



GRACE NOTES

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, 46 WOODLAND STREET, HARTFORD, CT 06105

860-527-7792



November Volume 2017

What's Old is New – Baptismal Font Comes Full Circle

By Dawn Scagel

Grace has a new “old” Baptismal Font in the Narthex at the top of the stairs. Pastor Rick found a posting in the *NESynod Rostered Leaders* Facebook group for a Baptismal Font being given away recently. He was the first to respond.

The Font has an interesting history. One of our long-time members, Dorothea Glatte shared with us:

“It would once again be a circular, historic event. Pastor Teichmann retired from Grace (in 1965) only to lead/pastor Trinity Lutheran in Centerbrook, CT for several years during his retirement. The building suffered a devastating fire (at Trinity) during that time and Pastor Teichmann was the one who oversaw the rebuilding of their sanctuary before “retiring” a second time. Yes, God’s ways are uniquely circuitous but wonderful.”

Pastor Rick then shared this news with Pastor Betkoski at Trinity Lutheran in Centerbrook, where we picked up the Font.



Pastor Betkoski’s response, “I am thrilled with the connection and knew nothing about it...it warms my heart and reinforces my lifelong trust. We rarely know what is to happen, but we can always trust that whatever does, it will bring love to us individually and collectively. And we can know and feel His presence.”

Pastor Rick and several able-bodied volunteers picked up the Font last Friday, October 27th and the Font was installed in Grace’s Narthex just in time for the combined Reformation Sunday service with Trinity Episcopal and First Calvary Churches on October 29th. Thanks to Walter Scott, his brother Toby, Ron Bell and his weightlifter friends, and to the volunteer from the Trinity choir who made all the difference!

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Together We Come

By Pastor Rick

As one can glean from our stories about our new/old Baptismal Font and our Commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, the Holy Spirit is here with us, even as our connections with Trinity Centerbrook (Font), Trinity Episcopal Hartford (Reformation Service) and First Calvary Baptist (Reformation Service) have all been sharing with us in one way or another. We commemorated rather than celebrated to acknowledge the work that continues on the bringing together of the Body of Christ, and our hope that we may all come to live together in harmony and love in God’s Kingdom. Celebrating the schisms somehow felt inappropriate.

As November comes into view Jesus is teaching us about God’s Kingdom and making sure that we understand that it is present in our lives, now! Oh, how wonderful it would be if we could all see it, touch it, and feel it. In parables this month the Kingdom of God continues to be described... even as we wait for Jesus. Waiting is not a static process either, not as Jesus teaches. Once again, we are encouraged to take action now, in this day – and every day – even though we may not do it just right, or that we may fail to succeed in ways that we recognize and can embrace.

Let us open our hearts to each other and to our loving God. That means not fretting, but remaining in the present, even as things all around us may be disturbing or troubling. Let’s not be distracted by our fears and anxieties. Let us give what we have been given, unhindered by all that is going on around us.

Our Fridays continue, our joy in Janet’s Closet and Janet’s return home, our thankfulness for the deliberations about a music school for children at Grace along with an After School Activities Program, and our work on building Fresh Start with confidence and trust.

May we think about the present days, not the last day, and let’s not ignore those that are hungry, thirsty, the strange, the naked, the sick and the imprisoned... for in their faces we may well see the King and remember that in pulling together, all denominations and faiths can create a thread that reaches out to each of us, and each of them, one happy thread after another.

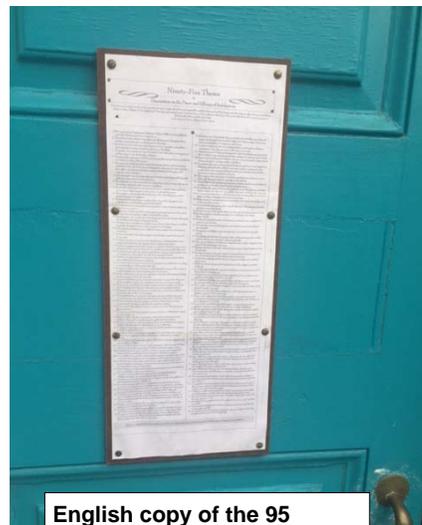
God is good... all of the time. God is good. Know it, see it and trust it. Amen.

REFORMATION SUNDAY – 2017 AT Grace! – With Friends and Partners

By Pastor Rick

Besides the front page story about the Spirit at work with the Baptismal Font, our Reformation Service itself was very special! Our brothers and sisters from Trinity Episcopal Hartford were there, along with their remarkable choir, joined by some of Grace’s volunteers. Jack Merrill led the combined choirs, and our own Dale Eberhardt played our upgraded organ with a kind of Lutheran passion. Brothers and sisters from First Calvary Church joined with us, too, as we commemorated the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation.

(Continued on page 3)



English copy of the 95 Theses on Grace’s Door Reformation Sunday

Reformation Sunday

(continued from page 2)

On All Saints Eve, some think of it as Halloween, Martin Luther, a scholar, monk and priest nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. These 95 revolutionary opinions would begin the Protestant Reformation. There were those before and after Luther who questioned the church, but most folks believe that this step by Luther was the seminal event that triggered change that has lasted through to this very day.

Luther's passion, faith and personality, along with the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg, all came together, perhaps by accident. Many of us believe that the Holy Spirit provided the path. He nailed those words on the church door to open a dialogue about the church and its doings.

For those who came, and well over one hundred did, they saw the actual words of the 95 Theses nailed on the front door of Grace – in English - We didn't have Luther, but we did have Guenther!

In his Theses, Luther condemned the excesses and corruption of the Roman Catholic Church. They focused on the Papal practice of asking payment – called indulgences – for the forgiveness of sins and salvation. It was essentially a fundraising campaign in Germany to finance the renovation of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. When asked to recant his writing before the holy Roman Emperor Charles V of Germany, Luther responded, "Here I Stand." Charles' response was to issue the famous Edict of Worms declaring Luther an outlaw and heretic and giving permission for anyone to kill him without consequence.

On that morning, the Sermon began with Luther's Morning Prayer: "I thank you, my heavenly father through Jesus Christ your dear son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that you would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. AMEN."

(Continued page 5)

Last chance to order from our Reformation 500 Bookstore!

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation has come! Do you want to learn more about Martin Luther, his writings, and their impact on Christianity? Do you want to reflect on the ongoing impact of the Reformation today? Stop by our Reformation 500 Bookstore to shop for engaging books on the Reformation for readers of all ages and interests! Save up to 50% plus receive free shipping on all Bookstore titles.

Our Bookstore is sponsored by Augsburg Fortress, the publishing ministry of the ELCA. The books include bestselling biographies like *Luther the Reformer* as well as an atlas of the European Reformations, a graphic novel for young readers, and primary sources from The Annotated Luther series.

LAST DAY TO ORDER IS NOVEMBER 12th!





Preparing the Font for its journey to Grace: Top left: Walter's brother Toby with appliance dolly. Top right: Walter with Pastor Betkoski at Trinity Lutheran Centerbrook, CT.



Center left: Walter and Toby with the wrapped base of the Font. Center Right: Ron Bell (Fresh Start) with volunteers begin the assembly of the Font at Grace. Bottom center and right: the gradual steps of assembling the Font. Bottom left: the Font at its new home at Grace.



WE GOT HOSPITALITY!

It is amazing how naturally and seemingly easily we welcome people to Grace. Reformation Sunday was a case in point. The Community Room was beautifully decorated, refreshments were both generous and delicious, and it seemed like everybody was chipping in. Thanks to Lou Oliver, Emma Carr, Barbara Calogero, Judy Butterworth-Kremer, Nina Kretschmer and Debbi Hamer from Trinity all did a wondrous job.

Having served 96 people at the prior Friday Gathering, there was a lot of work to do to get things back together and in-place. Walter Scott, Allen Redding and Walter's brother Toby all helped out, as did all of the volunteers working at Grace that night.

Guenther made sure that the Sanctuary was beautiful and the Theses in place. Thanks to the altar guild, too. All was simply beautiful!



Above: Guenther symbolically "nailed" an English copy of Luther's 95 Theses to the door of Grace Lutheran



Above: Music was provided by a combined choir featuring members of Trinity Episcopal's choir and volunteers from Grace.



Left: Members and friends of Grace Lutheran, Trinity Episcopal and First Calvary commemorating the 500th anniversary of Luther's Reformation.

Thanksgiving Service

There will be an intimate Thanksgiving Day Holy Communion Service with Trinity Episcopal in our Forum Room at 10:00 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day, November 23rd. Father Don will be the preacher and officiant. This is so people will not have to move between Trinity Episcopal and Grace Lutheran for the day's events.



“Open Doors” at Grace on Thanksgiving

Grace Lutheran will be assisted by First Calvary and Trinity Episcopal in sponsoring “Open Doors” on Thanksgiving Day. The doors will open at 8 a.m. for breakfast on Thanksgiving and then a thanksgiving lunch will be served at noon. There will be a time of fellowship, games and a movie until 3 p.m.

Multi-Faith Prayer Breakfast

The 20th Greater Hartford Multi-Faith Prayer Breakfast will be held at The Artists Collective, 1200 Albany Avenue in Hartford from 7:15 a.m.—8:45 a.m. on Thursday, November 9th.

Archbishop LeRoy Bailey, Jr., pastor of First Cathedral in Bloomfield, will speak on “Love Thy Neighbor across the Street.”

A Celebratory Concert at Faith Lutheran Church, East Hartford

Please join Faith Lutheran Church, East Hartford for a Celebratory Concert on Sunday, November 12th at 4:30 p.m. in celebrating our music and our faith.

Faith's own musicians include their bell choir, vocalists and instrumentalists offering performances featuring their new Allen Bravura digital organ and restored 1966 Steinway baby grand piano.

PRAISE IS IN THE HOUSE!

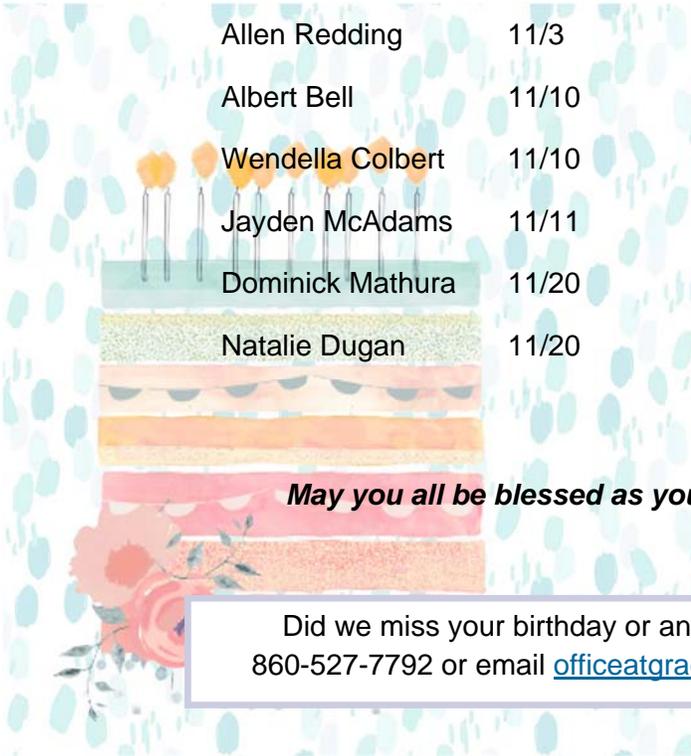
We are participating in a combined service on Sunday, December 10, 2017 at 10:30 a.m. with the following churches here at Grace:

Temple of Praise, Waterbury (where Walter Scott's mother worships) and First Calvary Baptist Church

We plan on holding a pot luck lunch following the service

More details will be available in future issues of Grace Notes.

November Birthdays



Allen Redding	11/3	Hazel Abrom	11/22
Albert Bell	11/10	Barbara Ruhe	11/25
Wendella Colbert	11/10	David Eberly	11/26
Jayden McAdams	11/11	Bodo Jahn	11/28
Dominick Mathura	11/20	Felicite Yigle-Kaljob	11/28
Natalie Dugan	11/20	Marion St. Germain	11/30

May you all be blessed as you celebrate your special days!

Did we miss your birthday or anniversary? Contact Dawn at the office, 860-527-7792 or email officeatgrace@sbcglobal.net to update our records.

The GROOM ROOM

Youth Who Are Making a Difference in Recognition of :

**Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week
& Family Volunteer Day**

Saturday, November 18th, 2017
7:00AM - 2:00PM

South Congregational Church
277 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Music provided by DJ Lou Diamonds

Event led by Safe Deposit Box, Inc.



Contact Yvette Jones
Woodward
(860) 468-9424



Services Provided:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| • Hair cuts & styles | • Music |
| • Braids | • Activities |
| • Manicures | • Flu shots |
| • Eyebrows | • Blood pressure checks |
| • Facials | • Photo ID's |
| • Massages | • Breakfast |
| • Clothing | • Lunch |
| • Care Packages | • Resources |

Enough is Enough!

Introduction by Pastor Rick

Like everyone else in our country, we at Grace are troubled by gun violence and mass killings with automatic weapons. Debates have gone on Ad nauseam in our country – you are either for or against guns. We cry when vulnerable people, including children and the elderly, are murdered in churches, in school yards, at concerts and at nightclubs. We watch while people place flowers and notes and prayers near the location these horrific incidents have taken place. And yet, in all of this, we have simply done nothing. Absolutely NOTHING.

Why? It is time for us to ask why? I'm just a pastor, but people are shot almost routinely in the communities I serve. Often the victims are children or young people, so many of them killed by accident for having been at the wrong place at the wrong time.

How can we simply not do anything? The article below is timely and important. I pray that it might change hearts. We need to begin to care about all those victims; and, we are the most violent nation in the world. **THAT'S RIGHT; WE ARE THE MOST VIOLENT NATION IN THE WORLD.**

And, that is not even counting the human toll of our misguided foreign policy in Iraq and Viet Nam. Exclude the hundreds of thousands of deaths that result from our aggressive approach to regime change; just look at how many of our children die each year, some by their own hand, some by playing in the wrong yard, some who were intentionally mowed down in a mass killing. Remember the 26 who died in a small Texas Church and the 59 who died at a concert. Let's do something. **We can vote!**

*A version of this article appeared in print on November 8, 2017, on Page A15 of the New York edition of the NY Times with the headline: **Only One Thing Explains Mass Shootings in the United States.***

What Explains U.S. Mass Shootings? International Comparisons Suggest an Answer

By MAX FISHER and JOSH KELLER, NOV. 7, 2017

When the world looks at the United States, it sees a land of exceptions: a time-tested if noisy democracy, a crusader in foreign policy, an exporter of beloved music and film.

But there is one quirk that consistently puzzles America's fans and critics alike. Why, they ask, does it experience so many mass shootings?

Perhaps, some speculate, it is because American society is unusually violent. Or its racial divisions have frayed the bonds of society. Or its citizens lack proper mental care under a health care system that draws frequent derision abroad.

These explanations share one thing in common: Though seemingly sensible, all have been debunked by research on shootings elsewhere in the world. Instead, an ever-growing body of research consistently reaches the same conclusion.

The only variable that can explain the high rate of mass shootings in America is its astronomical number of guns.

What Explains Mass Shootings

The top-line numbers suggest a correlation that, on further investigation, grows only clearer.

The United States has **270 million guns** and had **90 mass shooters** from 1966 to 2012.

No other country has more than **46 million guns** or **18 mass shooters**. (continued page 9)

Americans make up about 4.4 percent of the global population but own 42 percent of the world's guns. From 1966 to 2012, 31 percent of the gunmen in mass shootings worldwide were American, according to a 2015 study by Adam Lankford, a professor at the University of Alabama.

Adjusted for population, only Yemen has a higher rate of mass shootings among countries with more than 10 million people — a distinction Mr. Lankford urged to avoid outliers. Yemen has the world's second-highest rate of gun ownership after the United States.

Worldwide, Mr. Lankford found, a country's rate of gun ownership correlated with the odds it would experience a mass shooting. This relationship held even when he excluded the United States, indicating that it could not be explained by some other factor particular to his home country. And it held when he controlled for homicide rates, suggesting that mass shootings were better explained by a society's access to guns than by its baseline level of violence.

What Doesn't: Crime, Race or Mental Health

If mental health made the difference, then data would show that Americans have more mental health problems than do people in other countries with fewer mass shootings. But the mental health care spending rate in the United States, the number of mental health professionals per capita and the rate of severe mental disorders are all in line with those of other wealthy countries.

A 2015 study estimated that only 4 percent of American gun deaths could be attributed to mental health issues. And Mr. Lankford, in an email, said countries with high suicide rates tended to have low rates of mass shootings — the opposite of what you would expect if mental health problems correlated with mass shootings.

Whether a population plays more or fewer video games also appears to have no impact. Americans are no more likely to play video games than people in any other developed country.

Racial diversity or other factors associated with social cohesion also show little correlation with gun deaths. Among European countries, there is little association between immigration or other diversity metrics and the rates of gun murders or mass shootings.

A Violent Country

America's gun homicide rate was 33 per million people in 2009, far exceeding the average among developed countries. In Canada and Britain, it was 5 per million and 0.7 per million, respectively, which also corresponds with differences in gun ownership.

Americans sometimes see this as an expression of deeper problems with crime, a notion ingrained, in part, by a series of films portraying urban gang violence in the early 1990s. But the United States is not actually more prone to crime than other developed countries, according to a landmark 1999 study by Franklin E. Zimring and Gordon Hawkins of the University of California, Berkeley.

Rather, they found, in data that has since been repeatedly confirmed, that American crime is simply more lethal. A New Yorker is just as likely to be robbed as a Londoner, for instance, but the New Yorker is 54 times more likely to be killed in the process.

They concluded that the discrepancy, like so many other anomalies of American violence, came down to guns.

More gun ownership corresponds with more gun murders across virtually every axis: among developed countries, among American states, among American towns and cities and when controlling for crime rates. And gun control legislation tends to reduce gun murders, according to a recent analysis of 130 studies from 10 countries.

This suggests that the guns themselves cause the violence.

(continued page 10)

Mass Shootings Happen Everywhere

Skeptics of gun control sometimes point to a 2016 study. From 2000 and 2014, it found, the United States death rate by mass shooting was 1.5 per one million people. The rate was 1.7 in Switzerland and 3.4 in Finland, suggesting American mass shootings were not actually so common.

But the same study found that the United States had 133 mass shootings. Finland had only two, which killed 18 people, and Switzerland had one, which killed 14. In short, isolated incidents. So while mass shootings can happen anywhere, they are only a matter of routine in the United States.

As with any crime, the underlying risk is impossible to fully erase. Any individual can snap or become entranced by a violent ideology. What is different is the likelihood that this will lead to mass murder.

In China, about a dozen seemingly random attacks on schoolchildren killed 25 people between 2010 and 2012. Most used knives; none used a gun.

By contrast, in this same window, the United States experienced five of its deadliest mass shootings, which killed 78 people. Scaled by population, the American attacks were 12 times as deadly.

Beyond the Statistics

In 2013, American gun-related deaths included 21,175 suicides, 11,208 homicides and 505 deaths caused by an accidental discharge. That same year in Japan, a country with one-third America's population, guns were involved in only 13 deaths.

This means an American is about 300 times more likely to die by gun homicide or accident than a Japanese person. America's gun ownership rate is 150 times as high as Japan's. That gap between 150 and 300 shows that gun ownership statistics alone do not explain what makes America different.

The United States also has some of the world's weakest controls over who may buy a gun and what sorts of guns may be owned.

Switzerland has the second-highest gun ownership rate of any developed country, about half that of the United States. Its gun homicide rate in 2004 was 7.7 per million people — unusually high, in keeping with the relationship between gun ownership and murders, but still a fraction of the rate in the United States.

Swiss gun laws are more stringent, setting a higher bar for securing and keeping a license, for selling guns and for the types of guns that can be owned. Such laws reflect more than just tighter restrictions. They imply a different way of thinking about guns, as something that citizens must affirmatively earn the right to own.

The Difference Is Culture

The United States is one of only three countries, along with Mexico and Guatemala, that begin with the opposite assumption: that people have an inherent right to own guns.

The main reason American regulation of gun ownership is so weak may be the fact that the trade-offs are simply given a different weight in the United States than they are anywhere else.

After Britain had a mass shooting in 1987, the country instituted strict gun control laws. So did Australia after a 1996 incident. But the United States has repeatedly faced the same calculus and determined that relatively unregulated gun ownership is worth the cost to society.

That choice, more than any statistic or regulation, is what most sets the United States apart.

“In retrospect Sandy Hook marked the end of the US gun control debate,” Dan Hodges, a British journalist, wrote in a post on Twitter two years ago, referring to the 2012 attack that killed 20 young students at an elementary school in Connecticut. “Once America decided killing children was bearable, it was over.”

Thank you for those who have already submitted Directory Updates. Deadline: Nov 17th

Directory Update Request...By Dawn Scagel

Please help me to help you! In order to communicate effectively to the congregation, I need to be able to get hold of you. Please provide me with an update of your addresses (email and residential), phone numbers and birthdays and anniversaries so I can properly recognize you and update our directory and church records.

Please fill out the following form and drop it off in the offering plate or the basket on my door or mail it to me at the church. Even if there have been no changes in your information, please fill out the form.

Please use one form for each person in your family.

First and Last Name: (Please Print) _____

Residential address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mailing address if different: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone number: _____

Work Phone number: _____

Cell phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Birthday (Month/Day): _____

Anniversary Date (include year) _____

Preferred method of contact: (Check as many methods desired, indicate which is primary)

Mail _____ Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ Email _____



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David Holmes, Secretary

Dale Eberhardt, Treasurer

Janice Potter, Financial Assistant

Dale Eberhardt, Organist

Walter Scott, Sexton

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