

# THE WITTENBERG WAY

## PASTOR'S PAGE

October 2020  
Volume 13, Issue 7



Dear Grace Family,

I am grateful that our Lord continues to lead new families to our church, just as I am saddened to say goodbye to Michael and Betty Burke this month as they have announced their plans to retire and move to South Carolina. We have several scheduled baptisms, upcoming births, Reformation Sunday, Oktoberfest, and many other things to celebrate this month.

I especially want to thank God for Gretchen Jordan on her ten year anniversary as our church administrator. She is a remarkably talented and faithful woman who holds this all together. There are still so many questions, unknowns, and uncertainties in our city, state, country, and in our world. Amidst a cancel culture of fear-mongering, the one place of bedrock stability is in the Church. And that is because the Head of the Church is Jesus Christ. And as the scripture tells us, "JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY AND TODAY AND FOREVER" (Heb 13:8). Jesus Christ is the Head of Grace Lutheran. His grace and sovereignty have not been affected one iota by the pandemic. And while not everyone has returned for worship inside our beautiful sanctuary, the ministry of Grace Lutheran continues on, carrying out our mission to be a lighthouse for sinners, steering them away from the shoal waters of false gods by pointing them to the world's rightful King and only Savior. This is how Jesus put it to His disciples:

*"What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:27-28)*

Jesus lovingly invites us not to fear. How strange this is to our ears since we tend to internalize fear and anxiety, which has only been magnified by this present pandemic. It is almost as if we should say to Jesus, "Well, that's easy for you to say, you're Jesus." Then again, maybe that's the point. While we are alive, we are willing to go through almost anything to minimize the pain that the body feels. After we die, people gather around the casket and offer words that seem helpful, but often refer to the body as a "vessel" or "shell." Yet Christ tells us that we should not fear that which kills only the body. Nothing can destroy our relationship with our Father, who is in heaven. The worst thing for a Christian to imagine is that God has abandoned them. Here, in these words, we find the opposite. Christ tells us not to fear the pain and death of the flesh but fear the one who can take your soul into death. With Christ, there is only life after His death. And for us, we have this resurrection life for all eternity.

Prayerfully Yours,

Pastor Thomas

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**OCTOBER 25, 2020**



**GRACE**  
Lutheran Church

*Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

- Collect for Reformation Day

The Church year is a cycle of festivals and seasons. Churches around the world and throughout history have shaped their faith and marked their lives by these events. Together we will pray the collect above on Sunday, October 25th, as we Lutherans celebrate the anniversary of the Reformation. The color is red to signify the work of the Holy Spirit. During this time, we give thanks to God for providentially leading an Augustinian monk and Hebrew scholar to a deeper understanding of the Gospel. Through his preaching and pen, Martin Luther brought attention to a corrupted Medieval papacy and church, who had turned the Gospel into a money-making endeavor through the selling of indulgences. While he simply wanted to reform the doctrine and practice of the church from within, Luther was deemed a heretic and officially excommunicated by the pope. The Lutheran movement, against all odds, grew like a California wildfire and spread throughout Europe with the help of the printing press and the protection of his Saxon prince.

This year as we celebrate this monumental moment in history I would like you to reflect on your own attachment to the Lutheran tradition. Why are you Lutheran?

Some of you are life-long Lutherans. You were literally born into it, baptized, raised, confirmed, and still remain. Thanks be God! Others, myself included, were drawn to the tradition for a variety of reasons: marriage, liturgy, doctrine, convenient location of a local parish, day school, etc. Whether you are a cradle Lutheran or a brand new convert, I am glad you are here.

We have been studying the work of C.S. Lewis at our Wednesday study. In his book, *Mere Christianity*, Lewis likens the Christian church to a large house with many rooms, each representing a different tradition of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. While his desire was to draw people into the hallway for discussion on our shared faith, he encouraged his readers to settle down in one of the rooms. "But it is in the rooms, not in the hall, that there are fires and chairs and meals. The hall is a place to wait in, a place from which to try the various doors, not a place to live in" (xv).



I did not grow up in the church; therefore, I took Lewis' advice by exploring the Christian house quite thoroughly as a young man, trying various doors in search of a room to call my own. I attended non-denominational churches, Baptist churches, and even spent a few years in the Presbyterian church. For a short while, I attended an Anglican graduate school of studies called Cranmer Theological House as I fancied myself one day becoming a church historian. It was here that my studies led me to the works of Martin Luther, Phillip Melancthon, and Martin Chemnitz. At this point, I crossed the hall and entered the Lutheran room, where I remain to this day.

I am often asked, "Why Lutheranism?" My answer, "I am a Lutheran because I believe it is the most biblically faithful room in the house." While I do not consider our tradition or synod to be perfect, it remains the most scripturally sound church this side of heaven in my humble opinion. However you ended up here in the room called "Lutheran," let me encourage you to really explore all our room has to offer. Settle into a comfy chair and read some of our theology, listen to a Lutheran podcast or radio program, attend Sunday school or a Wednesday Bible study if you are able, and soak up all that our blessed tradition provides when it comes to the teaching of Holy Scripture.

# FUN FACTS ABOUT THE REFORMATION



1. The word 'Protestantism' originates from German princes issuing a 'protest' against the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V.
2. Martin Luther (1483 – 1546) was the most influential figure of the Reformation.
3. Luther's ninety-five thesis represented the symbolic start of the Protestant Reformation in 1517.
4. 'Justification by faith alone' or Sola Fide in Latin is at the core of the new Lutheran ethic.
5. Pope Leo X's Papal Bull of 1520, *Exsurge Domine*, was the first response from the papacy condemning Luther.
6. The Edict of Worms declared Luther an obstinate heretic and banned the reading or possession of his writings.
7. Guttenberg's revolutionary printing press was central to the spread of new protestant ideas.
8. The burgeoning spirit of learning as part of the Renaissance period made people question traditional thought. The driving thought was "*ad fontes*," meaning, go back to the original documents, like Holy Scripture.
9. The Catholic Church responded via their own 'Counter-Reformation'.
10. The Bible was translated from Latin into vernacular languages across Europe.



# FROM OUR COUNCIL PRESIDENT

PAGE 4



Fellow Grace Lutheran Members,

I want to take a few moments to provide an update on the giving at Grace during 2020. As you all know, this has been an extraordinary and challenging year, not only for Grace Lutheran and our community here in San Diego but for the entire nation and indeed the world.

Despite the challenges many of us are facing, which may include sickness of family or friends, loss or reduction of income, feelings of fear, loneliness or simply being disconnected, or political unrest, we are all able to take comfort that we have a God that will never forsake us. As we hear in Isaiah 41:

*Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

To deal with struggle and just from his beneficence, God has provided the Word, his Son, and to each of us earthly time, talents, and treasures. The Christian belief is that these earthly things are not ours and biblically, our role is likened to that of a custodian. In other words, there is a mission to our goods and time that transcends us. It's a subset of the broader Christian challenge to deny one's self.

Recently, we asked GLC members to prayerfully consider moving up on level in giving, with the short-term goal of erasing unexpected deficits related to the preschool closure and the long-term goal of establishing independence from preschool revenue. I can tell you that the congregation has shown extraordinary generosity over the past six months despite the restrictions on gathering and the challenging economic environment that we have faced. It's a little early to say how we're all responding to the step-up challenge, but I am encouraged that giving does seem to have increased to some extent. Certainly we should all be grateful that it remains strong in any event.

For example, through the end of August in 2019, received offerings for Grace were \$170k. The approved budget for 2020 called for giving of \$176k through the end of August. The actual offerings were \$178,792! This is even though attendance was down roughly 50% due to the impact of the virus and government restrictions. It's truly a blessing that such generosity and faithfulness has been evident during this difficult time. The \$2700 in additional giving over budget is good progress. Of course, to close a projected budget deficit of \$22K by the end of the year, we're hoping the faithful and those with the means can further respond in the next 3 months.

There are many ways to adjust giving in the short run. You can take an amount of money you've laid up as savings and devote an amount of it to the church's immediate need. You can give from earnings if you're well employed. You can take the Lenten approach and deny yourself some treasured luxury temporarily. As you know, we have encouraged each family to prayerfully consider moving up a rung on the giving ladder. If you haven't done so, we encourage you and your families to engage in this cognitive and meditational exercise, if only to reassess priorities and remain grateful for all the blessings we receive every day as members of the body of Christ.

On a personal note, we in the Houts family miss seeing you all, seeing your faces, and hearing your voices raised in praise and can't wait for this COVID cup to pass from our lips. Our thoughts and prayers are with each of you and we humbly request your prayers for our family, for our Pastor, and for the Elders and Council Members who are working to navigate the challenges of the day for Grace Lutheran. But we all need to be reminded that our present struggles are the challenges of a day and not some sort of dark destiny. In the words of the Psalmist, God's word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. And an old hymn puts it this way:

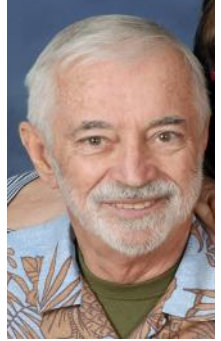
*Lead, kindly light. Keep thou my feet. I do not ask to see the distant scene. One step enough for me.*

Randolph Houts  
Council President

## AND FROM OUR TRUSTEE

Several projects are ongoing at Grace and one big project has been completed. Here is an update:

- The sanctuary roof has had serious leakage problems for years. This has been mostly located in the large north side section. We had repaired this section several times. Last winter we again had a problem in two areas of that section. So, we decided to replace the entire section. Heavy-duty underlayment was used and all of the tiles were reinstalled using a method that requires fewer nails through the roof. So now we can all pray for rain!
- The downspout and gutters on the preschool building, which caused serious flooding in the classrooms costing over \$1,000 to remediate, have been corrected as well.
- Other ongoing major projects are the enhancement of the video security system. So far we have used the video to identify illegal dumping activities alongside our dumpsters. The enhanced system will provide more comprehensive coverage of the sanctuary and the parsonage.
- While some projects had been placed on hold, normal maintenance has continued largely unhampered.
- The fence around the playground and the parking lot has been repainted.
- Currently, I am working on making two entrances less hospitable for homeless sleeping areas.

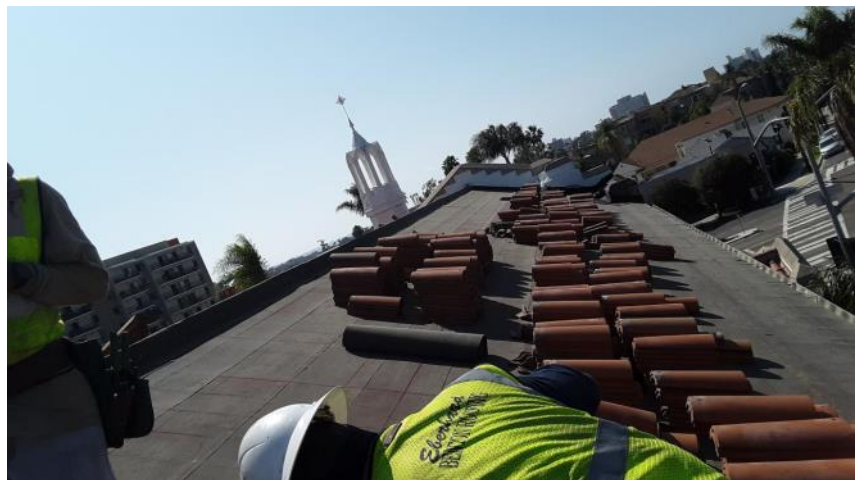


I have not been attending the Sunday services and desperately miss all of you. I pray for an end to this pandemic so that my wife & I can again receive the blessings of Word and Sacrament at Grace and the fellowship of our beloved church family.

In His service and yours,

Paul Himmelberger

Trustee





## CAN YOU FIND THE TRANSEPT “BIBLE” WINDOW? PAGE 6

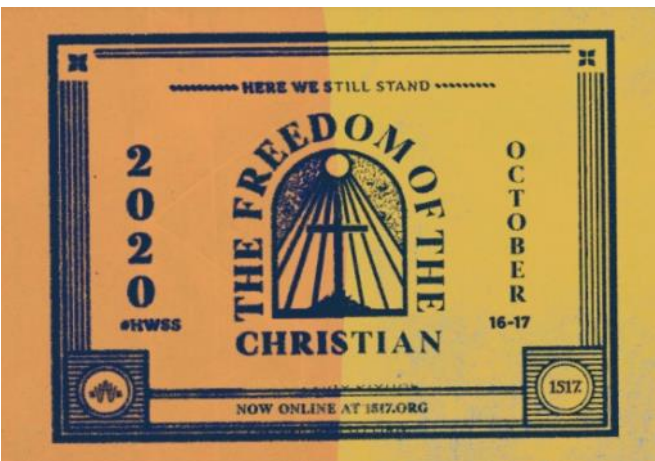
Moses is depicted as the one to whom God delivered the Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone. The Law declares God's will for our lives, and thus, correspondingly shows us our sin as we see how often we trespass His holy ways. On either side of Moses stand figures depicting the Gospel.

On the left side of the window is John the Baptist, who seeing Jesus, said: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). On the right side is St. Paul, holding a sword to remind us to "take up the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God," which points us to the saving message: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:1).

The quatrefoils above show a Dove, symbolizing the Holy Spirit on the right, who as our advocate brings us to trust in the Lamb of God on the left.



## HERE WE STILL STAND 2020 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE



### THE FREEDOM OF THE CHRISTIAN

On Friday and Saturday (October 16-17), we will bring you a two-day online streaming experience. You will see the same plenary speakers and great talks. There will also be all kinds of extra LIVE content mixed with pre-recorded talks, interviews, and opportunities to ask questions and interact online. Register for **FREE** at: <https://watch.1517.org/live-signup/>

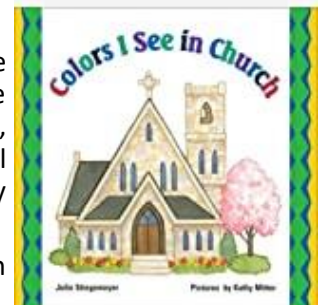
## TEACH THE CHRISTIAN FAITH TO YOUR CHILDREN

Have a baptized child under the age of five? How about a brand-new godchild or grandchild?

On Saturday, November 7, come to a half-day class for equipping parents to teach the Christian faith at home. You don't need a theology degree to do this. In fact, you'll be surprised to see how easy it is to use the three chief books of the church -- the Holy Bible, Small Catechism, and the hymnal -- to enrich your family life and nourish your children. We'll also learn footholds to bring your child into a fuller participation in the Divine Service, step by step.

Excellent resources are available to aid and guide you in cultivating the faith He has given your children in baptism. He gave you to them as parents! What an awesome job.

The class is scheduled from 9:00 to 1:00, and will feature special guest and LCMS children's book author, Julie Stiegemeier. Lunch and all materials will be provided; just bring something to take notes on the ideas, tips, and resources you'll be acquiring. Please RSVP by email to [davidpluslaura@gmail.com](mailto:davidpluslaura@gmail.com) by October 15 so we can ensure a proper headcount. Thank you!



## GODSPEED MICHAEL AND BETTY BURKE

My first official act as a vicar here in 2009 was to find a suitable organist to lead and beautify our liturgy through music after. Little did I know that Michael and Betty Burke would become such an important part of our fellowship. Finding good organists is not as easy as it sounds. They are a dying breed. When you do find one, they are often "guns for hire," as they play for an hour or two and then leave to their next "gig" to collect a fee for service.

Gratefully, Michael and Betty were impressed by the Lutheran tradition and resolved to make it their own. In doing so, we not only got a new director of parish music but dear life-long friends in the faith. Thus, saying goodbye to them as they retire to South Carolina is not easy.

Michael has led our choir, instrumentalists, and enhanced our worship in profound ways over the past twelve years. Through his leadership, our choir had the opportunity to sing in Carnegie Hall! How many choirs get to say that?

Betty's hospitality is unmatched as she has opened her home to so many in our parish and been instrumental in our fellowship together and a member of our church council. I personally will miss the laughter of sharing life together (along with a few adult beverages) on their back deck in Escondido. Since their children and grandchildren will remain in San Diego, I am grateful we will get to see them when they visit. I suspect their frequent flyer miles will grow exponentially if Jonah has a say in it.

*Please join me in praying for them:*

Lord God, Your gracious presence attends Your people wherever they go. Be with Michael and Betty whose lives are in transition as they move from a familiar home and church to a new community in South Carolina. Support and surround them with caring Christian friends so that they may find welcome and peace in their new home and joy in Your ongoing kindness and love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.







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

The Reverend  
Brian W. Thomas

Music Director  
Michael Burke

Office Manager  
Gretchen Jordan

Divine Service  
8:00 am & 10:30 am

Nursery available

#### IT'S EASY TO DONATE TO GLC

Scan the QR code below with your phone or text a dollar amount to 84321 to donate. Give through your online banking, use your giving envelopes or just drop your donation in the offering plate.

Thank you!



Hearing Assistance is now available in our sanctuary.



Please see one of our ushers who will be happy to provide you with a listening device.

## PRAYERS

### PRAISES TO THE LORD

The Holy Baptism of August Francis Lehman on Oct. 11.  
The upcoming Holy Baptism of Jameson William Beard on Oct. 17.

### PRAYERS FOR STRENGTH

Barbara, Dave, Rev. Ken & Marilyn, Josh, Bill, Christy, First Responders, Police Officers and Firefighters.

### PRAYERS AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF A CHILD OF GOD

Jeremy & Alma, Gavin & Carmen

### PRAYERS FOR OUR MISSIONARIES

Rev. James May (Kenya), Daniel Conrad (Central America), Rev. Dr. Ron & Mary Anne Rall (Papua New Guinea), Rev. Dr. John & Melinda Bombaro (Latvia)

### PRAYERS FOR THE MILITARY

William Baker, Andrew Burke, Tajy George, Jack George, Jr., Philip Hawthorne, Dylan Jensen, Jack Ogden, Josh Martin, Matthew Morgan, Gavin Robillard, Heath Russert, Matt Sharber, Linka Schleusener, and Holly Schmidt

### PRAYERS FOR THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND SERVICES

Lorna Winterstein, Joyce Rochester

## BIRTHDAYS

### OCTOBER

11- Leigh Ann Bozung  
13- Rebecca Kiperts  
14- Cindy Behling-Hansen  
15- Dillon Weissman  
17- Wesley Newton

17- Mike Thompson

20- Zaro Razak  
28- Christina Burke  
28- Jeremy Fullam  
30- Betty Burke

### NOVEMBER

1- Lois Paylor  
1 -Daniel Lindsey  
11- Spencer Huntley  
11- Luke Rall

If we missed your birthday email the church office at: [gjordan@gracesandiego.com](mailto:gjordan@gracesandiego.com)

## WELCOME DESK

If you haven't noticed it, we have a new welcome desk with free resources and some books available for purchase. Please stop by and take a look. I would like to thank Mark and Gretchen Jordan for their help in constructing it. It is a part of the Pastor's plan to assist visitors and members by staying informed about what is going in the parish and to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ Jesus.

