

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



Grace
Lutheran Church

**AUGUST 2026
GRACE VINE
NEWSLETTER**



Matthew 14:17-21

They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” And he said, “Bring them here to me.” Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Letter from the Pastors

Book Recommendations

In my time off this summer I had the opportunity to get to two books that I've been meaning to get to but hadn't. The one book I listened to an audible version of; I mentioned it in my first Sunday back, it's called The Anxious Generation. I don't recommend books often, but I'm going to recommend two today. If you're a parent, you need to read The Anxious Generation; if you're a grandparent you need to read this and you need to get it into your children's hands, so that they're better equipped to raise your grandkids. I had heard of this book, but didn't have any intention of reading it, until our principal at Las Flores advised parents to read it... I'm glad she did. I knew (as I think most everybody does) that smartphones are ruining our youth; but to hear the statistical data was jaw-dropping. In fact the week after we got back I went in to our principal's office and said, "Okay, I read the book. What are we doing about this and is there anything happening at the district level?" *Please read or listen to this book.*

The other book I finally got around to reading is the book that the Stevens lead a Sunday Morning class on between services in July, We Shall Live in Heaven: A Pastor's Testimony of Faith, Recounting His Experiences in a Soviet Slave Labor Camp. This book was edited by Rev. Siimon Haamer who visited us in March and is the head of the Tartu Academy of Theology in Estonia; the book is his grandfather, Rev. Harri Haamer's, recounting of his time in the Soviet labor camps. This is another timely read given the rise in popularity of Socialism and Communism here in the US. I'm old enough to remember the final years of the Cold War; I can remember sitting in front of the TV as a kid and hearing President Reagan's, "Mr. Gorbachav, tear down this wall" speech. But there's two and a half generations behind me who have no living memory of the Cold War.¹ So I recommend this book both for your own reading but also, if you have kids or grandkids in high school or college, I would recommend this for them as well.

My favorite part of this book is toward the beginning and Pastor Haamer is conversing with a fellow prisoner from Germany. The German was absolutely distraught and Pastor Haamer asks the man if he's a Christian. The man said yes. Pastor Haamer says to him, "But you must know that hopelessness has no place in our program." Then he reminds the German about the time the disciples were afraid for their lives when the storm rose upon them at sea and, from that, Pastor Haamer preached hope back into the German prisoner saying, "There is no situation into which we cannot go with Christ. If we have faith in Him, we shall not perish, even if we should die. And that is why hopelessness has no place in our program."²

This book is full of bold proclamation and bold faith in the face of grave evil. Like reading the book of Psalms, you hear and experience the lowest of lows, "I am a worm and not a man" (Ps.22:6), and the highest of highs, "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!" (Ps.32:11). You will hear both the worst of humanity and the best of humanity, and you will follow the steps of an under-shepherd who was torn away from his flock, yet, with every camp he was transported to, managed to find and tend to some lost sheep and form them into a flock.³

Your Partner in Ministry,
Pastor Kris

¹ Born in 1981, depending on whose numbering you use, I'm either the tail-end of Gen X or the very beginning of Gen Y (aka: the Millennials).

² Haamer, Harri We Shall Live Again, pgs.34-35. Tartu Academy of Theology; Tartu, Estonia. 2022.

³ On a personal note, the reason I became interested in this book was to get some understanding into a piece of my own family history that my grandma never spoke about: My maternal great-grandfather and his oldest son (my great uncle) were also POW's and, like Pastor Haamer, lived for some time in the Soviet camps in Siberia.

THE WELCOME THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING:

Building a Culture of Hospitality in Your Church

Part 1

Most churches are full of warm, caring people who love Jesus and love their church. The heart is there. And yet faithful, welcoming congregations watch first-time guests slip out the back door, never to return, and they cannot quite say why.

Here is the honest truth, and it is worth saying plainly. Your church is not lacking heart. It is lacking connection. There is a gap between how welcoming you think you are and how welcomed a guest actually feels, and that gap is exactly where you lose the very people you are praying to reach.

THE FRIENDLIEST CHURCH IN TOWN

Almost every congregation describes itself the same way: We are the friendliest church in town. They mean it, and they are usually right that they are friendly. The hugs in the lobby are real. The laughter in the hallway is real. The long conversations after the service are real.

But all that warmth is happening among people who already know each other. To a guest standing nearby, it is a closed circle they are watching from the outside. We measure our friendliness by how Sunday feels to us, surrounded by people we love. The guest measures something completely different: Did anyone notice me? Did anyone speak to me? Did I matter to a single person here?

It is not unkindness. It is human nature. After a long week we come longing to see our friends, and our attention is already spoken for before the newcomer ever arrives. The better question is not whether we are friendly. It is this: Are we friendly to each other or welcoming to the stranger? Those are not the same thing.

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Scripture Readings for August

Date	Gospel Reading	Additional Readings
Aug 2	Matthew 14:13-21	First Reading: Isaiah 55:1-5 Psalms Reading: 136:1-9 (23-26) Second Reading: Romans 9:1-5 (6-13)
Aug 9	Matthew 14:22-33	First Reading: Job 38:4-18 Psalms Reading: 18:1-6 (7-16) Second Reading: Romans 10:5-17
Aug 16	Matthew 15:21-28	First Reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 Psalms Reading: 67 Second Reading: Romans 11:1-2a, 13-15, 28-32
Aug 23	Matthew 16:13-20	First Reading: Isaiah 51:1-6 Psalms Reading: 138 Second Reading: Romans 11:33-12:8
Aug 30	Matthew 16:21-28	First Reading: Jeremiah 15:15-21 Psalms Reading: 26 Second Reading: Romans 12:9-21

Sunday
Morning

Scripture
Readings

Announcements



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.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH INVITES YOU TO

FAMILY FUN NIGHT

BACK-2-SCHOOL BREAKFAST & BINGO

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2nd AT 6PM-8PM

PANCAKES, BINGO AND PRIZES

INVITE FRIENDS AND FAMILY - ENJOY FELLOWSHIP AND FUN



502 N. NORMA ST. + RIDGECREST, CALIFORNIA
FREE WILL DONATIONS ACCEPTED

New Member Class

Sundays August 9, 16, 23, 30 from 9:15 to 10:15
in the Conference Room

To sign up check the "interested in membership"
box on your connection card.

We'll cover such topics as:

- Brief history of Grace and how we operate
- Philosophy of Ministry
- Lutheran Distinctives (aka: What's a Lutheran)

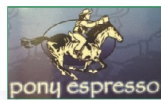


NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Online Convocation 2026
Friday, August 7th from 4 to 7pm PDT

Visit TheNALC.org to register

Please support our
Family Fun Night Sponsors!



Forefront Chiropractic



RESCHEDULED

Open Hearth YG Summer Pool Party

August 9th, 6pm-8pm

At the Lindula's house

Join us for some fun, food, and fellowship.
Maybe we will even have s'mores. (Pink
flamingo floaties are optional)

OPEN HEARTH YG

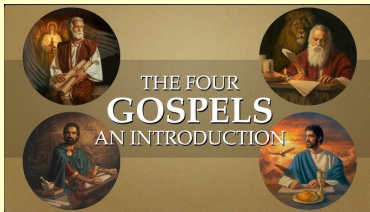
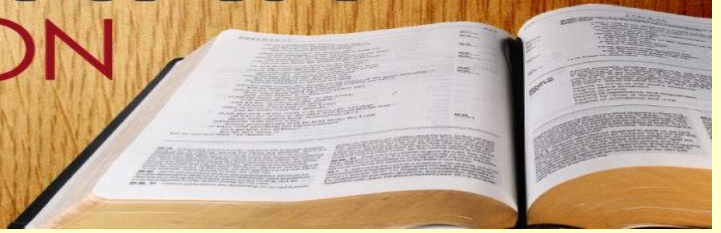
Sundays, 6-8pm, in the Grace Center

Where our youth gather for a meal, games, study, prayer, and fellowship.

BEGINS ON AUGUST 16TH



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.

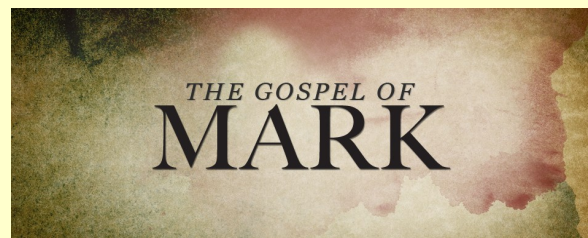


Limbo Young Adult Life group meets Mondays at 6:30 p.m. at the Smee's home.

Regular Education Hour will be on break
until Sep 13th



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



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*

Kathi Moe



Work at China Lake brought Kathi and Dick Moe and their 3 young daughters to Ridgecrest from Minnesota in 1967. Kathi enjoyed a civil service career that spanned a variety of tasking from configuration management to project office support. A little shy of qualifying for full retirement, Kathi decided to take advantage of an early out offer to retire from civil service, but since she enjoyed her job and the people she worked with, she continued working as a contractor for another decade. Working as a contractor, Kathi would occasionally get laid off, but inevitably received a call to return to work. The last time she got that call, however, she decided she was done working and started enjoying being fully retired.

Arriving in Ridgecrest, Kathi and Dick came to Grace as "cradle to grave" Lutherans. Dick has since fulfilled that moniker, having passed away about 8 years ago. After several years of attending Grace, Kathi was encouraged to play in the bell choir. Protesting she didn't read music, her friend Connie Wells convinced her to give it a try. Kathi did and found she greatly enjoyed playing bells under Jane Kuhlman's direction. Kathi has also been helping coordinate Grace's annual bazaar since 2018.

Kathi learned woodworking with her father and brothers and greatly enjoyed making wooden toys, a hobby she brought with her to Ridgecrest, where her family originally lived in a home with a nice workshop. Since moving to a smaller home, Kathi no longer has those large woodworking tools, so she doesn't do as much toy making as she used to -- and despite the danger of working with powerful saws, she still has all her fingers!

These days, Kathi enjoys reading and sewing, particularly quilting. She also meets with a group of friends on a monthly basis. She looks forward to developing new friendships as she continues to be blessed with good health and vitality.

Kathi's Party Meatballs

2/3 c evaporated milk

1 lb hamburger

1 envelope dry onion soup mix

Mix above ingredients.

Roll into balls ...

small for appetizers,

larger for dinner

Put on cookie sheet and bake in

oven at 350 deg until brown...

about 20 minutes.

SAUCE

2 c ketchup

1 c brown sugar

1 TBSP Worcestershire sauce

Mix ingredients and heat.

Pour over meatballs and serve.



Enter LCMC's 2026 Photo Contest

As an LCMC congregation, LCMC's annual photo contest offers Grace the chance to share the work and ministry being done here with churches and leaders throughout the association. Selected photos and stories will be featured in upcoming LCMC newsletters as a way to encourage and inspire others in their ministry and to showcase the life, work, and talents of the local church through a creative lens.

Detailed captions are an important part of each entry, helping readers understand the people, places, and stories behind each image.

Grace was recently featured in the June issue of the Celebrating Global Mission digital magazine that can be seen at this link:
<https://www.cgmmag.com/ideasfromchurches/rc-established-connections/>.

Let's see if we can be included in LCMC's newsletter too!



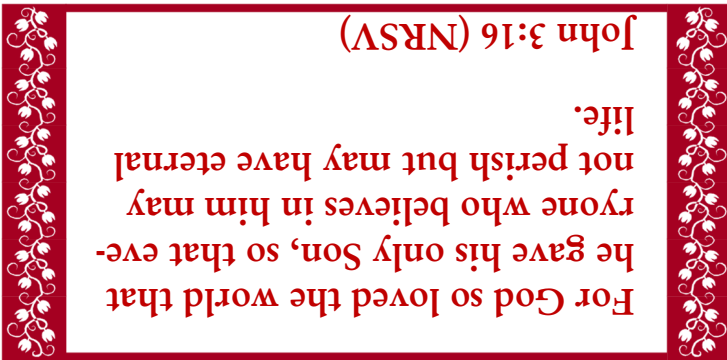
AUGUST 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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2 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 6 pm Family Fun Night	3 6:30pm Limbo 6:30 pm High Desert Pipers 7 pm Boy Scouts	4	5 10 am Music Together	6 5 pm Praise Band Practice	7 4 pm Youth Orchestra	8
9 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 9:15 am New Member Class 6 pm Youth Pool Party	10 6:30pm Limbo 6:30 pm High Desert Pipers 7 pm Boy Scouts	11 1:30 pm OWLS	12 12 pm Naomi's Friend's	13 2:30pm Parkinson's Group 5 pm Praise Band Practice	14 4 pm Youth Orchestra	15 8 am IMTT
16 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 9:15 am New Member Class 6 pm Youth Group	17 6:30 pm Limbo 6:30 pm High Desert Pipers 7 pm Boy Scouts	18 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting	19 9 am Peace Bible Study	20 5 pm Praise Band Practice 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	21 4 pm Youth Orchestra	22
23 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 9:15 am New Member Class 6 pm Youth Group	24 6:30 pm Limbo 6:30 pm High Desert Pipers 7 pm Boy Scouts	25 1:30 pm OWLS 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	26 12 pm Naomi's Friend's	27 5 pm Praise Band Practice 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	28 4 pm Youth Orchestra	29
30 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 9:15 am New Member Class 6 pm Youth Group	31 6:30 pm Limbo 6:30 pm High Desert Pipers 7 pm Boy Scouts					



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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www.facebook.com/gracelutheran.org

We're on the Web at:

Rev. Kris Madsen, *Senior Pastor*
Rev. Carleton Smece, *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

