

THE WITTENBERG WAY

PASTOR'S PAGE

January 2019
Volume 11, Issue 1



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It was a busy but deeply moving Advent and Christmas season, and I want to thank all of you who contributed so much of your time in service to our church family. Our choir, musicians, ushers, elders, acolytes, altar guild and greeters crushed it! I appreciate every one of you.

Speaking of family. Grace had four babies born in the past six week, with more on the way, so it proves that of all the commands in Scripture, Grace members especially take the cultural mandate of Genesis 2:28 seriously: "Be fruitful and multiply." I'm grateful for the gift of new life and the vocation of fathers and mothers, and look forward to seeing them all baptized into the life of Christ.

Sadly, we lost one member during this time. Our brother, Len Roberts, joined the saints victorious on December 11, 2018. His funeral will be held here at Grace on February 1st at 2:00 pm. Pastor Bombaro will be giving the homily. Please continue to pray for our sister, Bobbi, as she grieves the loss of her husband of 50 years.

We have now entered the season of Epiphany, which centers on the revelation of Jesus' identity -- God in man made manifest -- as one of our Epiphany hymns so aptly puts it. This wonderful season is bookended by the Father's voice. At the beginning of the season we reflect on the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, where the Father proclaims, "This is My Beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matt 3:17). The season ends at the Transfiguration, where we look over the valley of the shadow of Lent and see a glimpse of resurrection glory on top of the mountain. The Father reiterates what He said at Jesus' Baptism, "This is My Beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him" (Matt 17:5). My prayer for us during this season is that we will take the Father's Word seriously and boldly confess that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, listening to what He has to say. A Blessed Epiphany to you all.

In Christ's Service and yours,

Rev. Brian W. Thomas

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WHY DO SO MANY CHURCHES HAVE RED DOORS?

FONT TO TABLE: A CHURCH MISCELLANY BY PASTOR BRIAN W. THOMAS

As you drive by Grace Lutheran Church, one of the things that immediately catches your eye is the color of our entrance doors. Red! In fact, it is so prominent that we have incorporated it into our church logo. This is a common color for traditional church doors. A variety of explanations have been offered over the years to explain why.

The first is simply practical. Until modern developments in pigmentation, red was one of the few easily made, durable colors of paint. This is why many old barns were painted red. According to the Farmer's Almanac, the early farmers that settled in New England didn't have extra money to spend on paint, so most of their barns remained unpainted. By the late 1700s, farmers looking to shield their barn's wood from the elements began experimenting with ways to make their own protective paint. A recipe consisting of skimmed milk, lime and red iron oxide created a rusty-colored mixture that became popular among farmers because it was cheap to make and lasted for years. It is thought that these same farmers—as members and volunteers of their respective churches—took the leftover paint and applied it to their churches doors. Red paint spread in popularity due to its functionality and convenience, becoming an American tradition that continues to this day.

A further explanation that goes back to the Medieval period is that red marks the church as a place of sanctuary—a place of refuge and safety from violence and injustice (comparable to the cities of refuge found in Numbers 35:9-12). If a person being pursued by the local populace, police or gentry could reach the church door he/she would

be safe. Nobody would dare do violence on sacred ground and, in most cases, the Church was not subject to civil law during that time. The red door was fair warning to pursuers that they could proceed no further. One who claimed sanctuary in this way would then be able to present his/her case before the priest and ask that justice be served. This is beautifully pictured in Victor Hugo's classic novel, *Les Misérables*, where the recently released convict, Jean Valjean, finds shelter in the church after he is turned away by everyone else. His host, the Bishop of Digne, introduces himself. "This is not my house," Bishop Myriel declares, "it's the house of Jesus Christ, a refuge for the outcast."

Some have tied red doors to the remembrance of the martyrs and the ultimate sacrifice they made for their faith. Tertullian famously said, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

The spiritual explanation I find to be the most poignant is that red symbolizes the blood of Christ. Just as the blood of the lambs marked the doors of Israelite homes in Egypt during the first Passover, so the blood of the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world marks the doors of the New Israel.

A red door symbolically portrays the theological centerpiece of the Lutheran tradition: "The Cross Alone is our Theology." In the words of Christ himself, "I am the way and the truth and the life, nobody comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). We cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven but through the shed blood of Christ for us.

Like the door to your home, a church entrance is its interface with the outside world. While there is nothing particularly sacred about a doorway, there is no better location to place a sign to display the faith of those who reside inside. "The household of faith," as St. Paul calls the church, would not exist apart from the blood of Christ, for it is in the blood of the Lamb that our robes have been washed clean (Rev 7:14). The red door serves as a good reminder of this fact as you make your entrance into the sanctuary.



PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP - PART 3

III. GOD'S STEWARDS ARE SAINTS AND SINNERS.

What does this mean?

God's stewards rejoice in and live out what the Lord has declared them to be through the cross. At the same time His stewards recognize they are sinners who fight sin and its consequences each day.

What does God's Word say about this?

Eph. 4:22-24 You were taught, which regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (cf. Col. 3:5-17)

Rom. 7:21-25 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

1 John 3:1-2 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1 Peter 2:9-10 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

How is this done?

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

- Recognize that the potential for great good, or great evil, lies in the way stewardship is presented and received;
- Evaluate carefully all communication, oral or written, according to the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, and in keeping with the biblical truth that each steward is at the same time saint and sinner; and,
- Offer varying opportunities for Christian stewards to grow, recognizing that they are at different points of spiritual maturity.

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

- Assume that, because we are dealing with Christians, we can set aside the proper application of Law and Gospel in serving God's stewards;
- See all Christians as being at the same maturity level; or,
- Use any approach to stewards that appeals to the sinful nature, selfish interest, or something other than faith active in love.

HOW OUR OFFERINGS STACKED UP IN 2018

2018 Offerings Budget	\$242,000	2019 Offerings Budget	\$246,000
2018 Offerings Actual	\$233,000	January 2019 Budget	\$ 18,384
Shortfall	\$ 9,000		

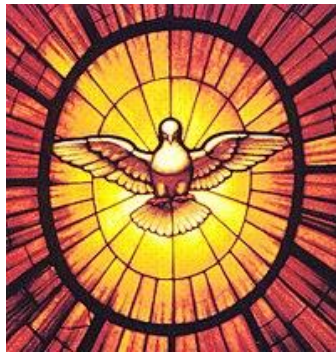
2019 offering envelopes are in your mailbox in the hallway. There are other ways to make your offerings including direct pay through your bank's bill pay, employer programs, and don't forget your time and talents. For more information or questions, please call the church office at: 619.299.2890 x 1.

CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTION: WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

BY DEACONESS DORIS SNASHALL

Confirmation/Catechism Instruction – So, what do our kids learn in Confirmation classes? Could you pass the elder exams they face when it comes time to be confirmed? As Lutherans we are encouraged to make the reading and study of Luther's Small Catechism a regular practice. It is not just useful for the couple of years of catechetical instruction for our youth, it is for all of us "full of consolation and a tremendous cause for joy." (Matthew C. Harrison, *Why Am I Joy: Fully Lutheran?*)

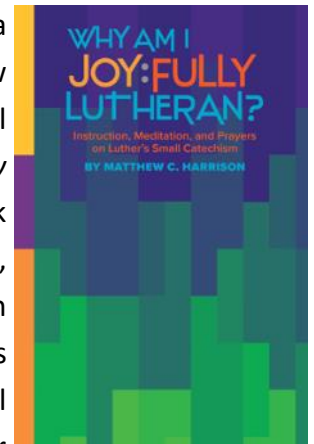
Our instruction for Confirmation at Grace has changed over the past 11 years. Early on Pastor Bombaro, with a little assistance from the Deaconess, taught the catechumens for two years on Wednesday evenings after the Evening Prayer services. For about the past two years, Confirmation instruction has become a three-year program. Students in the 5th and 6th grades are taught directly from Luther's Small Catechism for the first two years during the Augsburg Academy Sunday morning instruction time. Year three will be taught by Pastor Thomas beginning 2019.



Concordia Publishing House published a new version of Luther's Small Catechism in 2017. This version, like previous versions, states each of the Six Chief Parts of the Catechism (the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism, Confession/Absolution, and the Sacrament of the Altar [Holy Communion]) followed by Luther's

Explanations and scripture verses that prove each part. The 2017 version has been improved, in my opinion, to include expanded questions and answers throughout the text. There is a section entitled *The Central Thought* and another named *Connections and Applications* after each study that bring this 1529 textbook into the daily lives of today's students. Additionally, there is a new section focusing particularly on the Means of Grace, which boldly declares (as would Pastor John Bombaro) that Absolution is counted among the three sacraments as believed, taught, and confessed in the Lutheran Confessions.

Consider picking up a copy of the 2017 version of the Catechism. You can get hard copies or Kindle versions from Amazon.com. Another option for re-reading the Catechism is a new text by Matthew Harrison, our LCMS synodical president, *Why Am I Joy: Fully Lutheran?* This paperback includes instruction, meditation, and prayers on Luther's Small Catechism. This easy to read little devotional book takes you one day (or chapter) at a time through each of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Sacraments, concluding with a daily prayer for forgiveness, renewal, and joy for the day.



One of my New Year's resolutions is to read more; and daily devotions, especially centered on Luther's Small Catechism will certainly be at the top of my reading list.

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS



THE QUEST FOR AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

What Happens at Crosswise?

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!

SAVE THE DATE - June 23-28, 2019 at Concordia University Irvine

- Crosswise is open to current High School 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

Higher Things

Concordia

2019 HIGHER THINGS CONFERENCES
WWW.HIGHERTHINGS.ORG

June 24-27, 2019
 Concordia University Nebraska
 Seward, NE

June 26-29, 2019
 Concordia University St. Paul
 St. Paul, MN

July 2-5, 2019
 Concordia University Chicago
 River Forest, IL

July 16-19, 2019
 Concordia University Wisconsin
 Mequon, WI

July 30-August 2, 2019
 Concordia University Irvine
 Irvine, CA

DARE TO BE LUTHERAN



Pastor Brian is shown at left baptizing Jaxson Wickham on December 30. Heidi and Michael are Jaxson's parents and they were married at Grace by Pastor John about 4 years ago and currently live in New Jersey.

Below right is Maya Grace Moriates who was baptized on Dec. 22 here at Grace. Parents Chris and Jessica were members here about 10 years ago and Maya's godparents live in San Diego. Chris, Jessica, Maya and her older brother traveled from their home in Austin TX for the baptism.



Pastor Brian had the pleasure of visiting Charlotte Marie Lindsey on the left during his first full month as Senior Pastor. We had four births at Grace in the last two month.

We have several upcoming baptisms including Leopold Jeremiah Fullam on January 20 and Charlotte Marie Lindsey on January 27.



Above Left: Leopold Jeremiah Fullam was born on November 27, 2018 to Jeremy and Alma and will be baptized on January 20.

Above Middle: Corban Daniel Merfalen is with his big sister Joelle in the photo above. Shawn and Rachel are now the proud parents of two little ones.

Above Right: Dillon and Darica Diers welcomed Lily Jade at 2:19am on Dec. 15th. She was 7 lbs. 12 oz. and 19 inches. Lily joins her older brother Jackson.

GRACE BIRTHDAYS

JANUARY

13- Travis Wheeler
19- Jennifer Gertz
19- David Long
21- Katharina Hass
24- Jennifer Hass
31- Kelsey Bonilla

FEBRUARY

1- Carly Milligan
7- Zuri Rall
7- Elle Hansen

SUN	Jan 13	9:30 am	New Member Class
		9:30 am	Augsburg Academy resumes
WED	Jan 16	10:00 am	Wednesday Morning Bible Study
THU	Jan 24	6:00 pm	Coronado Evening Bible Study
SUN	Jan 27	11:30 am	Parsonage House Blessing
FRI	Feb 2	2:00 pm	Memorial service for Len Roberts
SAT	May 4	8:30 am	2019 Catechism Convocation at Grace

CATECHISM CONVOCATION

Saturday, May 4th, 2019, 830 am to 230 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)



PRESCHOOL LIVING NORTH STAR



The preschool children celebrated the season with various special days, Christmas sock day (shown above), crazy outfits and others. Chapel days were also very special times for the children, too.



The 2-year old class at Grace Preschool learned about the stars and the week of Christmas they specifically learned about the North Star. They heard stories about how the Magi followed it to find the new born baby Jesus. Our teachers, Miss Allie and Miss Cassie had *fourteen* children lie in circle with their heads together to signify the radiating North Star.





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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, Jules, Nick, Eli, Rachel, David 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, and Rory & Yui as they await the arrival of a child of God.

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

PRAYERS FOR ELI

Eli Vidal (Melinda and Pr. John's nephew) has had a good week which is the first in many months. He will be traveling on Monday to Toronto where he has a battery of appointments, one of which is to be rescanned. He has had several rounds of chemo in Saskatoon, SK as they are trying to shrink the large tumor that has regrown on his lung. The chemo is also attempting to kill the cancer in the lining of his chest cavity. The plan is to remove the tumor if it has shrunk. This would be #2 surgery as the past surgery was prior to learning it was cancerous. Until the consults on Jan. 17th are accessed, he will not undergo any further chemo as he needs to be strong enough to be in public and travel. Prayers are appreciated as these appointments will determine the next course of action. Our entire family is so grateful for all the love and prayers from Grace. Eli was accepted into genetic profiling studies at Sick Kids in Toronto as well as BC Children's Hospital. Over the course of the next 2 months researchers will sequence both Eli's and his tumors DNA and RNA with the goal of finding a genetically specific drug that will be more effective at defeating his cancer's growth.

This picture is so funny! Eli is the one completely bundled with two little



closed eyes. Jenn, his mom said he was awake and enjoyed a sleigh ride around their property with his big brother, Isaac. Eli can't go out in public (sadly, not even church) because of his low white blood cell count or out of their house with the cold and inclement weather. It's fun to see them taking advantage of a nice day to get some fresh air.

