



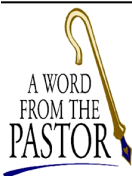
April
2020

GRACE MESSENGER

Grace Lutheran Church, an ELCA Congregation
19221 Pineville Road, Long Beach, MS 39560
228-864-4248 gracelutheran4248@gmail.com
www.gracelongbeach.com
PASTOR DAVE PARR cell - 423-620-1284
Personal email gracepastordave1@gmail.com



Keith Voigts - Church Council President
Sunday School - 8:45 am Adults ~ Youth @ 11:30am
Worship & Communion 10:00 a.m.
Office Hours: Pastor Dave 9-12 Tues. - Friday
Staff, Tues. All day - Wednesday 8-12,
Thursday 12-4 & Friday 8-12
Please call to make sure someone is in the office.



"I lift up my eyes to the hills— where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth." – *Psalm 121:1-2*

WIGIAT?

Where is God in All This?

My Pastoral Care professor at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (LTSS) would often pose this question using the "WIGIAT" acronym as a constant reminder that this is a very real and relevant question in times of distress such as we face now. People asked this question in 2001 as 2,996 people died at the World Trade Center during the 9/11 terrorist attack. People asked this question when 230,000 people died in the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami.

So where is God in the midst of this world-wide pandemic? The answer is quite simple: God is right here. In front of us, above us, behind us, beside us, and *inside us!* *God is all around us!*

God didn't abandon the people in the Twin Towers. God walked with them through their valley of the shadow. God did not abandon those who perished in the 2004 tsunami. God went with them through their valley of the shadow. And God has not abandoned us. God walks with us and talks with us every day of our lives, every step of the way, giving Light in the darkness.

Sometimes we can't feel God because we are overwhelmed with other feelings; human emotions that we cannot always shrug off. Anxiety, fear, apprehension, grief, and anger rise to the surface in a time such as this.

Sometimes we can't hear God because of the "noise" caused by circumstances in the world that give rise to the aforementioned feelings.

But that's when God is the closest. That's when God takes our hand and whispers, "Peace, be still."

Some have asked not only "Where is God"? but "Why, God?" "Why do you allow these things to happen?" Some have suggested the answer is that God is punishing the world for sin, that this a "wake-up call." Some even go so far as to name a particular sin, or something that *they* have decided is sin. The theological truth is that *every sunrise is a wake-up call*. Every sunrise is a reminder of the Son-rise (more about that in the Easter sermon!) God's Word is the instrument God uses to wake us up:

"But everything exposed by the light becomes visible--and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." – Ephesians 5:13,14

This pandemic is an example of all the other bad things that happen to good people. And to "bad" people. It is a reminder that we live in a world in which God never intended for us. Scripture teaches us that because of disbelief and disobedience God banished humanity from the Paradise originally intended for human habitation (Genesis 3:23). Whether or not one subscribes to that teaching is a matter of choice. I choose to believe God's Word in all things, and I encourage others to do the same. Therefore, I declare to you that God *has not* and *will not* abandon us, nor will God forsake us. So, let us take heart and lift up our eyes unto the Lord!

In Christ, Pastor Dave



Footprints in the Sand

One night I dreamed a dream.
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you." - *Author Unknown*

Thank you for serving!

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Christians welcoming and serving

The marks of discipleship are to:

*Pray daily *Worship weekly *Serve your church & community *Relate to others in a small group
*Read the Bible *Give a tithe and beyond

READERS

- 5 Barb Gaines
Palm Sunday
12 Kevin Schultz
Easter Sunday
19
26

ASSISTING MINISTER

- 5 Jerry Luzadder
12 Ron Schmidting
19 Judy Hierstein
26 Kevin Schultz

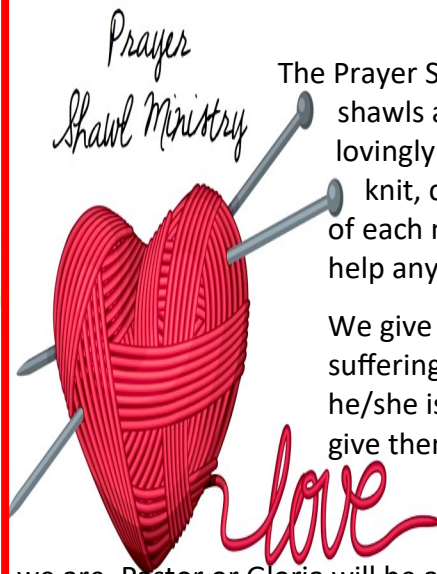
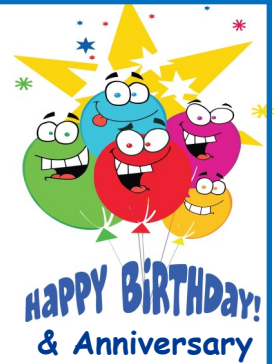
*faith
OVER
fear*

Birthdays in April

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 5 Laura Wilson | 18 Richie Sween |
| 6 Dominick Miscavage | 19 Beth Romig |
| Emily Rush | Makenzie Cross |
| 8 Lucy Puckett | 20 Larry Wilson |
| Jackie Haygood | 27 Judy Hierstein |
| 12 Azalee Fullmer | Barbara Kouba |
| 16 Barbara Gaines | 28 Daniel Sween |

Anniversaries in April

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 21 Mike/Carrie Carrubba | 23 Del/Colleen Budd |
| 22 Larry/Sarah Koehn | 30 Richie/Kayla Sween |



The Prayer Shawl Ministry has given away hundreds of handmade shawls and throws over the years. These items have been lovingly and prayerfully made by our members. We gather to knit, crochet and fellowship together on the last Saturday of each month. We welcome all who want to join us and will help anyone who is just learning.

We give these shawls to anyone. Usually the recipient is suffering from an illness, injury or some other difficulty. Or he/she is grieving the loss of a loved one. However we also give them out for happy occasions!

Please ask anyone from our group for one if you know of someone in need. If you don't know who we are, Pastor or Gloria will be able to put us in touch with you.

These shawls and throws are for you and your friends! **PLEASE ASK!**

Dolores Dupont



CHURCH

YARD
SALE

Our yard sale has been postponed until this craziness is over.
Be safe.

Thanks so much,
Christy Authement, Service



The President's Message ~ Keith

Wow. I'm sitting here trying to think of what to write when everything and anything to be said about the virus has been said. So let's get off that train and stop worrying (worry is praying to yourself). I may be a little quirky at times, but I must say things like this just don't worry me that much. When Hurricane Katrina hit and I was in Ohio without a way to get back here, I didn't panic. I just remained positive that things would work out. That's how I feel about most things. When church members panic about our finances, I (maybe very naively) remind them that God is in control and if we keep on keepin' on, we will be OK. I have felt the same about Gwenn's terrible illness, which is in remission as we speak. Lucky me, for some reason I was born with and raised in the very strong concept that I am in God's hands and whatever happens is understood by Him. If things go bad, I have something to hang on to. That's easy to say, but it's so very true. It is so important that we hear this message often, and at our church, it comes through loud and clear. It's my prayer that this message does not go in one ear and out the other and that the message does affect how we look at life. Thank God that Pastor Dave and his IT helpers have kept the message alive with the Zoom services. If you haven't participated, I sincerely hope that the Holy Spirit will drive you to getting on board.

You go, Zoom!



Outreach ~ Pete Raif

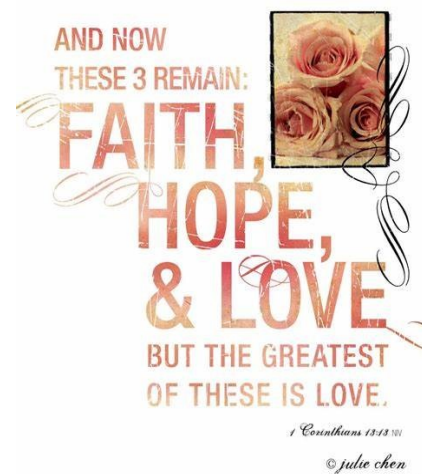
We will be returning to the VA on Sunday, May 17th at 1:00 pm to celebrate Memorial Day with the veterans. We will provide chicken tenders. Volunteers will be needed to provide the sides and desserts and to help serve. This has not been cancelled yet. We will keep you updated regarding any changes.

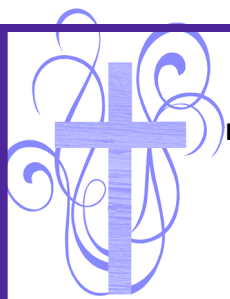
The Southern Miss Gulf Coast Civic Choral 25th Anniversary Concerts

POSTPONED UNTIL MAY

USM Campus Fleming Auditorium, Long Beach
Reception to follow

St. Michael Catholic Church, Biloxi, MS
FREE ADMISSION





Readings for April

Date	Sunday	1 st Reading	Psalm	2 nd Reading	Gospel
5	Palm	Isaiah 50:4-9	31:9-16	Philippians 2:5-11	Matt. 21:1-11
12	Easter	Acts 10:34-43	118:1-2, 14-24	1 Colossians	Matt. 28:1-10
19	Holy Humor	Acts 2:14a, 22-32	16	1 Peter 1:3-9	John 20:19-31
26	Easter 3	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	116: 1-4, 12-19	1 Peter 17-23	Luke 24:13-35

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers for....

Johnny Authement, Anne Bacchiocchi, Lisa Baron, Rose Bearson, Col. Dave Biggs, Jennifer Bonstaff, Henry/Wanda Branstetter, Erica Broussard, Mariah Brown, Peggy Broussard, Jan Bruner, Charissa, Cynthia Chadwyck, Bruce Clemmons, Vivian & Mike Collins, Alice Crandall, Cole Crane, Stan Cross, Susan Cross, Robert Crowley, Anita Cruz, Richard Cuevas, Gina Dale, Timothy Davis, Toni Davis, Angie Dedrickson, Christie Deshotel, Janie Dropco, Glen McElwee, Amberly Favre, Azalee Fullmer, Madelyn Gordon, John Guthans, Jackie Haygood, Debbie/Billy Hennessy, Steve Hiles, Brenda Hiles, Carly Hinton, Sherry Holbrook, Pat Holliday, Miriam Hurdle, Mike Johnson, Carmela Jones, Palmer Jones, Royce Joyce, Peggy King, Josephine Kippes, Larry Kirtwright, Larry & Sarah Koehn, Debra Kotzen, Helen Kupke, Cheryl Lacey, Breanna Ladner, Billy/Duyen Lamb, Charlie/Carol Loew, Lois Long, Mary Ann Maggard, Betty Marshall, Lindsey Mays, Cindy Mitchell, Kathy Pearson, Ann Peneguy, Lucy Puckett, Christopher Ryan, Karen/Kim/Kevin Schultz, Corky Sidell, Larry/Mori Smith, Rilyn Speck, Ruth Spera, Rita/Boyd Swenson, John Thompson, Maggie Tirrell, Gorie Thomas, Jeff Turner, Juanita Vann, Gwenn Voigts, Fergi & Sylvia Von Behren, Doris Weaver, Brantley West, Kacey Jade West, Larry Wilson, Steve Wilson, Lynnsnora,

Deployed & Active Military, "Victims of Domestic Abuse"



Church Finance Report - Duane Wilson

Finances for Grace declined in February. Net General Fund income in February was \$12,369, while expenses were \$15,442. There were no unusual budget expenditures in February. To meet the 2020 budget, our income needed each month is \$16,610.

Contributions YTD are \$6,558 short of reaching the budget.

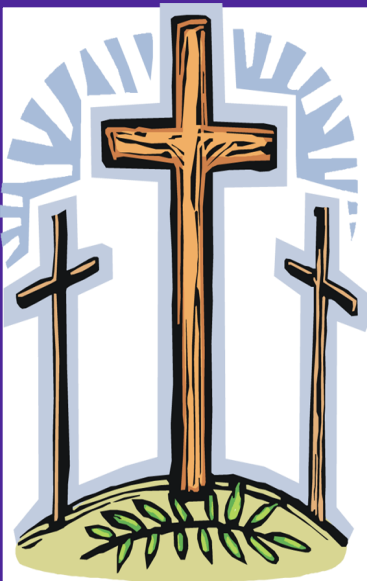
Restricted fund account activities were fairly active in February. Grace Food Pantry received \$3,586 in donations with \$2,087 in expenses. Good Samaritan expended \$1,759 to assist members and others in need while receiving \$1,061. The Service Project Fund received \$1,506 with spending of \$3,000. These Restricted funds will continue to be used to help members and others in the community in need.

The February Financial Summary is posted in the hallway if you'd like to review the finances in more detail. We should all be thankful for our financial stability, challenge ourselves to turn the decline in Finances around, and continue to pray for the council and financial health of our church so that we can continue to support our church mission and outreach. **Please remember to support our church financially during the COVID-19 pandemic.**



Stephen Ministry

We all experience challenges in life. There are times when we could benefit from the support of a caring Christian friend that will keep our visits confidential. Stephen Ministers are ready to provide the emotional and spiritual care one needs when faced with a difficult time. If you, or someone you know in the congregation or community, could benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister, please call or ask the person to call the numbers below. Stephen Ministry is **CONFIDENTIAL**
Contact: Linda Johnson 504-433-4768 or Pastor Dave Parr 423-620-1284.



Worship Committee - Candis Raif

Since we are not able to worship as a congregation in our building, we are going to simulate as much as possible our usual Wednesday night and Sunday morning services using Zoom. This allows us to come together as a congregation and to worship together while 'socially distancing'. We are still working out some of the issues that occurred this past Sunday. Please use the video option so we can see each other as we worship.

We will need assisting ministers and readers for each Zoom service. You will receive a copy of the bulletin and readings. If you can participate as a reader, please let Pastor Dave or Gloria know. For Assisting Ministers, we will use the AM schedule as it stands. If for some reason you can't serve, please find a substitute!

I did not order Easter Lilies since we will most likely not be in the sanctuary for Easter Sunday!

April Service / Liturgy Schedule

April 5 ~ Palm Sunday - ZOOM

Gospel: Matthew 21:1-17



April 12 ~ The Resurrection of Our Lord - ZOOM

Gospel: Matthew 28:1-10... sorrow gives way to 'fear and great joy' when the women are met by an angel, see, hear and then proclaim the good news: Jesus is risen!

April 19 ~ 2nd Sunday of Easter ... 'Holy Humor' Sunday - ZOOM

Gospel: John 20:19-31... Jesus appears to the disciples, and offers a benediction, a commission and the gift of the Holy Spirit ... but Thomas is missing.

April 26 ~ 3rd Sunday of Easter - ZOOM

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35 ... On the road to Emmaus, the disciples discuss the recent events with a 'stranger', only to realize it is Jesus when he breaks the bread.

Mid-week Worship Schedule

We will have a Wednesday service on the 8th.

9th, 10th there will be a service for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday from the ELCA online and Pastor Dave will let you know how to connect. *We do not have that information yet.*

Wednesday worship resumes on Zoom ~ April 15, 22 and 29 at 7 pm

