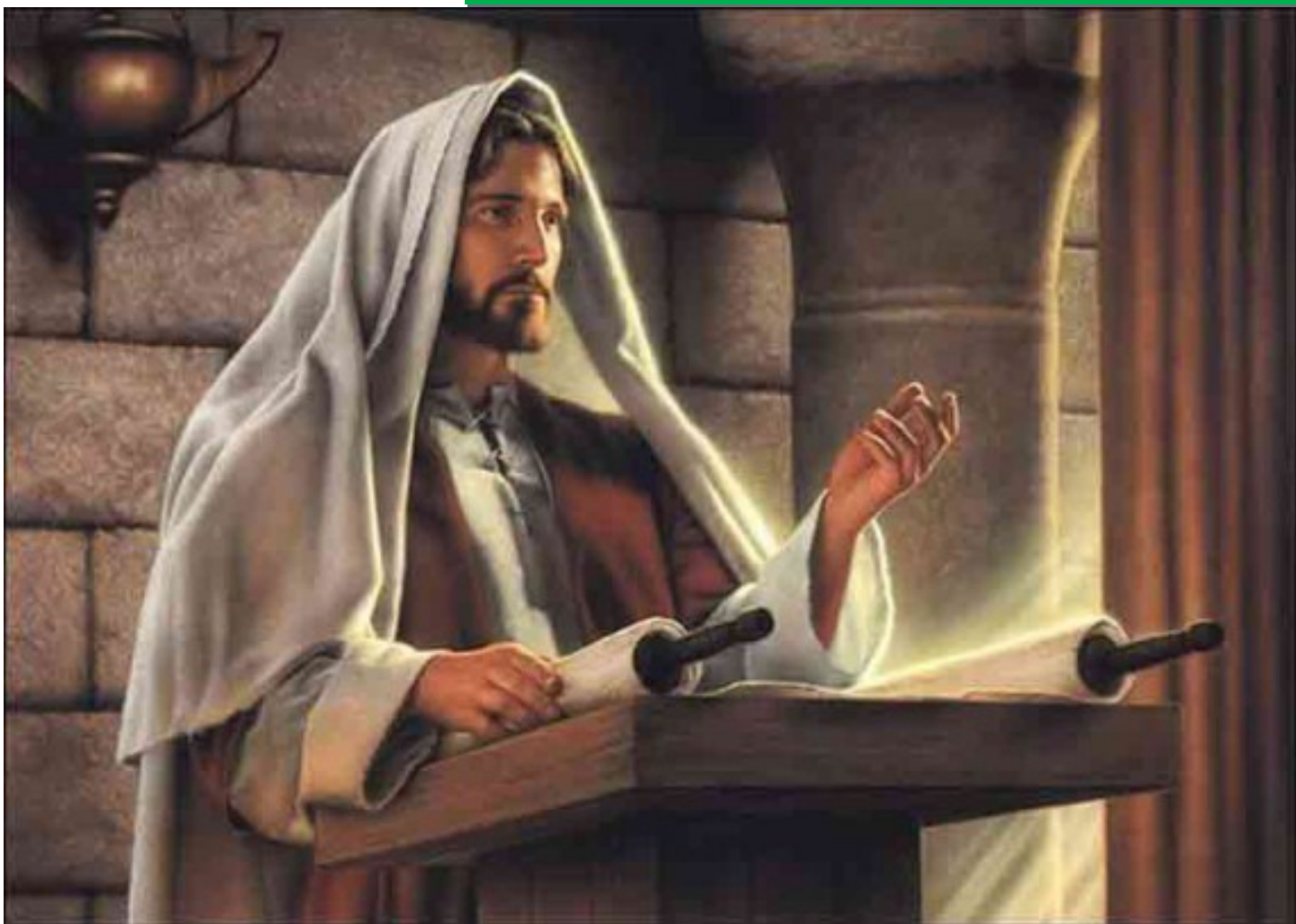


GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



FEBRUARY 2025 GRACE VINE NEWSLETTER



At daybreak he departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowds were looking for him; and when they reached him, they wanted to prevent him from leaving them. But he said to them, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose." So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea.

Luke 4:42-44

Letter from Pastor Smee

Training in suffering...

Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. – 1 Timothy 4:7-8

Over the last 3 months or so I have been doing work with Josiah in the pool to help him be a better swimmer. He has these goals, you see. He wants to three-peat as League champion in the 200 freestyle, medal at CIF, and break the school record. Every day he gets up knowing that it is work time. He goes to school, wakes up early on a Saturday and we head to the pool on base. He warms up for a while and then “punishment” comes. Suffering. Some practices involve long swims at low intensities to help build his endurance. Others are full of speed work on short rest periods to make him get used to going fast. His least favorite are those practices that are not short, and they are not long. They are somewhere in the middle and they don’t involve long and slow, or short and fast, but they are these moderate-fast workouts in which he knows it is going to hurt because he has to push his body past the threshold of where his muscles are burning lactic acid and everything wants to quit. The more he does that, the better his body adjusts to running out of good fuel and having to live off the bad stuff. The ultimate end is for him to push through the pain and soreness, because that is what his races entail.

Now, take this over to the Christian life. Our churches in America are often full of many preachers who tell us nice sentimental things, cute stories, and create lists that if we follow this guide everything will be alright. Yet that is not the way of the Christian, nor the way of Christ. I could point you back to Matthew 16:24 (If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me), but you know that one already, don’t you? Bearing our crosses – a phrase we often use to address any sort of inconvenience in our lives. But what about this one?

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:21)

The context is one of people enduring suffering even when we do the right thing, or the good thing, because as Christians, we follow Christ, and if he suffered for the abhorrent thing of forgiving sins and granting mercy to sinners, how can we but follow in his footsteps and endure the suffering we face in the world knowing that one day we will be made whole in him?

As I have been training Josiah, I have been meditating on the words of Martin Luther that “suffering makes a theologian.” I really want to take that a little further and say, “suffering makes the Christian.” Life is hard. Some days are great, and some days are really, really bad. And yet the bad is the whole reason why we cling to Christ. We know that his promises overrule the pain and death that surrounds us.

I do wonder, though. Do we teach this to ourselves and our younger generations? Do we help those around us to suffer well as we await the great day of the Lord? Or do we spend a large percentage of our time dreaming of pie-in-the-sky niceties? How can we do a better job as a church of speaking to, and upholding, the truth that the life of the Christian is one of hardship? Knowing that because we spend our days walking (or training) with Jesus, we can withstand all “stuff” that the world does to burden us.

Paul, in writing to Timothy gives him this challenge – to train himself in godliness. A godliness that sets God before our eyes in all circumstances so that when the world seems to fall apart around us, we are prepared because we know where to turn since we have made our home at the feet of Jesus this whole time. Or even more so, he has been there all the time holding onto us, even when we want to get the heck out of Dodge. The God who sent his own Son to suffer and die for the sake of sinful humanity won’t abandon us in our suffering because he shows himself to be the God who suffers and dwells with us in the dirt of life to give us the hope we need until the end.

In him,
Pastor Smee



GLC Mission Trip to Chico, CA

When: Sunday, July 20- Saturday, July 26th (work days M-F)

Cost: \$250/person plus transportation and meals while traveling

Attendees: Any age may participate but those age 16 or younger must be accompanied by guardian.

Scope of work: Finish work on homes that are being rebuilt after the fires from 2024. No skills required. We will learn on the job.

Accommodations: We will be staying at a Lutheran church with a shower trailer. Bring cots/air mattress, sleeping bag, towel. All meals will be provided while in Chico.

Deadline for signing up is May 1, 2025

A sign up sheet for those interested is in the Narthex.

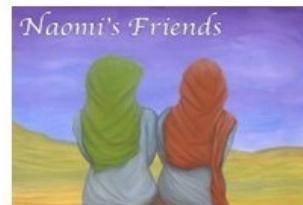
Contact: Kim Perkins (805) 428-6313 for more information

Sponsored by the NALC Disaster Relief Team

Announcements



(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 meet the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of
each month at Ale's Crab House @ 12 pm.



The Care Center is in need of these items:

- Men's and Women's winter clothing
 - Canned Chili
 - Canned Peaches
- Side items for Holiday Baskets



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.

OPEN HEARTH 2025 COASTAL YOUTH RETREAT

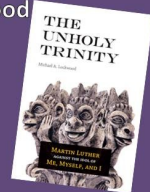
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA
FEBRUARY 14TH-17TH

Don't let anyone despise your youth, but set an example for the
believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity.
- 1 Timothy 4:12

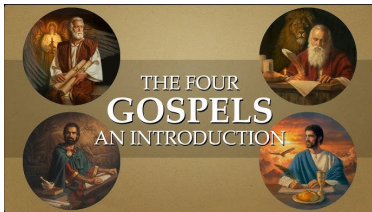
Mid-Week Lenten Services "The Unholy Trinity: Me, Myself, & I"

Based on the book by the same title
By Rev. Dr. Michael Lockwood

Wednesday Evenings
beginning March 12
Dinner at 6, Service at 6:30



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
**Intro to the Bible &
The Bible's Big Story
with Pastor Carleton**
Fellowship Hall

Augustana
**The Lutheran Perspective
With Pastor Kris**
Conference Room



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.

Scripture Readings for February

Date	Gospel Reading	Additional Readings
Feb 2nd	Luke 4:31-44	First Reading Jeremiah 1:4-19 Psalm Reading 71:1-11 Second Reading 1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13
Feb 9th	Luke 5:1-11	First Reading Isaiah 6:1-13 Psalm Reading 138 Second Reading 1 Corinthians 14:12b-20
Feb 16th	Luke 6:17-26	First Reading Jeremiah 17:5-8 Psalm Reading 1 Second Reading 1 Corinthians 15:1-20
Feb 23rd	Luke 6:27-38	First Reading Genesis 45:3-15 Psalm Reading 103:1-13 Second Reading 1 Corinthians 15:21-42



Sunday
Morning

Scripture
Readings

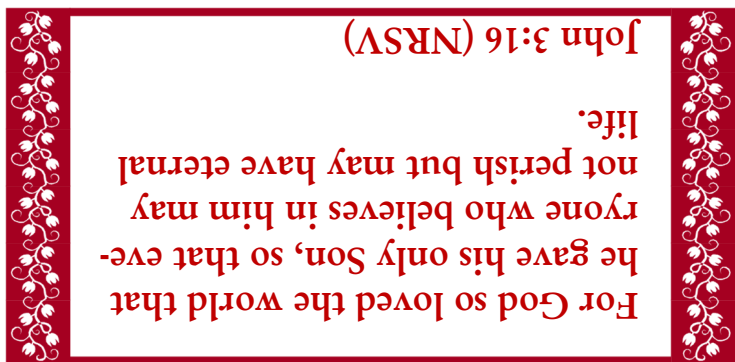
February 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 6pm Youth Group	3 6:30pm Limbo	4	5	6 5:10 pm Praise Band 7pm Choir	7 10am Grief Share	8
9 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 6pm Youth Group	10 6:30pm Limbo	11 12pm Naomi's Friends 1:30pm OWLS	12	13 2:30pm Parkinson's Group 5:10 pm Praise Band 7pm Choir	14 4pm Youth Retreat	15 Youth Retreat
16 Youth Retreat Worship 8:00 & 10:30am	17 Youth Retreat Office Closed	18	19 9am Peace Study	20 5:10 pm Praise Band 7pm Choir	21 10am Grief Share	22
23 Worship 8:00 & 10:30am 6pm Youth Group	24 6:30pm Limbo	25 12pm Naomi's Friends 1:30pm OWLS	26	27 5:10 pm Praise Band 7pm Choir	28 10am Grief Share	



502 N. Norma
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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 & 10:30 am
Christian Education Hour Sundays 9:15 am