

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



MARCH 2024 GRACE VINE NEWSLETTER



When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Mark 16:1-8

Letter from Pastor Kris

“(The Lord) gave skill to human beings that he might be glorified in his marvelous works. By them the physician heals and takes away pain; the pharmacist makes a mixture from them. God’s works will never be finished; and from him health spreads over all the earth.” - Sirach 38:6-8*

How’s your health? Have you been to the doctor lately? Perhaps you’ve recently had your annual check-up or “wellness visit” as many like to call it these days. As begrudging as I will confess to be concerning the obligatory wellness visit to the doctor, I must also confess that I can see a value in it. This is all part of the movement toward preventative medicine: catch something early so as to minimize the risk of a small, insignificant issue potentially becoming a major issue. So I go to the doctor, I get my check up, if something pops up then we address it, and then go about life until the next visit comes up.

Following a time of conversation and discernment, the Church Counsel has decided that it is time to take Grace to the doctor for a wellness visit; for this reason we have entered into a relationship with Church Doctor Ministries to get a “wellness check” on our overall congregational health. In 1 Corinthians 12, Saint Paul refers to the Church as the body of Christ, “Now y’all** are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” Like our own physical bodies, the body which is the Church also has its own level and degree of health and the same goes for congregations within the Church. Though a person can check themselves for abnormalities, it’s still a good thing to go get checked out by a doctor because there are some things - lots of things - that are hidden to the untrained eye. This is where Church Doctors Ministries comes into play. Church Doctors work with congregations to help assess congregational health: they come in and get to know the background and history of a congregation and get an introduction to the community. Additionally they conduct interviews with a cross-section of the congregation and a survey of the whole congregation, and through this process they help congregations identify their strengths and weaknesses and then they work with the congregation to put a plan in place to increase overall congregational health and vitality.

In February we conducted the congregational survey portion of our “wellness visit” (thank you to all who participated in the survey). April 24 through 26 the Church Doctors will be coming to visit us. During this visit they will take time to learn about Ridgecrest, as well conduct in-person interviews with staff and a cross section of the congregation. Backing up just a bit, in March we will be contacting people and putting together a schedule of worshippers for the Church Doctors to talk with (If you would like to request an interview with the Church Doctors, please contact myself or Craig Stevens and we’ll be sure to get you on the schedule). On June 2nd the Church Doctors will come back out and we will hold a congregational event at which they will give us an in-person presentation with their findings (their diagnosis, if you will). Following the diagnostic report to the congregation, the Church Doctors will take on a 12-month coaching role to help leadership put action steps in place and work with us to actually bring those action steps to fruition.

On behalf of the council, I want to thank you in advance for your participation in this process. The council and I look forward to seeing what will come from this relationship as we continue to move forward into the future God has planned for us here at Grace.

Your partner in ministry,
Pastor Kris

*Sirach is one the books in what’s called the Apocrypha, a section of the Bible with secondary authority to the 66 books of the Bible. The best known books of the Apocrypha are the books of the Maccabees.

** The word is in fact y’all, it is a plural pronoun... who knew southerners have some handle on Greek grammar ;-)

Letter from Pastor Smee

Lead us not into temptation...

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone. – James 1:13

The sixth petition, lead us not into temptation, has always been a tricky one for me. James tells us that God tempts no one, and yet we pray that God would not lead us into temptation. I even have taken the time to read it in the Greek, and the verb truly means to bring something into a particular place, or to cause someone to enter into a particular condition. So, it is not like we have a bad translation. The Word tells us that we pray for God not to lead us, or bring us, into temptation.

However, the word for temptation does not have to mean being enticed to commit evil. It is also used as a sense of testing the quality of something - like testing a mineral to see how pure it is, or metal to remove irregularities. Reading this I began to discover a little more clearly how we can truly pray this petition.

We pray, in part, that God would protect us from all sources of temptation. That he would safely keep us in his presence so that we are not harmed by "the devil, the world, or our own selves" as the Small Catechism tells us. Basically, this petition and the previous one about forgiveness are connected. Help us, Lord, to not have need for forgiving and being forgiven anymore.

I think we also might pray in this prayer that God would have no need to test us, or discipline us. That he would hold us so close to him that we would walk clearly in his steps and not stumble. That he would help us to trust him as we see evil around us, knowing that even if death does come to us, or we are harmed by the brokenness of the world, he will still be God and will give victory even over our death.

The seventh petition is almost exactly like the sixth – deliver us from evil. Praying as we do, that he would deliver us from all adversity, and when we take our last breath, he will grant us a blessed end and take us in his grace to his side. It is not necessarily a prayer to avoid all difficulty or pain, but is a petition that he would keep us from our own sins and the sins of others. That the work of Christ for us is a daily necessity, rather than a work that happened only once 2000 years ago (which Christ himself did). That every moment of every day, we pray this prayer in the trust that what we pray, God will do. We ask him to do the very thing that the resurrection will finally complete. When the last trumpet sounds, and the heavens open once again, as Christ comes to retrieve his people, we know that all evil, pain and sorrow will be defeated, and God's ever-increasing mercy will find its completion in Christ.

In His name,

Pastor Smee



Based on John 4:5-42

In the third week in Lent, the Gospel text is the very long story of the woman at the well (John 4:5-42). Perhaps better said, it's the story of Living Water. It's also the story of how, once we receive this Living Water, it flows from us into others.

Do you remember a time when you were so excited about the Gospel, you couldn't wait to tell everyone about it? Yes? No? Was there ever such a time for you? There certainly was for this woman at the well. Jesus only told her to go get her husband, but after the exchange that followed, she went and got the whole town. Two thoughts about this: First, no past sins can bar our access to Jesus Christ, and second, we are called to love and reach out to those who are different, and perhaps even marginalized. The Great Commission applies to us all.

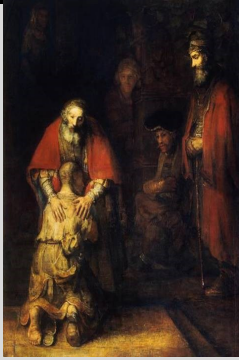
She wasted no time. She didn't even draw the water to take with her. She left the water for later (she had better water) and rushed back into town. She didn't just fetch her lover; she spoke to the whole town. "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ" (ESV)? A bit of an over-statement, but I'm sure she realized he did know everything about her there was to know.

And what do you think the townspeople thought of this promiscuous woman? She was obviously excited enough not to care what they thought of her. She wanted them to think of the Christ. "They went out of the town and [came] to him" (ESV).

"Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me all that I ever did.' ... 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world'" (ESV).

Lord, grant that we may be such wonderful witnesses. Amen.

Written by the Rev. Dr. Eugene Grimm. Rev. Dr. Grimm is a member of the NALC's Living and Giving Stewardship Team.



Midweek
Lenten Sermon
Series:
*Nouwen,
Rembrandt, & the
Return of the
Prodigal Son*

Wednesdays @ 6pm
Starting Feb 14



Lenten soup suppers Wed evenings 6pm.

Message from the Johnsons

Dear Grace Brothers and Sisters,

Jeff and I have started a self funded Missionary Guest house out of our home. We need your help raising money to buy three new beds, dressers and supplies for our home, in order to serve other missionaries. It would mean so much if you could take a look at my Go-FundMe, "Envision House where Missionaries go for HOPE.". Please donate or share with others—any help gets me closer to my goal. Thanks in advance for your kindness and support.

Here's the link: <https://gofund.me/2534a5c8>

Thank you,

Roxanne and Jeff Johnson



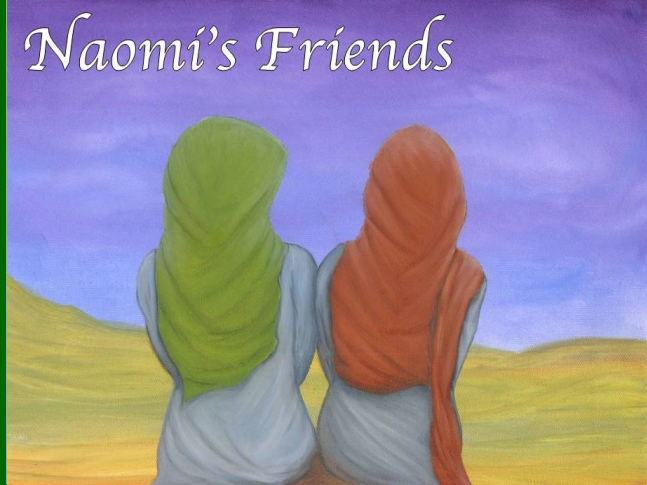
March 24-31

Maundy Thursday 7pm

Good Friday 7pm

Easter Sunrise Service 6:30am

Naomi's Friends meet the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month at Ale's Crab House @ 11 am.



Church Council meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm in the Conference Room. If a regularly scheduled council meeting needs to be rescheduled, the congregation will be notified through the weekly MailChimp mass emailer as well as the bulletin.



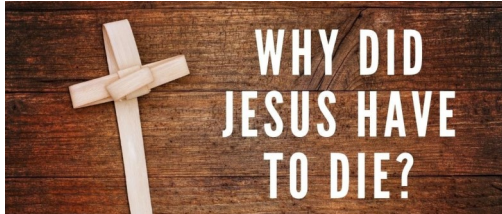
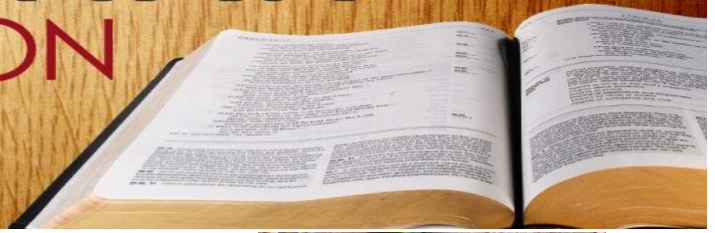
Grace Care Center

Grace fulfills an important need in our community for assistance with non-perishable foods and hygiene items. (SOCKS are always needed). They are in need of hygiene products, fruit cups, and snack bars, and canned yams and donations of cat and dog food for their people and pets program. Bring contributions to the church office or the care center during their regular hours.



(Older Wiser Lutherans)
Meets for games, fun, and entertainment in the Fellowship Hall the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 1:30 pm. All are welcome to attend.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Peace Bible Study meets the third Wednesday of the month at 9 am in the CR. The study is called *Why Did Jesus Have to Die?*. All are welcome.

TEAM 784

*...tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD...
Psalm 78:4*

Join us each Sunday morning at 9:15 am in the conference room for a time of intergenerational fellowship, study, and prayer.



LIMBO Young Adult Life group meets Mondays at 6:30 p.m. at the Smee's home.

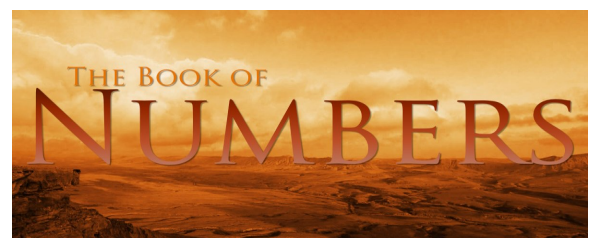
Intergenerational Catechism Class



Join us Sunday mornings at 9:15 am in the fellowship hall.



Join "A Bible and a Pencil" Bible study via Zoom on Tuesdays at 1:00 pm. The study is on the book of Exodus. Please contact Mark Brynestad via email at marknsue78@gmail.com. for further information regarding this class.

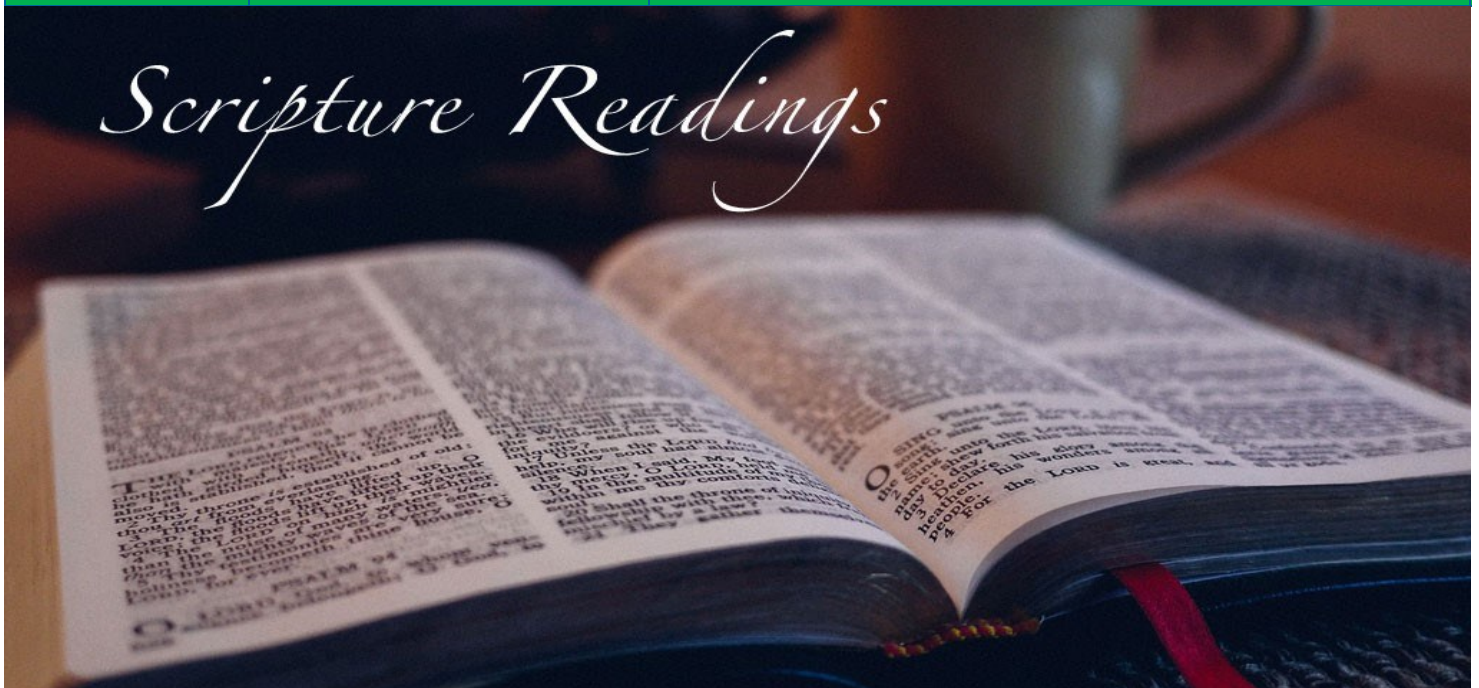


An in-depth Bible study of Numbers via Zoom on Tuesday nights, 7:00, under the instruction of Mark Brynestad. Please contact Mark Brynestad via email at marknsue78@gmail.com for further information regarding this class.

Scripture Readings for March

Date	Gospel Reading	Additional Readings
Mar 3rd	John 2:13-25	First Reading Exodus 20:1-17 Psalm Reading 19 Second Reading 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Mar 10th	John 3:14-21	First Reading Numbers 21:4-9 Psalm Reading 107:1-9 Second Reading Ephesians 2:1-10
Mar 17th	Mark 10:32-45	First Reading Jeremiah 31:31-34 Psalm Reading 119:9-16 Second Reading Hebrews 5:1-10
Mar 24th	Mark 14 & 15	First Reading Zechariah 9:9-12 Psalm Reading 118:19-29 Second Reading Philippians 2:5-11
Mar 31st	Mark 16:1-8	First Reading Isaiah 25:6-9 Psalm Reading 16 Second Reading 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Scripture Readings



March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am 9:15am TEAM 784 9:15am Catechism Class 6pm Youth group	4 LIMBO 6:30pm	5	6 6pm Soup Supper	7	8	9
10 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am 9:15am TEAM 784 9:15am Catechism Class 6pm Youth group	11 LIMBO 6:30pm	12 Naomi's Friends @ Ale's Crab House 11am OWLS 1:30pm	13 6pm Soup Supper	14 Parkinson's Support Group 2:30pm	15	16
17 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am 9:15am Catechism Class 9:15am TEAM 784 6pm Youth Group	18 LIMBO 6:30pm	19 Council Meeting 7pm	20 Peace Bible Study 9 am 6pm Soup Supper	21	22	23
24 Palm Sunday Worship 8:00 & 10:15am 9:15am Catechism Class 6pm Youth group	25 LIMBO 6:30pm	26 Naomi's Friends @ Ale's Crab House 11am OWLS 1:30pm	27	28 Maundy Thursday Service 7 pm	29 Good Friday Service 7 pm	30
31 Worship 6:30am Sunrise Service 8:00 & 10:15am						

Nurture
Equip
Share
Grace
Lutheran Church

502 N. Norma
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

For God so loved the world that
he gave his only Son, so that eve-
ryone who believes in him may
not perish but may have eternal
life.
John 3:16 (NRSV)



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www.facebook.com/gracelutheran.org

We're on the Web at:

Rev. Kris Madsen, *Senior Pastor*
Rev. Carleton Smece, *Family, Youth, and Education*
Michelle Koenig, *Office Manager*
Jane Kuhlman, *Music*
Paul Jauregui, *Custodian*



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Worship Services Sundays at 8 & 10:15 am
Team 784 Sundays at 9:15 am

