



www.tasteofgrace.com
tasteofgracevdc@comcast.net

The Taste

August, 2007

Newsletter for

Taste of Grace Via de Cristo

Our prayers....

Ultimate Healer, please be with all those fighting cancer and all those terminally ill. Be with the patient for healing, with the medical profession for wisdom and with loved ones for comfort.

Please comfort:

- Craig Christensen
- Harry Benner
- Alan

Heavenly Father, please keep wrapped in the comfort of your loving arms those who mourn the passing of loved ones. Help them to find peace in the knowledge that their loved ones are in your loving presence.

Most especially, comfort the family and friends of:

- Terri Baker
- Clara Louise Behrens
- Mary Delano
- Fred Gruber

Dear Lord, please be with those of us who are depressed and/or struggling with other emotional issues. Help us to overcome this dark void of sadness and despair. Wrap your loving arms around us and lift us up and give us the strength to overcome.

Gracious Father, be with all whom are recovering and/or undergoing surgeries. Give them strength and wrap them in your healing arms. Comfort their families with your love and compassion. Guide the doctors and give them wisdom and knowledge. Continue to be with and strengthen:

- Julie

Heavenly Father, be with those of us sick and struggling with medical problems and issues. Help our Doctors in diagnosis, give us patience as we await results, and let us find comfort and peace In your presence.

Especially with:

- Anne Marie Zan
- Don Carlson



Dear Lord, please guard and guide all of our troops and those commanding them. We pray that those making decisions seek and follow your will. We ask that you keep them wrapped in your protection. We ask that you comfort their friends, family and loved ones.

Father continue to watch over all Cursillistas in their 4th day journey. Help them to remember the mountaintop as they work in the hills and valley.

Lord, please be with your children whom you are calling to attend the upcoming fall weekends.

Be also with Rector Dave VanZant and Rectora Janeen Tietjens and the teams you are forming, that it is able to be Christ's hands, heart and ears to the pilgrims attending.

We give thanks and praise for all the joys you give us. We are most especially thankful for:

- Charisse Jesiolowski's wonderful visit to Romania.
- Craig Christensen's good surgery report

Father God, thank you for those you place in our lives, for our marriage partners, our reunion brothers & sisters and all others that help shape us into who you would like for us to become.

Thank you Lord, for your never ending love, grace, and forgiveness in our lives.

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grace, and forgiveness in our lives.**



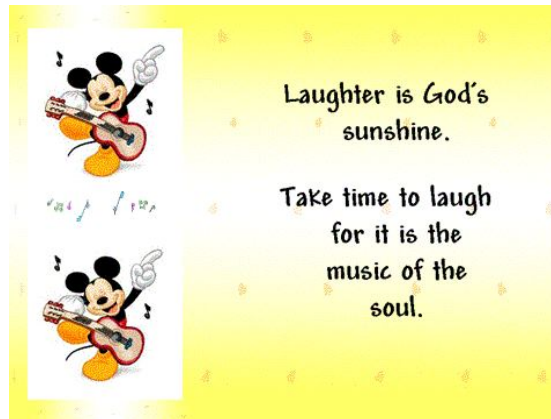


A note from the Rectora of ToG #9

TOG 9, what can I say? It was an awesome experience and I am so incredibly humbled that God asked me to be a part of that team! The team, and the pilgrims were all right there for the glory of God. I am praying that the memories will continue to inspire me in my journey.

Dave and Janeen have willingly answered God's call for TOG 10 and the praying begins now (actually, yesterday). I can't wait to hear more stories of what God is capable of in more Christian's lives.

GLYASDI,
Traci Little



A father wanted to read a magazine but was being bothered by his little girl. She wanted to know what the United States looked like. Finally, he tore a sheet out of his new magazine on which was printed the map of the country. Tearing it into small pieces, he gave it to her and said, "Go into the other room and see if you can put this together. This will show you our whole country today" After a few minutes, she returned and handed him the map, correctly fitted and taped together. The father was surprised and asked how she had finished so quickly. "Oh," she said, "on the other side of the paper is a picture of Jesus. When I got all of Jesus back where He belonged, then our country just came together."

AMEN!!!!



A WELCOME TO OUR FALL WEEKEND

From ToG #10 Rector Dave VanZant

I pray that grace and peace will be given, in abundance, to all in our "Via de Cristo" community, here and throughout the world.

Greetings, my name is David VanZant and I have been blessed with the opportunity of serving as Rector for our **"Taste of Grace" men's weekend #10**. As a brief introduction, I currently attend Shepherd

of the Hill Lutheran Church, in Lockport, with my wife Ruth and I "reluctantly" attended Taste of Grace weekend #4. I now look forward to each new weekend opportunity.

As we begin planning for the fall weekend, I would ask all who read this to take a few minutes and pray - **right now** - pray for;

Guidance; Psalm 143:10, *"Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground."*

Humility; Psalm 25:9, *"He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way."*

A servant heart; Philippians 2:7, *"But made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."*

And the courage to say yes to His call; I Chronicles 28:20, *"David also said to Solomon his son, 'be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you."*

My energy for the weekend will be directed toward; encouraging prayer in everything that we will encounter, in acting with humility and in serving the pilgrims, and each other as Christ served His Apostles and all He encountered. For me this "Via de Cristo" experience and this Christian community have been life changing, and I am always anxious to share the love and joy that are mine today because I said yes to attending a weekend and I said yes to Jesus Christ when He asked for my heart.

Whether you are called to serve or not, I ask that you pray for the pilgrims that God is preparing for this weekend, pray for those who are called and will serve and pray for the opportunity to talk to a friend about sponsoring him for the weekend. As with every weekend "Prayer Warriors" are both needed and welcome. I Thessalonians 5:16-18, *"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*



Your input is valued.

- ☰ Do you have anything you would like to share with the community via The Taste newsletter?
- ☰ Stories, devotionals, bible passages that touched your heart that you would like to share with all of us?
- ☰ Would you like to share with us what your weekend has meant to you?
- ☰ Do you have a short, clean, funny joke?
- ☰ What about an important event in your life, or one come up?

Let me know – send me an email or call me, and I will be happy to include it in the next edition of *The Taste*.

GLYASDI
Debbie Claar ToG #1
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d.claar@comcast.net



Have you moved?

Do you have a new address?
New phone number?
New email address?

Please let me know so that I can update our information.

Has someone in your reunion group mentioned they don't get emails, postcards, or phone calls from us. Have them contact us with their information.

Thanks so much!
815-436-1676 Debbie or Joe
tasteofgracevdc@comcast.net



A Message from the Lay Director

1. What do you think about most?
2. Where do you spend your free time?
3. How do you spend your extra money?

Sound familiar?

Well, lately for me all my spare time has been spent working, studying or sleeping. I am at the tail end of our annual financial audit at work while also compiling financial statements for May month-end. I come home and sit at the PC all night until I find myself rereading a question for the fourth time, when I finally hear my pillow calling my name. But in my attempt to keep God as my ultimate ideal I still read my daily devotions, discuss my scripture questions with Lenny and other mature Christians whose opinions I value, pray and listen to pastors preach on the radio in the mornings while on my way to work and I participate in corporate worship every week.

A few weeks ago two radio preachers, an article I read and a Pastor on Sunday all spoke about gifts:

- Spiritual gifts or God given talents
- Finding ourselves lacking because we're comparing ourselves to another
- Burying our gifts by denying them or refusing to explore and hone them

- Allowing the gifts He's given us to become dusty with lack of use or just not using them for God's kingdom
- A reminder that God gave us gifts because the body of Christ needs us to use them

Most times I feel God speaking to me through the lyrics of Christian music. I'll wake singing the same few lines of a song. And not one I heard right before going to bed. It makes me stop and ask myself what He might be trying to convey through those words. On rare occasions God just speaks to my mind as clearly as if it were audible. But I've never had God reiterate something to me four times in about five days. I'm still trying to discern in what way the messages about gifts fits into my life. Since I don't have the spiritual gift of discernment, this means talking with those closest to me and getting their input. That's another way God speaks to me - through mature Christians who love me, know me and who can be brutally honest with me.

How does God speak to you? Can you hear Him in multiple ways or is it always the same? How do you incorporate His message into your daily life? Do you think that if your ideal shifts you still hear His voice?



In this summer time of vacations, lazy days sleeping in and/or active days that keep us from our normal routines, I pray

that you cling to your ideal of keeping Christ as your center focus.

Listening for His voice,
Michele Koniewicz
Lay Director

PS: We still have opportunities for serving our Taste of Grace Community:

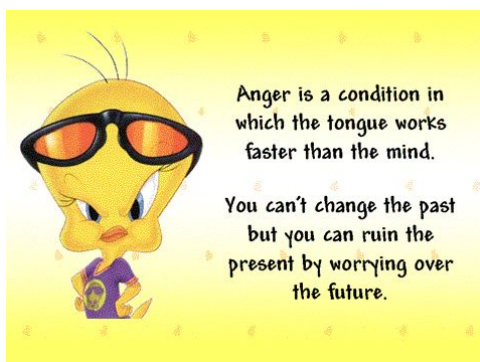
Banner Cha:

- Repair and maintain banners
- Update the banner book as needed
- Ensure the banner book is available to the Rector/a for Team Formation Meetings (can be done via Janeen, the Property Chairperson)
- Ensure the banners are available Thursday afternoon/evening of the weekend
- Pick up the banners after clausura on the last weekend of the season (women's weekend in the fall and co-ed in the spring) and store appropriately

Book Table Cha:

- Purchase Book Table items (Taste of Grace provides initial cash)
- Control inventory (a system needs to be developed)
- Ensure items are available when needed on the weekend (and at ultreyas if possible)
- Store items as needed
- Provide an accounting of any inventory losses

Please note that these two positions do not require attendance at Secretariat meetings nor do they require that you work every possible weekend. The amount of time required may be higher initially, but as with most things lightens with frequency. Please prayerfully consider assisting Taste of Grace in either of these capacities.





Pastor's Letter

*Summertime, and the livin' is easy
Fish are jumpin', and the cotton is high
Your daddy's rich, and your mamma's good lookin'
So hush, little baby, don't you cry*
From "Porgy and Bess"

This old song captures the feeling of summer, even in the music, with its low, lazy rhythm. Summertime is a lazy time: the fields are planted, the weather is hot, and when things are going well, it's a time to lay back and relax. What have we to worry about? But when things are not going well...

It can be hard to think about relaxing and enjoying the summer when you have electricity bills that are sky high – so you cannot even cool your home, or you have medical issues, or you are in jeopardy of losing your job, or you just found out your son is being sent to Iraq. As I was talking the other day with a parishioner, I thought about each and every person in the community – any community – and how

we each carry such enormous burdens. In every house in town, every car that passes by, every swimming pool, park, grocery store – the world is filled with troubled people. God's people. Where can we turn for help? For peace? For comfort?

We turn to Christ. No matter if we think our troubles are great or small, we can lay all our burdens there at the foot of the cross. We know this; we believe this. But sometimes in the midst of our day-to-day struggles, we forget this. That's why it's so important to be in community, to attend worship, to meet in your small groups to pray and to praise God. God gives us the community as a strength – when one is weak, another is strong. When we participate in

the life of the community, we encourage and support one another on this journey.

I know it's tempting to sleep in – it's too hot to get dressed, or you'd rather "worship" on the back 9, but remember, as members of the body of Christ, we are ALL needed. You might not think you need to be in worship – the fish are jumpin' and everything seems just fine – but someone needs you to be there. Even on vacation, connect with the community of believer wherever you are, and know that you make a difference in the lives of others. And the God of all consolations will continue, through the love of Christ we each share, to bless us to be a blessing for the sake of the world!



Greetings from the "Out Reach" chair(s)

Both Ruth and I pray that everyone will have a safe, healthy and happy summer, a summer filled with the grace and peace that comes only from living our lives in Jesus Christ.

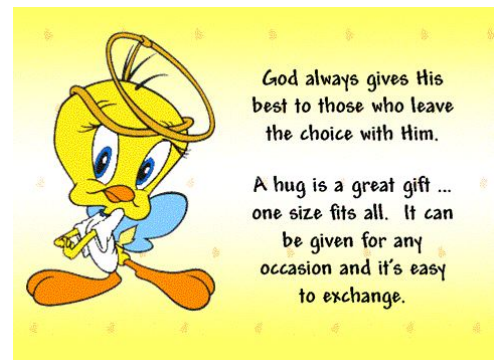
Planning for the fall weekend is under way. The Rectora - Janeen Tietjens and the Rector - David VanZant have begun to build their teams and calls are going out to prospective team members. We pray that all of you will be open to the opportunities that may be presented to you, and more importantly, that you pray for the opportunity to sponsor a pilgrim, giving him or her an opportunity for self-examination and spiritual growth.

We would also be very grateful if all community members would put notices of the up-coming weekends; November 8th -

11th for men and November 15th - 18th for women, into your home congregational bulletins, and act as the contact person for your congregation opening up the opportunity to a larger population. The "Taste of Grace" secretariat can also supply a speaker, for your congregation's, small men's or women's group - if you have an interest, please contact me (David VanZant) or my wife (Ruth VanZant) at 815-834-1293 for more information.

In July we will be traveling, along with several other members of our secretariat and community, to the "National Secretariat" gathering in Indianapolis to try and gather information and ideas that will help our community stay alive and vital.

Please pray for a safe and fruitful journey.
God's peace, Ruth and David VanZant





DeColores and Greetings, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

God is good...very, very good, indeed and in deed. For, you see, He has called me to serve as Rectora for the upcoming fall women's weekend TOG #10. While I feel somewhat inadequate to serve in this position, I know that His Holy Spirit will guide me every step of the way. Philippians 4:13 states, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength." And, I so rely on His strength daily to live out my Christian calling and fulfill His purpose in my life.

Speaking of calling, Dave VanZant, Rector for the upcoming fall men's weekend TOG #10, and I are in the process of putting together God's teams. We're currently making phone calls and contacting those whom God has placed on our hearts and minds. If we contact you, please prayerfully talk with God about this opportunity to shower others with Christ's love and grace. If you don't receive a phone call or email message, do NOT be discouraged or feel left out. For God can use you in other ways for the weekends. Again, prayerfully talk with God about how He can use your talents and abilities to bless those who will attend the men and women's weekends this fall. Are you creative and gifted at art? Why not get started on making some palanca for the pilgrims and team members? Even if you aren't "artsy", why not try putting together some placemats that can be used at mealtimes (another form of palanca)? Last but certainly not least, have you been talking with God about sponsoring a pilgrim for the upcoming weekends? If not, please do as we could sure use the community's assistance with that task.

In closing, I leave you with a poem written by Roy Lessin, which talks about being chosen by God. How humbled and blessed I am that God has chosen me as Rectora to head up and lead His team. It's my prayer that you feel just as meek and joy-filled that God has chosen YOU to be ambassadors for Christ, not only in your daily lives, but also in the work He's called you to do in the Via de Cristo Movement.

JUST THINK,

You're here not by chance,
but by God's choosing.
His hand formed you and
made you the person you are.
He compares you to
no one else—
you are one of a kind.
You lack nothing that
His grace can't give you.
He has allowed you to
be here at this time in history
to fulfill His special purpose
for this generation.

Romans 8:38-39

"For I am convinced that neither death
nor life, neither angels nor demons,
neither the present nor the future, nor
any powers, neither height nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation, will be
able to separate us from the love of God
that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

GLYASDI, Always!
Janeen Tietjens
Rectora for TOG #10



The NLS annual meeting.



Dear Lord,

So far today, am I doing all right.



I have not gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or self-indulgent. I have not whined, complained, cursed, or eaten any chocolate. I have charged nothing on my credit card.

But I will be getting out of bed in a minute, and I think that I will really need your help then.

The 2007 National Lutheran Secretariat was held in July and the following Taste of Grace Via de Cristo Secretariat members attended.

Back Row: Lenny Koniewicz, Ruth VanZant, Dave Van Zant, Dawn Constantino

Center Row: Michele Koniewicz

Front Row: Gary Constantino, Pastor Anne Strickert



Comments on weekend "Palanca" from the Secretariat meeting, 8/11/07

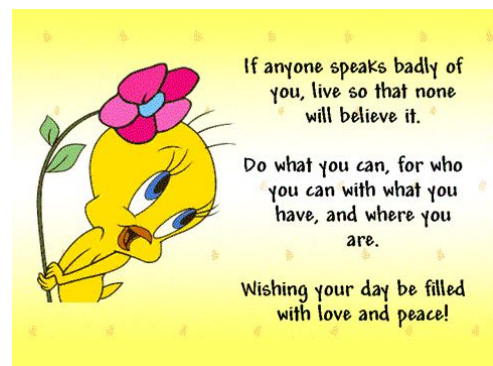
A question on the timing and distribution of "community" palanca letters was presented for discussion and direction.

The resulting motion determined that "palanca" notes to the pilgrims will be distributed throughout the weekend, rather than being held until Sunday where they often get lost in the emotion of personal letters from family and friends.

We are requesting that on all future weekends the community, actively send "palanca" letters and notes to the pilgrims for distribution during the weekend.

Letters and notes should be appropriate for the day of they are targeted for delivery, - for example notes intended for delivery on Friday may contain messages of encouragement, while notes for delivery on Saturday may be more spiritual in nature. The envelopes would also need to notate when the palanca should be delivered, for example, note on the upper right-hand corner FRI EVE or SAT AM, etc. and if there is a need to mention events experienced thus far, it must be sensitive to the weekend schedule.

God's peace,
Ruth and David R. VanZant
Outreach Chair





2007 CALENDAR

Fall Team Formation Dates are tentatively scheduled as follows:

Saturday September 15, 2007

Saturday September 29, 2007

Saturday October 6, 2007

Saturday October 20, 2007

Fall Taste of Grace Weekend #10

Men's Weekend November 8-11, 2007

David VanZant will be Rector

- Thursday November 8, 2007 - 7:00 pm Sendoff
Dedication of the crosses immediately following Send Off
- Saturday November 10, 2007 – 7:00 pm Serenade – practice begins at 6:00 pm
- Sunday November 11, 2007 - 4:00 pm Clausura
-

Women's Weekend November 15-18, 2007

Janeen Tietjens will be Rectora

- Thursday November 15, 2007 - 7:00 pm Sendoff
Dedication of the crosses immediately following Send Off
- Saturday November 17, 2007 – 7:00 pm Serenade – practice begins at 6:00 pm
- Sunday November 18, 2007 - 4:00 pm Clausura

2008 Taste of Grace Weekends

Coed Spring Weekend #11 April 24-27, 2008

Men's Fall Weekend #12 November 6-9, 2008

Women's Fall Weekend #12 November 13-16, 2008

2007 ULTREYA's

(Ultreya's are held on the Second Saturday of the month at 5:00 pm)

7/14/07, 8/11/07, 9/8/07, 10/13/07, 12/8/07

Location and additional information on following page.



ULTREYAS

Dates and locations for upcoming Ultreya's are as follows:

Time: 5:00 pm; Bring a dish or two to pass.

September 8, 2007; Westminster Presbyterian Church, 815-725-6687
1015 Winthrop Ave, Joliet IL 60435

5:00 pm Pot Luck, Worship and Communion to follow

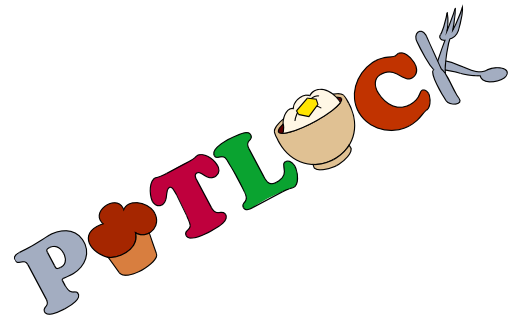
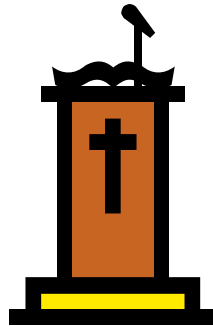
October 13, 2007; Rejoice Lutheran Church, 630-262-0596
0n377 N Mill Creek Dr, Geneva IL 60134

5:00 pm Pot Luck, Worship and Communion to follow

November will not have an Ultreya because of the Men's and Women's Weekends.

Dec. 8, 2007; Shepherd of the Hill, 815-838-0708
925 E 9th Street, Lockport IL 60441

5:00 pm Joint Worship Service, Pot Luck to follow



Come and join us as we come together in fellowship to worship and praise our Lord and Savior. We will as always eat, reunion, and listen to a short talk as someone shares with us their 4th day journey.



Taste of Grace Via de Cristo Secretariat

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Taste of Grace Email: tasteofgracevdc@comcast.net

Taste of Grace Via de Cristo Weekends are held at the:

Dickson Valley Camp and Retreat Center
8250 Finnie Road Newark IL 60541-9573 630-553-6233
630-553-6240 fax www.dixonvalley.com



**May your troubles be less,
your blessings be more
and nothing but happiness
come through your door!**