

Grace Matters

*the radio ministry of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

Spring 2005

**“All theology is summed up
in that one word,
grace.”**

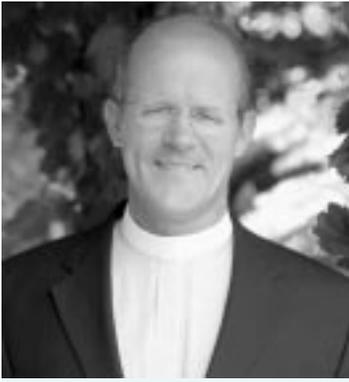
—MARJ LEEGARD



Photo by Sue Edison-Swift

Living in God's amazing grace

www.gracematters.org



From the Desk of The Rev. Peter W. Marty

Leaving Our Footprints

Dear Friend,

As I enter your life through this broadcast ministry, and you enter mine, I'm going to call you a *friend* from the get go. We're entering this wonderful partnership of faith, and I can't think of a better word for it than FRIENDSHIP. Friendship is one of the greatest gifts God ever handed out to human beings.

And you and I get to share it—this wonderful grace that makes life shine so brightly.

We'll share joys and sorrows together, because that's what real friends do. Not that you can increase my joy or I can decrease your sorrow on any given week. But in sharing the same deep desires for knowing and loving God, it's inevitable that we'll both be changed.

It was Eleanor Roosevelt who once said,

“Many people will walk in and out of your life. But only true friends will leave footprints in your heart.” I want to walk all over your heart and leave countless footprints of love. And I hope you'll traipse all over my heart with your own rich life of faith and your own soul-searching way.

I welcome your comments, ideas, and support for this blessed ministry. All are important. So join me in a weekly way for a program designed to deepen your life of faith.

Anticipating great times with you,

PETER

“Many people will walk in and out of your life. But only true friends will leave footprints in your heart.” —*Eleanor Roosevelt*

Voices from the Heart

Letters from Our Listeners

to all of you at *Grace Matters*, I can not ever tell you how much your ministry has helped me through difficult times in my life. I lost my daughter to cancer in July of 2002. Her son has been diagnosed with Hodgkin's. He is our oldest grandson, a wonderful 24-year-old young man. He was 6 days old when his mom was diagnosed with the tumor in her chest.

I am having a difficult time dealing with this as it is like losing my daughter all over again. I need the strength that God provides to do what I promised my daughter as she died, and that was that I would always be there for her children. I ask prayers from all of you for all of our family and especially for healing hands of God to bless our grandson. I am sorry to have rambled on, but writing to you is like therapy for me and sharing concern with my good friends at *Grace Matters*.

God bless all of you for your wonderful work. I went to church yesterday, but find it difficult to stay composed and not break down and cry. So when I miss worship, you are my connection to God in prayer and praise. Thanks for listening to me.

—Marjorie Lindstrand, Winthrop, MN

Your Legacy of Ministry

for more than fifty years, people have gathered around their radios to hear the good news proclaimed through the radio ministry of *Lutheran Vespers/Grace Matters*. These programs are made possible only by the gifts of listeners and friends of this ministry, and you can be a part of it!

A Charitable Gift Annuity with *Grace Matters* will provide a lifetime guaranteed income for you, and help continue this unique radio ministry far into the future. For information on how you can create a Charitable Gift Annuity, please contact the ELCA Foundation at (800) 638-3522, ext. 2970, or visit the Foundation Web site at www.elca.org/fo/annuity.html.

**I can not ever tell you how much
Grace Matters has helped me
through difficult times in my life.**



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Why Grace Matters So Much: An Interview with Marj Leegard

by Sue Edison-Swift

“Grace matters because it’s all I have!” says Marj Leegard. “Faith... love... trust... if we’re talking about what I have to offer God, I’m in the hole. All theology is summed up in that one word, *grace*. From God to me, that’s how it works; faith, love, trust, is all from God, it’s all God’s grace.”

We experience God’s grace “always through people,” says Marj. “People make the gospel come alive in old and new ways for each other.” She remembers

working on a “ministry in daily life” project in 1988 with Bob Sitze. “‘You’re a writer,’ he said before I had ever written anything. People do that you know, identify and bring out your gifts, and tell you things in ways you can hear.”

Marj is known for being a “liturgical storyteller,” connecting the sacred seasons with the seasons and everyday experiences of life. When asked to tell a “Lent story,” she responds with:

“One of my relations lived in Europe for a time. They went to see the [multi-day] passion play at Oberammergau, but their son had to leave early to go to camp. The day he was to leave for camp they found him in the closet furiously reading the Bible: ‘I’m reading ahead to see how it turns out,’ he explained. When I was frustrated with the hard parts of traveling and speaking [to church groups], I’d tell myself ‘there may be somebody there who doesn’t know how the story will come out.’”

“Grace matters because it’s all I have!” says Marj Leegard.



Photo by Sue Edison-Swift

Marj Leegard’s inspirational column, “Give Us This Day,” has been a popular feature in *Lutheran Woman Today* magazine for more than ten years. She and her husband, Jerome, are newlyweds of 62 years. They listen to *Grace Matters* on KFNW, Fargo, ND.

“Those of us who know how Lent turns out, who come to Lent from ‘the other side’ of the tomb, can find Lent a difficult time,” Marj admits. “In order for the longing for Easter to be personal we can’t rush through Lent.”

Marj, now 84, has heart troubles that have worsened lately, causing her to give up her speaking, but not her writing. “It’s quiet these days. I still get around, but there are lots of things I can’t do anymore,” she says.

“Old age is not as I imagined. I thought I would feel old, but I still feel 25. I’m not ready for ‘peaceful resignation.’ My dear friend has moved into a nursing home; she says, ‘it’s a good thing we had so much fun when we were young.’”

Marj Leegard is author of *Give Us This Day*, (Augsburg Fortress, 1999). On the back page of this newsletter, you’ll see how you can receive this collection of her favorite *Lutheran Woman Today* columns for your own! What’s her favorite column among the 25 favorites? “‘Kettle Covers,’ [p. 27] I get the most feedback from that story.” The column closes with God “‘gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless’ (Isaiah 40:29). God’s children are never discarded. Never useless. Never too old.”

Sue Edison-Swift, who does ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal communication, is proud to be Marj Leegard’s former editor and current friend.



Brenda Engelby

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From the Editor

Welcome to Grace Matters!

As I thought about the blessings that surrounded us during this time of transition from *Lutheran Vespers* to *Grace Matters*, I was drawn to Psalm 84. There is such peace and joy knowing we are moving confidently from the strength of Walt's powerful stories to the strength of Peter's grace-filled messages.

It's a new year with a new look to the program and the newsletter. We are not throwing out the old—we're enhancing it and sprucing up! There are new voices in the broadcast and some new features in the *Grace Matters* newsletter.

And it's Lent—that wonderful contemplative season of the church year when we concentrate fully on that blessed, sacrificial gift—Jesus' death—for us.

It's time for us, as Marj Leegard says, to "furiously read the Bible to see how the story ends." It is a perfect end, you know. The question is, "Do others know the end?" Immerse yourself in the Scripture during these weeks of Lent. Re-program your day to start with God's Word—at least from now to Easter when you will experience the

glorious end, but really the beginning, of the story.

Grace matters. It matters for you, and me, and for everyone. *Grace Matters* will tell the story of Jesus week after week. Invite your friends to listen.

I'm drawn once more to Psalm 84: *my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God*. Can you feel the joy? God is blessing this ministry and you are the biggest blessing of all.

Happy are those whose strength is in you...
they go from strength to strength... O Lord
God of hosts, hear my prayer... look on
the face of your anointed. —*Psalm 84, NRSV*

News To Use!

Bringing Grace Matters to You

To find *Grace Matters* in your area, visit our Web site (www.gracematters.org) for complete station listings. Or, if *Grace Matters* isn't available in your area, you can also listen to the broadcast right on the Web site!

CDs and written transcripts are available for every program, and subscriptions are available so you or someone you love can receive every program automatically. You can sign up on the Web site, or call (800) 638-3522 ext 2967.

If *Grace Matters* isn't available in your area, or the hometown of your loved ones, you can make a difference! Call or e-mail, and we'll send you a packet of information to help you contact station managers in your area and guide you through the process of placing the program on a station.

Please write to us! We'd like to know if there is a topic you'd like to hear about on the program, or a person to interview who might bring God's grace to all of us. Tell us how you like the new format! You can write to *Grace Matters* and to The Rev. Peter W. Marty at 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631.

Or, e-mail us! Our e-mail address is brenda.engelby@elca.org.

If you'd like to make a gift of \$50 or more by credit card, call (800) 638-3522.



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the radio ministry
of the
Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Interim Speaker: Bishop Stephen Bouman
Titles, Texts, Topics • February 2005

February 6 *Hic*

Matthew 14:13-21 A congregation in Africa, a grandmother in a nursing home, and a homeless man, all demonstrate the nearness of God.

***Grace Matters* with The Rev. Peter W. Marty**
Titles, Texts, Topics • February 2005

February 13 *Grace Matters*

1 Timothy 1:2 There is nothing in the Christian life that compares with grace. It matters completely. Listen in on the story of a Middle Eastern hostage whose little battery-powered radio was "the grace note" of an otherwise unbearable ordeal.

February 20 *The Journey is the Destination*

Matthew 4:1-11 Instead of putting all of their energy into some eventual destination, faithful Christians delight in the journey along the way. I'll introduce you to the journey you and I will share ahead.

February 27 *Shaking Your Fist at God—Suffering Part I*

Psalms 77:1-8 The experience of suffering can mutilate our best plans and chop up our happiest dreams. Hear the story of two individuals who, by all right and reason, could shake their fist at God, but who choose to grow their character through their personal suffering.

Listen to *Grace Matters*

every _____ at _____ on station _____

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***Grace Matters* with The Rev. Peter W. Marty**
Titles, Texts, Topics • March 2005

March 6 *Avoidance and Suffering Do Not Mix—Suffering Part II*
Romans 5:1-5 Suffering may be many things, but one thing it is NOT is avoidable. Confronting life's most painful challenges means deciding between two kinds of faith expressions. A biblical insight will help you dismiss one variety, for the sake of living the hope-filled other.

March 13 *A Life vs. A Lifestyle*

John 6:35-37 The search for meaning in life is as old as Adam and Eve. Before wasting more time hungering after the wrong things, listen for a word from Jesus that has as much to do with making a life as making a living.

March 20 *The Home Stretch—Palm/Passion Sunday*

Matthew 21:1-11 As Jesus enters Jerusalem in what will prove to be his final journey, Christians once again face the ultimate question about the faithfulness of their own journeys. We'll be joined by Bob Herhold and his reflections on Christian courage for the final journey.

March 27 *Putting All My Money on Jesus—Easter Sunday*

1 Corinthians 15:13-14 Without the resurrection of Christ, we are stuck with two unwelcome options: living in some kind of utopian illusion or some sort of dreadful despair. I'll put my money on Jesus before bowing to illusion or despair. Join me for Easter joy and the sounds of triumphant music.

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**April and May's Titles, Texts, Topics weren't ready at our press date,
but please call us or visit our Web site (www.gracematters.org) for updated listings!**

Gifts that Live to Serve Others

IN MEMORY OF:

A gift to Grace Matters is a special way to remember a loved one who has gone to be with the Lord. Your memorial gift will help carry the gospel to thousands!

(Gifts received through Nov. 30, 2004)

Charlotte Andersen
Rev. Carl Andersen

Mae Behrens (wife)
Ronald Behrens

Edwin Brue
Lester & Alice Brue

Berniece Glestad
Edgar & Dorcas Dorow

Selma Nelson
Dr. & Mrs. John Erickson

Ronald Kruse
Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Fick

Vera Compelien
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Hansen

Harriet E. Lang/Rasmussen (mother)
Ruth Hitchcock

Dick Jaeger (husband)
Shirley Jaeger

Ida McConnell
Myrtle Jentz

Relative & friends who died this year
Esther Johnson

Arlene Sandve
June Johnson & family

Morris C. Kalmoe
Hazel Kalmoe

Rev. Ronald Koch
Genevieve Keranen

Rose Nelson (mother-in-law)
Florence Nelson

Emma Rempel
Doris Oakland

Lee Solberg
Laurayne Solberg

Rev. Conrad M. Thompson
Swanhild Thompson

Eleanor Johnson
Abern & Evelyn Thoreson

Hazel Halvorson
Margaret Trygstad

Thomas A. Clinton
Jeffrey R. Condit
Glen "Ed" Harriman
Howard Skinner

LaVonne Tegen
Naomi R. Wiese
WELCA Immanuel
Lutheran Church,
Independence, IA

Laura Hildebrandt
WELCA St. Paul Lutheran
Church, Gaylord, MN

David Johnson
Helen Werner

IN HONOR OF:

Spreading the gospel through a gift to Grace Matters is also a wonderful way to remember a birthday, anniversary or other special occasion!

(Gifts received through Nov. 30, 2004)

Dr. & Mrs. Victor Brandt
Ruth Proft Dannehl

Dorothy & Dale Johnson
Mildred Harms

Josephine Stange
James A. Jagow

Norma Monson's 90th Birthday
Ronald & Arleen Martin

You Matter to *Grace Matters!*

Since 1994, Marj Leegard has written her popular “Give Us This Day” column for *Lutheran Woman*

Today. Her simple stories intertwining faith and daily life have been clipped and put up on refrigerators, or tucked into letters to friends. Twenty-five of Marj’s own favorites have been gathered into one book, our gift to you in appreciation for your essential support of *Grace Matters*.

If you’d like to receive your copy of *Give Us This Day*, simply check the box on the enclosed reply form when you send your gift today. Please don’t forget to make your check payable to *Grace Matters!*



Photo by Dan Gill



Looking Ahead on *Grace Matters*

There is nothing quite like grace. It’s one of the most bizarre things in the world. Like punching 3 + 3 into the calculator and coming up with 7. Grace is that love of God that always adds up to more than we deserve.

I’d like to describe the new *Grace Matters* as a bit journalistic and a lot meditative. Each and every program is geared toward discovering how much grace matters in our lives.

Each broadcast will feature a personal interview. You’ll listen to conversations with people eager to see and know the grace of God

active in their life and work. In my weekly reflections the Bible will be my constant companion, and we’ll still have the marvelous music that is such an integral part of the program.

I intend for this program to be a lively one—resourceful, purposeful, and insightful for all people. The program aims to meet you where you happen to be in your life, but not leave you exactly as you were found.

Every time we pause long enough to contemplate grace, we end up with the same conclusion. That *living in God’s amazing grace* is just that—amazing.

PETER

Coming in April...

Peter interviews Sr. Joan Chittister,
author of *Called to Question!*



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IS ENCLOSED!

Lutheran Vespers
IS NOW

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Matters
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Please
Place
Stamp
Here

To Help Others Live in God's Amazing Grace!

YES, I want to help *Grace Matters* share the Good News of Christ with every listening heart.

Enclosed is my gift of: \$ _____

I **would** like "Give Us This Day"

I **would not** like "Give Us This Day"

I listen to Lutheran Vespers on station _____



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*If you would like to charge
a gift of \$50 or more,
please use reverse side.*

I have included *Grace Matters* in my estate plan.

★ Please remember to make your check payable to *Grace Matters*!

Please Send Me Information About Estate Planning

YES, I would like more information about:

Bequests

Charitable gift annuities

Endowment fund

Including *Grace Matters* in my will/estate plan

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email (optional) _____



For Your Convenience

Many friends have requested that we provide them with the ability to make contributions via credit card.

If you would like to charge a gift of \$50 or more on your credit card, please provide the following confidential information:

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____ Verification Code _____

Located on the signature panel on the back of your card.

Signature _____ Phone Number _____



Or call us at (800) 638-3522

I listen to Lutheran Vespers on station _____