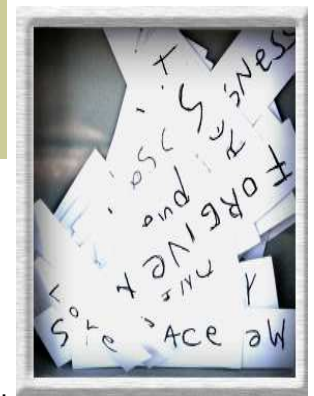


# GRACE SPOTLIGHTER



## JUST WORDS

Just words.

Think how this may be taken. That words are only words?

That's how critics of President Obama recently appraised his State of the Union speech. "Just words," they said. Quoting Shakespeare, Obama's speech was "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Meaning what? His words were essentially empty, of no real account. He offered only words.

One may disagree with any president, but to say his speech was "just words" does more to demean the words than belittle the president. It counts words as merely disposable, and I don't buy that.

Anyone who dismisses words as "just words" promotes an idea that true reality must go beyond words. Words, of themselves are paltry and have impact only if fortified by my opinion of them.

But is this true? Are words of themselves only sounds with no substance until I invest them with meaning I choose to give? If so, then words are indeed "just words."

Another take is that "just words" refers to honorable words. Here the meaning is quite opposite from that consideration which deems words neutral at best or meaningless at worst.

"Just words" in this other sense refers to the nobility of words, words regarded as powerful in their own right, endowed not only with a capacity to carry truth but to create it. Here "just words" are something beautiful.

It was first said of Jesus at Nazareth, "All spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth." [Luke 4:22] But what really had Jesus done at Nazareth? Had he done great, impressive acts? Had he built an industry? Had he achieved fame? Had he assembled an empire? What had he done to justify their marveling at him?

All he did was read in worship from the prophet Isaiah, "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*"

Just words.

No empire. No celebrity. No conglomerate.

Just words.

The sheer volume of words transmitted in our time, a billion bits per second, lead many to think we should receive them at a big discount. I mean, look at what most books bring at a yard sale? Pennies at best. Bibles particularly are a dime a dozen.

But by that criteria, if words are cheap, then we in Christ's church are impoverished.

The critic may look at God's people and demand, "What have you got!" Show us your accomplishments, your exploits, talents, and successes. What have you got?"

And how do we answer, "Just words."

It may sound foolish, but that's how it is. It's all we have. Just words.

Yet, these are not empty words. They have more substance than granite or gold.

Words established the cosmos [Gen. 1]. Words prepared and

sustained the flood survivors [Gen. 6:18]. Words were God's covenant with Abram [Gen. 15:1]. And with a thousand other examples, we can testify God's words have done it all.

Just words.

No collateral. No stock. No cash.

No gear.

Just words.

Of all that might be dear to you, the most precious are words. Words spoken over you at your baptism declared you a child of God, forgiven sinner, and heir of heaven.

Words at the altar convey bread and wine to you which communicate the living body and blood of Jesus Christ. Words deliver the forgiveness of sins. Words convert the skeptic, sustain the weary, comfort the bereaved, and raise the dead.

Medicine doesn't do this. Money doesn't do this. Machinery doesn't do this.

Just words.

Dear Grace family, never consider the gift of words miserable or the church feeble until it gets beyond words. The greatest spiritual fakery is to go beyond just words. The hope and security we have as Christians; the trust and the truth to which we cling is just words. Our life stands or falls on words ... just words. His words.

Our foundation isn't in fortune, fame, or fanfare. The church is just words.

But oh! What words they are! "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away," Jesus promised [Mark 13:31]. Can this be said of *anything* else except just words? What a promise these words — just these words deliver, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." [John 15:7]

These are truly just words, words which not only carry truth but create it.

Words. Christ's words have created in you a new life. Christ's words do exactly what they say and express. They deliver the forgiveness of sins to you.

And when you come to the end of your days, when health, accomplishment, skill, and years fade, yet someone asks you what you have left on which to ground your life, you can say, "Just words."

Just words!

Christ's words are my singular blessing. I have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of my Lord remains forever. And it was just this good word that was preached to me.

God continue to bless you all — as He always has — with just His words.

*Pastor Reed*

## "A New Year for Family Devotions"

Principal Miss Annette Rudick

Did you make any New Year's resolutions with your family? Maybe less ice cream and more exercise, or perhaps more reading and less television. These goals are important to the physical and educational development of your children. But, do not forget about your family's spiritual development. Any time is a good time to recommit to worship as a family.

"Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up." Deuteronomy 11:19

God's Word, given to us through Moses and the prophets is for us and for future generations. God assigns the task of passing this on to parents. Our church and school are here to help assist you in this endeavor. Your ability and desire to do this comes from God Himself. Family devotions are a wonderful way for you to pass on God's teachings to your children.

Setting aside time for family devotions is often easier said than done. When you children are young, scheduling devotions right after dinner seems to be a popular option. As our children get older and there are evening activities that interrupt the family schedule, encouraging your child to read a devotion before bedtime and then scheduling once-a-week family devotions can be a more workable option.

Once you have determined a routine for devotions, the next step is to find resources that meet the needs of your family. Many of them are available from Concordia Publishing House, which serves the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. We get all of our religion and science materials from CPH. The web site for CPH is [www.chp.opg](http://www.chp.opg).

Music is the best way to share your faith with infants and toddlers. Sing them to sleep with a favorite song from your growing up years or a simple lullaby. Toddlers are ready for Bible story books. Look for something with simple text and intriguing pic-

tures. As toddlers develop attention span, they are ready for simple devotions. Those that are short and tackle only one scriptural concept at a time are good for this age group.

Children reading at the third grade level are ready for their own copy of the Bible. That is the time that we put scripture into the hands of our students here at Grace. If your child still struggles with learning to read, they will enjoy a Bible story book written at a beginning reading level.

As a parent, if you are going to be able to instruct your children in the faith, you need to be spiritually fed too. Regular church attendance and Bible study are essential ways to grow in the grace of God. God created the family as a method of passing on faith from generation to generation. However, the job of creating faith is not ours as parents – it's God's job. He sends His Spirit into the hearts of our children at their baptism and as they read and hear His Word. This is how faith is born and grows in the heart of a child. What a wonderful blessing we have as parents to be a part of this process and to watch it happen.

### Upcoming School Activities and Important Dates

- We continue with our basketball season. Our "A" teams play most Mondays with all four teams playing on Fridays. Check our web site or bulletin board for specific dates and times.

**A.R. winners for the 2nd half of the 2nd quarter -front row - Elijah, Cameron, Jordan, Allie - second row - Bailey, Katie, Kaylee, Alexis. Congratulations to these students.**



- On Valentine's Day, our students always look forward to going bowling. The school will travel to Midland's Valley Lanes for an hour of fun the afternoon of February 14<sup>th</sup>. The cost is being paid for by our C.P.T.L. – many thanks!
- The third mid-quarter marking period ends on February 11<sup>th</sup>, with the reports going home on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Our second parent/teacher conferences of the year are scheduled for February 16<sup>th</sup> in the evening and 17<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon and evening. Bay City Public Schools will not be in session on that Friday. Our classes will dismiss both days at noon. This second conference is optional. If either the classroom teacher or the parent feels a conference is needed and beneficial, one will be scheduled. If both the classroom teacher and the parent are satisfied with the student progress, no conference is necessary.
- The annual Grace Spelling Bee will be held on February 10. Students each from grade three through eight will compete to find the best speller. The Bee begins at 1:00 p.m. in the gymnasium. This is a warm up for the Bay/Midland Lutheran Spelling Bee on March 10 and 17.



## Gledhill Gators

The Christmas flu has left the air and the classes can resume as normal. And although we have been inundated with cold weather, most of the students giggle with glee as they frolic in the snow and around the playground at recess.

I am happy to report that I have been proudly utilizing the most recent technology addition to our school. We have a laptop with wireless internet capabilities attached to a large screen TV/monitor - all bolted to a rolling cart. I use it daily watching CNN student news for my 7th and 8th grade social studies to start the class. Also, on Wednesdays and Fridays, I have the 5th and 6th grade in my room for their study hall period during that time. They have asked every time if they can sit on the floor in front of the large monitor to watch the short 10 minute segment. It's a great burst of current events that is geared to this age group, and their attentiveness speaks for that. So thank you Steve



**Our new TV & CD recorder**

for putting all that together!

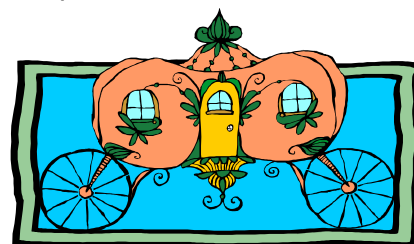
For the rest of the class time, the 7th and 8th grades are exploring the Caribbean Islands and Central America, as well as getting 'deeper and deeper' into the earth and the effects on land and soil.

The 5th and 6th grade science is especially enjoyable -- for me. I trust I can convey the same enthusiasm for them to receive. We are studying the different laws of physics and forms of energy. It is easy to come up with real-life examples for them to wrap their heads around -- after I get the deer-in-the-headlights look with the

technical lingo.

They have also spent a great deal of time pouring into the ancient histories of the Central American region and the civilizations around China and India.

3rd and 4th grade science is also delving into forms of energy and transfers. They are also exploring our early and growing nation as it expanded further and further west. K-2 had a nice treat. They studied how different cultures sometimes share the same story, but with their unique cultural implications. We looked at Cinderella from Korea and Egypt, and then they got to see the American version by Walt Disney.



**Cinderella's Coach**

## Mrs. Arnold's Classroom

The adage "Time Flies" surely applies to this school year. January 21st we handed out report cards covering the first semester. The report card results indicate that you have a school full of excellent readers. Our AR (Accelerated Reader) program requires the children to read books above and beyond their reading curriculum. The average number of books read by each K-2 child was 10. The average for 3rd-4th grades was 9 books per child, 5th- 6th grade average was 4 books per child, and 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade average was 3 books per child. Keep in mind the older the child the more advanced the reading level. So...Hats off to our students!



## Mrs. VanSickle's Room



The students in Mrs. VanSickle's room have welcomed the New Year in many ways. The Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> graders have been working hard on their January writing journals. They are learning more about creating interesting writing using descriptive words, the kindergartners are even remembering capital letters to start each sentence! Our unit on poetry continues in grades 3 through 8; with students trying many different types of poetry writing and reciting. Sadly, our Christmas decorations have come down and are stored until that joyous season comes around once more. We are welcoming winter with snowflakes, and Valentine's Day with hearts and love. Please stop by our room anytime and see our progress! Enjoy the dazzling winter wonderland we've been given 😊

## What's Going On

**Valley Lutheran High School Parent Organization** will be holding their annual PIG ROAST on Sunday, February 6, 2011 from 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM at the high school, 3560 McCarty Rd. The dinner includes tender, moist, seasoned just right Roast Pork, mashed potatoes, gravy rolls, coleslaw, green beans, pie and beverage. Tickets are available at the door, \$7 for 12 and over, \$4 under 12 and takeout is \$7. Proceeds will benefit ongoing technology upgrades throughout the school. Matching funds provided by Thrivent for Lutherans.

**Annual Valentine's Chicken BBQ** will be held at St. John Amelith on February 13th from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm with take-out dinners available at 10:30 am. Enjoy the taste of summer cooked by the Athletic Club Pit Crew. Cost: \$8 for ½ chicken and \$6 for ¼ chicken. All money raised will be given to the Fund Raising Drive and will be matched by Lead donations. For questions, please contact Gene Engerer at 684-5748.

### **An Enchanting Evening of Fun**

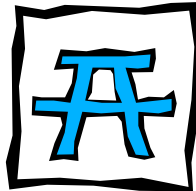
Adults...ask a young person ages 6-14 to be your date at a Valentine Dinner Dance on February 13, 5:30 – 8 pm. Charm your young heartthrob with this lovely evening of fun that includes a served meal in a heart themed atmosphere, dancing to the passionate sounds of past and contemporary tunes, a captivating short program for young and old, and small activities that will burn meaningful memories into hearts gapped by generations. The cost is \$25.00 per couple; \$12.50 for an additional person if desired. This community wide Lions sponsored event is being held at Grace. Purchase your tickets in advance at these Auburn businesses: Village Glass Works, Cherries Feed n' Seed, Auburn Farm Bureau, an Auburn/Williams Lions member, or call 662-4940.

### **Lutheran Hour Report**

With donations and contributions to the Saginaw Valley Lutheran Hour Fund used for broadcasting expenses of The Lutheran Hour and Woman to Woman in the local area continuing to decline, the need to inform local churches and supportive organizations of this shortfall becomes urgent. Contribution envelopes specifically for support of local broadcasting were discussed. These envelopes could also be used to set aside a memorial for Lutheran Hour Ministries. Currently we support one local radio station WKNX 1250 AM. Cost for airing the programs is currently \$145.00 per week. Donations in support of the local broadcasting should be sent to: Saginaw Valley Lutheran Hour Fund, PO Box 133, Frankenmuth, MI 48734.

### **Camp Lu-Lay-Lea Report**

was given by Gerhard Klemm. Excavating around the new dining hall is nearing completion. Excavating around the outside dining pavilion is also being worked on. Currently four new doors have been installed on camp buildings and four cabins have the new wiring completed. During a recent windstorm at the camp, three large trees came down with no damage to any of the buildings. These trees will need to be removed prior to camp opening next summer. Dave Gehm, President/CEO of Lutheran Homes of Michigan visited the camp. A Children's Camp and Residents Day Outing Trip were some of the many items discussed. Wheel chair accessibility to camp areas and waterfront will need to be addressed with the possibility of new paths and asphalt walkways. We are still looking for nursing coverage at the camp for next year, along with other staff positions. Applications are available from Bonnie LaLone, Camp Director, by telephone 989-245-3361 or e-mail laloneb@yahoo.com. Applications are also available from the Saginaw Valley Zone Secretary, Chuck Heinlein at 989-868-3379.



### **Phantom of the Auction -**

The 8th annual VLHS Benefit Dinner & Auction is going to be on Saturday, February 26, 2011 at Apple Mountain Conference Center. The past 7 auctions have netted us over \$250,000 which has been applied to various school improvements including the 21st Century Classroom Initiative, busses, student aid, teacher training & more! Thank you for your past support of VLHS! We could use your help - we are asking for items to be donated and put up for bid (merchandise, tickets, services, vacation homes, etc.) There are also opportunities to participate by way of Prayer, advertising, sponsorship, or attending the auction. Click on our Auction link [www.vlhs.com](http://www.vlhs.com) and get more information and check out our often-updated list of items. Watch your bulletin and/or church message board for ticket/donation fliers. For further information or questions, you may call Valley Lutheran at 790-1676, Beth (Lambert) Kaul 989-754-5918kaulfarm@airadv.net, or Karrie Gatza 989-667-0034 Karrie-kookies@aol.com.

### **A Little Ado about Lions Club**

A NEW Auburn/ Williams Lions Club was formed in the spring of 2011. A lot of members may be aware that Lions has rented Grace for a number of events. Initially it was for the "Signing of the Charter" Member Dinner in September and then more recently in January, a Spaghetti Fundraiser Dinner that was open to the community. Universally Lions is a service organization that supports the notion, "community is what we make it." They raise money through a variety of fundraising events to support a variety of causes. These include paying for eye glasses or hearing aids for residents in need in the Auburn area, and Leader Dogs for the Blind, They also collect old eye glasses to be distributed to those in need overseas.



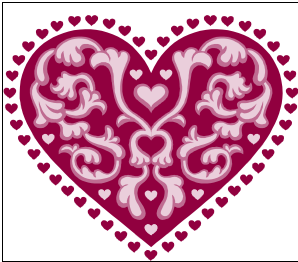


Grace Lutheran Church and School  
303 W. Ruth Street  
Auburn, Michigan 48611

Rev. David H. Reed, Pastor  
Miss Annette Rudick, Principal

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***FEBRUARY***

## ***February Birthdays & Anniversaries***

### ***Birthdays***

1 Heidi Arnold, 1 Mary Kalitta, 2 Lucas Weiss, 3 Ned Gray, 3 Dale Gripentrog, 3 Kaleena Kirmizian, 3 Loretta Wegener, 4 Kayla Mularz, 6 Jeffrey Sugden, 8 Jon Alexander, 8 Aaron Stanford, 9 Stephanie Dominowski, 9 Paul Netkowski Sr., 11 Trevor Shuart, 11 Ruth Skyrme, 12 DeLynn Taglauer, 13 Crystal Wisniewski, 14 Dale Gripentrog, 14 Jordan Pyle, 14 John Whalen, 15 Rena Rosenbrock, 15 Steven Wegener, 17 Rick Garlinghouse, 17 Ronald Kent, 18 Mark Konsdorf, 18 William Melick Jr., 19 Ilene Taglauer, 20 Genell Taglauer, 21 Robert Feinauer, 21 Joyce Rabadue, 21 Janet Vennix, 22 Kathleen Alexander, 22 Jesse Arnold, 22 Thomas Feinauer, 22 Ray Ralph, 23 Debra VanTol, 24 Cole Melick, 26 Ruth Roth, 28 Robert Wegener

### ***Anniversaries***

*5 Dale & Dale Ann Gripentrog, 23 Art & Elaine Prah*