
May 2020

Grace Notes

Grace Lutheran Church

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From the Pastor's Desk . . .

"It just isn't the same ..."

As I've talked to many of our church members of the past two months one of the common themes frequently mentioned is that people miss being with their families. Grandparents miss hugging and playing with their grandkids. A shared communal meal – like on Easter when everyone would normally gather together – is sorely missed. Teenagers want to hang out with all their friends – whether at a ballgame, senior prom, or graduation – but can't. Adult siblings long for a time when they can interact together – going to the zoo, Cedar Point, or the beach.

Oh sure, it's nice that we have technology now. People can talk to their grandkids every day on the phone. Many use Facetime, Duo, Zoom, or some other platform to be able to see their grandkids as they talk to them in real time. That's nice... **but it just isn't the same!** There's nothing quite the same as being there, talking to someone in person, and getting a hug from your grandson when you walk through the door. *"Ain't nothing like the real thing, baby..."* (to quote Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell). We yearn for and need human interaction – which is brought so predominantly to our attention during this pandemic, stay-at-home "season" of time.

To pivot the discussion slightly, I think this pandemic helps teach us the same thing when it comes to worshiping as a church. Several people I've talked to have said they **miss going to church**. They miss singing songs together, sharing the camaraderie of the group, getting a hug before worship, and a coffee and cookie afterwards. We miss the fellowship of sharing our lives

together – whether through conversation after the service or through faith during the worship service. And hopefully we also long to receive the Lord’s Supper again, the sacramental meal where Christ promises to grant us forgiveness and strengthen our life in Him.

Some months from now, when this pandemic is all over, people will return to their “regular” lives and many will go to church on Sunday mornings to worship God. When they do it will be tempting for other people to wonder about whether it’s not just as well to stay home from church. After all, during this pandemic time they’ve “made due” without it; using online sermons and daily devotions to fill the “spiritual need.” Perhaps on a busy weekend in October it would be easier to just sleep in on a Sunday morning and get around to listening to a sermon or worship service some time later in the afternoon – if nothing else “comes up.”

While it’s true that being spiritually fed online is a good thing, I think this pandemic has hopefully helped to illustrate that “it just isn’t the same” as the real thing – just like seeing your family. There’s no complete substitution for gathering as a congregation on Sunday mornings and worshipping together. It’s a time to listen and encourage others – while sometimes hearing that encouragement yourself. It’s a time to sing God your praises – while hearing others do the same. It’s a time to hear God’s Word shared and preached to you – and then have Christ delivered to you in Holy Communion. It’s a time for us to just BE together as the family of God – doing what families do together.

So during this season of waiting, we continue to long for the time when we shall gather together as Christ’s family in worship – even as we know He is present with us individually in our homes to sustain our faith in Him.

In His Service,
Pastor Josh

April Official Pastoral Acts:

- 3 leadership meetings
- 4 circuit visitor activities
- 35 phone conversations

Upcoming Sermon Texts	
May 3	John 21:1-14
May 10	John 21:15-19
May 17	1 Peter 4:7-11
May 24	Acts 1:1-11
May 30	Acts 2:1-24

This month Pastor and the leaders of Grace will start working on the **plans** for how and when the church will be reopening, whenever that time comes.

Remember to email Pastor (graceoberlinpastor@gmail.com) if you have any **prayer requests**, and they will be included with the Sunday sermons sent out to everyone.

Lutheran Women's League News

Our next meeting was scheduled for May 16th at 6:00 pm at the church. However, due to the current pandemic restrictions, this meeting has been postponed until a later date. Stay safe.

~ Bonnie ~

COVID – 19 UPDATE

It's been just a month since I wrote about the novel virus causing the current world pandemic. In that time, Ohio's confirmed cases have increased from 1933 to 18,743 (increase of 16,810) and deaths have gone from 39 to 1002 (increase of 963). There have been more than 60,000 deaths in the United States. These statistics reveal why this virus has caused a pandemic. Other viruses that have caused havoc are either "catchy" or "deadly", but not both. Ebola for example is deadly but not so catchy since most die before transmitting it to others! The H1N1 is catchy, but thankfully not deadly. This corona virus is both "catchy" and "deadly"!

Part of the "catchy" relates to the fact many people, 50-80% or more, have the disease and are infectious but have no symptoms and feel good! We know that 60-80% of those who get sick, do well. The down side is that the other 20-40% often become critically ill and even die from the disease. The "deadly" part is that it keeps presenting more and more complications with multiple organ systems being impacted including heart, lungs, kidney, liver, brain, central nervous system. This is what we know so far...we're learning more every day. As yet there is no definitive treatment, although at least one antiviral drug is showing promise in decreasing the duration of the disease and several possible vaccines are currently in clinical trials. In moving forward and opening up the country a bit, the healthcare specialists remind us that to control the spread we need more testing, careful contact tracing, isolating the sick, and continuation of the "social distancing" and hygiene measures already recommended. If we wildly open everything at once and everyone is out doing "their thing" the virus will be very hard to control and the risk is that the 20-40% of those critically ill would totally overwhelm the current health care system. So while staying in and apart from friends and loved ones is not what we are used to doing and can be mentally, emotionally, and physically challenging, it is important for us to continue at least for awhile longer.

In the midst of the difficulties this pandemic has caused, I see many examples of the virtues that Paul writes about in Colossians 3:12-14. My prayer is that these actions continue long after the virus has subsided. It is comforting to see His peace at work as others extend kindness, humility, patience, compassionate hearts, and love to those in need.

~ Jan Koepp ~

May Birthdays

Bev Hines	5/04
George Martin	5/15
Kathy Sklarek	5/18
Susan Walker	5/20
Kathy Knipper	5/27
Simon Moldenhauer	5/29
Elijah Moldenhauer	5/31

May Anniversaries

Wayne & Donna Perron	5/14
Dale & Megan Swanzer	5/25
Ron & Jan Mertz	5/29
Ken & Robin Jones	5/31

* If we accidentally forgot your birthday or anniversary, please tell Pastor and we'll add it to our list.

Buildings & Grounds News

- The exterior of the church grounds needs a **spring cleanup** – scheduled for May 9th at 9 am. Projects will include raking leaves, weeding, and edging. Volunteers are encouraged to bring rakes, hoes, and shovels.
- The Parsonage roof is (slowly) leaking. Hope to have it repaired soon.
- All other repairs on hold until further notice.

– Dale Rider –

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

So, how was your month? Do anything special other than read a book, get tired of take-out food, and maybe just drive aimlessly for 10-15 minutes to keep from being completely bored because of the coronavirus?

Here are 3 of the “activities” I’ve done...and am still doing:

- 1) Reading/listening to Pastor Moldenhauer’s daily homilies. By the way, the text of each homily should be bound as a Christian spiritual resource for future Eastertime reference by our congregation.
- 2) Watching a church service on television on Sunday when possible.
- 3) Calling family members and several church members just to chat.

Mr. Karp, Grace Treasurer, has kept me and other members of the Church Council up-to-date regarding the church financial picture. I went to Grace April 9th to record the checks sent by congregants and make a bank deposit of same. I will follow the same procedure April 28th so that Mr. Karp can incorporate the 2 deposits onto his monthly financial reports. I will leave the dollar numbers to Mr. Karp and any reporting he provides the Grace family.

Should you send any donation to church via the US Postal Service, please consider including the collection envelopes provided you in the beginning of the year. Utilizing a counters’ worksheet with numbered envelopes makes the recordkeeping much easier and more accurate for 2020 income tax reporting.

Please remember: “*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*” (Hebrews 11:1) Always be careful and safe. This pandemic too shall pass.

Fred C. Feddeck