

# THE WITTENBERG WAY

## PASTOR'S PAGE

June 2019  
Volume 11, Issue 6



Dear Grace Family,

Where has the year gone? We have already arrived at the Feast of Pentecost this Sunday where we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. One of the gifts the Spirit has empowered over the years is music, and especially, the rich hymnody of the church. As we gather each week around Christ's Word and Sacraments, the music undergirds and reinforces the truths of God's Word as "we sing to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with our hearts" (Eph 5:19).

In this issue of the Wittenberg Way, you will read about our most pressing stewardship need, which is our beloved organ. It is, quite frankly, a Frankenorgan. Years ago, it was built from several different organ manufacturers parts and pieces that were never intended to go together. While our organist, Michael, has done his best to cover up her flaws and make her sound as good as he can, the time has come for us to invest in restoring her as she is now on life support. Our council has authorized an organ fund and our stewardship team will be putting together a plan to raise funds to support a multi-phased approach to restoring her to health. I would ask you to prayerfully consider giving to this cause in addition to your regular giving.

I would like to congratulate our new confirmands - Spencer Huntley, Luke Rall, and Willis Razak - on the successful completion of several years of catechesis and passing their oral exams before their pastors, elders, and deaconess. Well done! I would also like to congratulate the Yow family on the birth of their daughter, Isabel Joy Yow. Also, congratulations to Elle Hansen on her graduation from High School.

In Christ's Service,

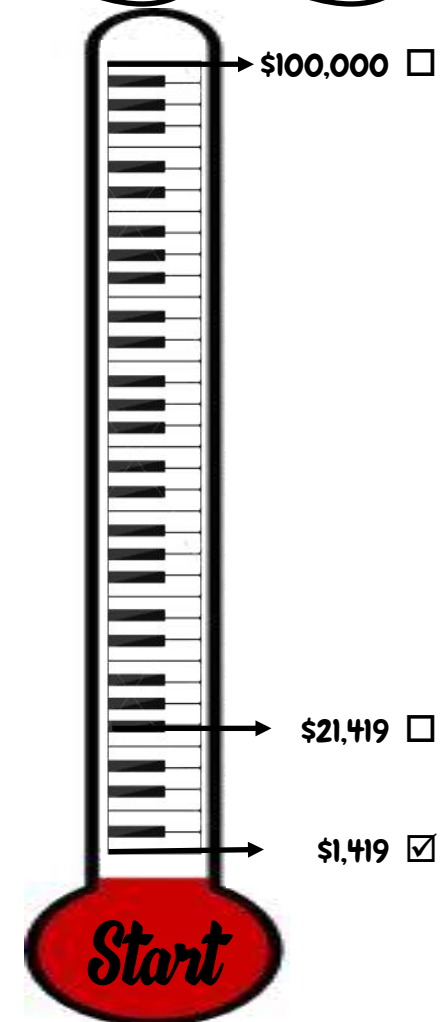
Pr. Brian W. Thomas

*Did you know you can make your offering to Grace the same way you pay household expenses, give gifts and shop for groceries without leaving your home? We love seeing you each week in church, but often you might run out of the house forgetting your offering. It's easy, on your computer, laptop, or phone just log into your bank account and add Grace Lutheran Church to your pay bills/send money feature. You can set up for regular contributions each week or monthly and anytime you remember all of God's gifts.*

### WHAT'S INSIDE

<b>THE NEED FOR CREEDS</b>	<b>PG. 2</b>
<b>THE GRACE ORGAN</b>	<b>PG. 4</b>
<b>PRESIDENT'S LETTER</b>	<b>PG. 6</b>
<b>GRACE PRESCHOOL</b>	<b>PG. 7</b>
<b>FACES OF GRACE</b>	<b>PG. 7</b>
<b>PRAYERS, EVENTS &amp; BIRTHDAYS</b>	<b>PG. 8</b>

### GLC Organ Fund



# The Need for Creeds: Why Do We Recite Them?

PAGE 2

By Pastor Brian

*This summer I will be breaking with the lectionary and preaching on the truths of the Apostle's Creed for ten weeks. In this article, I wanted to remind you why we confess the faith using the creeds in our worship service each week.*

After visiting our church for the first time, a woman commented, "I really liked that poem written by the apostles." When this story was conveyed to me, it took me a minute to figure out what she meant, and then it dawned on me. She was referring to the Apostles' Creed. This woman was raised in a nearby evangelical mega-church and had never heard of, let alone confessed, the Apostles' Creed. While it may leave you scratching your head that someone may not be familiar with something the church has practiced for nearly two millennia, it serves as a good reminder that many churches have drifted far from her ancient moorings.

In the late fourth century, a little known figure in church history, St. Vincent of Lerins, is famous for a single sentence: "Hold fast that faith which has been believed everywhere, always and by all." This succinct phrase gives the Church solid, reliable guidance in interpreting and confessing the truths of the Bible. Enter the creeds.

The Latin term *credo* means, "I believe," and it is from this word that we have inherited the word creed. Over time, the Church of Christ has written and adopted a few ecumenical creeds that summarize the main tenets of the Christian faith: The Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. Sometimes you will encounter a well-meaning believer that says something like, "You don't need man-made creeds if you have the Bible." In this case, it is thought that the creeds trump the Bible. Nothing could be further from the truth! The

creeds affirm the faith that has been *believed everywhere, always, and by all*. They do not replace or supplant the Bible in authority but give us an orthodox summary of the faith drawn from the Holy Scriptures for us to publicly confess.

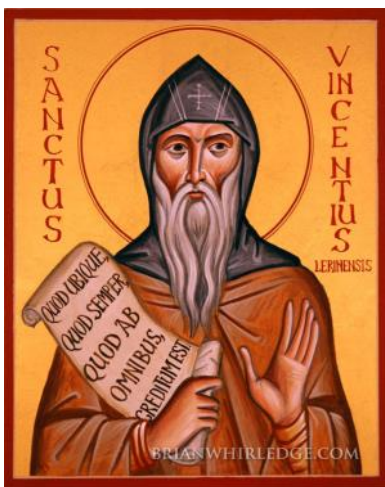
We live in a time where people are skeptical of tradition; where the individual takes precedence over the many, but this has not always been so. Christians are a part of a larger community of faith. When we are baptized into the Holy Trinity we are adopted into the body of Christ who becomes our brothers and sisters (like it or not). There are no lone-ranger Christians isolated from the many. When we confess the faith of the Apostles' Creed we unite ourselves to Christians in the past, present, and future. Faith is personal, but it is not private. As Luther Reed says, the creeds witness to the "perpetuity, unity, and universality of the Christian faith; it binds Christians to one another and to the faithful of all centuries" (*The Lutheran Liturgy*, 302).

To confess the creeds is to take a counter-cultural stand. We are not just expressing our own views or our personal priorities, but as Ben Myers notes:

We are joining our voices to a great communal voice that calls out across the centuries from every tribe and tongue. We locate ourselves as part of that community that transcends time and place. That gives us a critical distance from our own time and place. If our voices are still echoes, they are now echoing something from beyond our own cultural movement... the truest and most important things we can ever say are not individual words but communal words (*Apostles' Creed*, 10–11).

While the creeds have served many purposes, let me mention three of the most important:

First, *the creeds provide a brief summary of the Christian faith*. No one baptized into the life of the Church makes up their own personal beliefs. It is something that has "once been delivered" (Jude 3). You do not become a Christian by reciting a creed, but the creed does provide the substance of what you should believe about God the Father, Son, and Holy



## The Need for Creeds: Why Do We Recite Them?

Spirit. The creeds answer the question, “What do Christians believe?” The creeds provide a concise narrative framework of the Bible’s story from creation to consummation that is both meaningful and memorable.

Second, *the creeds help us avoid inadequate or incomplete versions of the Christian faith*. In other words, they safeguard the truth. They are like a fence around a shepherd’s property that allows his sheep to roam and graze, but not stray into danger. We will never outgrow our need for the basics the creeds provide. To borrow a phrase of my father-in-law, they keep the main thing the main thing. The creeds, especially the Nicene Creed, was written to combat heresies that had arisen in the early church. By adopting and confessing the creeds, we are rejecting the same errors and holding fast to the truth.

Third, *the creeds unite the church in a common confession by their use in worship*. Far from being a device of the ivory tower, writes Michael Horton, creeds were the way ordinary tradespeople and farmers could learn about and pledge their lives to the God of the Bible (“Creed and Confessions,” *Mod Ref*, 26/3, 28). A central act of our life of faith is confessing it before others. As Jesus promised: “Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven” (Matt 10:32). The creeds provide a means of unified confession that is biblically sound, transcending many denominational lines of demarcation, and are free of many of the cultural trends that tend to sweep aside the fundamentals of the faith. Again, they help us hold fast the faith, as St. Vincent exhorted, which has been believed everywhere, always and by all.

### WE THREE CREEDS...

**THE APOSTLES’ CREED:** (150 CE) Written in response to gnostic denials of the *humanity* of Jesus. The apostles didn’t write it, but as it summarizes what they taught, it has been used as a baptismal formula since the second century.

**THE NICENE CREED:** (325 CE) Written in response to Arias’ denials of the *deity* of Jesus. An elaboration of the Apostle’s Creed, it is used in Eucharistic celebrations.

**THE ATHANASIAN CREED:** (5th century-100 years after St. Athanasius, a brilliant grumpus who defended the church from those wishing to “shrink” God.) A 44 line statement of the Trinity written for use in worship (church obviously lasted much longer then).





# The Grace Organ – A Gift to be Treasured

by Michael Burke

PAGE 4

August 2009

As I write this article for the newsletter, the San Diego Chapter of the American Guild of Organists has just about completed a grueling week of Pipe Organ Encounter. POE is a national event sponsored by the Guild to promote the pipe organ to young adults ranging in age from 13-18. During this week-long event, attendees are introduced to the pipe organ through a series of concerts, lectures and lessons. I was asked several months ago if the Grace organ could be used this week to give lessons on, since it is one of the largest organs in the county, and one of the most unique. I agreed, so each morning this week, students have been able to experience our wonderful instrument while taking lessons from some very competent instructors.

This year, POE took place in 9 cities across the US, San Diego being one of them. The reason I write this to you is two-fold: one, to let you know about this wonderful program for young music students, and two, so that you get a sense of what people outside of our church think of our wonderful instrument.

A few evenings ago, I attended one of the POE recitals featuring Chelsea Chen on the First Methodist organ in Mission Valley. While there, I was introduced to some other organists in the city, many of whom exclaimed, "Oh, you're at Grace! Wonderful organ!". I also had several conversations with members of the Guild who indicated that they knew and loved the Grace organ and were hoping that the church was committed to making the necessary repairs so that, perhaps in a few years, they could begin holding Guild recitals on it, once again.

I am sure there will be more than a few gasps from people reading this who thought the organ was in perfect working order, particularly now that it has stopped playing by itself. Unfortunately, that couldn't be further from the truth. "But", you say, "We just spent thousands and thousands of dollars just a few years ago to completely restore the organ." While that is true, the organ was not only NOT completely restored, some problems that were present at the time were not fixed at all and have only gotten worse. Please don't get me wrong, the money spent was not all wasted. Several ranks of pipes were added to the instrument, the console was rebuilt to include draw knob stops, and a digital transposer and several new banks of memory were added. These are all good things, however, as one person who knows the organ well put it, "Bells and whistles were added, but some of the basic problems were never addressed". Most

of the problems associated with the instrument are technical and will take a qualified organ builder/restorer to address. For example, the electrical wiring inside the chambers can be classified as nothing short of a disaster. There are severe chest problems in the Choir Division (all the stops that are played on the 1st keyboard), as well as massive air leaks both in the Choir and Positive reservoirs. Also, several ranks of pipes were installed in locations that are completely inaccessible for tuning or repair. The problems listed here, are but a few.

To make sure the organ sounds as good as possible, I have learned since I came to serve as your organist what things to avoid using when playing for you during the Divine Service. For now, the organ is certainly usable and portions of it are working as intended. However, as we begin to consider our options with regard to the instrument's repair, it is important to remember, as a congregation, the treasure that we possess. Historically, like our building itself, this organ is listed with other treasured instruments from all over the country with the Organ Historical Society. As well, our organ is the 5th largest pipe organ in San Diego County, but there is scarcely one in the county that compares given the combination of the sound of the organ and the acoustics in the Sanctuary.

Since 1930 when E.A. Spencer first installed this instrument, our organ has served Grace Lutheran Church well, helping all who have worshipped here to lift their voices to Almighty God in songs of Praise and Thanksgiving, drawing people to the church through recitals and concerts, and using it as a vessel to train up young organists who will serve the church in the future. I look forward to the day when this instrument will be restored to its full potential once again.

Soli Deo Gloria,  
Michael Burke



## The Grace Organ – A Gift to be Treasured

The article on the previous page is one I submitted for the Wittenberg Way in August of 2009, just shortly after I was hired as your Organist and Choir Director. It talks about our organ and what a treasure we possess not only for the robust accompanying of our Liturgy and hymns, but also a treasure for the music community of San Diego. As Pastor Brian reiterated last week to the congregation, after the Word and Sacraments, the music at Grace is a major component in the Worship of our Gracious Lord.

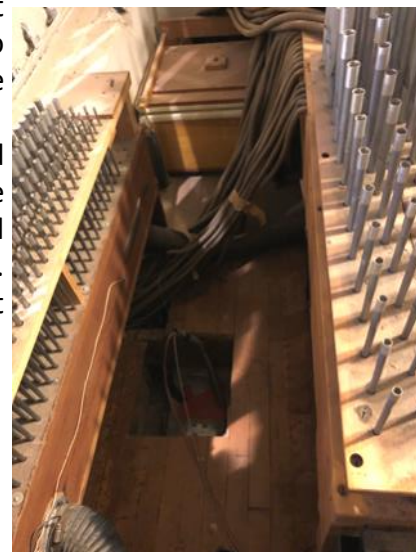


As you read through the article written – *nearly 10 years ago* – the issues with the organ that I outlined then are still present today, only exacerbated with the passage of time. There is one exception. In 2010, the Mezzanine was refurbished and the organ console, Positiv Division, and Sanctuary Choir were relocated there. While that was being done, the 7 existing ranks of the Positiv Division were

completely restored, 2 additional ranks were added to properly accompany the Sanctuary Choir and the Spanish Trumpet En Chamade was revoiced. Since that time, however, the remaining 51 ranks in the front of the Sanctuary along with the chests they are sitting on have continued to deteriorate. Dale Sorenson from L.W. Blackinton & Associates, who has serviced our organ for years, has been lovingly holding the organ together, mostly with Gorilla tape, to keep it playing and in reasonable tune. We have reached the point, however, that even the Gorilla tape is losing its effectiveness. With the approval of the Grace Council, we have, once again, requested that the Blackinton firm provide us with cost estimates that will break down the complete restoration of the organ (minus the Positiv Division) into 4 separate phases. The total cost of this restoration is sizeable (which is why it's taken 10 years to get to this point), however, the Council and Pastors have agreed that not moving forward with this project will only cause further deterioration to the point that the organ may one day be un-playable, not to mention that the longer we delay, the more costly the repairs become.

You will soon be hearing from the Stewardship Committee and Members of the Church Council about plans for a Capital Campaign with the sole intent of fully restoring our magnificent organ. Until that time, I would ask that you prayerfully consider how you can help in this worthy endeavor. Thank you for your continued support, your consideration, and most especially, your prayers.

Soli Deo Gloria,  
Michael Burke  
June 2019



### HOW OUR OFFERINGS STACKED UP IN MAY AND THE YEAR

May Offerings Actual	\$17,429	YTD Offerings Actual	\$100,578
May Offerings Budget	\$18,525	YTD Offerings Budget	\$102,618
<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>\$ 1,096</b>	<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>\$ 2,040</b>



Members of Grace,

By way of midyear report, I'd like to discuss some of the priorities and projects the Council has been working on this year.

Congregational Safety – One of the great disappointments of the age for me is that our churches and leadership have to be concerned

with the potential for violence on our premises, in addition to the ordinary risks of fire, earthquake, theft, vandalism, and the like. It's never comfortable to confront the issue, but to fail to do so is to shove our heads in the sand and hope...and hope is not a strategy. Our Safety Committee, which has had the input of legal, law enforcement, military, and medical resources has recommended and the Council is implementing procedures that are designed to secure unused entrances during worship and to place ushers or other members of the congregation at the front entrance. The church's primary medical kit (located outside the office) has been updated and smaller, portable kits have been placed near the corners of the sanctuary where they are inconspicuous, but accessible. The Elders will also be addressing the size and duties of the Usher Corps. I would like to stress that we are in need of able-bodied people, particularly men, who are willing to serve as Ushers as well as others who are willing to be part of a "Tap Corps", meaning when the ushers go forward during the Offering or Communion, they are available to be tapped to stand at the rear of the church so that our door doesn't appear to be unsupervised. While members of the Council, Elders, and Safety Committee are already checking and locking rear doors once the service is underway, we are also investigating automated locking functionality that will both permit locking, but admit certain persons who need access between services using an authorized key fob. Other measures are in the works and we are doing our best to balance the type of worship environment we all cherish with the need to address new, unfortunate safety issues. Please don't leave this to others; take part of the responsibility and involve yourself at some level when assistance is sought. You can speak to Ted Nilsen about the Usher and Tap Corps.

Expansion of the Pre-School – The Council's investigation of the potential for expansion of the school actually goes back to last year, but we have reached the stage where the Council is favorably considering the expansion and members of our congregation and Council are engaged in some early drawings and preliminary engineering studies that

need to be done. The school represents the majority of the church's revenues and expanding it may be critical to the anticipated future costs of maintaining our aging facilities, preparing for replacement of the elevator, and importantly, beginning the process of replacing our organ in stages. Expanding the school entails additional legal risk and costs that are not insignificant, particularly in California, but the Council sees the additional revenue as potentially critical to our long-term ability to maintain the buildings, systems, and worship environment we all hope to preserve. Realistically, while we can hope and pray that individuals of means will assist the church along the way, things like the roof, the elevator, and the organ are budget busters and it would be better to have a controllable and predictable source of revenue for them.

Organ Fund Drive – The organ is approaching the time when its episodic malfunctions are going to spread and it is the Council's judgment that concrete steps should be taken to begin a staged renovation and replacement of the organ's various pieces and systems. The first step is the replacement of the "brain" of the organ, meaning the console where Michael sits and where the keyboard manuals and stops are located. It seems like this is place to start because the capabilities of the console will dictate what other blowers, fans, pipes, and the like will be appropriate and operable. The console will be approximately \$100,000.00. The church will receive a donation of \$20,000 from the estate of David Long that will be earmarked for this and the Council is willing to devote another \$20,000 from reserves to the drive, an amount that will not compromise other contingencies in the Council's view. The remainder will be sought from the congregation and anyone else willing to donate and we're trying to hit the mark by year end. The organ is a very important part of our worship at Grace. Perhaps if I threaten guitar masses? Just kidding, but please prayerfully consider what you can do. Doing the entire organ will be a project of years, but it's time to start.

Prayer for the Church – People can wonder what God's will is for them, but the Bible says it succinctly: "Rejoice, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:12–28. I'm still trying to decide if it's comforting or challenging; but it's what we're to be about. Please remember to include Grace Lutheran, Pastor Brian, Pastor and Deaconess Snashall, the Church Council, the Elders, and myself in your prayers; pray for the church's safety and preservation. And don't forget to rejoice and give thanks for the very special repository of confessional and liturgical worship that Grace is. May God's blessings be upon each of you.

Randy Houts





## GRACE PRESCHOOL

### MISS VANESSA

Vanessa has been with Grace for seven and a half years after convincing her that it would be a wonderful place to work AND she could love on babies all day! She has always been passionate about working with young children, going to conferences and being part of National Association for the



Education of Young Children for over 35 years. Becoming a part of the Grace family has been a blessing in more ways than one. She is an active member of Grace church and is probably most recognized by her huge smile, which she is frequently wearing!

As a staff member, we will be saying goodbye to Miss Vanessa, as she will be retiring at the end of June. She promises to come back and sub for us when we need her and you will probably be seeing her around for more church events and activities.

### MISS BERTHA

Bertha is one of our two original (as we are now) staff members. She has been with Grace since January 2008. In our professional field, that is a long time to be in



one place and we appreciate her dedication and commitment. Her passion has always been with the toddler age and she has a knack for it. Bertha's name is most often the first name the toddlers start saying. Very cute and sometimes funny!

Through her growth and confidence here at Grace, Bertha is ready to start mentoring some younger and less experienced staff in hopes of fostering a renewed passion in the younger generation for the teaching of young children.



Eleanor Hansen graduated from Frances Parker school last week and will be attending Hillsdale College in the fall. Congratulations Elle and thank you for your service at Grace. Elle has been an acolyte and crucifer for several years and we will miss her.



Kalisha Patterson was baptized on Sunday May 26 by Pr. Brian. Kalisha is Matthew Morgan's fiancé. Matthew graduated from SDSU with honors and received a BS in Aerospace Engineering. He was commissioned on May 24th as a second lieutenant in the United State Marine Corps. He is shown in the middle photo with his mother, Patty and father, Scott. Congratulations!



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The Reverend  
Brian W. Thomas

The Reverend  
Gleason Snashall

Deaconess  
Doris Snashall

Music Director  
Michael Burke

Office Manager  
Gretchen Jordan

Preschool Director  
Rexanna Blas

Divine Service  
8:00 am & 10:30 am

Augsburg Academy  
9:30 am

Nursery available



## PRAYERS

Today and every day include some time for prayer . . . for yourself, for your church family, and for those in need.

**Prayers for strength in time of need:** Bill, Rachel, Hayden, Don, Dave, and Rev. Dr. Herbert Mueller

**Prayers for our missionaries:** Rev. James May (Kenya), Daniel Conrad (Central America), Dr. Rev. Ron and Mary Anne Rall (Papua New Guinea)

**Prayers for the military:** Thomas Abbott, Nathaniel Beaver, Rev. John Bombaro, Andrew Bund, Andrew Burke, Alex Cavins, Gaby Cavins, Christian Cole, Jon Feazel, Jonathan Fisch, Brenda Fonseca, Tajy George, Jack Lynn George, Jr., Joseph Jindrich, Jack Ogden, Dave Miceli, Matthew Morgan, Eric Mitchell, Jacob Neuberg, Heath Russert, Andrew Warren

**Prayers awaiting the arrival of a child of God:** Jeremy & Jessika, and Brandon & Jennifer as they await the arrival of a child of God.

**Prayers for those unable to come to services:** Lorna Winterstein, Mary Jane Robinson, Rev. Don & Maryann Preisinger.

## CALENDAR & EVENTS

This week begins our summer service schedule with only one service on Sunday at 10:00 am. Augsburg Academy and Wednesday Bible Study will be on recess until September. Pr. Gleason's class will continue at 9 am.

## Boatin' on the Bay! Youth Event Sat. June 15th at Noon

Paul & Gloria Himmelberger have invited Grace families to their boat and picnic on Mission Bay for a fun youth outing and picnic lunch on the beach. There's a small dinghy and two kayaks for paddlin' around the water. Bring your own lunch, drinks and snacks. Pick up a map from the desk in the hallway. If you have any questions, contact Pastor Brian.

## BIRTHDAYS

### JUNE

10- Elvie Nichols  
12- Jack George  
14- Gabrielle Moore  
14- Gavriel Taylor  
15- Dillon Diers  
17- Carolyn Hansen

20- Lily Newton  
20- Thomas Gertz  
22- Renee Thompson  
23- Natalie Brown  
24 -Tony Mezzadri

### JULY

5- Scott Weselis  
8- Natalie Lukaesko  
9- George Serrano  
11- Steve Paylor  
12-Brandi Burke  
13-Andrew Burke