



February 2, 2018

Greetings friends,

Last week we had the opportunity to meet with our District Superintendent, Harlan Gillespie. It was good of him to make time to meet with us to answer some of our questions about some of our pastoral salary concerns and the thinking process behind policy. He was very helpful and it was a good meeting.

What was great about the meeting, though, was the number of us who were concerned/interested enough to attend and how well we were able to articulate our concerns. We shared a little bit of our church history, respectfully questioned what we didn't understand, spoke of our concerns and we listened. As our SPRC Chair, Denise Carlson said, "We've learned some things in these last couple of years. And because of that, we know it is okay to ask questions." It is okay to advocate for Grace.

We have made some great progress in Pastor Fred's time with us. Our committees are empowered and better understand our responsibilities. We've built some communication skills, are respectful of process and it's made our committee work/meetings much more enjoyable.

Rev. Gillespie has admonished some of us when we've said that Grace is our (my) church. He says, "No, this is God's church." Okay, I think we can all agree with that. But I submit to you, Grace is *OUR church family*. We care deeply about and for one another and want to be inclusive to anyone who cares to join us. We're strong together and getting stronger in our knowledge and in our relationships to one another and to Christ. Yes, we have challenges to face and work through, but that is a good thing. Working together helps bring out the best in us. With the experiences of these last couple of years we have become empowered to create a vision for our church family and to pursue it. With God's grace and to His glory, our best days are ahead of us.

This Week at Grace –Pastor Fred's message, *A New Reality* is inspired by Mark 1:21-28. The Chancel Choir will sing, *My Jesus I Love Thee*. Gloria Sampson is our liturgist this week with Gene & Erma Schaeffer and Leah Frandson serving as greeters. Erma, Nate Warwick, Suzy Hess and Christine Semler-Blue will be taking a turn as ushers. Worship begins at 9:15 with Coffee Fellowship immediately following. Sunday school will meet at 10:30. Please join us!

You're invited to join us on **Sunday, February 11th at 11:45 a.m. for a Valentine Pot-Luck Meal and Games**. We'll hold it at the church in Fellowship Hall. Sign-up sheets will be put on a clipboard and located on the north table just outside the sanctuary in the narthex hallway. The hosts will provide the group games and some "fabulous" prizes. We hope you'll choose to come have a warm, fun time on a cold winter afternoon.

Grace Church is responsible for leading work at the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry in 2018 and we need lots of volunteers to help and support our faithful leaders (Judy Miller, Sue Bohner, Claudia Pauk & Valerie Hubert). All kinds of opportunities abound – a sign-up sheet is on the north table in the narthex hallway. Please plan to get involved with this *Grace Church-wide* project this year.

Anyone who would be interested in learning the tools to conflict management is invited to the day-long (8 a.m.-3 p.m.) workshop on February 17th. Pastor Fred is facilitating the *Managing Conflict* workshop which will be held at Fairview Lodge here in Story City. Participants will be asked to complete an online personal assessment that we use in our training. The cost of the assessment is \$7.50; you will access the tool by making payment by credit card, and if you wish to be reimbursed for this cost please send a copy of your receipt to the church office. As part of this assessment, you will get a detailed copy of your style that should be helpful to you in whatever group you are part of.

The link to the online assessment is:

https://www.riverhouseepress.com/index.php?option=com_virtuemart&view=productdetails&virtuemart_product_id=3&Itemid=176

A copy of the outline-in-progress is attached that will give you a fuller description of our learning for the day. Hand-outs will be provided for further reference as a part of the workshop.

Please let us know your plans to attend. Please also let us know if you are willing to bring breakfast items, fruit, juice, etc., and things for snacks. We are in the process of finalizing lunch plans.

As you pray this week, please remember these friends and hold each up in special prayer:

Leroy Johnson; George Mackey; Karen Keech; Tim (Becky Barclay's brother); Natalie Tryon; Denny Michel; Julie Jacobson; Sara Dappen; Norman Patti; Pam Hillis; Lois Johnson; Cooper Leeman, Taylors in Africa

News You Can Use

Sunday, February 4

9:15 AM Worship – choir, Communion

10:15 AM Coffee Fellowship

10:30 AM Sunday school

Monday, February 5

6:30 PM Education?

Wednesday, February 7

7:00 PM Choir

8:00 PM Bells

Sunday, February 11 – Scout Sunday

9:15 AM Worship – bells

10:15 AM Coffee Fellowship

10:30 AM Sunday school

**Faithfully,
Cathy**