

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



**JULY 2024
GRACE VINE
NEWSLETTER**



He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Mark 6:1-6

Letter from Pastor Kris

Reflections from Jury Duty

I want to begin this article by thanking all of you for your patience as I served my civic duty over the course of the last month and a half-ish: 17 days of trial proceedings plus two and a half days for jury deliberation. There was a two week break in the middle of that time which I thought was going to be a good time to be back in Ridgecrest catching up on things, but – as many of you know – God had other plans for that two week break as my grandfather ended up having a stroke and five days later entered into his eternal rest. I was tapped for preaching his memorial service... UFFDA!! “But by the grace of God.” So again, I thank you for your patience over the past month and a half and it’s good to return to some semblance of “normalcy.”

My time on jury duty was not without time for thoughtful reflection on life and certain things that I’ve likely taken for granted. There are two particular topics on which I’ve spent much time reflecting : First is the significance of the nuclear family; second is trial by jury.

Cognitively I have always known the importance of the nuclear family but it has never been more than a cognitive awareness and a commitment to the way God created things to be from the beginning (Mtt. 19:8). Having grown up in a stable nuclear family and a stable extended family, I’ve never given too much thought as to the significance of the nuclear family (though I will say that in grade school several of my friends’ families were rent asunder [it was almost pandemic like] and this created some anxiety in me: could my family be next?)* Receiving the daily reports on how all three kids (but most especially Jonathan) were handling my absence and getting glimpses into their emotional health via video calls has really transformed this cognitive knowledge into so-called “heart knowledge.” I am convicted that, as a society generally and as the church particularly, we need to do much better in elevating the significance of the doctrine of marriage so as to provide a more stable foundation for the socio-emotional development of our nation’s youth.

With regard to trial by jury, it can be easy to think rather cynically of our judicial system whether your reflecting back on race issues in our country or watching and hearing about some of the trials (or lack of prosecution) that have captivated media and national attention. It’s also easy to hear about verdicts in various trials on TV and maintain a large degree of separation: these trials happen hundreds if not thousands of miles away from us and most of them don’t actually affect our day-to-day lives.

As most of you know, the jury I was selected for was held in federal court and the prosecution was the United States of America. In closing arguments, one of the defense lawyers asked us to think about exactly that for a moment: the United States of America vs. three defendants. Imagine if your name happened to be one of those defendants, how awesomely overbearing would that feel: the full weight of the largest, most powerful nation in the world against, little ol’ you. In many countries the same government that brings charges against a person is the same government that hears and tries the case; and what do you suppose the chances are of the government finding against itself? And when it came time for the jury to be brought in for the reading of the verdict – **holy cow** – my heart was pounding as though I had just raced up the seven flights of stairs to get to the court room in which we were gathered. Even as confident as the jury was in reaching the correct verdict, it is nonetheless an awesome weight to have such an incredible role in the fate of another human being’s life. Needless to say, it was a *long* three hour drive home with just me and my thoughts.

This said, as we prepare to celebrate Independence Day again I am particularly grateful for a system of government (a judiciary in particular) where the government is **not both** prosecution and judge/jury. As burdensome and inconvenient as it can be to serve on jury duty and as heavy a weight as our jury process places on folks like you and me who may not be particularly savvy when it comes to understanding the ins and outs of the law, I must confess that I am grateful for our judicial system.

I wish you all a safe summer and a happy and blessed 4th of July.

Your partner in ministry,
Pastor Kris

* Divorce is, of course, not the only way nuclear families are broken up, but it is one means among many and the means which we have the most control over. Other ways that nuclear families get broken up include human trafficking, drug & alcohol abuse, violent crime just to name a few.



Based on Genesis 22:1-14

“So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide” (NIV).

Can you even IMAGINE being in Abraham’s shoes? I can feel terror welling up in me just reading about it. “Please, God, don’t make me do this! Anything but this! Anything!” I have no doubt Abraham thought something similar. But, he felt the fear and acted anyway to obey God’s clear directive.

But the angel said, “Now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me” (ESV).

It’s one thing to SAY we fear and trust God, but quite another to act in accordance with that statement when faced with the loss of all we hold dear. But, if we truly acknowledge that everything we have comes from Him, who are we to hold anything back?

My own personal awakening in this regard came a number of years ago in the loss of a career that I had placed my identity and security in (something far less important than a beloved son). I learned that I can hold onto God’s blessings with a clenched fist to keep from losing them, or I can hold them with an open hand. With an open hand, it’s easy to take something away from me, but with a clenched fist, it’s impossible to give more blessings to me.

And I learned the hard way that God will rip open that clenched fist if he has to, and it will hurt! Better to open it willingly, to allow His blessings to flow freely not just into my hand but back out again to others. When I did, He replaced what I lost with a much better calling that allows me to serve others like never before.

I write this as we are coming out of a near total economic shutdown due to COVID-19. The worse epidemic, though, has been the widespread panic at the thought of losing either our lives or our livelihoods, which is ripping our relationships apart.

But rather than being overcome by fear, ask yourself ... what are you really being asked to offer up? Certainly not your only son. No, God already did that for you. How great a love to actually carry that out! Can’t even imagine. Everything else pales in comparison. So, find a way to serve others, even in the midst of your fear. The Lord Will Provide for you, and for others through you.

Written by Beverly Wright Miller, a member of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Sarver, Pennsylvania. Ms. Miller works as a Financial Coach and serves on the NALC Living & Giving Stewardship Team.



FEELING CRAFTY?

JOIN US
SATURDAY, JULY 20
@11AM

Come create quilted, crochet or knit prayer shawls to be donated to The Lighthouse.

Different stations with tutorials. Materials provided or bring your own. No experience required.

Not so crafty?
Come hang out anyway :)

GRACE LUTHERAN
502 N NORMA, FELLOWSHIP HALL

P.S. FRIENDS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH INVITES YOU TO

FAMILY FUN NIGHT

BACK-2-SCHOOL BREAKFAST & BINGO

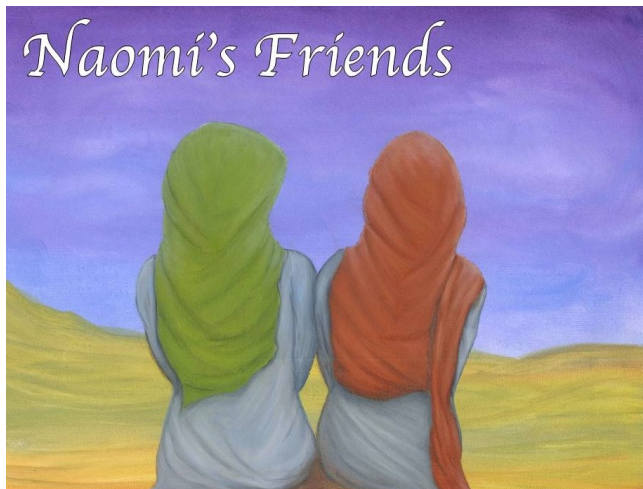
SUNDAY, AUGUST 4TH AT 6PM-8PM

PANCAKES, BINGO AND PRIZES

INVITE FRIENDS AND FAMILY - ENJOY FELLOWSHIP AND FUN



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



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



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 need cereal, canned chili, and pork and beans, 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.

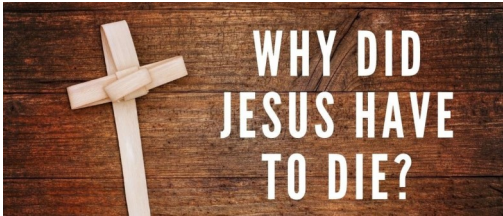
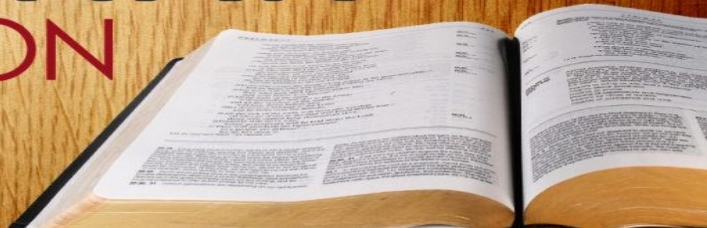


(Older Wiser Lutherans)
Meets for games, fun, and entertainment in the Fellowship Hall the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 1:30 pm. All are welcome to attend.



Church Council meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month from 6:30 pm to 8:00 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.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



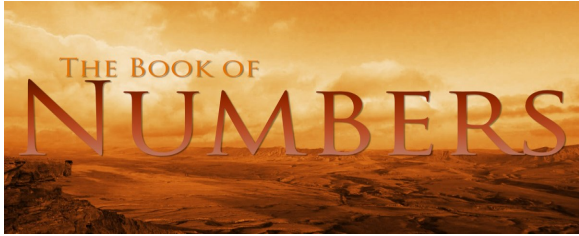
Peace Bible Study meets the third Wednesday of the month at 9 am in the CR. The study is called *Why Did Jesus Have to Die?*. All are welcome.



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



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 July

Date	Gospel Reading	Additional Readings
July 7th	Mark 6:1-13	First Reading Ezekiel 2:1-5 Psalm Reading 123 Second Reading 2 Corinthians 12:1-10
July 14th	Mark 6:14-29	First Reading Amos 7:7-15 Psalm Reading 85:1-13 Second Reading Ephesians 1:3-14
July 21st	Mark 6:30-44	First Reading Jeremiah 23:1-6 Psalm Reading 23 Second Reading Ephesians 2:11-22
July 28th	Mark 6:45-56	First Reading Genesis 9:8-17 Psalm Reading 136:1-9 Second Reading Ephesians 3:14-21



Sunday
Morning

PSALM 33:12
12 Blessed is the
the people
13 The LORD
he sees all
14 from where
on all the i
15 he who fashi
and observ
16 The king is r
a warrior i
17 The war hor
and by its
18 Behold, the
on those w

Scripture
Readings

July 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 LIMBO 6:30pm	2	3	4 Office Closed 5:10 pm Praise Band	5	6
7 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am	8 LIMBO 6:30pm	9 Naomi's Friends @ Ale's Crab House 11am OWLS 1:30pm	10	11 Parkinson's Support Group 2:30pm 5:10 pm Praise Band	12	13
14 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am	15 LIMBO 6:30pm	16 Council Meeting 6:30pm	17 Peace Bible Study 9 am	18 5:10 pm Praise Band	19	20
21 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am	22 LIMBO 6:30pm	23 Naomi's Friends @ Ale's Crab House 11am OWLS 1:30pm	24	25 5:10 pm Praise Band	26	27
28 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am	29 LIMBO 6:30pm	30	31			

Nurture
Equip
Share
Grace
Lutheran Church

502 N. Norma
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

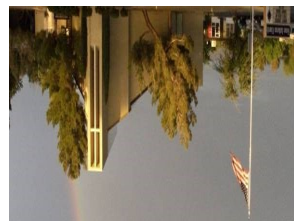
For God so loved the world that
he gave his only Son, so that eve-
ryone who believes in him may
not perish but may have eternal
life.
John 3:16 (NRSV)



www.gracelutheran.org
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*



Phone: 760-375-9768
Fax: 760-375-1313
E-mail: gracelutheran@gracelutheran.org

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

