

FALL 2008

A M A Z I N G  
GRACE

Grace Lutheran School

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www.gracriverforest.org

## Grace grad is Minnesota Teacher of the Year

*“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”*

**1 Peter 4:10 NIV**

by Mark Brewer

“Teaching is more than a job—more than a profession.

It’s how I believe God uses me to impact the world,” says Derek Olson, winner, 2008 Minnesota Teacher of the Year and Grace School graduate, Class of 1980.

While pursuing an economics degree at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn., Olson traveled to Thailand and Hong Kong to help refugee orphans. Through that experience, he sensed a call to dedicate his life to helping children.

Today, as a sixth grade teacher at Afton-Lakeland Elementary School in Lakeland, Minn., Olson’s life is centered on impacting children’s lives.

### Growth matters

Olson’s teaching philosophy is built on growth: set goals, reflect often, and celebrate success. Each fall, he shows his class an overhead of two students on a ladder: Joe Spring and Jane Spring. He asks whether Joe or Jane had the better year based on their positions on the ladder. Students typically select Joe Spring, who is highest. Then Olson shows where Joe and Jane were in the fall, and they see that Jane climbed three rungs while Joe climbed one. “They get it,” Olson says. “Growth matters.”

A fall evaluation test benchmarks students. A spring evaluation tracks growth. The bench-



PHOTO © ANDREW WALLMEYER

*“Teaching is more than a job—more than a profession. It’s how I believe God uses me to impact the world.”*

**Derek Olson**

marking test helps Olson, who works with two other sixth grade teachers, to group students and differentiate instruction to meet individual needs and promote growth. The result is that Olson’s students are in the top 1 percent of students nationally in language for the last three years, and in the top 1 to 5 percent in math and reading in all levels of learning.

### Olson breathes life into learning

Olson engages students mentally and physically in learning. To teach the life cycle, the class raises pheasants from eggs. To learn about the Middle Ages, the class throws a Medieval Festival and produces podcasts. To learn about Egypt, they turn their hallway into a tomb, paint mummy masks and learn hieroglyphics. When they study archaeology, they dig up artifacts that Olson buries in the playground. The class travels to the

*Olson, Continued on page 3*

GRACE  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH  
& SCHOOL

## New Faces at Grace Michael Costello

by Kathryn Brewer

Michael Costello is Grace's new Cantor. As leader of music at Grace, his responsibilities include being the primary organist, planning music for worship, directing senior choir, and coordinating the choirs and instrumentalists. He leads a church music staff which includes Carl Grapentine (assistant director of the senior choir and part of the management team for the Bach Cantata Series) and Laura Zimmer (assistant organist).

"I have a love for the worship of the church—to do it well and do it to the best of our abilities. I see myself as continuing and building on the heritage and a long tradition of fine worship and music here, with a 21st century approach," he says.

Michael has oversight of the school choirs, which are directed by Gwen Gotsch, Paulette Reddel and Janel Dennen. "I really enjoy working with children, and that's actually one of the first things that drew me to Grace." He



*"I have a love for the worship of the church—to do it well and do it to the best of our abilities."*

enjoys opportunities to visit with each choir, often as accompanist, to prepare for singing in worship. He has also formed a small group choir for children in 5th through 8th grades. He says, "The idea was that we could start a treble choir and learn music that was a bit more challenging than the classroom choir. This core group of kids will begin to participate in cantatas and lead in festival liturgies."

Michael brings his adept organizational abilities and profound respect for

the talents of those around him to create collaborations between choirs in the Grace community. He was instrumental in forming a new youth choir, which is under the direction of Lori Bormet and assisted by Gwen Gotsch. They sang a piece with the 7th and 8th grade treble choir on Reformation Sunday.

Michael also hopes to improve and expand the instrumental programs for school and church, and possibly pull together an intergenerational group. "We have so many people around that can play an instrument well, it's a shame not to share that talent," he says.

Rev. Michael Costello was most recently director of music ministries and assistant pastor at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Columbia, South Carolina. He grew up in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and attended college at

## Brian Schultz

Grace's newest faculty member is Mr. Brian Schultz. Born in Chicago on the south side, he grew up in Sheboygan, Wis. He earned his undergraduate degree at Valparaiso University in finance and economics, worked at a bank and did an internship in an accounting firm.

Brian says, "After some interviews and offers, I decided I didn't want to work in a cubicle all day! I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, so I joined the LEAPS program."

The LEAPS program of Valparaiso University is a two-year program for people whose undergraduate degree is not in education, but who want to become a teacher. Brian says, "You teach at an under-resourced Lutheran or Catholic school for two years. I was up in Rogers Park at Bethesda Lutheran." To complete the Master's degree, he took 12 credits of classes each summer and an online course during each school year.



*"This is the math that students are actually likely to use for the rest of their lives. So I try to make it relevant."*

At Bethesda Lutheran, Brian taught third through eighth grade math and science, plus the 5th-6th grade homeroom. "When we started after the first day of registration, we had only 33 kids registered for the whole school, and we thought the school might close. But numbers were up to 100 last year."

The classes were combined, so he had to teach math to 3rd graders and 4th graders at the same time in the same classroom. "That gave me a lot of experience in time management and working with a wide range of kids from an academic standpoint. It was a good opportunity to get my feet wet in terms of teaching."

During the two years while teaching at Bethesda, Brian assisted in Grace's track program and served as 5th-6th

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Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory, North Carolina. He graduated with a Master of Divinity degree from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (LTSS) in 2006 and was called to and ordained at St. Andrew's. Michael is the winner of several awards in organ performance and a composer of both organ and choral music.

Michael is married to Rebekah Costello, also a musician and also a graduate of LTSS. She is nearing completion of a second master's degree at LTSS, a Master of Sacred Theology. She would like to teach at a college or seminary. Their son, Andrew, was born in February in South Carolina and baptized at Grace in June 2008. "We felt it was important that Andrew be baptized into a community of faith in the place where he would likely grow up. It was important for us to do it here at Grace."

boys basketball coach in the winter 2008 season.

Now at Grace, Brian teaches junior high math and science, P.E., and 7th grade religion, and is the 7th grade homeroom teacher. "I try to find ways to relate math and science to everyday life. This is the math that students are actually likely to use for the rest of their lives. So I try to make it relevant. In science, they can clearly see the application with the lab work. The challenge is getting them to see the general knowledge or the reason that it is practical."

Brian finds Grace to be a very welcoming place. "A friend who has been coming to church with me even came on his own and felt welcomed by Grace members."

"I really do like it here a lot. The kids are great. And I am getting a lot of parent and faculty support."

In college, Brian participated in NCAA Division 1 Men's Track and Field for three years. He will continue to assist Mr. Glock in coaching track and field, and will coach 5th-6th boys basketball and 6th-8th girls volleyball.

### **Olson, continued from page 1**

north shore of Lake Superior in a week-long adventure experience for building teams and conquering obstacles. Students draw on the experience throughout the year to help scale new academic heights, like preparing for junior high.

Olson tells students that they have a mountain to climb. The goal, at the top of the mountain, is junior high. The road to the top is the traditional method of learning. If students apply themselves to learn the rules of the road, that is, help maintain an orderly and respectful classroom, they can take "off-road" trips—exciting adventures such as the archaeological dig and Lake Superior retreat.

### **Olson teaches process along with content**

Olson's teaching method is to increase students' learning tools and improve their skills in using them. Students use the tools to build a house of life-long learning.

Olson says he's less concerned if students remember specific facts and more concerned that they know how to prepare to be evaluated—that they know how to study, take good notes, and use modern technology to prepare for a test. He says, "It's not just what they're researching, but how to research."

Olson says that being recognized as Minnesota Teacher of the Year is an opportunity to be a representative for teachers, an ambassador for education, and ultimately, an advocate for children. He says, "So often we hear about what is wrong with kids, or what is wrong with schools or teachers. Schools and teachers should take the lead in promoting what's good about kids, teachers, and schools."

A panel of 24 community leaders sifted through 115 nominations to select Olson as the winner. The purpose of the award is to encourage and recognize excellence in education. Education Minnesota, a teacher's union, organizes

***"I feel very indebted to Grace in many ways. Not only did I receive an excellent education, but Grace gave me a solid faith foundation. I'm grateful for the role models. I'm grateful that they were present at a critical time in my life."***

and underwrites the Minnesota Teacher of the Year Program. Olson will be Minnesota's nominee for National Teacher of the Year for 2009.

Olson attended Grace for grades 5-8. He says, "I feel very indebted to Grace in many ways. Not only did I receive an excellent education, but Grace gave me a solid faith foundation. I'm grateful for the role models of Christian men—Mr. Mortensen, Mr. Bouman, Mr. Koenig and Pastor Lueking. I'm grateful that they were present at a critical time in my life, and I believe they had a direct impact on me as a Christian man." Now that he teaches in a public school, Olson says he strives to be the same sort of role model for others.

Olson has a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from St. Thomas University in St. Paul, Minn., and a bachelor's degree in economics from St. Olaf College. Derek and his wife, Kris, have three children. They live in Stillwater, Minn.



**Olson's students learn about Egypt by turning their hallway into a tomb, painting mummy masks and learning hieroglyphics.**

# Place, Space, and Grace

by Mark Bouman

*There are places I remember all my life,  
Though some have changed,  
Some forever, not for better  
Some have gone and some remain.*

**John Lennon, *In My Life***

Seven boys celebrate a seventh birthday in May of 1963, squirming in their seats on the Kiddietown special. John Pedersen wonders why Brad Orchard has to mug for the camera. Todd Gieschen knows: it's Brad's birthday! Mark Bouman looks to the right, wondering about the make and model of this particular train. Paul Ritter settles confidently into his seat, lacking only coffee and paper to look every inch the confident commuter. Chuck Guebert's and Dan Marotz's faces are obscured by Todd's and Mark's big heads.

When the train left the station with these first graders in 1963, the world around Grace was a different place than it is today. These were the peak years of population for the "West Towns," the six municipalities that surround Grace (Oak Park, River Forest, Elmwood Park, Melrose Park, Maywood, Forest Park). The corners of these communities were being newly built out, with little open land remaining. Downtown Oak Park was the regional shopping destination, the newly opened Oakbrook Center just a whisper to the west. Blue and White West Towns buses clogged Lake and Harlem, bringing shoppers to Wieboldt's, Field's, Lytton's and Ward's.

In 1963, save for an annual Christmas party when Grace hosted kids from Chicago, or for an odd encounter on a field trip to one of the city's museums, or for a drive with parents down Madison Street past Kostner, nose pressed to the window, none of these seven boys was likely ever to see,



much less to develop a meaningful relationship with, a person of color.

Five years later at Brad Orchard's 12th birthday party in 1968, the seven boys listened to Brad's Jimi Hendrix record. They talked about their heroes Billy Williams, Ernie Banks, Fergie Jenkins, and they were fairly certain that the Cubs' 60 years of World Series frustration would soon end. They knew that Martin Luther King had been recently assassinated.

Forty-five years before Brad Orchard's seventh birthday party, World War I still raged and the people of Grace Lutheran were thinking of discarding German language worship. Forty-five years after Brad Orchard's seventh birthday party, the people of Grace are wondering about the threads that connect them to the places they remember as a faith community, while trying to understand the changes that have come to the community.

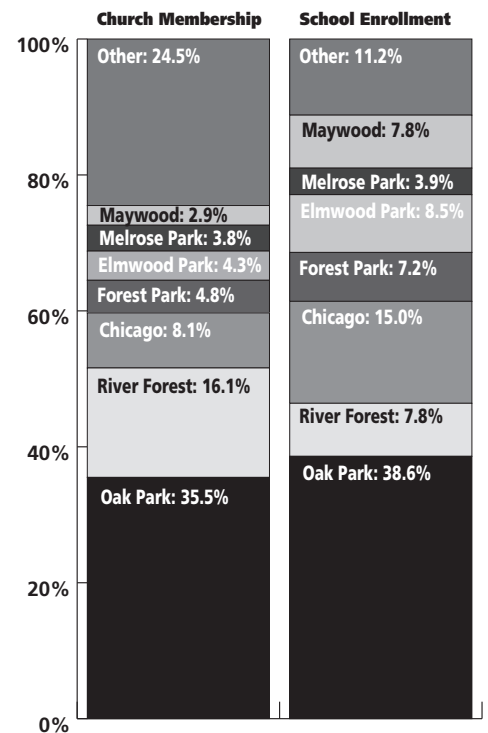
It is important to take constant stock of this context, since the mission of the church and school is to "bring in, build up, and send out" for Jesus Christ. From where, exactly, does Grace "bring in"? Is this area different for church and school? Is this surrounding community growing, changing in race and ethnicity, aging? How do these changes compare with changes in the Grace community? Data provided in the 10-year U.S. Census and information that the school and congregation knows about itself can tell us.

## What area does Grace serve?

Grace's membership comes from eight key municipalities. Half of the households come from Oak Park and River Forest; two-thirds come from those two communities plus Chicago, Forest Park, and Elmwood Park, and three quarters from those five communities plus Melrose Park, Maywood, and Elmhurst.

### Grace Church Membership and School Enrollment

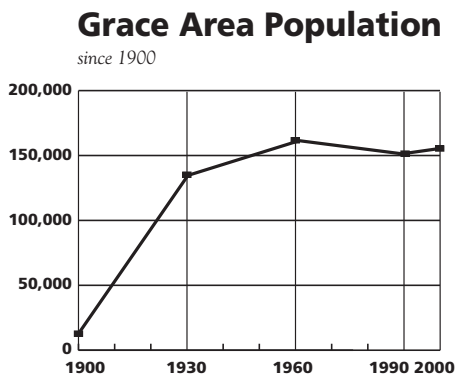
by area, as a percentage of total membership/enrollment



The distribution of school children echoes the church membership, but it bears some important differences. It is useful to compare the percentage of members that comes from a particular community to the percentage of school-children from that community. For example, roughly twice the proportion of the school population lives in the city of Chicago (15%) as does the proportion of the church membership (8.1%). Thinking about it this way, Maywood, Elmwood Park, Chicago, and Forest Park are highly over-represented in the school, and River Forest is highly underrepresented, relative to the share of church membership that comes from these communities.

### What population changes are occurring in Grace's service area?

Overall population changes in Grace's service area are shown on the following chart. For the first time since 1960, population has trended slightly upward, but its racial and ethnic composition has changed significantly. The white world of Kiddietown in 1963 is gone.



It is worth investigating these numbers in some more detail, since population actually decreased in two-thirds of the neighborhoods studied. Increases were seen in north Maywood, southeast Elmwood Park, the Galewood neighborhood of Chicago, downtown Oak Park, and Forest Park.

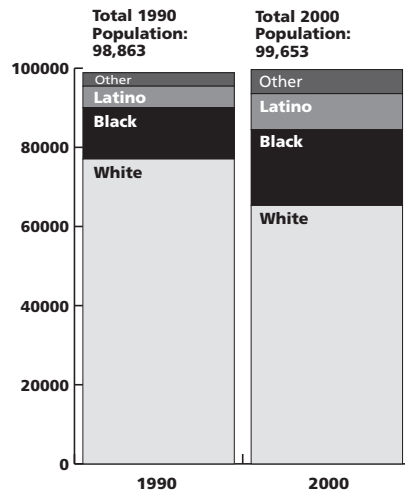
The area's white population is now about two-thirds of the total, ranging from less than 50% in some communities to more than 80% in others. The white population declined in each of the 21 neighborhoods studied. There are significant pockets of "new immigrants," including Poles, Ukrainians, and Russians in Elmwood Park and Romanians and "Yugoslavs" in Berwyn.

The Latino population roughly doubled to 9%. The largest Latino areas are north Maywood, northeast Melrose Park, southeast Elmwood Park, and Galewood. River Forest's Latino population doubled between 1990 and 2000.

The African-American population of the service area is up about 50%. North River Forest is now about 5.5% African-American. Roughly a quarter of the Grace school kids are African-American, which is fairly close to the

### Racial Diversity

Changes in Grace's Area Population



service area total of 19%. It should be noted only about 1% of the membership of Grace church is African-American. Even as the school continues to rise to the challenge of making certain that children of all races and backgrounds are being reached in the classroom, this disparity suggests an opportunity for the church.

Opportunities also leap from the page when comparing Grace Church's age and sex profile with that of the surrounding community. When examining the following two charts, one can see that Grace is both younger and older than the surrounding community. Grace seems to have a very narrow "waist," especially in the 25-35 age bracket. Senior women outnumber senior men nearly 2 to 1, though Grace has a slightly higher proportion of senior men

than the community does. Grace's median age is 38, slightly older than the community's 36.2. On the other hand, as you can see by the wide bars at the bottom of the Grace chart, the church is home to quite a few young people, which bodes well for both school and church. As it turns out, for the first time in years, the entire surrounding community is getting younger. The number of people aged 65 and over has decreased in every one of the 21 neighborhood studies. The number of young people increased in 12 of these 21 areas, including River Forest, although that town has roughly double the proportion of senior citizens as the other areas do.

Outside of Brad Orchard's birthday bounty, seven year olds in 1963 tended not to think about "income," much less about disparities in income. Today's children at Grace hail from an area where the median income is \$63,000 per year, but which ranges from \$37,000 (in Galewood) to \$127,000 (in north and central Oak Park). Poverty rates range from less than 2% in central Oak Park to nearly 19% in Galewood.

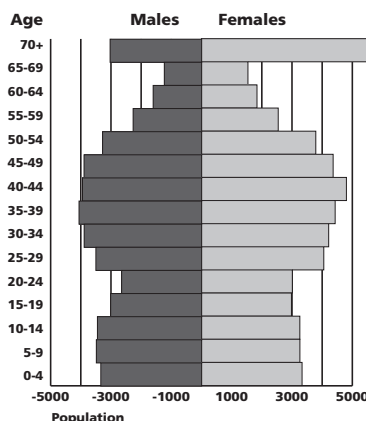
### What does this mean?

Of course, it can be tricky to tease out exactly what all this adds up to for the Grace family. But some other things should be borne in mind when thinking about these numbers.

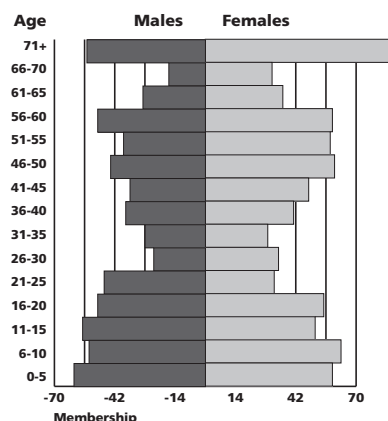
First, the boys of 1963 knew that Grace was a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Since 1977,

*Continued on back page*

### Age/Gender Structures Community Population



### Grace Church Membership



## It glows, it whirrs and it beeps

by Gary Tzeng, member of the Board of Elementary Education and chair of the Technology Committee

In today's society, we are surrounded by wonderful, albeit sometimes frustrating, technology. We cannot imagine a world without microwaves, cellular phones or computers. Our children also share our fascination and reliance on technology.

As technology continues to advance, Grace School has been challenged to update its technology curriculum as well as its infrastructure for our faculty and students. Our recent accreditation process helped Grace to not only identify areas of needed improvement, but also develop a plan to implement those improvements.

To better reflect our working society, our goal is to integrate technology into the current academic curriculum. Rather than being a separate class, we want the technology to be seamless and enhance our faculty's and students' academic lives. To that end, Grace has purchased 11 new laptop computers for faculty so that they can be mobile rather than affixed to their desks. An exciting new interactive whiteboard was installed in early October. Its wireless, portable remote allows mobile faculty-student interaction while providing a large display for all to see and learn. We are also developing a mobile computer lab for students. Rather than going to a room full of computers, a bank of laptop computers will come to students to use during class. We are excited about the endless possibilities for our faculty and students to interact with the curriculum, each other, and resources via wireless technology.

The current computer lab will be used to develop basic computer skills such as keyboarding and teach core programs such as Microsoft Word. The mostly Macintosh format of the lab will also complement the Windows-based format of the classroom, providing exposure and familiarity to both formats for students.

Our teachers' technology skills are keeping pace with the changing hardware and usage. Computer training began in the summer and will continue throughout the year. Lyle Mortensen, technology administrator, is managing and maintaining equipment and system operations. Christa Holm, learning media specialist and technology education coordinator, is assisting faculty in learning to use new equipment and integrating technology into their curricula, as well as refining and maintaining educational resources for both faculty and students.

We are thankful for God's grace and for all those who have created and implement this vision. While we are proud of our progress, we are still far from completing this task. As this will be an ever-evolving endeavor, we seek your comments, critiques, and support to help us achieve our ambitious goals.

## STACCATO NOTES

### Principal search

Grace is actively searching for a new principal for Grace School to begin in the 2009-10 school year. The key position requirements are experience in school leadership and administration, and the ability to inspire and manage the school community as it builds on its tradition of excellence. A master's degree in Education or nearing degree completion is preferred. Strategic planning skills, a commitment to Christian education in the Lutheran tradition, knowledge of exemplary curriculum practices, instructional experience in elementary education, and a demonstrated ability to form partnerships and build consensus are other key strengths being sought.

The search committee of 10 includes Gerald Koenig, principal emeritus; two school board members; one faculty member; several parents of students and former students, members of the congregation, Pastor Bruce Modahl, and Greg Rohlfling, president of the congregation.

The committee is advertising the position in *Christian Century*, *The Lutheran*, *Lutheran Witness* and through other ELCA and LCMS educational leadership venues. Members of the committee are also actively recruiting qualified administrators to consider the position.

Please share this information with those you may know who would be good candidates for the position. Possible candidates should review the full description at [www.gracriverforest.org](http://www.gracriverforest.org).

### Margaret Kruse celebrates 50 years

A luncheon in May 2008 celebrated Margaret Kruse's 50 years of ministry. Miss Kruse graduated from Concordia College (now Concordia University), River Forest, Ill., in 1957. She was called to start Bethlehem Lutheran School in Roseville, Michigan, with grades 4 and 5, with a co-founder who taught grades 6 through 8. It grew to 180 children in four years. Among several other calls, she was called to teach in Park Ridge in 1961. "Like Abraham going to a place where he didn't know, I felt the Lord wanted me to go to Park Ridge. And I have no idea why!" She came to Grace in 1963 and taught fifth grade until her (semi-) retirement in 2003. She has continued to serve as teacher and mentor at Grace. This fall she taught 5th grade religion, 6th grade religion, and 4th grade science.

### Prayers for John Folkening

Former Music Director John Folkening has been recently diagnosed with advanced stages of esophageal cancer. John was Grace's choir director and organist from 1981 until 2000. Most recently, he serves Redeemer Lutheran Church in Elmhurst as music director.

Letters and cards of support to John and his family are welcome. His address is 1101 Nichols Lane, Maywood, IL 60153.

## CLASS REUNION

The Class of 1958 held their 50th reunion at Grace Lutheran School on August 16 and 17. Among other activities, the group toured the new school building with Gread Koenig, their principal, and Paul Bouman, their 7th grade teacher and choir director. Saturday night's dinner was hosted by Jay and Doris Christopher in their Hinsdale home, which ended with the class singing "O Holy Night" and 50s-60s-era songs around the piano until the wee hours.

Classmates participated in the Sunday morning worship service. Rev. Aaron Sorrels, classmate and former assistant pastor at Grace, preached the sermon. William Kulhman played an organ recital after the service.

Attendees included Jay Christopher, Becky Becker Ernhardt, Ingrid Forsberg, Jon Huegli, Alyce Johnson Christensen, William Kuhlman, Robert Lange, William Long, Sallyjo Skach Mcavoy, Georgene Spirrisson Phillips, Rev. Aaron Sorrels, Valerie Law Stodden, Hildebrand Van Denend and Helene Spirrisson Zarcone.

## Top Ten Donor Opportunities

- 1 Bug Books for science, \$250
- 2 Wheeled cart for science materials, \$500
- 3 **NEW!** Warm-ups for sports teams, \$500
- 4 Sponsor one student at Grace, \$6400
- 5 **NEW!** Individual keypads for students to use with new interactive whiteboards, \$1900
- 6 **NEW!** ActivWand for new whiteboards, \$79
- 7 **NEW!** ActivSlate for new whiteboards, \$400
- 8 Choir robes for 5th-8th grade choir (currently 110 members), \$75 each
- 9 Sponsor an issue of *Amazing Grace*, \$2,000
- 10 **NEW!** Sound system for music classroom, \$500

### Acquired through special gifts

- Lighting system for school productions, \$8000
- Reading Supplements, \$200

## THANK YOU!

We gratefully acknowledge and thank alumni who have given gifts to Grace (April through October 2008):

Calvin Borchardt, class of 1948

Debbie Bodine Byron, class of 1971, in support of new choir robes

Jerome Foege, class of 1959

Pat (Choitz) Grundke, class of 1953

Patricia Wetzel Howard, class of 1947

Leroy and Cynthia Kleidon, parents of Jonathan Kleidon, class of 1991, and Krista Kleidon Port, class of 1987

Robert Meyer, class of 1962

Janet Sylvester, class of 1960

Linda (Schneider) Tjaden, class of 1961

## CLASSNOTES

**1947** Patricia Wetzel Howard enjoys reading *Amazing Grace* and keeps in touch with her classmates. She lives in Houston, Texas.

**1948** Calvin Borchardt has been retired from his orthodontics practice for two years. He has five grandchildren. Calvin lives in El Cajon, California, and is an active member of St. Luke's Lutheran Church in LaMosa, California.

**1953** Pat (Choitz) Grundke lives in Western Springs, Illinois.

**1959** Jerome Foege is retired from UPS as a mechanic. He lives in Northlake, Illinois.

**1960** Janet Sylvester lives in Elmwood Park, Illinois.

**1961** Linda (Schneider) Tjaden lives in Clear Lake, Iowa.

**1962** Robert Meyer lives in Forest Park, Illinois.

**1971** Debbie Bodine Byron, of Sahuarita, Arizona, added a seventh grandchild to the family. Her eldest grandson is serving in Iraq.

**2000** Monica Klempel completed her degree in biology and medical ethics from Loyola University. She is pursuing medical school. Monica lives in River Forest, Illinois.

**2005** Nick Curatolo starred as Jesus in the fall production of *Godspell* at OPRF High School, which also featured Katie Wilkes.

## College Choices

Grace's Class of 2004 graduated from high school last spring. Their college choices include the following:

Alma College, Alma, MI

Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA

Butler University, Indianapolis, IN

Carthage College, Kenosha, WI

Hampton University, Hampton, VA

Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, WI

Ohio Wesleyan, Delaware, OH

Purdue University, Lafayette, IN

Rice University, Houston, TX

Triton College, River Grove, IL

University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

University of Dayton, Dayton, OH

University of Illinois, Champaign, IL

University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA

University of Mary Washington,

Fredericksburg, VA

University of Southern California,

Los Angeles, CA

University of Texas at Austin, TX

In addition, two students are currently living overseas, one in France and one in Japan.

### Tell us what you've been up to!

Please take a moment to update us on what you are doing these days! Please send e-mail to [alumni@gracriverforest.org](mailto:alumni@gracriverforest.org) or write to 7300 Division Street, River Forest, IL 60305.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grace Graduating Class Year \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Family/Accomplishments/Activities \_\_\_\_\_

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**Place, Space and Grace**

*Continued from page 5*

however, Grace has been an independent Lutheran congregation. Almost four out of five members of Grace Lutheran Church have joined since that date, so the turmoil of those years may be a fading memory. All too present, however, is the decline in membership in the large Lutheran church bodies of over 20% just the past ten years. Since 1998, Grace Church's membership totals have remained roughly the same and have even shown a slight increase in recent years. Will the church sustain that growth in the years to come?

Second, there is a divergence between the racial and ethnic profile of the church and of the school. On the one hand, will the church begin to see growth in membership of people of color? On the other, how will the school serve an increasingly diverse student body?

Third, there are opportunities for broadening, deepening, and widening Grace's engagement with its surrounding community. The average Grace member has been at the church from ten to 14 years, but the median homeowner has lived in the area for only nine years. There are many newcomers in the area for Grace to reach—as when confirmands simply inform Grace's River Forest neighbors that here is a place to worship on Easter (and other Sundays).

"Place" is a subtle concept that requires attention to scale. It's important to think locally—what about those apartments on Harlem, where the number of rental units has sharply dropped recently? It's important to think about the community: Can we be sure that all families in the community are aware of the quality education available at Grace School? It's important to think about the metropolitan community: Did you know that the Bach cantata series has a region-wide attendance base, and that Oak Park is situated at the very center of the region's employment geography? And it's important to think globally:

Any conversation that involves "bringing in" and "sending out" has to account for worldwide mission and for widespread immigration.

***And I know I'll never lose affection  
For people and things that went before  
I know I'll often stop  
and think about them.***

Kiddietown died years ago; Wieboldt's and the like have long since moved on; West Towns became PACE; Fergie and Billy and Ernie are in the Hall. But lest nostalgia serve only to pin our memories to the mounting board, recall what William Faulkner wrote about the past: "It isn't dead. It isn't even past." And what also isn't past is what equips us to deal with change. Much of that is to be found in this web of lifelong friendships, the nurture of good teachers, the peace of Christ, and the Grace that roots us in the world.

**A group of Grace 1st and 2nd graders gather at recess. Many celebrate their 7th birthdays this year.**



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708/366-6900**

*Address Service Requested*

**Grace Church and School  
CALENDAR**

- November 23, 2008**  
Bach Cantata Vespers, 3:45 p.m.  
#51, "Praise God in every land!"
- December 14, 2008**  
Christmas Concert, 4 p.m.
- December 24, 2008**  
Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols, 4:15 and 6:00 p.m.  
Christmas Eve service with Holy Communion, 10:45 p.m.
- December 25, 2008**  
Christmas Day service with Holy Communion, 10:00 a.m.
- January 21, 2009**  
Grace PTO Mother-Son Event
- January 25, 2009**  
Bach Cantata Vespers, 3:45 p.m.  
#65, "They will all come out of Sheba"
- February 21, 2009**  
Grace PTO Mardi-Grace Event/Fundraiser
- February 22, 2009**  
Bach Cantata Vespers, 3:45 p.m.  
#32, "Dearest Jesus, my desire"
- March 20, 2009**  
Grace PTO Mother-Daughter Event
- March 29, 2009**  
Bach Cantata Vespers, 3:45 p.m.  
#180, "Soul, adorn thyself with gladness"
- April 26, 2009**  
Bach Cantata Vespers, 3:45 p.m.  
#6, "Bide with us"
- April 30, 2009**  
Confirmation Witness service, 7:00 p.m.
- May 1, 2009**  
Grace PTO Daddy-Daughter Dance
- May 3, 2009**  
Confirmation Service, 11:00 a.m.
- June 3, 2009**  
Graduation, 8:00 p.m.

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S Postage  
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Oak Park, IL  
Permit No. 28