alleluia!

