

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



Grace
Lutheran Church

April 2026
**GRACE VINE
NEWSLETTER**



Letter from the Pastors

Happy New Year and Holy Week...

Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! – Mark 11:11

You probably missed it, but did you know that the New Year started last month. It comes silently to us because, as protestants we hardly pay attention to this special holiday, but March 25th is the Feast of the Annunciation, the day we remember the Angel Gabriel coming to the girl Mary and announcing to her that she will bear a son named Jesus. For generations in the church it was New Year's Day, which fits because it is the beginning of the end. The end of time to come. The end of the toil of our mortality. The end of our sins.

What is fascinating is that the date is always present during Lent. While we are giving things up for God, God is giving himself up for us. He is declaring that he will take on flesh, setting aside his Godly frame, and become a fetus, a baby, a child, a savior. There in small words spoken to a teenager in Nazareth, the God of the universe inhabits time and space so he might die and rise to free you.

So, we get the announcement of his birth to come, and then we get faced with this week that we call "holy". A week in which the conception and birth of God into our history culminates in his mission – to be rejected, to be killed, and to rise. It is funny to think that we worry so much about the growth of the church, about more and more people that find church to be a nuisance or an after-thought. Those weekends are for kid's sporting events, and joining groups or organizations have become taboo. But what is this week about? It is about the reality that God leaves his dwelling in the heavens and comes to his people, stands before them, and they reject him. They look at the Christ and say – No! I'm good. Yet, we somehow wonder about our ability to craft some sort of program, sermon series, set of ministries, whatever, and that will bring people to Jesus. We think that if we can just get people to like us, they will then like Jesus.

That is not how Jesus works. Jesus is not waiting for you. He is not waiting for your neighbor. He comes to you. He did it once and he will do it again. He comes to you even when you try to avoid the places he hides himself. The hidden God is spoken of as this One hides himself in places we don't want him, like his word, a preacher, bread and wine, and water. We often want to find him in other places so we avoid him where he has said he will be found, but that doesn't keep him away from you. He'll get to you as he will. It will come on some random Sunday in church, a random program on TV (they can be preachers, too), or even a friend who meets you for lunch.

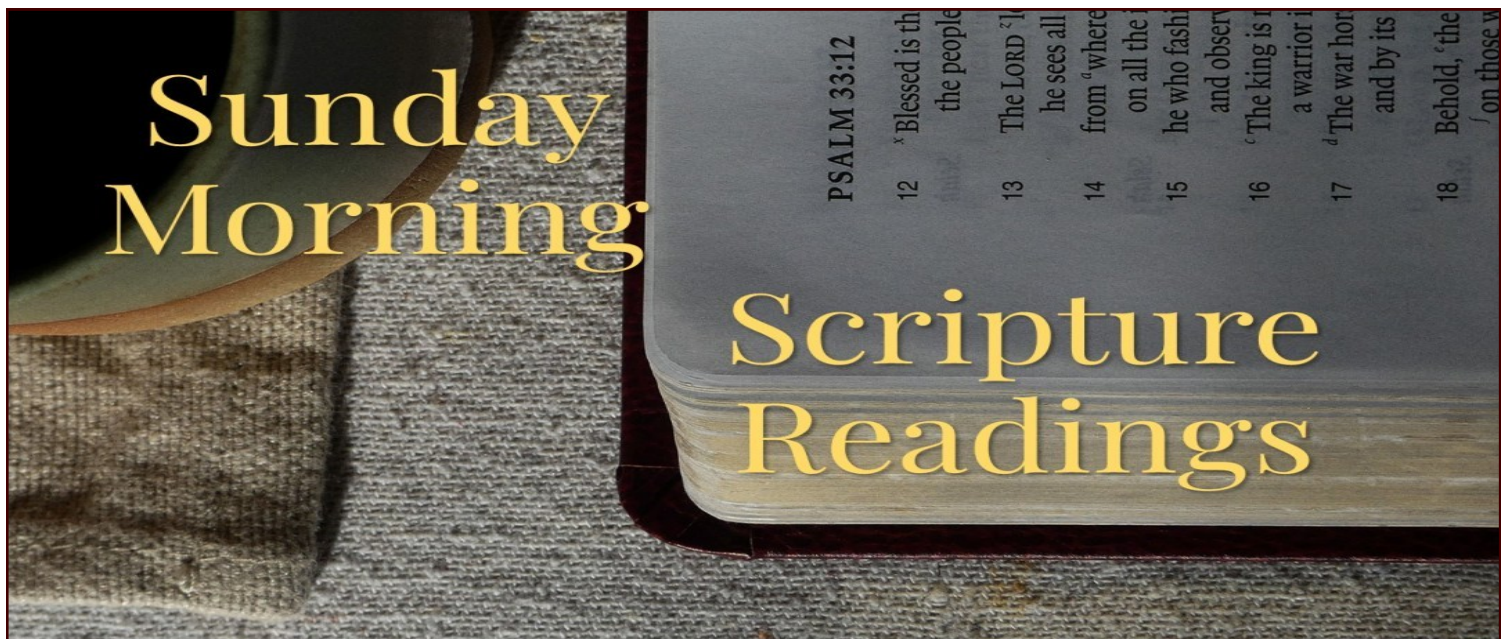
This season of Easter is a season to remember how Jesus came for you, died for you, rose for you, and is coming back for you. Remember that. He isn't aloof to your need for a savior. He can't let you go. He won't. (And when it is time, remember – HE IS RISEN!)

In Christ,

Pastor Smee

Scripture Readings for April

Date	Gospel Reading	Additional Readings
Apr 5	John 20:1 - 18	First Reading: Exodus 14:10 - 15:1 Psalm Reading: 118:15 - 29 Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:1 - 11
Apr 12	John 20:19 - 31	First Reading: Acts 5:29 - 42 Psalm Reading: 148 Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:3 - 9
Apr 19	Luke 24:13 - 35	First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 36 - 41 Psalm Reading: 116:1 - 14 Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:17 - 25
Apr 26	John 10:1 - 10	First Reading: Acts 2:42 - 47 Psalm Reading: 23 Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:19 - 25



Announcements



CHURCH COUNCIL

Church Council meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm in room 8. If a regularly scheduled council meeting needs to be rescheduled, the will be notified through the weekly MailChimp mass emailer as well as the bulletin.

HOLY WEEK




WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday March 29 at 8 & 10:30am
 Maundy Thursday April 2 at 7pm
 Good Friday April 3 at 7pm
 Easter Sunday April 5 at 6:30, 8, & 10:30am

Theology on Tap
 Wednesdays at 6pm
 In the Grace Center

April 22 through May 26



Tis better to think of the church in the ale house than to think of the ale house in church

Save the Date
 We're having a party!

Sunday April 19
 Congregational BBQ
 In celebration of
 Grace's 70th Anniversary




NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
 DISASTER RESPONSE

Service Trip to Altadena
 June 21-27
 Talk with Kim Perkins

SONShine Luncheon-Grace Ladies


S-Secret Sisters revealed
 O-Open Sisters celebrated
 N-New Sisters

When: Saturday, 4/25/26, 11-1230
 Where: Grace Fellowship Hall
 Tickets: \$5.00
 Available 3/29-4/20 Sundays and in the office




OWLS

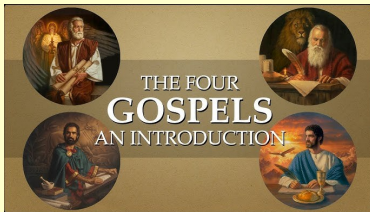
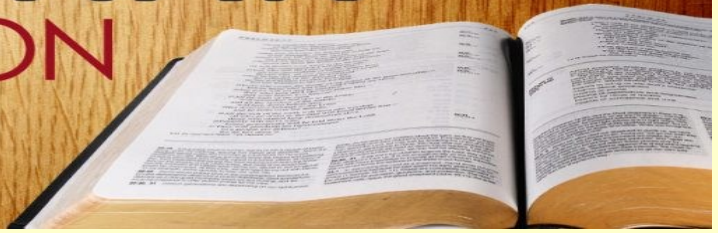
(Older Wiser Lutherans)
 Meets for games, fun, and entertainment in the Fellowship Hall the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 1:30 pm. All are welcome to attend.



Naomi's Friends
 Is a widow's Support Group.

They meet the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month
 At Lugo's Grill @ 12pm.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Peace Bible Study meets the third Wednesday of the month at 9 am in the CR. The study is called *Introduction to the Four Gospels*. All are welcome.



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

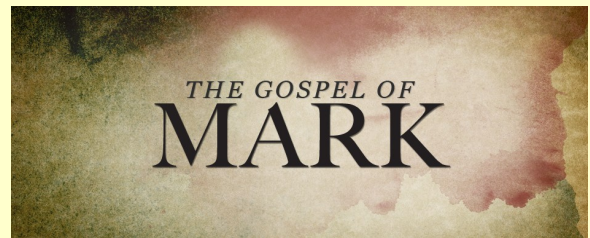
Team 784 meets in the Fellowship Hall

For ages 3rd grade to 90+

Kingdom Kids meets in the Conference Room for kids up to 2nd grade & adults



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 Mark 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.

*Spotlighting
the Family of Grace*

**Woods/Weidner family:
Don and Amanda,
Kennedy, London,
Jackson and Mason**



Amanda Woods was raised in Arkansas, attending a Southern Baptist church. She married a military man after her high school graduation and moved around the country to places he was stationed until landing in Bakersfield without him. To support herself and her children, she became a dispatcher for a towing service.

Don Weidner moved to Ridgecrest as an 8-year-old and, like many young people, couldn't wait to move to the big city as an adult. In the LA area, he went to the academy that began his career as an officer in the California Highway Patrol. Seven years ago, the desire to return to a small town had him transferring out of the city and moving back to Ridgecrest. As a CHP in Kern County, he would often call for cars to be towed. A dispatcher in Bakersfield, whose sultry voice was his Siren's song answered those calls. The truckers who arrived to do the towing encouraged him to meet the woman with that irresistible voice.

Don followed the advice of those tow truck drivers and met Amanda. They soon developed a serious, long distance relationship. Commuting got old in a hurry and the separation led to Amanda moving to Ridgecrest where they blended their family.

Don had fallen away from church while in the city, but began serious research into the theological doctrines of Ridgecrest's available churches in search of the right one for his family. After watching our 8 o'clock service online, he decided to attend Grace in person. Not making it in time for first service, he, Amanda and the boys came to second service on the first day of new member class and immediately decided Grace was the place for them. The entire family attended the remaining new member classes and they joined in September.

As a family, the parents support and enjoy the kids' many sports: London won her event at a recent track meet, Jackson and Mason play baseball, and Kennedy plays volleyball, just to name a few.

Don's Lemon Chicken & Asparagus

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 3 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tsp lemon pepper
- 1 bundle of asparagus
- 2 lemons sliced
- 2 Tbsp honey] for sauce
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter]
- Chopped Italian parsley

INSTRUCTIONS

Cover chicken in plastic and pound to 3/4 inch thick

Place flour, salt and pepper on plate and mix

Toss chicken in flour, coat both sides

Melt butter in pan on medium high heat

Brown chicken each side about 5 minutes a side

Add lemon pepper to each side as chicken is cooking

When cooked transfer to plate, set aside

Add butter to pan if needed and add asparagus

Cook until bright green or tender

Remove from pan, set aside

Add butter if needed and place lemon slices flat in pan

Cook a few minutes each side to caramelize

Remove from pan, set aside

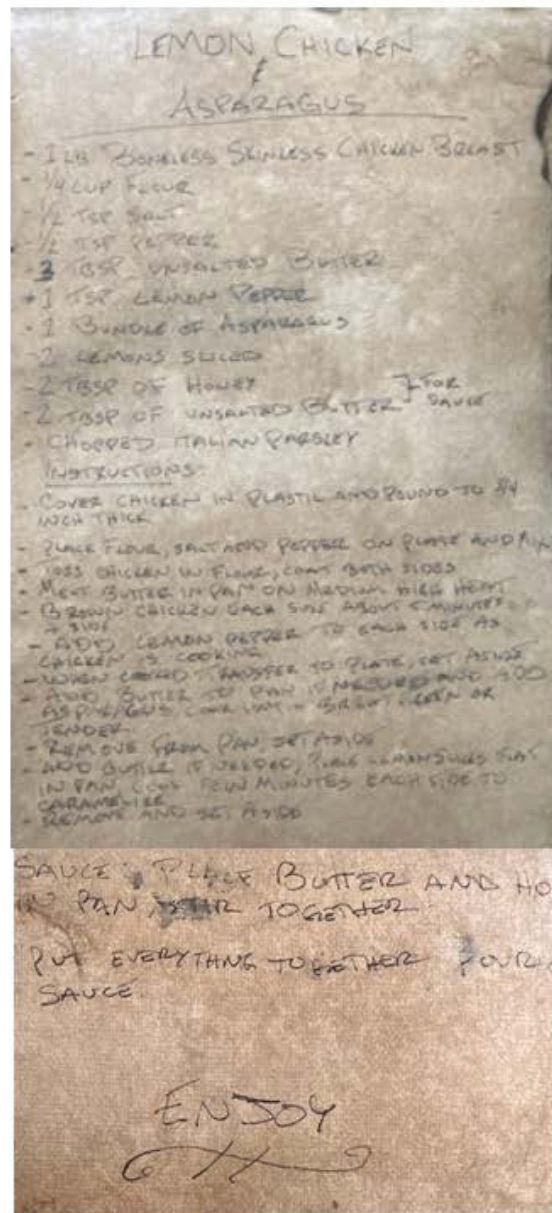
Sauce: place butter and honey in pan

Stir together

Put everything together

Pour on sauce

ENJOY!



April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
March 29th Palm Sunday 8 & 10:30 am			1	2 Maundy Thursday 7 pm 5 pm Praise Band Practice 5:30 pm Girl Scouts 7 pm Choir	3 Good Friday 7 pm 4 pm Youth Orchestra	4
5 Easter Services 6:30am, 8am & 10:30am 9:15 am Christian Education Hour	6 OFFICE CLOSED FOR EASTER MONDAY 5:30pm Model Planes 6:30pm Limbo 6:30 pm Flutes 7 pm Boy Scouts	7 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	8 10 am Music Together 12 pm Naomi's Friends @ Lugo's	9 2:30pm Parkinson's Group 5 pm Praise Band Practice 5:30 pm Girl Scouts 7 pm Choir Practice	10 10am Estonia Speaker 4 pm Youth Orchestra	11 10:30 am Music Together
12 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 9:15 am Christian Education Hour 11:45 am Youth Hike	13 6:30pm Limbo 6:30 pm Flutes 7 pm Boy Scouts	14 1:30pm OWLS 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	15 10 am Music Together 9 am Peace Bible Study	16 5 pm Praise Band Practice 5:30 pm Girl Scouts 7 pm Choir Practice	17 4 pm Youth Orchestra	18 8am IMTT Renewal 10:30 am Music Together 4 pm Boy Scouts Event
19 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 9:15 am Christian Education Hour 70th Anniversary Church BBQ after services	20 6:30 pm Limbo 6:30 pm Flutes 7 pm Boy Scouts	21 5:30 pm Girl Scouts 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting	22 10 am Music Together 12 pm Naomi's Friend's @ Lugo's 6 pm Theology on Tap	23 5 pm Praise Band Practice 5:30 pm Girl Scouts 7 pm Choir Practice	24 4 pm Youth Orchestra	25 10:30 am Music Together 11 am Sisters in Christ
26 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 9:15 am Christian Education Hour	27 6:30 pm Limbo 6:30 pm Flutes 7 pm Boy Scouts	28 1:30pm OWLS 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	29 10 am Music Together 6 pm Theology on Tap	30 5 pm Praise Band Practice 5:30 pm Girl Scouts 7 pm Choir Practice		

Celebrating 70 Years
1956 - 2026

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)



www.gracelutheran.org
[www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/gracelutheran.org)

We're on the Web at:

Rev. Kris Madsen, *Senior Pastor*
Rev. Carleton Smeed, *Associate Pastor*
Christine McClain, *Office Manager*
Jane Kuhlman, *Music*
Paul Jauregui, *Custodian*
Michell Koenig, *Gracevine Editor*



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Worship Services Sundays at 8 & 10:30 am
Christian Education Hour Sundays 9:15 am

