



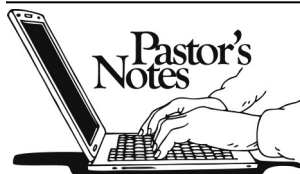
September
2020

GRACE MESSENGER

Grace Lutheran Church, an ELCA Congregation
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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
Zoom Sunday School - 9 am Adults
Zoom Worship & Communion 10:00 a.m.
Zoom Sunday School Youth - 11:30am
Office Hours: Pastor Dave 9-12 Tues. - Friday
Staff, Tues. All day, Wed.-Fri. 8-12



"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble." – Psalm 46:1 (Berean Study Bible)

Psalm 46 is one of my favorite Scripture passages for finding reassurance when life becomes overwhelming with troubles and fears. Today I share it with you, hoping that a close look at these powerful yet simple words bring the same reassurance to each of you.

"Times of trouble!" In the midst of a pandemic, tropical storms and hurricanes, riots, and growing civil turmoil, the phrase "times of trouble" seems muted and understated. And yet, it perfectly describes our world today. These are truly times of trouble! But that is only small section of the whole verse. It is simply a time and "place locator" for the immensely powerful and real presence of God!

Consider the Psalmist's three descriptors of God: refuge, strength, and help.

Refuge denotes a place of safety. But the connotation here goes far beyond a lack of danger. Refuge in the Lord provides a sense of peace and security that can be found nowhere else and in no one else. This refuge includes a calmness in the face of life's storms, and hope in the midst of turmoil and despair. Refuge in the Lord is a place where all the noise of living in a tumultuous world is hushed by the words of our Savior "Peace, be still!" (Matthew 8:23 – 27)

Strength is usually equated with the ability to "do heavy lifting." It can also denote the ability to endure hardship and overcome great obstacles. But as we surely know, human strength is limited. We often stumble and fall under the heavy loads that life places upon us. When we rely on the strength of the Lord and bring all our burdens to Him we find that no load is too heavy for God. "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) The Psalmist also noted: "The **LORD** is **my strength** and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him." (Psalm 28:7)

Help has at least three meanings that are relevant to the human condition. Used as a noun, "help" denotes assistance or aid. Used as a verb, it denotes the act of providing assistance or aid. And used as an imperative, "Help!" is a plea for receiving assistance or aid. (Yes, the Beatles song is now running through my head, and I'll bet it is in yours, too. We just can't *help* it!) Note that the Psalmist used two descriptors for help: "very" and "present". God's help is not just present in general, but present specifically *now*, for such a time as this.

Therefore, Children of God, let us lift up our eyes (and our hearts) to the Lord, and know that God is always present, always loving, always able to take us through these "troubled waters" and bring us safely to the other side!



*In Christ,
Pastor Dave*



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

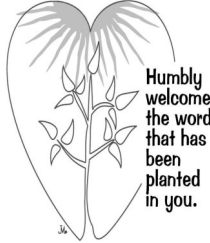
6 Kevin Schultz
13 Art Specks
20 Barb Gaines
27 Candis Raif

ASSISTING MINISTER

6 Keith Voigts
13 Sandie Guthans
20 Jerry Luzadder
27 Duane Wilson

TELLERS

6 Pat/Russell
13 Schultz/Luzadder
20 Puckett/Raif
27 Voigts/D. West



Birthdays in September

1 Gwenn Voigts	21 Kate Powell
Corey Prendergast	Melissa Busby
7 Babs Robie	22 Zoie Conley
8 Jesse McGee	Rick Allard
9 Avey Montgomery	23 Pete Raif
10 Barbara Hughes	Mark Walker
16 Elaine Schmidling	24 Alvin Culberson
17 LeAnna Conley	29 Michelle Crowley
18 Lynn Deegen	



Anniversaries in September

17 John & Jane Thompson 19 Scott & Vickey Gordon



Outreach Ministry - Pete Raif

Grace received a handwritten thank you note from the Long Beach Police Department for the Granola and fruit bars that we delivered on **July 23rd**. An outstanding gesture of appreciation from our local police.



On August 13th, Pastor Dave and I delivered the school supplies to Harper McCaughan Elementary School. These supplies help to reduce the amount of their own money that the teachers use to purchase supplies for their students. As always, these teachers appreciate anything we do for them.

Thank you for your donations!

In-house Worship at Grace

The Grace Church Council continues to consider all available data for returning to in-house worship. Information from national epidemiologists and state health officials was reviewed at the August meeting and the majority of council members agreed that conditions are not right for safely returning in-house. We are aware that some other congregations have done so, but we believe we must consider our own context and make decisions that are best for the well-being of all our parishioners. We will continue to diligently and prayerfully monitor the data. We are praying that the time will come soon when we can be together again.

Grace Council



Comments from our president ~ Keith

This past week, our son, Mike, visited us for a few days as the start of his Sabbatical, during which he will be writing a book on the subject of the fourth dimension of prayer. (That's all I know folks, but it sounds interesting.) Like many of us, we miss our children and grandchildren who live far away. But as Gwenn always says, "Quality vs. Quantity". This means that although our times together may not be many or long, we need to make the best of the time. In my little humble opinion, this holds true with our relationship with our heavenly Father. Our relationship should be deep and intense, rather than counting the physical presence in church and or church activities. I would rather my faith be deep rather than broad, intense rather than repetitive, solid faith rather than going through the motions. Only then can we experience the true presence of God in our lives.

Reminder

Grace Lutheran,
Don't forget about your Mutual Ministry Committee we are here
for YOU Comments/Suggestions/Complaints/Compliments come
see or talk to one of us:

Mutual Ministry



Pastor Dave	Art Speck
Don West	Dolores Dupont
Roy Puckett	Michelle Lee

Reminder



Christian Education ~ Lisa Speck

The Sunday School Zoom meeting was off to a great start this past Sunday. We had four students join us for classes. Please let me know if you would like your child to continue growing and learning about God. Ms. Beverly and Ms. Sheila have created engaging lessons to share. The lessons are mailed out during the week for your child to complete by Sunday to go over any questions and show off crafting skills. This is a wonderful ministry for families with children. If you have any questions, please email Lisa at peach79605@gmail.com.



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.



READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER

Date	Sundays After Pentecost	1 st Reading	Psalm	2 nd Reading	Gospel of Matthew
6	14th	Ezekiel 33:7-11	119:33-40	Rom. 13:8-14	18:15-20
13	15th	Genesis 50:15-21	103:1-13	Rom. 14:1-12	18:21-35
20	16th	Jonah 3:10, 4:11	145:1-8	Phil. 1:21-30	20:1-16
27	17th	Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32	25:1-9	Phil. 2:1-13	21:23-32

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR OUR PRAYERS FOR....

Kevin Baker, Rose Bearson, Gracie Blair, Jennifer Bonstaff, Charles Busby, Henry Branstetter, Erica Broussard, Peggy Broussard, Jan Bruner, Charissa, Cynthia Chadwyck, Vivian & Mike Collins, Alice Crandall, Cole Crane, Susan Cross, Robert Crowley, Anita Cruz, Richard Cuevas, Gina Dale, Timothy Davis, Toni Davis, Angie Dedrickson, Christie Deshotel, Joe Dunnion, Amberly Favre, Azalee Fullmer, Madelyn Gordon, Vickey Gordon, John Guthans, Jackie Haygood, Devon/Emily Head, Debbie/Billy Hennessy, Steve Hiles, Brenda Hiles, Sherry Holbrook, Pat Holliday, Miriam Hurdle, Peggy Jefcoat, Mike Johnson, Carmela Jones, Palmer Jones, Peggy King, Larry Kirtwright, Debra Kotzen, Cheryl Lacey, Breanna Ladner, Patti Lastorka, Patricia Lindsey, Lois Long, Mary Ann Maggard, Janie Malley, Betty Marshall, Lindsey Mays, Cindy Mitchell, Mike/Kathy Pearson, Ann Peneguy, Patience Poupart, Lucy Puckett, Christopher Ryan, Karen Samuelson, Kim Schultz, Corky Sidell, Ruth Spera, Larry Strohsack, Rita/Boyd Swenson, Ted, John Thompson, Maggie Tirrell, Gorie Thomas, Jeff Turner, Juanita Vann, Gwenn Voigts, Doris Weaver, Brantley West, Kacey Jade West, Janyce Westerman, Dolly Willams, Larry Wilson,

**Deployed & Active Military ~ Victims of Domestic Abuse ~ All who have been furloughed
All Medical Personnel and First Responders**



July Financial Report - Duane Wilson

Finances for Grace improved slightly in July. Net General Fund income in July was \$16,449, while expenses were \$16,034. There were no unusual budget expenditures in July. To meet the 2020 budget, our income needed each month is \$16,610. **This does include the PPP loan receipt. Contributions YTD are \$1,596 above required budget.**

Restricted fund account activities were fairly active in July. Grace Food Pantry received \$325 in donations with expenses of \$250. Good Samaritan expended \$400 to assist members and others in need with \$1,252 in donations. The Service Project Fund had no activity in July. These Restricted funds will continue to be used to help members and others in the community in need.

The July 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.





Worship Committee - Candis Raif

Thank you to all who have volunteered to sing, read, and serve as assisting ministers! Also, many thanks to the volunteers who deliver the children's sermon!

As we continue with our services using Zoom, please consider using the video option so we can see each other as we worship. Also, remember that we all need to "mute our mikes" because there is too much out-of-sync feedback when we don't mute. We can't respond and sing together in person (yet)! Adult Bible Study has resumed at 9:00am on Sundays and following the Wednesday night service.

If you would be interested in singing the first and last verse of the hymns at the church during the Zoom service on Sunday, please let Ingrid know. We can't have a group of people doing this, so you would be singing solo at the Clavinova while Ingrid plays.

Remember, we have in person communion on [Sunday mornings from 11:30 to 12:15](#) and [Wednesdays from noon to 12:30](#). We follow social distancing guidelines. The brief communion service lasts about 5 to 6 minutes.

We still need readers for each service. You do not have to be at the church to read. This can be done from home via Zoom. You will receive a copy of the bulletin and readings. If you can participate as a reader, please let Carrie Carrubba know. For Assisting Ministers, we will use the AM schedule as it stands. If for some reason you are not able to serve, please find a substitute and advise Gloria of the change.

Thank you for continuing to participate via Zoom!



September / Liturgy Schedule

September 6, 2020 ~ 14th Sunday after Pentecost (Green) ~ Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20 ... Conflict, discipline – not always cheerful topics, but here Jesus offers practical advice to his disciples – and the church – on how they should go about restoring relationships when a member sins against another.

September 13, 2020 ~ 15th Sunday after Pentecost (Green) ~ Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35 ... Peter questions the 'limits' of forgiveness. Jesus responds and challenges us to mirror the unlimited mercy of God!

September 20, 2020 ~ 16th Sunday after Pentecost (Green) ~ Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16 ... in the parable of the landowner who pays the same wages regardless of when their "shift" started or how long they worked, Jesus challenges the assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve ... when, in fact, God's mercy is boundless, and his grace is freely given to all who believe.

September 27, 2020 ~ 17th Sunday after Pentecost (Green) ~ Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32 ... again the chief priests and elders ask Jesus under what authority he does the things he's doing, and Jesus answers with a question they cannot answer! Moving on to a parable about not doing what you say you'll do, to drive the point home.

Mid-week Worship Schedule

Midweek Worship adapted from "Evening Prayer" on Zoom at 7 pm ~ September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Sept 9 – Commemorates Peter Claver, (d. 1654) priest and missionary to Colombia

Sept 16 – Commemorates Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (d. circa 258), martyr

Sept 30 – Commemorates Jerome, (d. 420), translator and teacher

Our Old Testament Bible Study continues, following worship.

All are invited/encouraged to stay connected!

