

THE WITTENBERG WAY

PASTOR'S PAGE

February 2019
Volume 11, Issue 2



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace Lutheran is a unique and special church for so many reasons. One of those ways is that we are a commuter church. People are willing to drive a long way to worship and participate in ministry here, often passing 5-10 other Lutheran churches just to get here. I will never take that for granted, but it does present a challenge. How do we build up solid friendships and community when most of us can only get here for a few hours on Sunday? To help facilitate doing "life together" as Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it, we will be offering Grace Gatherings beginning in March. Please take time to read the article in this issue and sign up to participate in a gathering near you.

Next Sunday we begin a short three-week season known as Gesimatide, which is probably the least known season of the church year as the majority of churches in the west no longer celebrate it. This season is also known pre-Lent as its purpose is to prepares us for Lent, a journey in our Baptismal life to die with Christ and rise again with Him on Easter.

The three Sundays are simply English conversions of the Latin words for 70th day, 60th day, and 50th day. Septuagesima (70 days to Easter), Sexagesima (60 days to Easter), and Quinquagesima (50 days to Easter). Lent itself is the 40 day period to Easter. Sundays, or "little Easters" in Lent, are excluded in the numbering, in case you actually wanted to do the math.

Each of the Sunday's readings, interestingly enough, correspond to the Solas of the Lutheran Reformation, making this often neglected season the most Lutheran of all.

A Blessed Gesimatide to you all!

In Christ's Service and yours,

Rev. Brian W. Thomas

CATECHISM CONVOCATION

Saturday, May 4th, 2019, 8:30 am to 2:30 pm
Grace Lutheran Church, San Diego
"Teaching and Practice of The Lord's Prayer"
Guest Presenter: Rev. Peter C. Bender
(expert catechist in the LCMS)

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WHY ARE TRADITIONAL BAPTISM FONTS EIGHT-SIDED?

Pr. Brian W. Thomas

The Christian concept of time is marked with our Lord's presence as He enters our lives, time, and space through the Church's weekly, seasonal, and yearly liturgical rhythms through His Word and Sacraments. In the Old Testament, Israel was given the command to "remember the Sabbath by keeping it holy" (Exodus 20:8). This was the "seventh day" and celebrated on Saturday as a day of rest to give thanks to God for the gift of creation and His continued sustainment of it. The Sabbath day prefigured the need for an eternal and new creation rest, which was inaugurated by Jesus' resurrection from the dead on Sunday morning, or the eschatological "eighth day" as the early church fathers recognized it.

Following His resurrection from the dead, the weekly observation of the first creation was rendered obsolete by the celebration of the new creation, thus the followers of Jesus gathered on Sunday to celebrate their Lord's resurrection victory and the renewal of life found only in Him.

In an Easter Sermon given to the newly baptized and confirmed, St. Augustine discussed the symbolism of the eighth day, showing how baptism fulfills the Old Testament institution of circumcision, which was done on the eighth day after birth:



This is the octave day of your new birth. Today is fulfilled in you the sign of faith that was prefigured in the Old Testament by the circumcision of the flesh on the eighth day after birth. When the Lord rose from the dead, he put off the mortality of the flesh; his risen body was still the same body, but it was no longer subject to death. By his resurrection he consecrated Sunday, or the Lord's day. Though the third after his passion, this day is the eighth after the Sabbath, and thus also the first day of the week. And so your own hope of resurrection, though not yet realized, is sure and certain, because you have received the sacrament or sign of this reality, and have been given the pledge of the Spirit.

It is through the missionary Sacrament of Holy Baptism that we enter into the life of Christ:

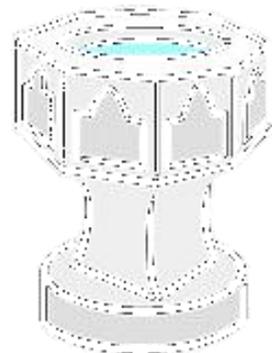
We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Rom 6:4)

For this reason, the early church built baptismal fonts that were eight-sided to visibly teach that baptism is the means by which we enter this new creation. In other words, through this blessed washing we enter into a life that never ends.

St. Ambrose draws out this architectural parallel in a late fourth century epigram:

*The octagon is raised for a sacred purpose
For which the octagonal font is also worthy
For this number eight aptly signs the sacred baptistry
In which the people are raised to true health restored
By the light of the Risen Christ who unlocks the gates
Of death and raises the dead from the grave.*

Many churches have retained the ancient practice of having an eight-sided font located in, or near, the entrance to the sanctuary. As parishioners walk in they are met with the architectural reminder that they are baptized. They have not come to meet with just any random "god" or "divine being," but the one true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who has made them heirs with Christ by virtue of their baptismal adoption (Gal 3:27-29).



PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP - PART 4

GOD'S STEWARDS ARE UNIQUELY SINGULAR, YET PROFOUNDLY PLURAL

What does this mean?

God's stewards recognize that their lives are not solo performances but are personal responses to God, lived out within the community of faith to benefit the whole world.

What does God's Word say about this?

- Rom. 12:4-5 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.
- 1 Cor. 12:12-13 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.
- 1 Pet. 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.
- 2 Cor. 8:13-14 Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality.
- Gal. 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (cf. 6:7-10)

How is this done?

As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will:

- Emphasize the privilege and the accountability this privilege entails of being unique children of God with specific gifts that honor the Lord and bless others;
- Recognize the personal and sensitive nature of the steward's response; and yet emphasize the truth that Christian stewards are members of the Body of Christ and are in kingdom work together with fellow Christians; and,
- Remind Christian stewards that God showers blessings upon those who manage them wisely and well for the common good.

As children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will not:

- Emphasize one aspect or area of church work to the exclusion or detriment of others;
- Teach or influence in ways which minimize the steward's connection to and need for the rest of the Body of Christ; or,
- Equate stewardship with merely meeting an organization's budget or financial goal.

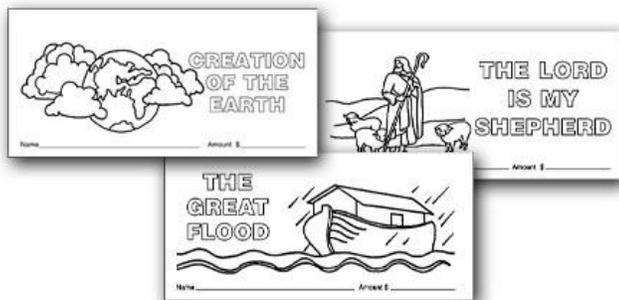
HOW OUR OFFERINGS STACKED UP IN JANUARY

January Offerings Budget	\$18,384
January Offerings Actual	\$16,986
Shortfall	\$ 1,098

2019 offering envelopes and 2018 statements are in your mailbox in the hallway. There are other ways to make your offerings including direct pay through your bank's bill pay, employer programs, and don't forget your time and talents. For more information or questions, please call the church office at: 619.299.2890 x 1.

Children's Offerings by Jeremy Fullam

In the next two weeks, parishioners will notice a new resource for young families on the table in the hallway outside the sanctuary. Part of the responsibility shared as parents and adult members of the church is to ensure a comprehensive catechesis of our young people. In our parish, one focal point of catechesis is the emphasis on active participation in the divine liturgy by people of all ages. Our children are taught to faithfully attend the communion table, listen attentively to the Word of God, sing joyfully, and make the sign of the cross in remembrance of their baptism. The offering, though not a "high point" during the service, is no less important liturgically or theologically than what it follows or precedes. So it is no different that children should be encouraged to participate in the offering in a manner consistent with their development in the church.



In response to feedback from several families with younger children, the church is now providing offering envelopes geared specifically towards children. These envelopes are intended as a means of instruction and tool for parents to use in establishing solid habits in their children. Whether



your family has one child or many, the goal is to involve the whole family unit in giving back to God by providing a means in which children can make their own contributions during the offering.

Additionally, each envelope has a different Bible scene which can be colored in – a fun learning activity for little ones with busy hands.



It should be noted this is just a resource available to Grace families and there are no expectations regarding their use. If your family currently has a method that works well for you, this may not be beneficial to you; if not, please give it some



consideration. You may choose to pick up one box per child or one for all of your children. These envelopes are specifically not numbered, so if you wish to have these contributions recorded for your end of year giving, please write your family's number on the top of the envelope.

Grace Gatherings

Bringing the Hospitality of our Lord to One Another

“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.” Virginia Woolf

Grace Lutheran is a commuter church, which means that the majority of our membership and regular attendees are spread across the county. Thus, planning mid-week services, youth events, and fellowship opportunities is difficult due to traffic, after-school activities, early bed times for those with young children, and those who don't drive after dark. Thankfully, the church is not a building, but you God's beloved people.

So to help foster deeper friendships in our community, I'd like you to consider participating in one of our "Grace Gatherings," which will be held at an address near you—in fact, right in your very own home from time-to-time! Jesus often gathered around a table for a meal with every sort of person imaginable—from the religious elite to those of ill-repute (i.e. sinners). Jesus used these times to engage with people and disciple them in the Word. In fact, even after His resurrection, Jesus made a point of sharing food together publicly:

"They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them."
Luke 24:42-43

Eating in the presence of God is our future. Food will be part of the renewed creation. Food is not left behind with the resurrection. References to a future feast are not just metaphors for an ethereal future existence. Our future is a real feast. Looking forward to this day, the prophet Isaiah says,

“The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, And refined, aged wine.”
Isaiah 25:6

There is nothing like a good meal to bring people together, so why wait until our Lord's second coming to start this party.



The idea is to gather 6-8 adults (and also children) in each other's homes once a month for a casual meal and conversation. The host family will plan the meal and assign side dishes, salads, desserts, and of course, wine or other adult beverages (we are Lutheran, after all). The next month the gathering will rotate to another's home, and so on, throughout the year. Personally, I love a good theme, so I can envision a lot of great dinner parties with friends celebrating Italian night, finger foods, charcuterie and cheese night, etc. At the end of the year, we can have a regional potluck competition at Sunday fellowship.

When we have an idea of how many individuals/families want to participate, we will know how to best group everyone together, but as I see it right now, we have numerous families in the following six geographic areas:

- North County (San Marcos, Escondido, Fallbrook)
- Mid-County (Poway, Carmel Mountain, Carmel Valley)
- East County (La Mesa, El Cajon, and Alpine)
- San Diego (Hillcrest, North Park, Tierra Santa, and Talmadge)
- Coastal (La Jolla, UTC, Pacific Beach, Bay Park, Clairemont)
- South Bay (Chula Vista, Bonita, National City)

If you are interested, please sign-up in the narthex. We'll group families together and send out emails, and you all can take it from there.

Bon appetite, my friends,
Pr. Brian Thomas





It was a busy day for the Fullam family a few weeks ago. Leo was baptized during the second service and this joyous occasion was followed by the blessing of their new home in Santee. Jeremy's father, Ken and Michael Burke played a beautiful piano and organ hymn for the anthem during the service.



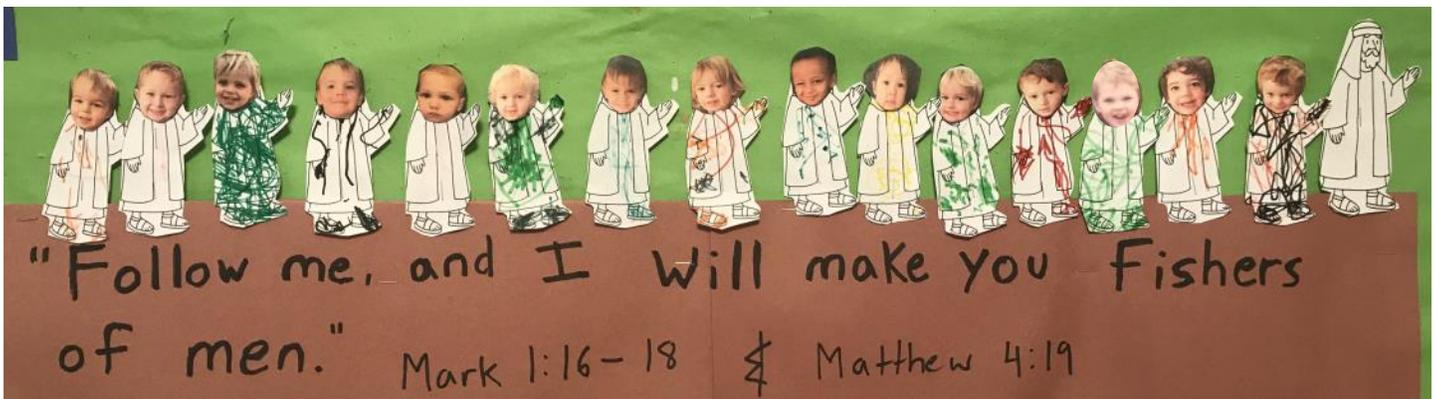
Pastor Brian, Rachel and Lily celebrated the blessing of their new home (the parsonage) two weeks ago. Although they moved in to the parsonage in December there were a few projects going on including a fresh coat of paint, several new appliances, the main bathroom remodel (it was original to the building!) and the powder room received a new sink, flooring and a brighter color. We wish them many blessings and happiness for many more years!



Ms. Cindy's class (Lions) painted with celery then, they put some other stalks into colored water and woke up from nap to some "magic". The left photo is Kaz from the class creating art.

The middle image is a work of art by the 2-year old class (Fishes) of familiar Bible verses they have learned about recently.

The bottom photo is the bike brigade of our preschool students. These new bikes were purchased with various fundraising efforts.



Upcoming Youth Events

THE QUEST FOR AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Crosswise Institute is an intensive six-day summer experience for high school students who are willing to grapple with the most remarkable issues confronting our communities both now and into the future. The 2019 theme will explore what it means to have meaningful relationships in an uncertain world. What kind of risks are you willing to take to get to know someone? Are you willing to be known? Come be a part of the conversation!

June 23-28, 2019 at Concordia University Irvine

- Crosswise is open to current HS students (grades 9-12).
- Registration includes 5 nights in the CUI dorms, meals and "SoCal" excursions.
- Early bird registrations is \$300.00 by March 1, 2019
- www.cui.edu/academicprograms/christcollege/crosswise/crosswise-experience-2019
- Contact Pr. Brian with questions or for more info



PRAYERS



3967 Park Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92103
619.299.2890
gracesandiego.com

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

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, Eli, David, Joyce, Kris, Hayden, Scott, Sheridan, Elvie, Mildred and John

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 , Kris Ullman, Andrew Warren

Prayers awaiting the arrival of a child of God: Brandi & Andrew, David & Laura, Kelsey & Nathan, Rory & Yui, and Jeremy & Jessika as they await the arrival of a child of God.

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WED	Feb 13	10:00 am	Wednesday Morning Bible Study
FRI	Feb 15	11:00 am	Funeral Service for Olive Hopkey
THU	Feb 21	6:00 pm	Coronado Evening Bible Study
SAT	Feb 23	4-7 pm	Laser Tag & BBQ Youth Event
WED	Mar 6	5:15 pm 6:00 pm	Lenten Soup Supper Ash Wednesday Service
SAT	Mar 9	7:00 am	Men's Bible Study
SAT	May 4	8:30 am	2019 Catechism Convocation at Grace

GRACE BIRTHDAYS

FEBRUARY

- 15- Gloria Berge
- 16- Meriah Razak
- 17- Gretchen Jordan
- 17- Lola and Ellie Mezzadri
- 19- Kenneth Cavins
- 23- Gabriel Castaneda
- 24- Brady Milligan
- 27- Laura Latham
- 27- Randy Houts
- 27- Georgia Thompson
- 27- Victor Cantu, Jr.

- 28- Lily Thomas
- 28- Angelo Brown

MARCH

- 1- Travis Milligan
- 4 - Ted Nilsen
- 5- Joelle Merfalen
- 6- Paris Brown
- 9- Luca Bombaro
- 20- Kaia Hill
- 22- Leslie Overstreet
- 30- Mrs. Bong Lee

