

THE WITTENBERG WAY

PASTOR'S PAGE

May 2020
Volume 13, Issue 4



Dear Grace Family,

It's been nearly two months since our lives have been impacted by COVID-19. While we never closed our in-person gatherings at Grace, they were greatly reduced in numbers and time. As I've said in email updates all along, the Divine Service is not something that can be fully replicated virtually, and therefore, it was not something I was going to suspend. Moreover, we were created in the image and likeness of God, which means we were made for relationships, and the isolation has been a great reminder of how much we desperately need one another. All this to say, I can't wait until we can get back to something more normal! And this is what this newsletter is all about.

After consulting with legal and medical professionals, along with our district leadership, the elders and I have made the decision to reopen on May 31 with two services at 8:00 and 10:00 am. This seems most fitting since it is Pentecost Sunday, a celebration of the church's birth. We will be joining thousands of churches across California that have selected this day to reopen with safety precautions in place, as outlined inside this issue. I hope you will prayerfully consider coming if you have not already been doing so. I also recognize that many of our seniors and those with pre-existing medical conditions may not feel safe to do so at this time, which is understandable. For those of you who plan to remain home, please let me know, so your pastors can make plans to serve you more personally.

I want to thank several people who have tirelessly served the needs of our church. First, our church council has had to work very hard through unprecedented legal and human resource issues throughout the past two months as we were forced to shut down our preschool. Second, Michael Burke has remained at the organ console faithfully playing six services every Sunday. Third, Gretchen has continued to serve our parish both from church and home taking care of our administration without skipping a beat. Lastly, Pastor Gleason and Deaconess Doris have continued to serve our shut-ins with special services of the Word via video every Sunday. Thank you!

I also want to thank those of you who have continued to financially support our mission at Grace either in person or through online giving. This virus has financially impacted many families, and yet, our giving has remained strong during this time. Thank you!

As the old beatitude puts it, "Blessed are the flexible, for they will never be bent out of shape." The weeks and months ahead will surely bring new and unexpected challenges, so we will remain flexible. Please pray for your pastors, staff, and leaders as we pray for you. We are promised, "that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

In Christ's Service,

Pastor Thomas

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PENTECOST

Please join us for services on Sunday May 31 at 8:00 and 10:00 am.



LUTHER AND THE PANDEMIC



Less than 200 years after the Black Death killed nearly half the population of Europe, the plague re-emerged in Luther's own town of Wittenberg and neighboring cities. In his letter, *Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague*, the bold reformer weighs the responsibilities of ordinary citizens during contagion. His advice remains a relevant and practical guide for

Christians confronting infectious disease outbreaks today. Brevity was not Luther's strong point, so I've highlighted some pertinent points and provided a link where you can download the full letter at the end of this article.

First, Luther argued that anyone who stands in a relationship of service to another has a vocational commitment not to flee. Those in ministry, he wrote, "must remain steadfast before the peril of death." The sick and dying need a shepherd who will strengthen and comfort them and administer the sacraments—lest they be denied the Eucharist before their passing. Note during this period in history, the church was still considered "essential." Public officials, including mayors and judges, are to stay and maintain civic order. Public servants, including physicians and police officers, must continue their professional duties. Even parents and guardians have vocational responsibilities toward their children.

Second, Luther did not limit tending the sick to health care professionals. Normal citizens, without any medical training, may find themselves in a position of providing care to sick family members, neighbors, or fellow parishioners. Luther challenges Christians to see opportunities to tend to the sick as tending to Christ himself (Matt. 25:41–46). Out of love for God emerges the practice of love for neighbor.

But Luther does not encourage his readers to expose themselves recklessly to danger. His letter constantly straddles two competing goods: honoring the sanctity of one's own life, and honoring the sanctity of those in need. All of us," he says, "have the responsibility of warding off this poison to the best of our ability because God has commanded us to care for the body." He defends public health measures such as quarantines and seeking medical attention when available. In fact, Luther proposes that not to do so is to act recklessly. Just as God has gifted humans with their bodies, so too he has gifted the medicines of the earth. A balanced approach centered in love and wisdom is what Luther offers and I recommend it to you.

The link to the full letter is at:

<https://blogs.lcms.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plague-blogLW.pdf>

STEPS TO ENSURE A SAFE REOPENING

I LOVE YOUR SANCTUARY, LORD, THE PLACE WHERE YOUR GLORIOUS PRESENCE DWELLS (PSALM 26:8)

FEELING SICK?



If you or a family member has been feeling sick, we recommend you remain at home and seek the medical advice of a doctor. Please update your pastors, so we can serve and pray for you.

SAFE DISTANCING

We have reduced seating capacity by roping off every other pew. Our ushers will limit the amount of people at the altar for Holy Communion in order to meet state safe distancing recommendations.



CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO...



All sanctuary surfaces have been sanitized. Additionally, we have hand sanitizer in the foyer for all worshipers to use before and after services.

HOLY COMMUNION

All Holy Communion vessels are thoroughly cleaned before each service. The high alcohol content of our wine and the metal of our chalices prevent microbes and the spread of disease according to numerous clinical studies.



TITHES & OFFERINGS



We will not be passing the offering bags during service. There is an offering box by the pulpit for your physical gifts, or you can give online. We are grateful for your continued financial support.

COVID-19 AND COMMUNION



Any time an infectious disease makes the news, there is a natural concern among Christians about the risks of taking Holy Communion. We believe the common cup is an essential symbol of our Christian life and identity. We, naturally, do not want to expose anyone to danger and contagion, but we are convinced that those risks are benign when Eucharistic worship is conducted responsibly.



The Center for Disease Control has found no documented transmission of any infectious disease has ever been traced to the use of a common communion cup.

The Journal of Infection Diseases suggests that appropriate safeguards for the Eucharist are:

- Wiping the interior / exterior rim of the chalice,
- Use of care to rotate the cup during use,
- Use of clean purificators for each service.

**We follow these guidelines at Grace Lutheran*



The gold and silver plating of our chalice, along with the high alcohol content of our wine, helps prevent transmission as it provides anti-bacterial benefits.

Your pastors and liturgical assistants wash their hands thoroughly using sanitizer just prior to serving the Lord's Supper.





Dear Grace Family and Friends,

We hope and pray that this letter finds you healthy and holding with the Spirit. With the first quarter of 2020 now complete, the Church Council thought it would be beneficial to provide an update of Grace's current financial status.

OUR GIVING: Giving for the first quarter of 2020 was \$62,726, which is 98% of what had been budgeted. That's certainly outstanding generosity in these times. Giving for the month of April was similarly generous, although a bit below the budgeted estimate. Some reduction in April giving was expected, but the reality wasn't nearly as bad as the expectation had been. Again, we can't help but be grateful for everyone's efforts.

OUR EXPENSES: While some of our expenses (i.e., office supplies, utilities, program/committee) have decreased due to the closure of the Preschool facility and social distancing guidelines, many of our expenses remain fixed (staffing, insurance, copier lease, etc.). Even so, and again because of your generosity, we ended the first quarter of 2020 with a modest surplus.

OUR PRESCHOOL: With the closing of the Preschool in March because of the government's COVID-19 orders, the Preschool naturally experienced some financial impact. While revenue was normal for March, expenses were substantially higher because the Council felt it was important to try to provide a severance payment to separating faculty as well as payment for more than 2 weeks during which the school was closed and the faculty could not work. The lay-off of faculty also occasioned the need to pay accrued vacation benefits. So, while the economic hit was substantial during the closure time frame, school expenses have now been eliminated and other expenses of the Church that were higher because of the Preschool have been paired back to the level appropriate for the Church's normal services and administration in the absence of the Preschool. The Church will experience a loss of income monthly in the thousands of dollars, but the Council has eliminated for the present monthly payments to reserves for the organ and building maintenance in an effort to compensate for this in part. We are also currently looking at ways to economize on insurance and other services in the wake of the closure.

PROJECTED BUDGET SHORTFALL: The Council has had to make some difficult decisions in an unexpected, unprecedented, and changing business and legal environment. Because of one-time expenses associated with the school closure, we do expect a substantial budget shortfall for 2020. Fortunately, the last few administrations of the Church had the foresight to move the Church toward a position where reserves will be adequate for anticipated contingencies, at least for a period of years. But I sense that those reserves will be called upon for maintenance to our fine, but aged campus and Sanctuary; things like the elevator, significant roof work, and repairs to the landing and drainage systems will assert themselves sooner rather than later. The Council is also sensitive to the ongoing desire of the congregation to renovate the Organ. While we have the funds for Phase 1 and a little more from donations, largess for which we are very grateful, future phases will require additional fund raising or donations and the Church cannot afford to have regular giving founder in furtherance of that. Blessedly, thus far it has not.

So, what do we make of this, and what can we do?

First, we can be thankful for God's abundance and your generosity, even amidst the present struggle and uncertainties! That we were on target in our giving through the 1st quarter of the year, with a portion of that quarter impacted by the global pandemic and an economy that suffered a major shock, says a lot about your generosity and the commitment you have to God's work at Grace. The "mission" of Grace Lutheran Church has not changed, although in the near term, some of our methods may change or be subject to future re-building efforts. Your generous support shows that you understand the situation.

Second, we understand that there are some, even among our flock, for whom this crisis has been not just a health concern but a financial disaster as well. If you are one of these people, please know that you are in our prayers and we understand that you may have to reduce your gifts to Grace at this time. For its part, the Synod has promulgated new guidelines by which fund donation purpose can be adjusted, in appropriate circumstances.

Third, we can also recognize that some of us may not have been adversely affected financially by this crisis. If you've been blessed in this way, you may want to consider how God might be calling you to be even more generous. Perhaps you can step up and help fill-in where others must step back. While we do not think it's reasonable to expect regular

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONT.)

giving to increase enough to rid us of 2020's anticipated shortfall in a single year, it's something to keep in mind if you find yourself able to help defray the shortage with an additional gift.

Perhaps you could begin to give automatically so that your gifts will be available to the church on a more regular basis. Grace offers a safe and secure way to give online. Please visit our website at <https://www.gracesandiego.com>. To give online, click on "Giving", or contact Gretchen Jordan in the church office at gjordan@gracesandiego.com. Perhaps you cannot increase your giving but can accelerate the timing of your gifts so that the church has cash on hand to weather this crisis. If you normally drop a check in the offering plate only when you are in attendance, please consider mailing your check to the church office. However you give, whatever you give, it ALL is a gift and it all goes to support what God intends for our congregation and community.

Please know that your Church Council will continue to monitor and review the financial impacts of COVID-19 on Grace's life and ministry and that we are committed to being faithful stewards of all the gifts you provide. As the body of Christ, we will continue with our mission to share our gifts through support of the LCMS and the Southern California District, as well as local and worldwide ministries.

We may be experiencing a global pandemic or government overreach, alternatively or perhaps simultaneously. The information conveyed to us electronically may be accurate or not; helpful or worrisome. Leaders may inspire by turning to the task, or they may exploit and distract. There is always much at work to resist the order we believe God intends. And while we may have been distanced, we are not parted. God, the Word, and his Church remain; and His grace can be found in every circumstance. I'm grateful to be among you and in this place at this time.

In ministry together,

Randolph Houts, Council President

CONGRATULATIONS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



JACKSON HUNTLEY

KATE LATHAM

LILY NEWTON

WELCOME NOLAN JOOST



Nolan Lorenz Joost arrived at 12:58 pm on April 17th! He was 5lbs. 7oz. and 18 inches long. Mom and Dad are Lyndi and Bo Joost who were married here at Grace in December 2018. Even though he was pretty early, they are all doing great!

Nolan's baptism is scheduled for Sunday July 12th.

Congratulations Joost family!





CAPS – SERVING WOMEN IN CRISIS PREGNANCIES

On Tuesday, May 12, I completed the last of seven training sessions for College Area Pregnancy Services (CAPS) volunteers who want to serve as patient-care specialists and support staff at one of the three area clinics. Our training emphasized the CAPS goals: speak the truth in love; offer available life-affirming options without an agenda; ask non-judgmental questions; listen with respect; and trust that God is in charge of the outcomes.

CAPS provides a variety of services including counseling, ultrasound, STD screening and adoption referral. Learn more about their mission, services and needs at friendsofcaps.org. You can also help by taking one of the CAPS baby bottles in the hallway and filling it with all that spare change you have in your junk drawer, car cup holder and under the sofa cushions.



Shannon Carreiro

Dear Grace members,

I hope you were able to join us for our event “20 Minutes for Life” with a special message from Dr. David Jeremiah. We were so encouraged by the response to our first-ever virtual event! We met our match and more! It is still available at 20minutesforlife.com if you would like to view it or send the link to a friend.

Each new day at CAPS is so different right now and yet the same. Though patients see only masked staff members, the welcoming warmth of kind, caring voices and smiling eyes comes through. And, the images on the ultrasound machine speak for themselves. God's love cannot be muffled or hidden by masks!

During this time, we have also been helping some of our new moms by sending diapers and wipes to their homes. Some of them are isolated and struggling with lowered or lost income. We are grateful for our friends like you who support CAPS and make it possible for us to help where we can. Free shipping and 5% donated back from Amazon helps too. If you purchase products on Amazon, you can sign on to smile.amazon.com and designate CAPS (use our legal name, College Area Pregnancy Services, Inc.) to get 5% of your purchase donated back to the ministry.

As we look forward to re-opening more hours and welcoming back personnel who have had to stay home, we are grateful daily that God is protecting and using His ministry in amazing ways in the midst of the pandemic. We continue to be very busy helping women and couples process through multiple crises. Please pray for our frontline servants. God is doing great things through your prayers and support!

Standing with you for Life,
Julie Dowler, Executive Director

This page is reprinted from the May Ministry Update published by CAPS. To sign-up for the monthly update visit: friendsofcaps.org. For more information talk to Pr. Brian or Shannon Carreiro.

CHANGE OF HEART

Shelly* came to CAPS with her boyfriend of just two months. After a positive pregnancy test at home, she had been encouraged to keep the baby by close family members but was considering abortion because her boyfriend did not want the child.

In the consultation room, Shelly's Patient Care Specialist said that her boyfriend's presence on this appointment was an encouraging sign. Shelly shared that she was struggling with the financial stress this was going to cause, but abortion would be a very unhappy choice. Her boyfriend joined her during the ultrasound. The nurse witnessed how quiet and uninvolved he was, but he watched and listened to all that was happening.

The first image on the screen was a fully formed beautiful hand and then the rest of the baby came into view. The heartbeat was strong. Shelly was very excited during the ultrasound because of how developed the baby was and stated, “It's a real baby!” Her boyfriend felt overwhelmed but was given several helpful informational brochures for men. CAPS staff prayed for this couple.

Two days later, Shelly told her nurse that she was going to carry the baby. She made a second ultrasound appointment and brought her boyfriend again. His whole attitude had changed! He was involved, talkative and interested in seeing the baby on the monitor. The baby was active and seemed to be showing off for dad. He told the nurse that he was happily going to parent even though it wasn't the ideal time. They walked to their car admiring the pictures of their baby. Please pray for continued encouragement and support.

*Not her real name

LORNA'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

Lorna Marie Winterstein celebrates her 100th birthday on May 22, 2020. Born Lorna Marie Schaaf in Fallon, Nevada to Karl and Meta Schaaf. Her father was a Lutheran pastor sent to Fallon to establish a congregation. She was raised in Broken Arrow and Chickasha, Oklahoma where Karl also served as pastor. Lorna was the oldest child in a family that eventually had six children. The family was very poor and her father had to supplement his pastoral income with other work such as raising and selling chickens or insurance. Her memories of those times are good, with lots of time spent with brothers, sisters, and friends. She learned English from playmates as she had been raised to speak German.



After graduating high school, Lorna entered the Oklahoma College for Women and majored in Latin with a minor in English. Her college education was through the benevolence of a good friend and golfing partner of her father. She taught English briefly in Hastings, OK before moving to San Diego to live with her aunts, Frieda and Elsie Schaaf. Lorna's sister Lois soon joined her and rented an apartment. Lorna was working in the office of SJ Wine's Coffee Company and remembers coming home smelling like coffee. She began attending Grace Lutheran church under Pastor Damschroeder's tenure and has been there with every pastor since.

Lorna worked for a San Diego defense plant during WW2 in the tool crib taking inventories. After the war, she took a job teaching 1st and 2nd grades at Grace Lutheran school; also moving into the church apartment near the school.

Lorna met Arthur Winterstein, a former marine sergeant, at Grace Lutheran and were married in Hebron, OK on June 26th, 1949 in a small country church by her father Karl.



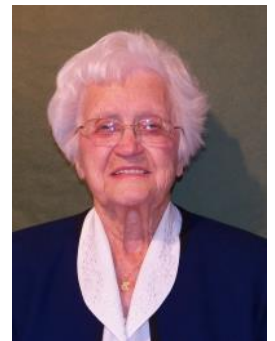
Lorna had two sons, Ken and son Ron and had settled in Mission Hills. She was a full-time homemaker and Art worked at North Island NAS. He retired after 37 years and Art and Lorna continued to attend Grace Lutheran and spend time with family, and grandchildren Cheri and Robert. They also took time to travel.

After celebrating 53 happy years of marriage, Art passed away at age 91 in 2002. The family took a cruise to Alaska a year later in remembrance of Art. Lorna continued to stay busy, completing a history of Grace Lutheran Church under Pastor John Bombaro.

Lorna still resides in Mission Hills and has been living with her granddaughter Cheri, who helps manage Lorna's care. She has met her great grandchildren Soren (5), Gwen (3), and has many visits each year from her sons and families. At the century mark, she continues as a steadfast prayer warrior until the time God calls her home to glory.



Ken Winterstein



Lorna has been a very important part of Grace Lutheran Church. She kept wonderful records and scrapbooks on the history of Grace. Lorna's family had planned a beautiful luncheon celebration prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the luncheon will not be her celebration, we can help her celebrate by sending her birthday cards. Her address is in the Grace directory and if you don't have one, call or email the church office.



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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

Divine Service
8:00 am & 10:30 am

Augsburg Academy
9:30 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!



PRAYERS

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

Praises to Our Lord: The upcoming wedding of Eddie Girling and Elena Segarra and the birth and upcoming baptism of Nolan Lorenz Joost.

Prayers for strength: Pr. Ken Licht, Buffey, Daniel, Walt, Alice, Shannon, and Phyllis and for our military and first responders.

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

Prayers for the military: Thomas Abbott, Nathaniel Beaver, 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, and Andrew Warren

Prayers awaiting the arrival of a child of God: Adam & Kim, Jeremy & Alma

Prayers for those unable to come to services: Lorna Winterstein, Mary Jane Robinson and Dottie Allen

BIRTHDAYS

MAY

4- Valda Houts
5- Tyler Cantu
14- Chris Rall
16-Levi Schroeder
16- Jude Lamontagne
17- Makenna Covarrubius
19- Paul Himmelberger
21- Sophia Bombaro
21-Nathaniel Parker
22- Lorna Winterstein
24- Kimberly Newton
27- Leslie Yoder
28- Anna Bombaro
28-Michelle Thompson
29-Jeremy Belgau

JUNE

1- Grace Newton
2- Lucas Schroeder
8- Mary Jane DeHart
10- Elvie Nichols
12- Jack George
14- Gabrielle Moore
15- Dillon Diers
17- Carolyn Hansen
20- Lily Newton
20-Thomas Gertz
22- Renee Thompson
23- Natalie Brown
24- Tony Mezzadri
28- Marge Foelber
28-Fran Willis
30- Lily Robillard

If we missed your birthday call or email the church office.

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 .

