
April 2020

Grace Notes

Grace Lutheran Church

310 West Lorain Street,
Oberlin, OH. 44074
440-775-3271

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From the Pastor's Desk . . .

"JUST a bit outside ..."

It's one of the more famous lines from one of the more famous baseball movies: 1989's "Major League." The tongue-in-cheek quote comes from the Cleveland Indians play-by-play announcer Harry Doyle (played by Bob Uecker) as he watches Ricky "Wild Thing" Vaughn (Charlie Sheen) throw a pitch so far off the plate that it hits the backstop. It was an understatement to say the least – but also a summary of Vaughn and the Indians at that time. They were way off.

How are things going around here at church? Probably about the same way they're going at your house.... *"JUST a bit outside of normal."* It seems we're all so far off of "normal" we're starting to forget what it looks like. This is something quite unlike anything we've ever experienced. And we have no idea how long we're in for. All this could be "over" next month – or the pandemic could stretch into the summer and reappear in autumn. None of us really know for sure. It's WILD times.

So what does that mean here at Grace? First, in consultation with the Elders and Church Safety Team I'd like to announce that worship and all in-person meetings at Grace have officially been canceled indefinitely. At some point we'll resume them – but we don't know when. The hardest part of making that announcement is realizing that means canceling all the Holy Week services in the sanctuary. What is meant to be a most poignant, meditative, and devotional time

will need to be altered completely this year. That's going to be hard for me as a pastor – and as a Christian wanting to worship also.

Second, this means we're going to continue adjusting to the "new normal" we all find ourselves in. Throughout Lent I'll keep sending out daily family devotions for everyone to use. Sunday sermons (along with Maundy Thursday and Good Friday ones) will be posted on the website, church Facebook page, emailed out to the congregation, and mailed to those who don't have internet access. If you know of someone who would like to be added to the mailing or emailing list, please don't hesitate to let me know and I'll be happy to add them.

Third, this means it's going to take some adjusting on your part also. The above stuff is good – but is there something more or different that we could be doing to serve the spiritual needs of you and others? Let us know. Jan Koepf's article (on p. 3) mentions an idea for us serving one another – even when we can't be "in community" in the usual way. Andy Karp's article (on p. 4) discusses the financial situation and how you can continue to support the church and God's Kingdom during this unusual time.

I think for all of us, this pandemic has stretched us "*JUST a bit outside ...*" our comfort zones. This can be, well... uncomfortable. But it doesn't have to be debilitating or depressing, for we still have experienced God's love in our lives and we can still share His love with others.

In His Service,
Pastor Josh

March Official Pastoral Acts:

- 2 sick/shut-in visits
- 2 private communions
- 3 pastoral care visits
- 7 leadership meetings
- 2 evangelism contacts
- 8 circuit visitor activities
- 38 phone conversations

Upcoming Sermon Texts	
April 5	John 12:12-19
April 9	John 13:1-20
April 10	John 19:28-30
April 12	John 20:1-18
April 19	John 20:19-31
April 26	John 21:1-14
May 3	John 21:15-25

Lutheran Women's League News

During these difficult and uncertain times we should all look to God for comfort and surety. With services and church activities still on hold, the Ladies lunch for April is canceled. Hopefully in early May we can schedule our summer meeting to finalize our goals and set dates and times for future activities. Please pray for world strength and healing.

God's Love to all,
Bonnie

Coronavirus Question ???

Pastor Josh asked if I might share some information about the current status of the Coronavirus Pandemic. It is safe to say that none of us has been through something quite like this before and it is at times confusing, overwhelming, and downright scary. There is a plethora of information being thrown at us every day. Do we believe it all? Some of it seems contradictory. One day there's one recommendation and the next day things are different. How do we really know what to believe? First of all, stop and take a slow, deep breath. This is new territory for all and our State's leaders are developing plans that are constantly evolving to meet this challenge. Many of you may already be aware of the following data and if so, please excuse the repetition.

As of today we know that 1933 people in Ohio have tested positive for the coronavirus disease, technically known as COVID – 19. This disease has been found in 77 of Ohio's 88 counties. 475 of those with the disease are hospitalized with 163 of those in Intensive Care. Ohio has had 39 deaths. We have been asked to do "social distancing", in other words, limit going out to absolutely necessary ventures such as groceries, drug store, and exercise. Stay approximately 6 feet from others and stay within your "bubble" of people, i.e. with the same people every day. A big change from our normal daily routines!

One of the things that I had questions about concerned the use of Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) during this time. I use it for pain management of my sore joints as many of you also may do. There have been reports that using it may increase the severity of the new disease should you contract it. The fact is that these reports have not been thoroughly tested or reviewed. The data has not been peer reviewed or substantiated. Therefore, there is not a valid answer to the question. "None of us can find real good data to verify this information," said Davidson Hamer, an infectious disease specialist from Boston University's School of Public Health. "We really need more information to know whether this is true." While more studies are conducted, Hamer said people infected with coronavirus should err on the side of caution and use acetaminophen (Tylenol).

Very good and reliable information can be found at the following websites:

www.coronavirus.ohio.gov www.coronavirus.gov

Governor DeWine's daily update videos can be accessed at the following site :

<http://www.ohiochannel.org/live/governor-mike-dewine>

Stay Safe!!!

Jan Koepp

PS With those over the age of 60 or with pre-existing medical conditions highly encouraged to "shelter in home," my concern is especially for meeting their needs. I'd like to ask if we could find 1-2 people to volunteer to be available to assist with grocery shopping, picking up medications, etc. for others who can't or shouldn't be going out. Then if there are people in our congregation who need assistance with getting something, these volunteers could be called on to do so. I'd be happy to coordinate all this – so contact me at 440-935-4287 if you can help with shopping or could you use someone's help shopping.

Buildings & Grounds News

- One of the refrigerators in the church kitchen has died and will cost more to repair than it is worth. With input from the LWL and church ladies, we'll have to have to decide whether to buy a new fridge.
- We are next on the list to have the foundation on the church repaired per call from the JVS. Put on hold until school resumes.
- All other repairs put off until the health crisis is diminished.

- Dale Rider –

Treasurer's Church Finances Update

Good News – Grace's three investments accounts are in safe investments due to council's actions. Total 2020 yearly losses are approximately \$2,000.00 and will not change much this year until investments are changed. In 2019 the accounts generated \$14,500.00 in positive income.

Bad News – For the foreseeable future, expenses will continue to outpace income putting pressure on church finances. 90 percent of church expenses are fixed. Although Grace is financially stable at this time, any emergencies or continued reduction in income will have a severe impact.

Action – At this time mailing a check to the church for offerings is preferred. I suggest either bi-weekly or monthly contributions. Deposits will NOT be done on a regular weekly basis. If mailing is a not an option, please contact Pastor Josh (440-775-3271) for his availability on taking your offering at the church on Saturday between 10am and noon or upon request.

Future – Congregation will continue to be informed about finances and possible electronic contribution option for offerings.

Mail to:

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Voters' Meeting

The first Quarterly Voters' Meeting of 2020 was held on Sunday, March 1st. At that meeting the voters approved a motion to email out the minutes of subsequent Voters' Meetings to the members – so they everyone is able to read about what occurred. That emailing (and mailing for those without internet access) will occur later this week. If you don't receive a copy but would like to, please contact the Recording Secretary, Lee Anne Christner.

Thank You.

My entire family and I would like to thank each and every one of you that helped in any way for Bill's funeral luncheon. We truly appreciate all the work that was done to welcome our friends and family after the service.

As you all know, Grace was a huge part of Bill's life. He loved his Church. Although we are missing him terribly, we know that he is resting in the loving arms of our gracious God.

Thank you all again.

Coralie Swanzer

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

So what is happening in the smoke-filled back rooms of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Oberlin, Ohio by some members of Grace's Church Council? Your president is pacing up and down the hallway and your treasurer is flipping a coin to determine the best course of financial action. "Hell" of a way to run an airline!

Seriously though, our treasurer has written a short 4 paragraphs about the current finances of our church for this newsletter and "not to fear." With this pandemic approaching 3 month in America and the stock market having lost approximately 9000 points at the time of this writing, the due diligence of Mr. Andy Karp, our treasurer, has given our monetary funds a loss of only c. \$2000. Indeed, truly remarkable! As the congregation's president, I have looked at our finances under Mr. Karp's leadership and estimate that **should the members of Grace contribute via the reliable US Postal Service on a regular basis**, we will weather this storm should it continue into the fall months.

But let's not forget the power and comfort of prayer! On Grace's website---a magnificent tool to showcase the extraordinary talent of pastor's wife---Pastor Josh has daily homilies for all of us to ponder and he's already given his first "Sunday punch" via the Internet to those using a computer or a Smartphone. In 2 Corinthians 4:17 "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." With ardent prayer---in laymen's terms, "This coronavirus too shall pass." Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.

Be careful. Be safe. Always!

Fred C. Feddeck
March 25, 2020