



Amazing Grace
LUTHERAN CHURCH

April 2015 NEWSLETTER

Interim Pastor Mary Armstrong-Reiner
3305 Lawrenceville Highway
Lawrenceville, GA 30044
770 381 1293 www.tisgrace.org



Worship Sundays, 8:30 & 11 am

Sunday School, Sundays @ 10 am

Homework Help, Wednesdays @ 5 pm

**February 25—March 25, Soup & Sandwich Dinners,
Wednesdays @ 6:30 pm**

**February 25—March 25, Lent Worship,
Wednesdays @ 7:30 pm**

Sisters and Brothers in Christ! On this Good Friday, I write to you to say thank you. Thank you for a great five weeks with you all. Thank you for the warm welcome, all the help to make things happen and flow at Amazing Grace, and thank you for being an alive church in Christ. I am blessed to serve here with, and among you all.



Good Friday is a reminder to me, and to all of us, to take this time to stop, and consider once again what God has done for us through his son, Jesus Christ. As we hear the story of Jesus last day on this earth, we are reminded of all the pain, and suffering he went through. His death was not a pretty one but a painful, powerful suffering for us all. But we know, even at the cross, he offered words of paradise to a convicted criminal on the cross next to him. I often think of that exchange, and realize that it could easily have been you or I hanging next to Jesus because if we are honest, we are all convicted criminals because we are all sinners. On this day, even in the midst of his dying, Jesus speaks a word to all of us of forgiveness, and a promise of what is to come. Even in his suffering, he points to his beloved disciple, and to his mother, and he tells them to now see each other as mother, and son, and to take care of each other. Jesus also asks us to see each other as family, and to take care of each other too.

So children of God, on this day, I journey with you as we come to the cross. There we will find Jesus. There we know he feels our pain, our sorrow, our losses. There he speaks to us, even in the midst of his own pain, his own loss, his own disappointment with us, and the world. Let us be reminded that even in the midst of our losses, Jesus is loving us through, calling us to follow him. He has work for us to do, not busy work, but life giving work, as we spread the seeds of his love, and forgiveness. We are called to journey to the cross, and beyond it. We are called to be open to where God is calling us to go in life, even on the most difficult of roads that we want to be spared from. But he is there, right beside us, helping us bear our cross. He says to us, "for my load is easy, and my burden light." He lightens our load even when it is the heaviest cross that we could possibly carry.

Thank you for inviting me to be on this journey with you for however much time we have together.

I wish you a Good Friday, and a Happy Easter!
Blessings,
Pr. Mary Armstrong-Reiner

LutherRanch pledges

There are 4 basic ways to automate donations to Novus Way for Lutheridge, Lutherock, and Lutheranch:



1. **Simply Giving** – Through a checking or savings account on the 1st or 15th of the month. The fee is paid by NovusWay. Fill out the Simply Giving form and attach a voided check and account information. Send to Margo Rabon, 28 Spruce Drive, Arden, NC 28704 or FAX to [828-684-5196](tel:828-684-5196) or email mrabon@NovusWay.com . This will be set up online with Vanco.
2. **ARB (Automatic Recurring Billing)** through BB&T. Donor can use Visa, M/C or Discover and set up a payment schedule for the 1st or 15th of the month. Fill out the credit card authorization form and send to NovusWay, Attn: Margo at the above address or mrabon@NovusWay.com . She will set this up online with BB&T.
3. The **DONATE NOW** button on our website www.NovusWay.com is more for occasional or one time gifts initiated by the donor. These donations will be processed through Xpress-Pay.com and will be deposited directly into NovusWay's bank account.
4. You can set up bill payment **checks through your own bank** to be sent to NovusWay, 28 Spruce Drive, Arden, NC 28704.

Arts & Crafts

Do you know a Crafter? If you or a friend or family member are an artisan/hobbyist who makes unique things, come join our 5th Annual Amazing Grace Arts & Crafts Festival on June 13th. It's the best deal in town for a vendor to show their wares. It's always wonderful fun. And all our proceeds go to a very deserving local charity. (More that on the charity later.) Booths tend to get snapped up fairly soon, so let your intentions be made known now. Contact Nannette Stariha or the church office.



property today™



Handicap Parking: You might have noticed the green post mounted to the side of the concrete wall outside the side door to the Fellowship Hall. We are in the process of installing two handicap parking signs. The plan is to convert the three parking spaces to two handicap spaces with an aisle between them. These spaces will be better suited to accommodate those with wheelchairs.

Wasps: We have been experiencing some wasps inside the church the past couple weeks, though we did not have any Easter Sunday. I talked with an exterminating company and they said that at this time of year the wasps are looking for places to build their nests. All they could do is come out to look for and find their nest, then remove it. I removed a couple small nests from around the front Sanctuary door. Flyswatters have been put in the back of the Sanctuary and in the Office for use if needed.



If you have any questions please contact David Rager, Property Chair at 770-906-1083

HELPFUL HOSTS DON'T ASSUME

"Just take APS and you can't miss us! We're on APS," said the person on the phone.

"APS? What is that?" I asked.

"Oh, uhm, it's the street that we're on."

"The street's name? How do you spell it?"

"Oh, no. It's an abbreviation. A-P-S."

"Oh, got it. Uh, what's it stand for?"

"I should know this. I guess you're new in town, huh? We haven't had to say what APS is short for in a long time. Man, I honestly can't remember. I'm so sorry. Once you find out what APS stands for, you can't miss us."

"Oh, all right. I'll try to find my way."

At that point, not even [Siri](#) could find the destination I was looking for. I had just moved to Santa Barbara and was trying to meet someone at a nonprofit organization. I couldn't even make it home without the aid of a GPS so finding what APS stood for and where it was on my own was going to be next to impossible. Siri (which had been recently introduced) was of no help. I eventually found out that APS was Alameda Padre Serra. And he was right, once I was on Alameda Padre Serra, the place wasn't that hard to find.

But I was annoyed at the conversation and at the effort it took for me to find the place. Why assume everyone knows what APS stands for? Why assume everyone who reaches out to you is a local? It was frustrating how unhelpful the representative of this organization was.

A season or so later, a friend of mine visited my church to "check up on me." We were catching up in my office and he asked where the bathroom was. Our women's bathroom is easy to find, as it's right next to the main entrance of our sanctuary. The men's bathroom is also easy to find, just not as easy as the women's.

"Go out of the sanctuary, take a right. Then go into the fellowship hall, take a right, and you'll see it. You can't miss it."

Five minutes later, he came back saying, "Dude. I can't find the bathroom." At first, I was annoyed with my friend for not being able to follow directions well. So I walked with him and then I realized that there are four different doors that you can take to enter our fellowship hall. How was he to know which door I meant, no matter how obvious it seemed to me?

I assumed that he'd know what I was talking about when I said, "Go into the fellowship hall." The guy on the phone assumed that I'd know where APS Road was. We had been insiders long enough that we began to assume that everyone is already an insider.

Continue...

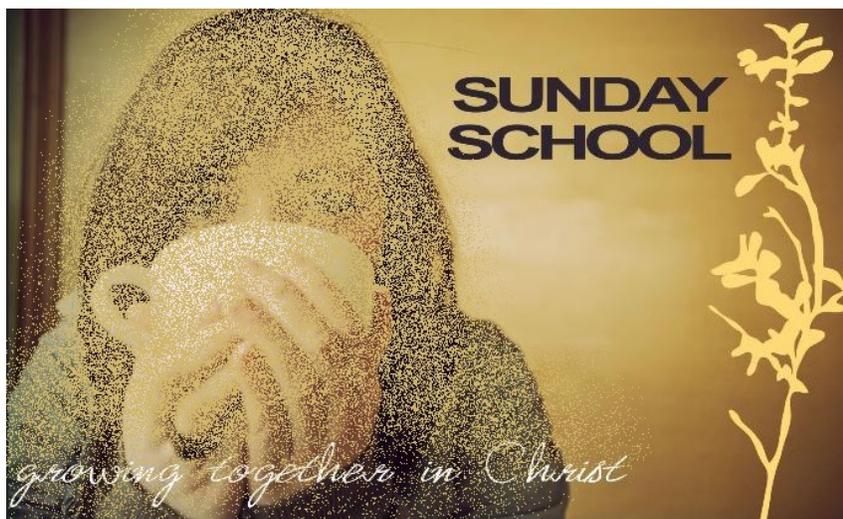
It's natural (and easy) for us to assume that people know what we know. But it's probably safer to assume that not everyone is enlightened as we are.

Not everyone knows where the bathroom is located on your campus. Not everyone knows where the nursery is or where to take their children when they arrive at church. Do they go into the worship service? Is there Sunday school for the kids? Where are the classes?

Not everyone knows what occurs after the worship celebration ends. One of the loneliest times in worship is when the service is over because people are on a mad dash to their lunch plans or after-service duties / classes / studies / fellowship. Where's everyone going? How do I join that class? Where's the fellowship hall? Do I just go pick up my kids or are they going to be led to the fellowship hall? Are there refreshments available after worship? Are the doughnuts and coffee free?

We also shouldn't assume that people who visit us are familiar with church and Christian lingo — that everyone knows what Communion is and how to take it, that everyone knows what the Doxology is and knows to stand while singing it, or that everyone knows the Lord's Prayer, Amazing Grace, O For a Thousand Tongues and other church favorites by heart.

We should be welcoming, informative, understanding, grace-filled and loving — helping people feel like they've always been part of our community — that they've always belonged here even if it's their first time setting foot on the church campus. We could be really helpful and put visitors at ease if we just stopped assuming.



Adult Sunday School

The Adult Sunday School will be hosting the class for new members this month. It will be a great way to review and share perspectives on our beloved faith tradition, plus a wonderful way to get to know some very interesting new people who want to be a part of Amazing Grace.

Celebration Lunch Bunch for March

It seems like time has just flown by since we had our Celebration Lunch Bunch on March 1st at I Love Pho! We had a big group of fourteen and a drop-in coming by to see if there were any leftovers!

As I suspected in my last article, most of the Linkes joined us for Lunch at I Love Pho! Debi was feeling really well that day as she and hubby, Dave, were there to celebrate their 19th wedding anniversary with family and the Lunch Bunch! Besides the anniversary, Ben Linke was happy to celebrate his upcoming 18th birthday later in that week! Jennifer Linke was very excited that she was going on her first business trip ever and also enjoyed celebrating her parents' anniversary!

Wayne and Liz Linke were still celebrating their February birthdays! Lee and Charlotte Bennett were having a great time celebrating their 39th wedding anniversary and thanking God for their two beautiful little grandsons!

Loving Life is one of the things Debbie Teal enjoys celebrating with the Lunch Bunch! She enjoys eating with her church friends also! Our organist, Charles Anscheutz, has fit in very well with our celebration group! He is so thankful that so far all of us have made it through the bad weather we had this winter and he is personally thankful for his Salvation! AMEN!

Alan and Sheryl North are always feeling the Blessings of Family, Friends, and Life! Alan is very thankful for the love and support he and Sheryl are always given them by all of us at Amazing Grace! Sheryl asked us to pray for her upcoming MRI! They are both excited to be asked to go the upcoming Via de Cristo Co-Ed 29 weekend that includes many familiar faces from AGLC and led by our own Bob MacKinnon!!

I, Linda, celebrated that my mother was doing well in rehab after she left the hospital and was preparing to go home! Bob celebrated that his Via de Cristo leadership was drawing closer and he asked God to be with him as he prepares to be the Rector of Co-Ed 29, April 30-May3!

As we were finishing our lunch and readying to leave, Art Scott joined us and was offered some of the Pho soup leftovers! When we left, he was still chowing down at the table we had just vacated! I did not find out if there was anything special he was thankful for! Sorry! Our next Celebration Lunch Bunch as announced in my March newsletter article will be held at California Dreaming, located at 1630 Cross Pointe Way in Duluth! It is scheduled for Sunday, April 12th! All are welcome to join us in Fellowship and Celebration as we share the experience of California Dreaming (and possibly a restaurant you have not visited before!)

I have also decided that since our schedule has gotten out of sync with being a specific (third or fourth) Sunday each month, to announce a possible date and place for our May celebration! With Via de Cristo, Mother's Day, and graduations happening in May, I thought perhaps May 17th could be a wonderful date for our Celebration Lunch Bunch at Papi's Cuban and Caribbean Grill, located at 911 Duluth Highway (at Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road on the left side of the intersection), Duluth, GA 30043! The phone number is 770-232-8889. We have enjoyed this restaurant before and survived the heat of a very warm day eating on the Terrace (we had a huge crowd that Sunday)! Please let me know if this is convenient for you...it is not set in stone!

We hope to see new faces! Life is a wonderful thing to celebrate with friends and food!

May God Bless each of you as we wait to meet for our next outing on April 12th at California Dreaming Restaurant!

Until next time....
Linda MacKinnon
770-972-8605



The Lawrenceville Cooperative Food Ministry

Hello, Amazing Grace! As Easter rapidly approaches, so does the deadline for my latest food project centered on our younger school age children who may not get Breakfasts and Lunches at home during their upcoming Spring Break!

A colossal Thank You to all of you at Amazing Grace who jump right in and help our neighbors with food and toiletries and the many needs of those who may not be employed or are under-employed!

A special Thank You to all who are bringing in breakfast and lunch items for us to help children be fed while they are enjoying five days off from school!

The deadline date for bringing items to the church is Sunday, March 29th! This is also the day we will be assembling the bags! We have Thrivent money to purchase the sturdier bags, fill in any gaps that arise in food items as well as shelf-safe milk, and a loaf of bread for each bag we prepare!!

I am saying Thank You in advance to all of you at Amazing Grace because I know that we always come together for others in need and the way the gifts of love have come in so far, I believe in my heart that we will be helping many children enjoy some wonderful breakfasts and lunches during Spring Break, April 6 – 10, 2015!

I almost forgot to mention that after the bags are assembled on Sunday, March 29th, they will be distributed on Wednesday, April 1st (and that is no joke!), at the Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry Food Bank! If anyone would like to join in this activity, just come to the Coop on Church Street (located behind the Town Hall Building in downtown Lawrenceville on the right side of the road) around 9:30 a.m. or so! Parking is limited on the actual parking lot and is reserved for clients of the day, but there is some parking across the street by the old Lawrenceville Police Station!

Thank all of you again for your continued generosity! May God continue to keep our hearts open and Bless our ministry with the Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry Food Bank!

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! These phrases seem so trivial, but they come from my heart! I always feel so blessed when I have this wonderful response from our congregation! I keep saying it over and over, but we are an AMAZING group of very caring people!

May God Continue to Bless Each and Every One of You!

Many many Thanks to all of you Amazing people!

Love always,
Linda MacKinnon



The Lawrenceville Cooperative Food Ministry

Updated Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry Food Bank Report

As it turns out, there were some changes to the plans on the way the Amazing Grace Breakfasts and Lunches Bags were being distributed at the Lawrenceville Coop!

My daughter, Wendy, and I delivered the Bags to the Coop on Tuesday morning! The bags were put in a prominent back corner and each person who filled a 'shopping' order at the Coop let Bob MacKinnon or Griff Griffin know how many children were in the age group to receive a bag! The bags were then given to the clients and it was explained that this was an added gift to the clients from Amazing Grace for their children to have Breakfasts and Lunches the following week during their Spring Break!

I just happened to be there when a client received two of these bags and she was so very grateful that she did not have to worry about how her children were going to be fed during Spring Break! The look on her face made my day as I said I was so glad that she was so appreciative of it because it was my idea! She thought it was a wonderful idea!

All in all with the 50 school bags of five breakfasts and five lunches and snacks and drinks, we contributed a total of 1,948 items this week! YES! I did say one thousand nine hundred forty-eight items plus the items in my original article, 123 items, for a total of two thousand seventy-one items for March!!! I don't know how we are going to top these numbers, but there is Thanksgiving coming up! Just thinking ahead about Thanksgiving boxes!

Thank you, Amazing Grace! Thanks to Thrivent Financial and Elaine Schwartz and (and Bob) and all those who helped us put the bags together - Pam and Eddie Angles, David and Kathy Berfield, Lud and D.J. Ludvigson, Linda Malis, Jackie and David Rager, Shirley and Gary Haselow, Kathy and Chuck Van Acker, Annette Irwin, and me, Linda MacKinnon! I also want to especially thank my daughter, Wendy MacKinnon, for helping me procure and bring all the things together so that we were able to put these bags together!

I keep saying it, "Amazing Grace Lutheran Church, you are Amazing!"

Thank each and every person who contributed items to this worthwhile cause that was once only a dream! May each of you enjoy a very Blessed Easter!

Thank You does not seem like enough to say! I just cannot tell you how overwhelmed I am at the success of this Coop Food Bank Appeal!

Thank you so very much!
Linda MacKinnon



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THRIVENT NIGHT AT THE GWINNETT BRAVES!

Saturday, May 30, 2015

**Thrivent Tailgate 4:45-6:00PM, Game begins at 7:05PM
Gwinnett Braves vs. Columbus Clippers**

This year, Thrivent will be sponsoring an Armed Forces Appreciation event at the pre-game, hot dog tailgate dinner. Thrivent members are asked to consider bringing current Armed Forces members and veterans as a special "Thank You!" Also, there will be blank greeting cards at the event for attendees to sign and send words of encouragement to the men and women in our Armed Forces.

We are asking each congregation to nominate an active duty serviceperson or veteran to throw out the first pitch. All nominations must be received by May 16—we will have a random drawing to choose the lucky pitcher! The winner will be contacted ahead of time and announced at the pre-game tailgate.

Ticket Orders:

**Tickets for the game are \$8.00 per person (children under 2 are free)
Pre-paid parking is \$4.00 per car (\$5.00 at the gate.)**

Information for Ticket Coordinator

The date of the game is Saturday, May 30, 2015. In order to get the tickets printed and back to you in a timely manner, **we need your ticket order by May 7.**

Nominees to throw the first pitch must be received by May 16. We will contact the winner of the drawing ahead of time, so please include contact information. Send nominee information to Elaine Schwartz at the information below.

Since the checks will be going directly to the Braves, they have requested that we try to cut down on individual checks. So, if possible, please have members make checks to the church or one individual and then send in ONE check for all tickets, made payable to "Gwinnett Braves."

Ticket orders and checks should be received no later than May 7. Send your ticket order and checks to:

Elaine Schwartz
Thrivent Financial
East Metro Team
2385 Clower Street, Ste. A
Snellville GA 30078-6143 Questions?
Please call Elaine at [770-982-0420](tel:770-982-0420) or
Email Elaine.Schwartz@Thrivent.com
Thanks, and see you at the ballgame! Elaine S. Schwartz, FIC
Insurance Office Professional
East Metro Team
Thrivent Financial®
2385 Clower St., Ste. A, Snellville, GA 30078-6143
Office: [770-982-0420](tel:770-982-0420)
Email: Elaine.Schwartz@Thrivent.com
Web: Thrivent.com/myteam/EastMetroTeam



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PRAY WITH HANDS UNFOLDED

Church leader John Wesley once said, "Prayer is where the action is."

When Christians see a need in the world, we pray. With hands folded in prayer we lift up to God people in distant lands as well as the needs we see in our local communities. And with hands unfolded, we dedicate ourselves to serving neighbors in need: providing meals for the hungry, tutoring the young, befriending the lonely. We give witness to our faith through our acts of service and the love we extend to "the least of these" (Matthew 25:40).

During a colder than normal winter, members of Holy Trinity Church in Reidsville, North Carolina, prayed with hands unfolded to address the needs in their neighborhood. As part of a Thrivent Action Team, church members put their prayer into action by assembling comfort soup mixes into quart bags and distributed the meals to families through their local Red Cross affiliate.

When we see a need, let us first pray. And then, let us pray with hands unfolded. Do you know of a specific need in your community? Learn more about Thrivent Action Teams at **Thrivent.com/actionteam**

Don Goldsmith, ChFC, RICP, FIC and

Kelly Goldsmith, CFP®, CLTC, FIC

at 770-982-0420 or eastmetroteam@thrivent.com

Amazing Grace's Events

April 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 9:30 am Alleluia Girls; 5-7 pm Homework Help;	2 7 pm Men's Barnabas Group; 7:30 pm Narcanon	3 6:30 am Men's Group	4
5 8:30 am Worship; 10 am Sunday School; 11:00 am Worship; 12:15 pm EXEC Meets; 12:15 pm Confirmation	6 6:30 am Men's Group	7 11:00 am Good Old Guys Meet; 7pm Council Meeting	8 9:30 am Alleluia Girls	9 7 pm Men's Barnabas Group; 7:30 pm Narcanon;	10 6:30 am Men's Group	11
12 8:30 am Worship; 10 am Sunday School; 11:00 am Worship; 12:15 pm Confirmation	13 6:30 am Men's Group	14 11:00 am Good Old Guys Meet	15 9:30 am Alleluia Girls; 5-7 pm Homework Help; 6:30 pm Monthly Fellowship Dinner 7:30 pm Midweek Grace	16 7 pm Men's Barnabas Group; 7:30 pm Narcanon	17 6:30 am Men's Group	18
19 8:30 am Worship; 10 am Sunday School; 11:00 am Worship; 12:15 pm Confirmation	20 6:30 am Men's Group 7:00 pm Prayer Discernment Meeting	21 10:30 am Staff Meeting 11 am Good Old Guys Meet	22 9:30 am Alleluia Girls; 5-7 pm Homework Help; 7:30 pm Midweek Grace	23 7 pm Men's Barnabas Group ; 7:30 pm Narcanon	24 6:30 am Men's Group IHOP	25
26 8:30 am Worship; 10 am Sunday School; 11:00 am Worship; 12:15 pm Confirmation	27 6:30 am Men's Group	28 11 am Good Old Guys Meet	29 7:30 pm Midweek Grace	30		