
MAY 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 . . .

May is the month of...packing boxes. At least around here at the parsonage. You never really know how much stuff you have, until you have to try and pack it into boxes and move. SO MANY boxes...! In a way it feels strange to be packing up and leaving, because this is the only place I’ve ever been a pastor. God has called me here and sustained me here through good times and bad. It’s a privileged place where I’ve learned a lot about what it means to be a pastor, what it looks like for congregation to be the body of Christ working and living together, and how Christ can work His grace in the unlikeliest of places and ways and moments.

All the packing has been good in that it gives me time to reflect a little on the last 15 years here. I’ve come across pictures from church picnics, Crusher’s baseball games, and anniversary dinners. I remember Family Night fun, Fred’s Movie Night movies, getting snowed on while participating in the Live Nativity, praying with the less fortunate during the Saturday Free Hot Meals and work Clean-Up days at Grace (when someone accidentally ran a rototiller into the Limpert’s truck). I’m grateful for a parsonage kitchen renovation project, a new wooden swing set in the parsonage backyard, and volunteers painting the inside of the church. I fondly remember a packed church on Easter, quiet candlelight on Christmas Eve, and laughter in the Fellowship Hall – not to mention the smiles, joy, and warmth of many members who are no longer with us, because they’ve gone from this life to the better Life to come. I’ve done funerals and baptisms, weddings big and small. I’ve baptized squirmy little Carter Harrison Fehlan Jones – and this month I look forward to confirming him in the Lutheran faith. I’ve had a chance to pastor many of you with care and God’s Word as you’ve opened your lives to me – and that I may remember and treasure most.

In a sense it's hard to leave and say good-bye to all of that – and start something new. But at the same time, it's not that hard at all...because I trust that God is leading me and will have good things in store for me as I continue on as his pastor in a new place with a new congregation. I say all that because for some of you this transition may also be hard – as you say good-bye to one pastor (with his ways and quirks of doing things) and look towards finding a new pastor with different skills and abilities. At times like these our faith points us back to the basics: that we trust in God that He has good things in store for Grace as you continue in the same place as the same congregation, but with new pastoral leadership and possibly a new direction. Our faith puts our confidence in the risen Christ, as His powerful Spirit (which we celebrate on Pentecost this month) moves us to faithfulness to Him and to your life together as His Church in this place.

In Christ,

Pastor Josh

April Official Pastoral Acts:

- 3 pastoral care visits
- 4 leadership meetings
- 1 sick/shut-in visit
- 1 premarital counseling visit

Upcoming Sermon Texts	
May 7	1 Peter 2:1-12
May 14	1 Peter 3:8-22
May 21	1 Peter 4:1-19; 5:6-11
May 28	Acts 2:1-21

Worship Information

- A special thank you to all those who volunteered to help make the Holy Week services at Grace so meaningful. It is appreciated.

- Sunday morning worship continues to meet at **10:30 am** every week this month. Starting in June we will resume meeting at **10:00 am** for worship every week.

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

GRACE 2023 SERVICE SCHEDULE

Please be responsible for a replacement should you be unable to serve

May 7th, 14th	Dale Rider	Carter Jones	Jan Koepp & Dale R.	Kathy Knipper	David Jones	Dave Jones
May 21st, 28th	Bob Izold	David Jones	Bonnie & Lisa	Karen Huston	Jon Storr	5/21 Paul C. 5/28 Greg C.
June 4th, 11th	Paul Castle	Reilly Jones	Dave M. & Fred F.	Colleen Karp	Fred Feddeck	Bob Izold
June 18th, 25th	Tom Monroe	Carter Jones	Bonnie & Lisa	Robin Turnbull	Dave Jones	Dave Jones

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 or to get on the list at secretary4grace@gmail.com

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>May Birthdays</u>		<u>May Anniversaries</u>	
Bev Hines	5/4	Wayne & Donna Perron	5/14
George Martin	5/15	Dale & Megan Swanzer	5/25
Kathy Sklarek	5/18	Ron & Jan Mertz	5/29
Susan Walker	5/20	Ken & Robin Jones	5/31
Kathy Knipper	5/27		
Simon Moldenhauer	5/29		
Elijah Moldenhauer	5/31		

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

Ladies Aid

Sunday the 14th, Mother's Day, we'll be featuring "**Muffins for Mom**" at coffee hour. Hope you can come. Ladies Aid is hosting a very special coffee hour on Sunday the 28th. I know it's Memorial Day weekend and I know there will be lots of plans but try to fit in our coffee hour on the 28th directly after Sunday Services. This is Pastor's last Sunday with us.

Lee Anne Christner

Oziah Wales Watch

Sunday, May 21st will be Oziah's last Sunday as our organist here at Grace. That weekend he is graduating from Oberlin College with a dual major in Organ Performance and Literature. He has served us well for the 4+ years he's been here.

Congratulations, Oziah!

President's Message

What's next for Grace as Pastor Josh departs for Trinity Lutheran in Elgin Minnesota.? We have been assigned Pastor Weldon from Grace Lutheran in Elyria as our circuit visitor. Pastor Weldon will guide us and help us as we go through the process of finding another Pastor. There is a procedure and we need to take the steps for what is next for us at Grace. As of now I have been told Vicar Glenn Mertz will preach to us during the months of June and July following Pastor Josh's departure. There will be another Pastor once a month to give Communion, dates to be announced in your Sunday bulletins. The service time will be changed back to 10:00 as of June 4th.

One of the questions we will have to ask ourselves is will we want a full-time Pastor, interim pastor or a vacancy Pastor. Can we afford to pay a full time Pastor? Our active church members that actually attend church is dwindling as are the funds to pay a full-time pastor. Long term we have an arduous path to follow. I encourage **everyone** to come to the Voters' Meeting on May 21st which will be for information purposes and to discuss these topics and let us ALL try to figure out the path forward.

Keeping the faith,
Tom Monroe

PS The Lutheran Witness has a tremendous, well-written article in the May edition titled "Multi-Congregation Parishes." You can read it at <https://witness.lcms.org/2023/multi-congregation-parishes> and I would encourage you to do so.

Upcoming Church Events & Dates

- **Double Confirmation Class:** Monday, May 1st, 8th, & 15th and Tuesday, May 2nd & 9th at 6:30 pm at Bethany.
 - **Adult Bible Class:** Sunday, May 7th, 14th, & 28th at 9:30 am.
 - **Council Meeting:** Monday, May 8th at 7:00 pm.
 - **Informational Voters' Meeting:** Sunday, May 21st at 9:30 am.
 - **Confirmation Sunday:** Sunday, May 21st.
 - **Pastor Josh's final Sunday at Grace:** Sunday, May 28th.
 - **June Newsletter Articles Due:** Tuesday, May 30th to Lee Anne Christner.
 - **Divine Worship Service (without Communion):** Sunday, June 4th at 10:00 am.
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Letters to Pastor Josh & Family

To Pastor Josh,

As a member of your first Congregation, you were called to shepherd, I wish to thank you, and pray the Lord blesses you in the next endeavor to which you have been called, for the furtherance of **His Kingdom Agenda**.

May you and your family depart while being comforted by the words of Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

For His Kingdom,

Harriett A. Thomas

Josh farewell

The first time I met Josh my reaction was "good heavens, I have grandchildren older than he is". "He is so young". Knowing you were fresh out of the seminary and Grace was your first parish I appointed myself as your assistant and proceeded to advise you and mentor your first year here at Grace Oberlin. (Did you realize that Josh?) And I was there when you became daddy for your first two sons.

I hope when you are back up in the cold north you find another grandmother-type to welcome you. I will miss you! I wish you contentment, happiness, enjoyment and successful future at your new parish. Good luck and as Roy Rogers used to say "happy trails to you till we meet again".

Carolyn Husted

Thanks to Pastor Josh for his many years of service to Grace. When we first met Josh, he was a young, single man. During his eventful years with us, he married Jen, and started a beautiful family. He was there for my family, too. He married Bob and me, and was there for the passing of my brother, dad, and mom. He always made time for my family. We will miss him and his family and wish him well in his new adventure.

Sue Walker and Bob Scherry

The Lord God, Almighty has been caring for GLC Oberlin, Ohio including Josh Moldenhauer's installation thru June 1, 2023 and forever more. Praying this Blessing of the Word will continue strong Christian growth within all to serve and praise.

The Fridenstines

Pastor Josh

Thank you for everything you've done for me. You've made me a stronger person. I SURE AM GONNA

MISS YOU yet you have to look out for you (& your families) best interests. You were my confidant. 😊



You've helped me through some VERY DIFFICULT TIMES IN MY LIFE ~~ you let me cry, laugh & EVEN POUT. HA HA. You NEVER told me that you UNDERSTOOD (like SO MANY PEOPLE DID yet no-one understood WHAT I WENT THROUGH. BECAUSE NO-ONE HAS BEEN IN MY SHOES), JUDGED, or even TUNED ME OUT. You LISTENED TO ME & let me be MYSELF.

Paster ~ your sermon's ~~ EVERYONE (except 1) touched my heart and made me understand our Lutheran religion SO WELL. I'm truly gonna miss you both yet I hope you find happiness in the next chapter of your lives together.

Best of luck to you & Jen (your boys too). You'll truly be missed. THANK-YOU Paster Josh for EVERYTHING.

Lisa Lalonde

With Pastor Josh and family

It's been nice to have kids back in church and Sunday School. I send he and his family – All hope, happiness and best wishes in the next stage in their lives.

Love,

Karen Huston

It was not long after Pastor Josh arrived when he came to our home for a visit. We enjoyed a good meal of lasagna, sat out on the barn porch and talked. I could see how excited he was about coming to Grace. He was so young, with so much energy that I hoped would inspire our church.

We have been blessed to see our Pastor grow. A wife and four boys, WOW!

Pastor Josh worked with me to fight the stigma on mental health. With his help we started a NAMI family support group and it was very successful. Pastor's wife Jen worked hard designing flyers to get the NAMI group started. Jen also set up and organized the Sunday School lessons for the children. Pastor Josh came to visit our son in the hospital when he was very ill and his prayers were and are greatly appreciated.

Thank you, Pastor Josh and Jen, for being part of our church family. We will miss you and your beautiful young boys. We wish you success at your new church.

We love you.

Bob and Lori Izold

After all these years, I have finally trusted enough to talk with and share with a person of God, Pastor Josh Moldenhauer. I've questioned most everything I read or hear from Josh and he always answers. Josh never judged my questions just answered. What a wonderful way to learn about God. Most important, Josh has taught me how to forgive. I'll admit I can't yet forgive as Jesus forgives, but God has shown me patience and love. I now understand during the worst events of my life, Jesus was there with me, helping me to survive and get through it. And still helping me survive. I've figured out with Josh's guidance that if Jesus can forgive me, then I can forgive.

Thank you, Josh, I will miss you dearly.
Lee Anne Christner

I want to thank Pastor Josh for many things. He's been there and supportive through all my illnesses and surgeries. I want to thank him for involving me in assisting with communion. I want to thank him for having enough faith in me to be an Elder. He's also been there when I've needed spiritual guidance. I wish Josh, Jen and the boys the best. I hope they have an eventful and fun trip to their new home. I know the boys will love their new school. I pray Josh's new calling is everything he wants and needs. Jen, enjoy all the snow and cold weather. I know your new home will be the home you can love.

Greg Christner

Thank you, Josh, for your hard work and loving kindness