

Grace Matters

the radio ministry of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Living in God's amazing grace

Winter 2007

The Gift of Grace

God, through Jesus Christ, has offered to humankind an amazing gift of love that cannot be earned. We call this precious gift grace—God's free gift that comes without strings attached! It is at this time of the year, when we hear and see the sights and sounds of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, that the gift of God in Jesus is proclaimed.

This Christmas why not re-gift grace—*Grace Matters* that is, the radio ministry of the ELCA? Here are a few ideas to help you share the grace that comes over the airwaves:

- *Grace Matters* individual CDs with two programs per CD. Perfect stocking stuffers for family and friends. Choose your favorite to share from the list of programs posted on www.gracematters.org. The suggested donation for one CD with two programs is \$10.00.
- *Grace Matters* printed transcripts. For those who want to read along with the spoken program or to use the reflections for devotional material. Suggested donation is \$5.00 per program.
- A year's CD subscription. Why not give a gift that lasts the entire year? A donation for a year's subscription is \$120.00. The suggested donation for a year's subscription for the print transcripts is \$75.00.

You may order these "gifts of grace" by contacting:

Dixie Miller
Grace Matters
ELCA Communication Services
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631
Telephone: 800/638-3522, ext. 2965
Dixie.Miller@elca.org



This Advent season *Grace Matters* is offering a downloadable Advent calendar. Follow Mary and Joseph as they travel to the stable in Bethlehem. Along the way meet the real St. Nicholas, shepherds caring for their sheep and a host of heaven announcing the birth of Jesus. For more information or to download the calendar go to www.gracematters.org.



\$50,000 Challenge!

From now until Feb. 1 your gift to *Grace Matters* will be doubled, dollar for dollar, up to \$50,000. An anonymous donor has made this offer with the hope of inspiring you to give a significant gift to this ministry. One hundred percent of your gift will go to the production and distribution of our radio and Web programs. For more information visit www.gracematters.org.



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Freed by the Spirit

A *Grace Matters* staff member recently received a call from a pastor requesting the CD of a particular program for a confined person he visits. After the usual pleasantries the pastor went on to tell the story of this “shut-in”—a prison inmate who was touched by Peter Marty’s interview with Eboo Patel.

“I must tell you that the prisoner who wants this program is in jail for life—he murdered someone,” said the pastor. At one time this man “ruled the prison” and was known by fellow inmates as “the beast.” People feared him. The pastor has known this man since they were young and boxed together, and remembers that “he was always so violent, everything in his life was violent.”



About three years ago the inmate’s mother noted a change. She informed the pastor that her son found Jesus. The pastor was somewhat weary about “jailhouse religion”—cynical prison slang for piety that comes from the desperation of incarceration and is soon forgotten. “I am often a bit skeptical about people when they say they find Jesus in prison, and how long this really lasts,” explains the pastor. “But I spoke with his mom years later and again she said ‘he is a changed person.’”

Sure enough, when the pastor visits this man now he encounters a new child of God, one who listens to and is touched by the *Grace Matters* radio ministry. The recording he requested was of the September 9 program. He was especially moved by a quote of Isaiah Berlin that Peter Marty used at the end of the program—he needed to listen to it again.

As Peter Marty reflected: “Patel’s straightforward style reminds me of some words Isaiah Berlin once penned. Berlin was one of the great moral visionaries of the 20th century. This is what he scribbled on a note to a friend one time:

‘Few things have done more harm than the belief on the part of individuals or groups that he or

she or they are in sole possession of the truth, especially about how to live and what to be and do; and those who differ from them are not merely mistaken, but are wicked or mad. It is a terrible arrogance,’ said Isaiah Berlin, ‘to believe that you alone are right. You alone have the magical eye that sees the truth. That no one else can possibly be right if he [or she] disagrees with you.’”

We thank God for this ministry that touches people in places we have never been. We also thank God for the support you give to this ministry.

If you would like to download the September 9 program or some other program that has touched you in a special way, visit www.gracematters.org/listen.html. To make a gift to this ministry call 800/638-3522 or write to

Grace Matters

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Chicago, IL 60631-4101

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Editorial Office:

Grace Matters

Mail:

Communication Services
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631-4101
800/638-3522, ext. 2967
773/380-2967

E-mail: gracematters@elca.org

Editorial Staff

Jan Rizzo – Editor
Dixie Miller – Editorial Assistant

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The Year in Review

Not always able to tune in to *Grace Matters*? Want to listen to a particular program for again? Go online to www.gracematters.org and listen at your convenience.

Here is a listing by subject of many of our 2007 programs:

Discipleship

February 4

Parker Palmer – The Undivided Life

April 8

Peter Marty – Hallelujah! Called by Name

June 10

Danny Wuerffel – Defining Success

June 24

Judith Valente – Nourishing Your Soul

September 2

Janet Peterman – Ritual Living, With a Flair

October 14

Dave Drapecky – Hope Born of Adversity

Health

January 14

Marie Fortune – Domination is Anything But Holy

January 21

Arthur Frank – When Our Bodies Get Sick

March 25

Murray Finck – Stretching Heart, Soul and Mind

September 16

Andrea Jaeger – Holy Laughter

Social Justice/Stewardship

January 7

Walter Brueggemann – Do You Trust God's Abundance?

March 18

Bill Davis – More Than a Bandage for the Poor

July 8

Robert Franklin – Raise Her for God

July 15

Simba Circle – Making Choices

November 25

Peter Marty – Thanks. Giving.

International

January 28

John Kamm – Inside Chinese Prisons

May 6

Philip Wogaman – No More Violence

May 13

Rick Steves – Expanding Your World

July 1

Robert Seiple – Humbly Engaging the World

July 29

Eric Olsen – Two Conspiracies: Evil & Good

Interfaith Dialogue

September 9

Eboo Patel – The Dangers of Religious Totalitarianism

November 11

The Faith Club – The Limits of Tolerance

November 18

The Faith Club – Friendship and Candor

Music

May 27 & June 3

Don Saliers and Emily Saliers – Saturday Night & Sunday Morning & The Art of Holy Listening

July 22

Ken Medema – Grace, Everywhere We Turn

Science

February 18

Timothy Johnson – Facing the Big Questions in Life

October 28

Francis Collins – Faith in Science, Faith in God

Miscellaneous

February 25

Anthony Chiffole and Rusty Hesse – Break Out the Angel Food Cake

May 20

Rob Owen – The Limits of Celebrity Worship

August 12

Joe Ehrmann – Love as Your Uniform

August 26

Lisa Jefferson – Flight 93: The Famous Phone Call



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Wrapping Yourself up as a Gift



By *Grace Matters* Host
Peter W. Marty

A young man made headlines several years ago when he crammed himself in a wooden crate and had it Fed-Ex'd to his parents' home in Texas. Risking his life from a lack of oxygen in the cargo bin, he successfully compromised airline security and ended up on the front stoop of

Mom and Dad's pad. When he popped out of the box he was *smiling*. Law enforcement and Homeland Security officials were not. They promptly arrested him and booked him for engaging in a dangerous prank.

I have long prized the line: "The gift that counts most is the one with a person wrapped inside." That man in the box, however, didn't exactly get this gift-giving line right. Putting oneself into a gift cannot mean simply making oneself the center of attention.

In this season of gift giving, it's a good idea to keep reminding ourselves of God's capacity to give a really fine gift. It so happens that God gave the greatest gift of love when God wrapped it up in an infant. This divine Baby would get more of the world's attention than floods, earthquakes, mountaintop

epiphanies and prophetic preaching.

From the example of that generous gift of God laid in the straw of Bethlehem, we have learned that the best gifts we can offer always have something of ourselves in them. So when you give a gift to someone this Christmas, be certain that the recipient will know that it embodies your love. Anything less is merely a token gift, more a checking off of a "send to" list than a heart-filled gesture of love.

So wrap yourselves generously in all that you give away. It will be your Jesus way of giving. Thanks for what you do in sharing yourself and your financial gifts with this precious radio and Web ministry.

A blessed Christmas to you and yours.



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Memorials That Live to Serve and Bless Others

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 October 11, 2007)

In Memory of:

Leona Marquart

Leona Bruns

Duane Anderson

Donald Larson

Elizabeth Lindblad

Ruth Dobrowski

Veikko (Victor) Garding

His Remaining Family

Margaret A. Olsen

Rev. Myron & Florence Grams

Opal A. Roberts (Mother)

Ruth and Ernest Harpster

Lyle Greeley

(Susan Greeley's father)

Carolyn Heidemann & Karl Andersen

Frederick & Anne King

Ruth Olson

Rev. Harris & Luetta Hostager

Jack Crow

Scott Bartell

Martin B. Jacobson

Ardis

Esther Johnson

Brenda Drill (niece)

Marjorie Lindstrand

Edward Frikken

Marrida Myron

Scot O. Nelson (brother of Bruce)

Bruce & Julie Nelson

Oscar and Amelia Karst

U.K. Nichols

Cheryl Thiele

Joyce Reinke

Bob Swanson (husband)

Dorothy Swanson

The Rev. Conrad Thompson

Mark & Marjore Thompson

Gustav & Esther Vidlund

Roberta & Roger Vidlund

Michael J. Wangerin

Dr. & Mrs. Walter M.

Wangerin Sr.

Adrian Johnson

Virginia Smith

WELCA, Spring Lake Lutheran Church, Spring Valley, WI

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 October 11, 2007)

In Honor of:

40th Wedding Anniversary of Gary & Theresa Emigh

Gloria Fuhrer

50th Wedding Anniversary of Dorothy & Vernon

Katherine Franklin

Mildred Linds 96th Birthday

Ronald & Arleen Martin

Helen Swanson