



Our Vision
To Bring the
Spirit of Grace to All



Grace Notes - May 2023



Worship Schedule

Saturday, 5:00 and Sunday, 9:00

Mission Statement

Proclaiming God's Love, God's Promises, and the Abundant Life



Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/SpiritOfGraceSCG/

Spirit of Grace Lutheran Church

15820 W Clearview Blvd

623-977-6000

In the  of The Grand

www.spiritofgrace.com

Worship Times

Saturday at 5:00

Sunday at 9:00

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Pastor Gary Benson

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Fred Bornhoeft

Director of Music

Ken Carnes

Choir Director

Sandy Hobbs

Choir Accompanist





A Message From Pastor Scott...

"...the church was earnestly praying to God..." Acts 12:5 NIV

The book of Acts is a wonderful account of what happened as the early church was forming. They preached, prayed, shared, cared, taught and learned. The baptized were at peace with one another because they were focused on the needs of others and the whole community. They were passionate about their faith and willing to risk in order that the world would know the good news of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. **It is a picture of the best of the church and one that we are called to emulate.**

This spring I'm asking you to make prayer a special focus. Please don't stop doing the other things we do as the church but be especially ***"earnest"*** in prayer. **And please pray for and about the mission of our church.** Pray about your place in living out and supporting that mission. We are an extension of the church that was begun on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem.

We will celebrate that Day of Pentecost on May 27th and 28th. It was a day when the people of God were empowered by the Holy Spirit of God to live out their calling. Pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire and empower us to do the same.

God has brought us to this very special time in the life of our church and made you a part of what he is doing here.

I thank God for you and I'm excited to see what God will do with us.

In the peace of Christ,

Pastor Scott

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ~ I Thessalonians 5:6-8 NIV





**A LOOK
at the
BUDGET**

FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF March 31, 2023...

	March	Bdgt	YTD	Bdgt	2022 YTD
Income	79,523	67,917	220,199	203,750	212,699
Expenses	73,106	70,457	209,759	211,371	250,011
Fixed Asset Purchases	-0-				
Mortgage Balance	533,717				
Households:	444		+2		448
Members:	741		-1		758

Glenn Schultz,

Director of Finance & Administration

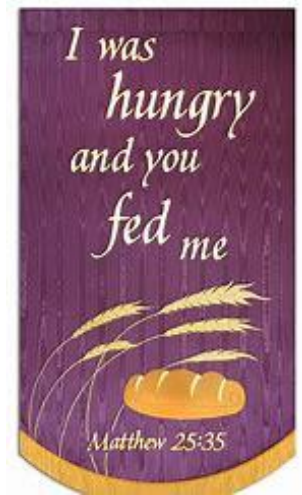
FOOD INGATHERING via Cash Donations

Please know...YOU are making a difference!!

Our contributions are much appreciated by the Food Bank!

The Food Bank uses our monetary donations to purchase items they are in most need of, at a generous discount allowing them to purchase even more!

Contribution Total For APRIL ~ \$1,410



If you have not given to this effort and want to be a part of it, **you may send a check by mail or drop it off at the office. Be sure to note that it is for the Food Ingathering.**



Glenn Schultz,

Director of Finance and Administration



Pastor Gary's Gospel Glimpse...

**And you will know the truth, and the truth
will set you free! ~John 8:32**

Dear Members and Friends,

Do you at times feel like a prisoner of your mind? Captive to situation, circumstances, at times out of your control, other times choices that went array. That said, could it be at times you are too hard on yourself, others, even our God?

Daily living offers so many choices ... physical, mental, spiritual, emotional ... to fit all the feelings and facts that control our living is impossible. We are often at crossroads, again some we choose, others we simply must contend with.

A few years ago I saw a saying that said, **"let not the last check you write be made out to ... Regret."** Such few words, yet such a provocative and profound thought. Reality says we can look back and focus on regrets ... which are now in our past and allow such to control our mind and emotions, and even shape our faith.

Or, we can concentrate on *opportunity, blessings, grace, relationships that are in our life NOW.*



Regret is captivity, a prison, darkness of the soul. However, when such is replaced with opportunities, blessings, relationship, possibility we live into the future, rather than regressing into regret, despair, depression, and again, darkness of the soul.

The Easter message sets us free ... but we have to CLAIM renewal, rebirth, a life of living in grace personally. To be free is to live changed lives of hope gifted to our soul through the power of the Holy Spirit. And as I taught in confirmation, **"For freedom, Christ has set us free!"** Free to be all we can be ... living into an abundance of joy, peace, hope that passes all human understanding.

Let go of regrets, be renewed in the freedom of God's love and mercy!!

Freedom in the Risen Christ,

Pastor Gary E Benson

***PS. As your part-time seasonal pastor I conclude this season at the end of May.
Thanks for your strong and encouraging support!!***



CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL UPDATE:

MAY 2023

Attendance continues to be very good. Easter Sunday had over 600 worshipers in attendance. However, we are now seeing some of our winter members heading out to their summer homes. We wish them safe travels, a good summer and looking forward to seeing them again in the fall. So far this year we have welcomed 18 new members into Spirit of Grace. Please make it a point to get to know our new members and make them feel at home. The financial picture starting the year is also good. (See Glenn Schultz’s report in Grace Notes). Thank you for your continued support!

The Strategic Planning Committee continues to work on our long-range plans. The Committee has been meeting bi-weekly to continue working on plans for the future of Spirit of Grace. (Please see Phil Nelson’s report in this edition of Grace Notes.)

LOOKING AHEAD! Plans are moving forward on the **celebration that marks the 2024 25th Anniversary of Spirit of Grace.** The official date is January 10, 2024, a Wednesday. The celebration will be held on January 14, 2024. *The Theme will be **God’s Work. Our Hands.*** Council Vice-President, Ellie Brooks, Secretary, Julie Townsend, and Treedah Magee are heading up the committee to plan the celebration activities. If anyone has any information regarding the startup of the congregation or pictures, please contact Ellie or Julie. This will be a very exciting time for Spirit of Grace.



Ellie Brooks Julie Townsend
Vice President **Secretary**

Treedah Magee Terry Pierce Paul Reichenbach
Sue Barbour Candace Renwall Betsy Gusea-Gerringer

Blessings in Christ,
Bruce Balanger,
Congregation President

Our Vision: To Bring the Spirit of Grace to All
Mission Statement: Proclaiming God’s Love, God’s Promises, and the Abundant Life

New Member Welcome Session!

It is a monthly opportunity for those who are new and those not so new, to learn about why our church exists and how you can be more connected and committed to our ministry. You will meet other prospective members, learn more about our mission and vision, discover various opportunities to serve and become more deeply involved in the life of **Spirit of Grace Lutheran Church**. *Everyone is invited to attend!*



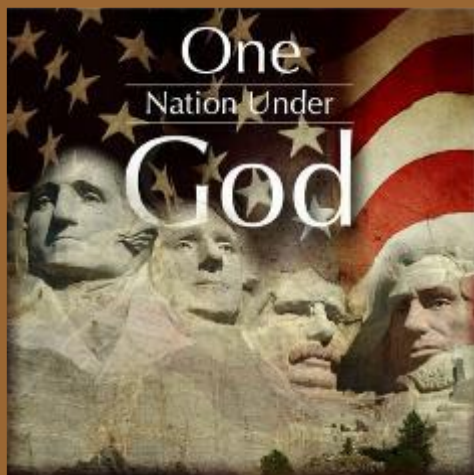
Our next Welcome Session is Monday, MAY 8 at 10:00.



Please call the church office at 623-977-6000 for more information or to indicate your interest in attending.

Hope to see you there!

Pastor Scott



NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER, MAY 4

The **National Day of Prayer** is an annual day of observance held on the first Thursday of May, designated by the United States Congress, when people are asked ***"to turn to God in prayer and meditation"***.

The president is required by law to sign a proclamation each year, encouraging all Americans to pray on this day!

DID YOU KNOW?

Laughter synchronizes the brains of both speaker and listener so that they become emotionally attuned.

Gossip and complaining make up approximately 80% of most people's conversations.

In central Italy, there is a fountain that flows red wine 24-hours a day.

It is free to everyone, except for drunkards and louts."





RACHEL'S DAY TABLE IN NARTHEX!

Child Crisis Arizona

LAST WEEK FOR CONTRIBUTIONS, ENDING MAY 7 !!

Funds to help with the establishment of the new resource building. **Checks should be made out to: Child Crisis Arizona**

The most needed items this year are:

Gift cards that are used for children get back to school outfits and shoes
Gift cards should be for Wal-Mart, Target, Amazon, Kohl's, Ross or old Navy

Diapers (size 4 and up), Wipes, Pull-ups (size 4t/5t only please), Pack and Plays
Water play toys for children ages (0 to 10) please non-violent
Hygiene items (lotion, body wash, shampoo and conditioner)

Clothing

Girls and boys short sleeve shirts (age 10 and up) - Children's shorts (age 0 to 8)
Boys and Girl teen clothing (age 13 to 17), Socks (all ages), Underwear (all ages)

****Tables will be in the Narthex for contributions until MAY 7! ****

**All contributions are tax deductible. Questions, call Debra Cunningham 623-933-6829.
Thanks in advance for your support of the children!**

I would like to share with you a few comments from children that have been helped:

"I appreciate greatly what you all do. Without this program a lot of us wouldn't be where we are today."

"You made an impact in my life that I can carry with me to help my family and the community".

"I came to you alone and frightened, neglected, hurt and abused. I now have hope again that I can grow into a fine young man."

Thank YOU!

Deb Cunningham

Make reservations for your special someone
in Café Grace, following the 9:00 church service
on May 14. No waiting lines! No high prices!

Be seated at beautifully decorated tables, and enjoy a delicious expanded menu of fluffy scrambled eggs, bacon and sausage, biscuits and gravy, country roasted red potatoes, bagels with regular or jalapeno schmear, Danish pastries, tortillas, salsa and budda (NY butter), plus fresh fruit salad.

*****While you dine, you'll be entertained by our own Sandy Hobbs and her harp.*****

You may register by purchasing before/after services on the weekends through
May 7, which will be the last day to get a reservation for Cafe Grace.
Cost \$25. CHECKS ONLY please.

You may also call Dorothy Carnes to reserve a table. Have brunch with your Spirit of Grace family & friends!

Dorothy Carnes
Fellowship Ministry



Happy Mother's Day!
Sunday, May 14

She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. ~ Proverbs 31:25-27



"Be a child again. Flirt. Giggle. Dip your cookies in your milk. Take a nap. Say you're sorry if you hurt someone. Chase a butterfly. Be a child again." ~ **Max Lucado**



UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES
May 20



ARMED FORCES DAY PRAYER

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the dedicated men and women who serve in our Armed Forces.

We pause in remembrance of all who have gone before them, often serving in harms way to protect the liberties we enjoy today.

In the name of Jesus, Amen

**** Our Prayer ****

BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS

Regular blood pressure checks are an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Hypertension is often at the root of heart disease, and if left untreated can cause organ damage.

**Have your blood pressure checked *MAY 21* —
Immediately following the 9:00 Service in the
Conference Room.**



SOMETHING NEW ADDED TO 'WATCH' FOR...

Please note the caution signs on stair steps and elevation changes in the Sanctuary warning us to please **'WATCH YOUR STEP'** to avoid sustaining injuries.

Jerry Huston
Facilities Manager

MAY 28 — (Wear Red)

Lord, send out your spirit, and renew the face of the earth. ~ Psalm 104



And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. ~ Revelation 22:5

**Everybody likes pie and ice cream! And do we have a deal for you!
— Pie, Ice Cream AND... a Movie!!**



Your Fellowship Team is putting on a Pre-Father's Day Pie & Ice Cream and Movie Event, June 11 - 1:00. You'll enjoy apple, berry and maybe peach pie with a big scoop of ice cream and then settle back to watch *'Running The Bases'*, a faith-based movie.

This is based on a true story about a small-town baseball coach who gets an offer from a larger high school to coach. He uproots his family and leaves the only home he's ever known. However, as a man of faith, he soon faces extreme opposition to his coaching methods from the school superintendent who makes the coach the target of his anger toward God.

Tickets for the event are only \$10 and Online sales will begin on May 19.

Paul Reichenbach

Men's Breakfast Team Leader

SAY HELLO AND WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS ...



LYNN SKINNER ~ Comes to us from Minnesota. Lynn and her husband are both retired. She enjoys arts and crafts, and particularly enjoyed selling trips to Belize and has visited there fifteen times! Lynn said she "came to Spirit of Grace because of Pastor Gary"...
Thank you, Pastor Gary!

MARVIN & VICKI BRINKMAN ~ Come to us from Omaha, Nebraska. Marvin is a retired Data Scientist in the Financial Industry. He has been a life-long Lutheran and enjoys hiking, and birdwatching (listening). Vicki was ordained in 1986 and employed as a hospital and LTC Chaplain, and now retired as an educator from 1998 through 2017 in both pre-school and elementary. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, outdoor activities, fitness, reading, and learning. The Brinkman's were looking for a Lutheran Church and found Spirit of Grace while driving by!



Continued on following page

NEW MEMBERS *continued...*



RICK & KAREN SAELENS ~ Come to us from Anoka, MN. Rick has retired from Sales & Marketing for a transportation company including multiple trade shows. He enjoys golfing, hiking and reading. Karen worked as a Paralegal in the County Attorney's office in Anoka. She worked with victims, drafted legal documents and worked with Civil Commitments. Karen enjoys Rosemaling — also worked for a funeral home doing Rosemaling on caskets (painting wooden furniture and objects with flower motifs), glass arts, golfing, hiking, and knitting. Spirit of Grace was recommended to them by members of their Minnesota Interest Group. *Thanks, Minnesota Interest Group!*

SHEILA GREER ~ Comes to us from Phoenix. She was employed by a telephone company many years ago but had to stop working due to a medical condition. Sheila has relocated from Phoenix and is now living with her daughter and her family in Surprise and she said she loves it! She enjoys music, crocheting & cross stitch, and singing in the Choir. Sheila said she found Spirit of Grace on the Internet.



GLENN & JOYCE OBERG ~ Come to us from Minnesota. Glenn is a retired Vice President of a propane corporation. His hobbies include Classic Cars and collecting guns — (target practice). Joyce is retired from the healthcare management industry. Her favorite interests are swimming, walking and music. They said they lived just 25 miles from the Canadian Rockies. The Oberg's also found Spirit of Grace just driving by!

PASTOR BUD & HELEN ESKRITT ~

Pastor Bud is a retired ELCA Pastor and was also the Associate Pastor here at Spirit of Grace from January 2005 until May 2006. He enjoys travel, golf and reading. Helen is a retired X-ray tech and enjoys travel and sewing. They took a special trip to Israel and participated in the Ceremony of Healing at The Church of the Nations'. *Nice!*

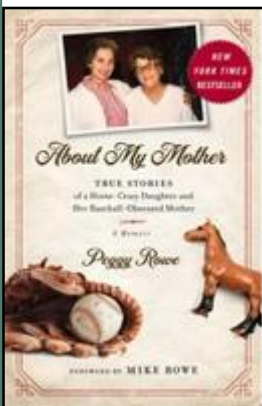


From Spirit of Grace...

CHURCH

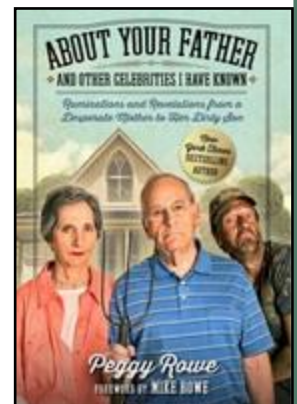
Library

Let's celebrate Mothers Day by celebrating "**America's Grandmother**", the title bestowed on Peggy Rowe after she wrote her third NY Times bestseller. Peggy was long known as a writer to her family, usually the subjects of her humorous writings, and to her friends, who were often subjected to readings by her proud husband. But publishers responded with nothing but rejection slips until her son Mike Rowe became a celebrated TV personality (*Dirty Jobs* and *Somebody's Got To Do It*). He put together a book of her columns, 10,000 copies sold out on Facebook and **Peggy became an overnight success at the age of 80!**



About My Mother: True Stories of a Horse-Crazy Daughter and Her Baseball-Obsessed Mother is a love letter to mothers that will have you laughing, crying and seeing yourself in her reflection. Dignified Thelma was determined to raise two lady-like daughters while Peggy preferred to pitch manure and gallop the countryside. Then, when major league baseball came to Baltimore, Thelma became an Orioles groupie who lived by the orange and black schedule on her refrigerator and yelled at the umpires. Life became a series of compromises that, with the advantage of distance, has become a loving memoir.

About Your Father and Other Celebrities I have Known is her story of marriage and family. Since the day they said, "I do"... Peggy's sense of humor was the perfect match for her husband's minimalist ways. From thoughts of wearing headlamps in the house to save energy, to squeezing out the last drop of toothpaste with a workbench vise, Peggy learned to pick her battles and celebrate the hilarity in each situation. Once their boys were born, woodstove mishaps and garbage dumping tales were the seed for Mike's obsession with doing dirty jobs and the comical presence he is known for today. Peggy was his most exuberant fan, supporting his career in some unconventional ways.



Carole Parnell,

Spirit of Grace Librarian



How many times have we thought we would like to express appreciation for something or someone but never get to it? If you would like to express gratitude, please share it with me at annie@spiritofgrace.com or on a note and I will post it here.

We would like to thank you all for the prayers and cards over the past few months. They are so much appreciated! Blessings and Love to all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

~ Mel and Sharon Byerley

A very big thank you to Peggi and RJ Misata who took my last-minute phone call on April 1. I realized I could not serve at a Seder table coming up the next day due to a nasty cold and Peggi and RJ stepped up and filled in for me. Dorothy Carnes' great plans went forward with their gracious help.

~ Vicki McCarville

****STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE UPDATE****

As previously announced, the Congregation Council has engaged the consulting firm of Gronlund, Sayther, Brunkow, under the direction of Evan Moilan to assist Spirit of Grace in a strategic planning process. A committee, working with Mr. Moilan, began deliberations in January and has accomplished the following steps in the process:



- ◆ **Participated in a Leadership Day event – half day retreat of Council, staff and congregational leaders**
- ◆ **Prepared and conducted a Congregation Survey**
- ◆ **Assessed Leadership Day and Survey results**
- ◆ **Interviewed community leaders**
- ◆ **Reviewed community demographics**
- ◆ **Drafted Mission, Vision, and Core Values statement for presentation to the Congregational Council**

The Committee has begun work on an Action Plan which includes identification of Ministry Results Areas including Goals and Objectives. This work will continue through the summer and early fall. We ask for your continued prayers and will continue to keep you apprised of our progress.

Phil Nelson, Chair
Strategic Planning Committee




Faith Community Nurse Corner

THE ART OF RESILIENCE

The ultimate challenge of resiliency is focusing on things you can control instead of dwelling on what you cannot change. We have the opportunity to hear former Phoenix Police Officer Jason Schechterle share his story of survival and resiliency.

****Registration for this event is required.****




The Art of Resilience
A FREE COMMUNITY HEALTH EVENT BY SUN HEALTH


Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at 8:15 a.m.
Grandview Terrace | Ballroom
14515 W. Granite Valley Dr., Sun City West, AZ 85375

When life throws you the ultimate punch, getting back up might seem like an impossibility. However, with the right tools and support, you can recover more quickly and become stronger than ever. Sun Health is honored to have **Jason Schechterle**, the ultimate representation of resiliency, as the keynote speaker at the 6th annual The Art of Resilience. His incredible story of survival is now his calling, sharing a new perspective on life, rebirth, and transformation in an event you'll never forget.

8:15 a.m.	Check In
9:00 a.m.	Roadmap to Resilience <i>Barbara Mason, Vice President of Home and Community Based Services, Sun Health</i>
9:50 a.m.	Burning Shield <i>Keynote Speaker, Jason Schechterle, Former Phoenix Police Officer</i>



Register today by calling (623) 257-6351 or visit SunHealthWellness.org/resiliency




Featuring Speaker

JASON SCHECHTERLE
Former Phoenix Police Officer

Former Phoenix Police Officer Jason Schechterle knows firsthand the importance of resiliency. Fourteen months into what he hoped was a lifelong law enforcement career, Jason suffered serious burns over 40% of his body after a taxi traveling over 100 mph rear ended his patrol car, trapping him inside. His ascent from one of the worst experiences imaginable to describing himself as the luckiest person alive is a testament to resiliency. He's using that experience to encourage others.

Deborah Frusciano RN BSN ACRN CT

Faith Community Nurse
deborah@spiritofgrace.com
623-977-6000 ext 140
602-909-8369 cell



This symbol - with the cross, water and a white lily - identifies the women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as children of God: baptized, forgiven, adopted into God's family, full of grace and hope in eternal life. It is a reminder of the growth, beauty and vitality that rise out of that life-giving baptismal water. The symbol also reminds us of the mission of the Church to "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." **MATTHEW 28:19**



Women's Ministry of Spirit of Grace (Women of the ELCA)

It is a busy time for the WELCA women. We are working on scholarships for the Triennial Gathering in September, continuing with donations for Rachel's Day under the guidance of **Rachel's Circle**, and **planning a Bible Study for May on Psalm 23.**

Many Blessings,

Sue Todd, WELCA President



Please join us at a time that is convenient for you (See the list of Circles below.)

■ May Bible Study for Circle gatherings: This month only 2 WELCA circles will meet. They will study the 23rd Psalm led by Sue Todd, the WELCA president.

■ Members of other circles who are still in the Surprise area and all women of Spirit of Grace are invited to join either circle gathering to hear and discuss this familiar Psalm, which reminds us that in life or in death — in times of plenty or want — God is good and worthy of our trust. The psalm uses the metaphor of a shepherd's care for his sheep to describe the wisdom, strength and kindness of our God.

■ **Monday, May 8, 9:30 — Martha Circle gathering in the Church Fellowship Hall.** Circle leaders are Barb Stenberg bstenberg3@gmail.com and Sue Barbour suejbarbour623@gmail.com

■ **Monday, May 8, 1:00 — Mary Circle gathering in the Church Conference Room.** Circle leader is Sue Tedell sjtedell@gmail.com

Continued on following page



WELCA NEWS continued ...

***Rachel Day Contributions Continue
Until May 7!***



Have you seen that table in the Narthex filled with children's clothing, diapers, and gift cards for popular stores such as Target and Wal-Mart? Those are the donations of the congregation for the WELCA-sponsored **Rachel's Day service project, which continues through Sunday, May 7.** All of these wonderful items will be presented to Child Crisis Arizona, a Phoenix-based organization which assists those needing help, especially children of all ages, after serious trauma.

Deb Cunningham (623-933-6829) is the coordinator of this project and can answer questions you might have about the donations. A list of most needed items was published recently and can still be obtained. ***What a giving community Spirit of Grace is! Let's keep it up!***



In the Future:

*****Wednesday, May 17, 1:00 —WELCA Board meeting in the church Conference Room**

*****Mary and Martha Circle gatherings will end in May for the spring.**

Summer gatherings of combined Circle members will take place in **June, July, and August.**

The dates to mark on your calendars are the second Mondays at 1:00 for the months of June 12, July 10, and August 14. The summer programs/Bible studies are yet to be announced, but come and join your fellow sisters in Christ for fellowship, coffee and treats, and the Bible study. *Check the Sunday bulletins and Grace Notes for more information.*

*****Comfort Covers workdays will take a vacation until the fall.**

*****The Women of the ELCA (WELCA) Triennial Gathering** will take place right here in Phoenix on **Thursday-Sunday, September 21-24.** Registration forms and more information is available at **welcatg.org.** for this gathering of Lutheran women from all 50 United States.

*****Individual Circle gatherings also will take a vacation in September.**

But, the date of the combined Circle fall kickoff will be Thursday, October 12, 1:00 in the Fellowship Hall. Watch for more information in Sunday bulletins and Grace Notes for the program.

Sue Tedell

WELCA News Coordinator

WHAT FUN TO CREATE AND GIVE TO OTHERS!

What a fun-filled and spirited day, women of Spirit of Grace had on March 21 when they cut, ironed, sewed and tied quilts, called Comfort Covers, for graduates of I-HELP (Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program). Julie Townsend and Sue Todd, WELCA's past and current presidents, plus Bekki Hamilton and Sue Barbour started the service project and now head up the program with about 15 sets (that's 30 in all) helping hands. The sewers will take a break for the summer but will get underway again in the fall. ***Watch for announcements then!***



HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY...!!!

