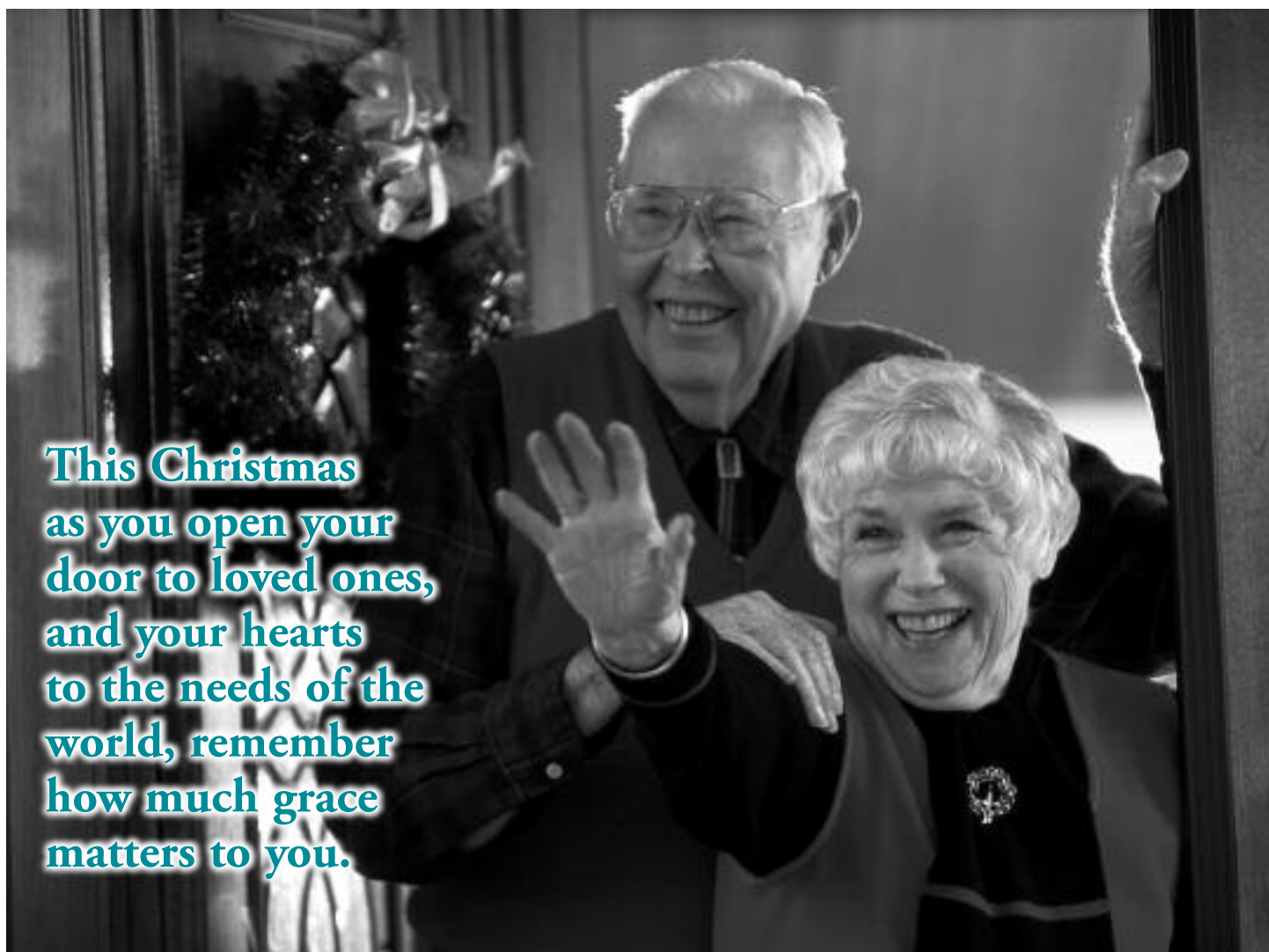


# Grace Matters

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

Winter 2005



**This Christmas**  
as you open your  
door to loved ones,  
and your hearts  
to the needs of the  
world, remember  
how much grace  
matters to you.

*Living in God's amazing grace*

 [www.gracematters.org](http://www.gracematters.org)





The Rev. Peter W. Marty

Host of *Grace Matters*  
[www.gracematters.org](http://www.gracematters.org)



# From the Host

## *The Beauty of Grace*

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Dear Friend,

When this newsletter drops in your mailbox, most of you in northern states have not seen the first snowflake yet. But, it's coming. Those of you in sunbelt states have no chance of seeing that first snowflake, I know. But if you really miss it, I'll bet some loving friend would be willing to dry-ice ship you a cup of the white stuff.

When have any of us ever paused long enough in life to study a snowflake—just one—there is no natural response except to drop the jaw. The intricacy and

beauty of each snow crystal is simply astounding.

No one snowflake is like any other. Each one carries the unique circumstances of its own downward trip. A single snowflake contains some ten sextillion molecules. Considering the many ways those molecules can be arranged, the odds against any two snowflakes ever matching is

unthinkable. Even if it snowed day and night until the sun burned out, it probably wouldn't happen once. The gift of our Lord's grace comes to us with as much variety and beauty.

There's no way in the world that any one person's experience of that grace will ever exactly match someone else's. Even if you live with an identical twin, don't expect the same treatment. The Lord comes serendipitously to our individual lives, unique to every moment. *To say the mercies of the Lord are new every morning*, as the writer of Lamentations does, is to acknowledge that we never get to take the Lord for granted. There is surprise each and every day.

As you give special thanks at this time of year for all that you have and love, soak up every moment as precious. Like a melting snowflake, you can only savor each act of grace for the briefest time. But as you open your door to loved ones, and your heart to the needs of the world, I hope you'll remember how much grace matters to you. Without the benevolence of God coming

*Peter's column continued on next page...*

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*Peter's column continued from page 2...*

our way, we wouldn't amount to anything. But God does come. And it's extraordinary!

Thank you for all of your year-end gifts to this radio and Web ministry. May God's gracious and serendipitous behavior in your life inspire great generosity. This ministry depends on you and your love, as I hope you know. Have a blessed Advent and Christmas in every way, snow or no snow.

PETER

## God's Gift of Grace

Soon we will celebrate the wonderful gift of grace, the gift "born in Bethlehem." Christmas is a traditional time of gift giving and receiving. I invite you to join me in thinking about gifts we give, and in reviewing Good Gifts that will soon arrive at your home.

Give a gift to *Grace Matters* to honor a loved one. Use the enclosed envelope or call (800) 638-3522 ext. 2970 for a Charitable Gift Annuity, the gift you give today, that gives to you for life and then gives to *Grace Matters*. At age 68, the gift annuity has a rate of 6.3% for life. For a couple at age 68, it is 5.8% for your two lives, guaranteed. Make a "Good Gift" this Christmas!



AN ABC CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

# Joy to the World

Repeat the sounding joy through the sights and sounds of six culturally unique Christmas worship celebrations. Tune in as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America brings **Joy to the World.**

**Christmas Eve** 🎄 **Saturday, December 24**  
**Christmas Day** 🎄 **Sunday, December 25**

ABC Television Network

Check your local listings for the exact airtime in your area.  
For more information or to order a DVD, visit  
[www.elca.org/joytotheworld](http://www.elca.org/joytotheworld)



# Sharing the M

## “Grace” Matters to Our Listeners...

during Global Fest at this summer’s Global Mission Events in Fargo, North Dakota, and in Baltimore, Maryland, we met many listeners of *Grace Matters* who responded to our question, “WHAT DOES GRACE MEAN TO YOU?”

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“Grace is everything that we have that we don’t deserve. It’s the gifts of life. Everything that we have is a gift and that’s what grace means. It’s the reality we live in. Everything we have is grace.”

—JON EVERET, COMSTOCK, MN (pictured at left)



Jon Everet of Comstock, MN, tells *Grace Matters* volunteer Anne Edison-Swift what grace means to him.

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“It surely has meant an understanding that God and people who are filled with the presence of God accept me, welcome me, affirm me very much, as I am. But they also see in me the possibilities and potentials for the person God meant me to be—to draw me into something better.”

—ED WHETSTONE, BALTIMORE, MD

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“It’s God’s love for me when I’m at my worst, and when I’m feeling my worst, and all the time when I’m behaving at my worst, too, unbelievably. Because Christ’s love is so profound that it can even take me at my worst, or any of us at our worst, and bring reconciliation, forgiveness, and peace to us.”

—DAVID LAMASTER, PARK RAPIDS, MN

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“What does grace mean to me...it means eternal life in God’s arms. Grace means a lot of love from others. I have just seen God’s grace in so many different ways in what he has given me, my family, my community and in the church. I just feel his love every day in my life in my heart and when I see other people I just want to share it.”

—HANNE K. GRISHAM, DUMFRIES, VA

# Message of Grace



“I left the church many, many years ago. But when I was in the Peace Corps in West Africa, I met a young woman and later found out that she was Christian... and even though I didn't at that time believe in Jesus, through her actions and activity, I knew that she did. And she's sat as an embodiment of grace ever since—someone who remains firm in her belief and her understanding of God's love for her and simply shows God's grace by her life.”

—ROBERT LOWDEN, PASADENA, MD (pictured at right)



“God's love, peace in your heart—just God's goodness in the world. He's kind, and good, and loving.”

—BRENDA KRUEGER, FREMONT, NE

“My life has been filled with so much grace and today I am here with that experience. I am really happy that you are reaching so many people through your ministry. God bless you. And, I'm sure many people will feel the grace of God which is given freely for all of us.”

—MOSES PENUMAKA, NEWARK, CA

Frank Imhoff, ELCA News staff, asks Bob Lowden what grace means to him.



## Grace Matters

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of the Evangelical  
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in America

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Web site: [www.gracematters.org](http://www.gracematters.org)

Mail: *Grace Matters*  
8765 West Higgins Road  
Chicago, IL 60631-4101

## Understanding Grace in Times of Trial

All of us at *Grace Matters* pray for the strength of those who have suffered from unspeakable tragedy in America's Gulf Coast. We pray for those whose future is evaporating before their eyes.

On the August 14, 2005, *Grace Matters* radio program, **God, We Need to Talk**, Rev. Peter Marty interviewed Dr. Gary Harbaugh about how to make sense of how God's will goes to work in these times of devastation when we're overwhelmed. Contact *Grace Matters* for a CD or a written copy of this interview.





**Brenda Engelby**

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(800) 638-3522 ext. 2967

# From the Editor

## *A Moment of Grace*

**W**hoever would have thought that a fork full of fresh hay thrown into an empty stall could be an act of grace; an evidence, truly, of God's amazing grace?

I picture a very tired, worried, and agitated Joseph seeking, knocking, and even begging for a bed. I see Mary, full of life, overcome with pain and running out of time, pleading with her eyes and watching Joseph as he sought the shelter and privacy they so desperately needed.

"No room! No room!" Over and over they heard the shout from the upper windows of inns—until one compassionate innkeeper offered them a sanctuary—with the cows, and a grace-filled pitchfork full of fresh sweet-smelling hay.

Perfect!

It was a warm place out of the cool desert night, it had a familiar and home-like smell, and it was so very private—just Mary and Joseph, the

comforting presence of the cows and sheep... and the baby.

The baby! Jesus. Never again would they have this grace-filled private moment, and a moment was what they needed to welcome and bond with this precious baby, the Christ-child.

Soon, all too soon, the shepherds would be there, and then those whom the shepherds told, and then the family, the three kings, the trip to Egypt, the temple...the crucifixion.

*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Tenth Edition) gives this definition for "grace." *Unmerited divine assistance given humans for their regeneration or sanctification.* *Cruden's Complete Concordance* lists grace as *the free mercy of God.*

And this grace is given to us! Grace can be a fork full of hay, grace can be the gift of overwhelming love at the birth of a child, and grace can be the sure and true knowledge of forgiveness of sins and life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grace can be Christmas—our time to remember and joyfully celebrate the gift. The baby! Jesus.

## GRACE: the free mercy of God.



# Introducing New iPodders!

Two lucky event goers at our recent Global Mission events in Fargo, ND, and Baltimore, MD, received a free iPod® after registering for the drawing at the *Grace Matters* booth. Jeannette Kpissay, a former missionary to Liberia, and Jack Balsley (pictured at right) from Pipe Creek, TX, love their new iPods!

You, too, can listen to *Grace Matters* on your iPod. Just visit [gracematters.org](http://gracematters.org), click “listen to the program,” and sync to the “podcast.” Thanks for listening!



## Gifts that Live to Serve & Bless 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 August 9, 2005)*

**Carl Anderson**  
Genevieve Keranen

**Evelyn Anderson**  
Marrida Myron

**Maxine Berg**  
Glenn & Joy Hagen

**Mary L. Biedermann**  
Rev. & Mrs. Eric Biedermann

**Pastor Jalmer Eldal (husband)**  
Marvyl Eldal

**Family Members**  
Mr. & Mrs. James Lein

**Margaret Frerck**  
Marjorie Lindstrand

**Rodney Grubb**  
Rev. & Mrs. Harold O. Vold

**Claude Z. Hitchcock**  
**Dorothy Telin (cousin)**  
Ruth Hitchcock

**Rev. Myrus Knutson**  
Virginia Jorgensen

**Helen Londgren**  
Helen Werner

**E.K. Michealson (dad)**  
Ruth Johnson

**Dr. Richard Ness**  
Robert & Joyce Bruns

**Gerald Olson**  
Leland Pederson

**Parents**  
Lyle & Alice Verhulst

**Pauline Reuer**  
Elverne & Laurie Ziemke

**Rev. Caroll Satre (husband)**  
Annabel Satre

**John O. Scheperle (husband)**  
Marie Scheperle

**Julius Szaltzer**  
Rev. & Mrs. Myron Grams

**Mildred Thingelstad**  
Mr. & Mrs. Jay Lewis

**Rev. Conrad M. Thompson**  
Mark & Marjore Thompson

**Glenn & Anne Whitcomb**  
John Whitcomb

### 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 August 9, 2005)*

**Emil Anderson**  
Allen Anderson

**Myrtle Bergland**  
Conrad & Theola Hofseth

**60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary of Douglas & Betty Fyksen**  
Rev. & Mrs David Barber

**50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary of DuWayne & LaVonne Grotta**  
Rev. David & Jeanne Hoyme

**50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary of Duane & Estelle Halstengard**  
Mr. & Mrs. Jay Lewis

**Two Family Wedding Anniversaries**  
Ardelle Lande

**Cleo McQuillin**  
Allen & Mary Van Haute

**Pastor Peter Marty**  
Ralph Gibson & Mary Junck

**Renata Schaal's 93<sup>rd</sup> Birthday (mother)**  
Flo Saeger

**85<sup>th</sup> Birthday**  
Harvey Sunt



## Christmas Giving Idea

It's not too late to give a friend or loved one a gift subscription to *Grace Matters* CDs or written Transcripts. Every week they will thank you again for this opportunity to listen to the program or to read the message.

We will be happy to include a gift card with the first shipment of CDs or Transcripts.

We welcome the following new station to the *Grace Matters* family!

KIFW 1230AM  
9:00 a.m. Sunday  
Sitka, Alaska

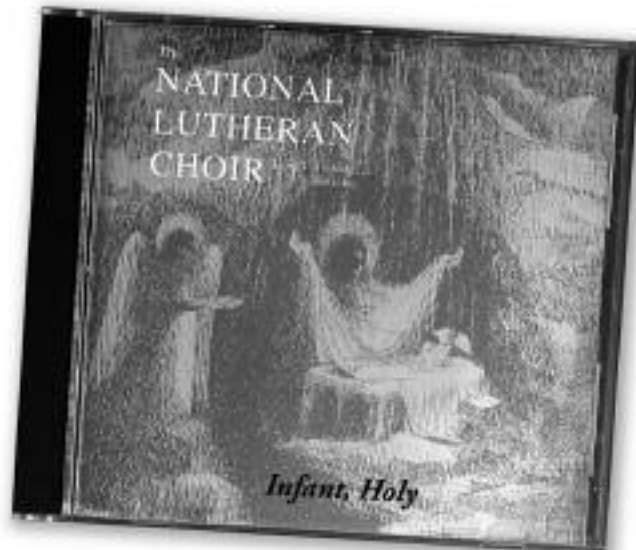
# Infant, Holy

## A Christmas CD for You

To help you celebrate Christ's birth during this season of Advent, we would like to send you a copy of *Infant, Holy* performed by the National Lutheran Choir. You will enjoy beautiful renditions of *Joy to the World*, *Tidings of Comfort and Joy*, *How Still He Rests*, *Silent Night* and *The Three Kings*.

These CD's are a wonderful gift for a loved one during Christmas or to keep for your own family's time of celebration. Simply check the box on the enclosed reply to receive your copy from *Grace Matters*.

Please also consider providing the gift of grace this Christmas season. You can do so by sending in a financial gift to *Grace Matters* today. We will use your generous support to continue sharing the grace of the season with all our dear friends and listeners.



## Coming Up On *Grace Matters*

A very special series of programs is coming up during the Sundays of Advent. "Walking through Advent with Peter Marty," will begin on Sunday, November 27, and continue through the four weeks of Advent preparing us for the birth of Jesus and the Christmas season.

Each week will focus on a word or theme as we ready our hearts for this most blessed and joyous time of the year. **Focus** is the first Sunday. **Waiting** is the second. Next is **Preparation** and following that will be **Hope**. Please join us every week on the radio, or on the Web.

Please call us or visit our Web site, [www.gracematters.org](http://www.gracematters.org), for updated Titles, Texts, Topics, and other listings!