
MARCH 2023

Grace Notes

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

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*“Grace Lutheran Church is a family united by faith in Christ,
which seeks to grow in that faith and to share it with others.”*

From the Pastor’s Desk . . .

“How would cooperation between our congregations empower the mission of the church-at-large (AKA the Kingdom of God)?!?” That was the question that Ohio Circuit Visitor Paul Werner put to the Dual Parish Committee members last month. That was the same question I put before many of you at our Voters’ Meeting last month. *How could becoming a dual parish benefit the Kingdom of God?*

There were no quick responses either time. Someone could have said, “Becoming a dual parish will help prevent either congregation from closing prematurely” – and that’s probably true. Two are better than one in a fight for survival.

But I think part of the better answer is actually revealed in the question itself: **cooperation**. At a small church (like ours) in a small town (like ours) where lots of the people here have been members here for most of their adult lives... it can be easy to think of Grace Lutheran Church of Oberlin, Ohio as THE Kingdom of God on earth. Our default setting can preoccupy us with what’s going on only at Grace. And while that’s good in some respects... it can also be harmful when we lose sight of the reality that God’s Kingdom on earth is growing and flourishing in countless OTHER congregations in other towns and cities as well. God is developing faith during worship services in places like Oberlin, Columbus, Mexico City, and Nairobi every Sunday morning.

While all of that may be nice to realize in theory, what forming a dual parish grants us is the **opportunity to work cooperatively for the Kingdom of God**. We are not in competition with Bethany Lutheran Church in Wellington. We are on the same team (God’s), working for the same goal (growth in faith), by the same means (God’s Word, Sacraments, fellowship, and service) in the

same general area. So, in general, becoming a dual parish can benefit the Kingdom of God because it invites us at Grace to work cooperatively with another congregation (Bethany) for the greater good of God's Kingdom.

What does that mean specifically?! It means that we at Grace may be able to **share ministry ideas** (like recording videos of our worship services and posting them online for shut-ins) and encourage those at Bethany to do them. It means that people at Bethany may be able to **share common practices or behaviors** (like everyone having to "pitch in" and do small jobs at church) and encourage us at Grace to adopt them. It may mean that the people at Grace and Bethany could work together to **do something new together** – like start a combined Vacation Bible School in the summer. There are many ways that two Lutheran congregations – of similar size and make-up – could encourage and help one another to grow in mission, ministry, and faith.

What's it going to take?! It's going to take Jesus Christ working the Kingdom of God in new and powerful ways inside all of us. And that's why, very purposefully, the Sunday and midweek sermons during Lent are focused on **the Kingdom of God**. Jesus reveals a lot about the Kingdom in Matthew's Gospel. As we meditate on it, Christ comes to help us experience it as it (and He) grows within us...

In Christ,

Pastor Josh

February Official Pastoral Acts:

- 7 pastoral care visits
- 7 leadership meetings
- 4 private communions
- 4 premarital counselling sessions
- 4 family visitations
- 1 circuit visitor activity
- 1 evangelism contact

Upcoming Sermon Texts

March 5	Matthew 18:21-35
March 12	Matthew 20:1-16
March 19	Matthew 21:28-44
March 26	Matthew 22:1-14
April 2	Matthew 21:1-11

Worship Information

- Midweek **Lenten services** will be held at **Bethany Lutheran Church** in Wellington (231 E. Hamilton St.) this year. They will be on **Wednesdays** at **7 pm**, with a **Soup and Sandwich Supper** at **6 pm**. The sermon series this year will focus on "The Ways of the Kingdom of God" as we grow deeper in our understanding (and growth) in the Kingdom and the King.

- **Maundy Thursday** and **Good Friday services** will be held here at **Grace** at **6 pm**. The sermon series this year will focus on "The Ways of the Kingdom of God" as we draw nearer to Christ by learning His ways.

- Sunday morning worship continues to meet at **10:30 am** every week.

- **Private Communion** is offered at church or by pastoral home visit whenever requested. Please contact Pastor to schedule.

- Copies of the **Sunday sermons** are emailed out to everyone and a hard copy mailed out to several people without computer access. If you'd like to start receiving hard copies by mail OR if you'd no longer like to be receiving the weekly emails, please contact Pastor.

Financial Information

I will be putting together the end of the year **church offering reports** soon. If you would like to receive a report, please contact me, Sue Walker at 440-822-9323 (call or text) or suze204@hotmail.com.

Update on Becoming a Dual Parish

The second combined meeting for forming a Dual Parish was held on February 28, 2023 at Bethany, Wellington. We reviewed part 1 of the Dual Parish Agreement – Regular Sunday Worship. We discussed keeping a regular time for Grace and Bethany – instead of changing every other month or quarter. After much discussion - 8:45 & 10:30 are being considered. Bethany is considering 8:45 a.m. as permanent service time. The Special Worship Services times and locations were mostly kept according to the Agreement. It was tentatively decided to alternate service times annually.

There was a discussion of the OVERVIEW OF FUNCTIONS & TASKS OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE. A detailed list of overlapping tasks (ones that could rightly be performed by the pastor or the members) was discussed, with preferences assigned for them to be done by the pastor, the Elders, both, or a member of the congregations. Each congregation will need to do further work to discuss and decide on these items at an upcoming Voters' Meeting. Grace's will be held on March 19th. Please plan to attend.

The next combined Dual Parish meeting is at Grace March 23rd at 7:00 p.m.

Prayerfully Yours,
Tom Monroe

GRACE 2023 Service Schedule

PLEASE BE RESPONSIBLE FOR A REPLACEMENT SHOULD YOU BE UNABLE TO SERVE

DATE	Usher	Acolyte	Counters	Altar Guild	Lay Reader	Communion Assistant
March 5th	Tom Monroe	David Jones	Fred & Lisa L.	Robin Turnbull	David Jones	Bob Izold
Mar. 12, 19	Dale Rider	Reilly Jones	Jan Koepp & Dale R.	Kathy Knipper	Jon Storr	Greg Christner
Mar. 26, Apr. 2	Bob Izold	Carter Jones	Dave M. & Fred C.	Karen Huston	Fred Feddeck	Paul Castle

Let's talk Coffee Hour!

As expressed in January's Newsletter: coffee hour has been scaled down in size and scope. This means less pressure and time needed to host. Non-perishable treats have been purchased for the use of coffee hour.

Talk to me for more details.

The sign-up sheet has been posted in the church hallway. We need your help, please find some dates that work for you to host a simple coffee hour periodically.

Thank you all for your help.

Lee Anne Christner

<u>March Birthdays</u>		<u>March Anniversaries</u>	
Jan Mertz	3/9	Dave & Jen Jones	3/29
Myles Bremke	3/13		
Caleb Moldenhauer	3/16		
David Jones	3/25		
Reilly Jones	3/25		

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

Ladies Aid

On February 24th we had a Ladies Aid meeting. The Ladies decided to have an Easter Breakfast at 9 a.m., Easter Sunday. Easter Sunday is April 9th, just 5 weeks away. There is a **Breakfast Attendance Sign-up Sheet** in the hall that will help us know how much food we need to make. Anyone that would like to make a dish, please **call or text me at 440/864-9456**. We are looking forward to restoring our Easter Breakfast tradition here at Grace. Any leftovers will be served for Coffee Hour to encourage fellowship after services.

The Ladies Aid are crafting "little red wagons" for table center pieces. I'm gathering all the supplies needed and we will craft on Friday, March 24th at 4 p.m. It should take a couple of hours of fun to put 5-6 center pieces together. **Plases join us for some crafting team work**. There may be a second date of crafting to put together the décor for inside the wagons. Hopefully we can use these centerpieces for many other seasons to come.

Thank you
Lee Anne Christner

English District News

On Sunday, March 12th **Glenn Mertz** will be Installed as a Vicar at Grace Lutheran Church in Elyria, Ohio as part of his training for becoming a Specific Ministry Pastor. The Installation will be at 3 pm with a reception to follow. Everyone is welcome.

Voters' Meeting Recap

The Quarterly Voters' Assembly was held on February 19, 2023

Start time: 12:01 pm

End time: 1:51 pm

26 members present; 26 members eligible to vote

The voters read or heard the usual reports (Pastor's, Evangelism, Buildings & Grounds, Treasurer's, Vice President's, Elder's and Ladies Aid)

There was a Dual Parish Committee Report:

A discussion changed the wording of the Dual Parish Agreement Draft.

The times to hold our regular Sunday Services at Grace was discussed and it was voted to present to the Dual Parish Committees, at their next meeting on the 28th of February: we'd change our service to 9 am. We will continue to hold our Voters' Assemblies quarterly directly after the Sunday service and during coffee hour.

The Special Worship Service times and locations were discussed and voted on. These times and locations were taken to the Dual Parish Committee Meeting at Wellington on February 28th. All were agreed on with the exception of our Regular Sunday Service times. That topic will be discussed at our next Dual Parish Voters' Meeting on March 19th after Church service. Please be there. **It was decided to remove Service and Voters' meeting attendance requirements in order to stay a voting member for the year 2023.**

Christmas Eve & Good Friday: Both to be held at Grace at 6 pm.

Maundy Thursday & Ash Wednesday: Both to be held here at Grace at 6 pm.

Midweek Advent and Lenten services: To be held at Bethany in Wellington, every Wednesday of March at 7 pm. With a soup & sandwich supper at 6 pm.

Thanksgiving Eve Service: To be held here at Grace at 7 pm.

The starting time for regular Sunday services to change the 1st Sunday in May.

Under **New Business** Zachary Abicht, Renee Watson and Sydney Wright were approved as new communicate members. It was also moved and approved to increase the Organist's pay as of the 1st Sunday of June.

The Next Quarterly Voters' Assembly is scheduled for May 21, 2023

Note: There are 3 more Dual Parish Voters' Meetings scheduled for March 19th, April 22nd and May 21st.

Upcoming Church Events & Dates

- **Combined Midweek Lent Services:** Wednesday, March 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, & 29th at 7:00 pm at Bethany.
- **Confirmation Class:** Monday, March 6th, 13th, 20th, & 27th at 7:00 pm at Bethany.
- **Elder's Meeting:** Tuesday, March 7th at 7:00 pm.
- **Council Meeting:** Thursday, March 9th at 7:00 pm.
- **March Voters' Meeting Packets Distributed:** Sunday, March 12th
- **March Dual Parish Voters' Meeting:** Sunday, March 19th at 11:45 am.
- **April Newsletter Articles Due:** Tuesday, March 28th to Lee Anne Christner.
- **Maundy Thursday Service:** Thursday, April 6th at 6:00 pm at Grace.
- **Good Friday Tenebrae Service:** Thursday, April 7th at 6:00 pm at Grace.
- **Easter Breakfast:** Sunday, April 9th at 9:00 am at Grace.