

# GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



APRIL 2024  
GRACE VINE  
NEWSLETTER

*Alleluia, Christ is risen!*  
**He is risen indeed,  
alleluia!**

*They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.*

*Luke 24:34-43*

# Letter from Pastor Smee

**It is a good thing...**

*How delightfully good when brothers live together in harmony! – Psalm 133:1*

The closing of the Lord's Prayer is rather self-explanatory – *For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.* I think it is a petition, though. When we close our prayers in this way, we are saying two things. First, that we commend all glory and power, and every “so-called” kingdom to the Lord; and second, as Luther says, we say “amen, amen,” trusting in the Lord that all we have prayed shall come about.

Often, as human beings, and as sinners, we rarely do either of these things. We mostly want to keep all the glory, all the power and every kingdom for ourselves. We hardly want to share, let alone rely on others for care and support. We also will say “amen”, which is a word for certainty, and yet we will pray and beg and be upset if things don't go exactly as we asked, even though God answers us more often than not.

As part of my work these last few months, while the council and Pr. Kris have been working on dual affiliation with the North American Lutheran Church (NALC), I have also been working on the formation of the LCMC Southern California District. The NALC offers us an opportunity to receive mutual care and assistance from a more organized denomination while maintaining our autonomy. There are plenty of resources that the NALC has that will help us continue to grow stronger as a Lutheran witness in the Indian Wells Valley. The work being done to form the LCMC Southern California District is something that has been tried and failed in the past because there was an attempt to do too much. Now, as we prepare for the district constituting convention in July, we are looking at the possibilities of a different kind of district. A district that does not exist as a bureaucracy to do things for the churches, but a fellowship of churches who mutually support one another. Where one church or pastor is gifted in a particular area, the other congregations can connect with them to receive benefits from the work God has called them to do.

The struggle with all of this is that each church, and each pastor, has to let go of all of our proprietary natures. We have to be open to being brothers and sisters that live together in harmony. That we give all glory and power to God. Ask that His Kingdom might continue to work in us and through us so we rely on His care and guidance. That we definitely pray “amen, amen” that He might make His Kingdom grow in and among us, and we trust that it will happen. It means that pastors let go of “their” stuff and give up time and talents to help seek and mentor future leaders. It means that churches join together to create disciples, not church members. May it be so for all of us.

In His name,

Pastor Smee



Based on Matthew 26:14-16

We do not know for certain what Judas was thinking when he sought an opportunity to hand Jesus over to the Jewish rulers. Irrespective of his thinking, Judas accepted the bribe.

Money is the one thing we all want and would like more of, hence so many of Jesus' teachings were about money's effect on our lives. What is it about the force of money that can cause such destructive behavior if left unchecked? I believe it is temptation. In order to have more money, without honestly earning it, people resort to all sorts of questionable behaviors for its acquisition. Steal it, lie for it, kill for it, sacrifice one's integrity or reputation, to name just a few.

Have you ever been tempted to take from another what is not yours? What was the outcome and how did you feel about yourself? We might also be tempted to buy what we cannot afford or hoard our money instead of being generous. These behaviors are forms of coveting which Scripture commands us not to do.

However, thanks be to God for His great love and mercy toward us, He provided a wonderful solution to the predicament. God sent us a glorious Savior to give us a new nature. Our new nature in Christ enables us to view our wealth as a gift from God to be used in holy stewardship as He directs! In Christ we have enough. We can trust Him to supply our needs, without resorting to sinful acts to meet those needs. We can become generous and serve others instead of wanting to be served or noticed.

This holy season may the love of God in Christ help us to have pure and right motives in the acquisition and use of silver.

Written by Mr. Mike Johnson. Mr. Johnson is a member of the NALC's Living and Giving Stewardship Team.



Women's spring tea April 27th at 11:30am in the fellowship hall. All ladies of Grace are invited to come.

**Save the Date**  
 Grace welcomes Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo of the North American Lutheran Church



**April 13 5:30pm dinner and presentation on the vision plan of the NALC**  
**April 14 9:15am presentation on the NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship initiative**



As part of the council's ongoing efforts to lead the congregation in health and vitality, Church Doctor Ministries will be here April 24-26 to acquaint themselves with Ridgecrest and to conduct interviews with members. If you would like to talk with the Church Doctors, you can talk with Craig Stevens to request an interview.

**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

**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.**



Dear Grace Family,

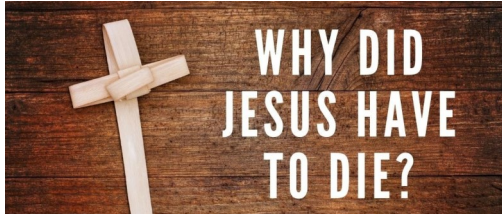
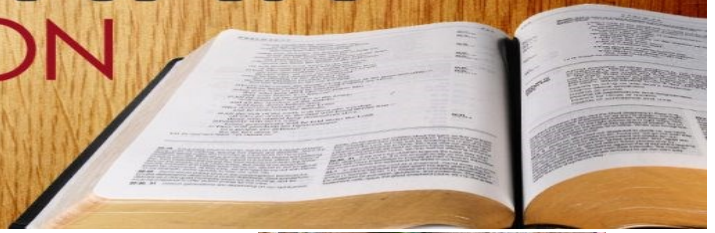
For some time, Luie and I have been struggling with the removal of a tree stump in our back yard. Despite contacting several professionals and making numerous attempts ourselves, we had been able to make very little progress. After church a few Sundays ago during the sharing of the week's "highs" and "lows," at Team 784, I shared that Luie and I were having trouble meeting this challenge. Seated at my table were Josiah and Carry Smee who suggested that this might be a project that some church volunteers could assist us in completing. I approached Pastor Smee and little over a week later, a group of men arrived to help Luie with the stump removal. To our amazement, the whole job was accomplished in about two hours! We are dearly grateful to everyone who helped: Pastor Smee, Josiah Smee, Alex Vargas, Jonathan Espindola, and Albert Guerrero. Thanks, too, to Carry Smee who encouraged me to reach out for help. We have a vibrant, helpful Youth Group, Limbo group, and a warm supportive church family. Luie and I are so thankful to be part of Grace Lutheran Church.

Desiree Trudy





# 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.

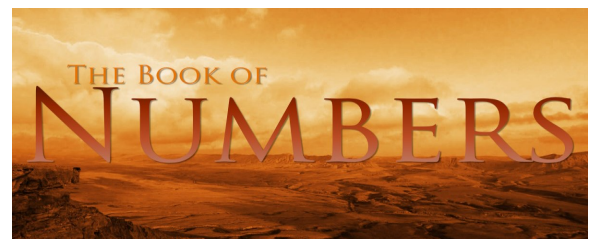
### Intergenerational Catechism Class



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](mailto: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](mailto:marknsue78@gmail.com) for further information regarding this class.

# Scripture Readings for April

Date	Gospel Reading	Additional Readings
Apr 7th	John 20:19-31	First Reading Acts 4:32-35 Psalm Reading 148 Second Reading 1 John 1:1-2:2
Apr 14th	Luke 24:36-49	First Reading Acts 3:11-21 Psalm Reading 4 Second Reading 1 John 3:1-7
Apr 21st	John 10:11-18	First Reading Acts 4:1-12 Psalm Reading 23 Second Reading 1 John 3:16-24
Apr 28th	John 15:1-8	First Reading Acts 8:26-40 Psalm Reading 150 Second Reading 1 John 4:1-21

*Scripture Readings*



# April 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office Closed	2	3	4	5	6
7 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am 9:15am TEAM 784 9:15am Catechism Class 6pm Youth group	8 LIMBO 6:30pm	9 Naomi's Friends @ Ale's Crab House 11am OWLS 1:30pm	10	11 Parkinson's Support Group 2:30pm	12	13 5:30pm NALC Dinner and Presentation
14 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am 9:15am NALC Presentation 6pm Youth group	15 LIMBO 6:30pm	16 Council Meeting 6:30pm	17 Peace Bible Study 9 am	18 Sr. high pizza in Mr. Vargas' class- room	19	20
21 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am 9:15am Catechism Class 9:15am TEAM 784 6pm Youth Group	22 LIMBO 6:30pm	23 Naomi's Friends @ Ale's Crab House 11am OWLS 1:30pm	24	25	26	27 Ladies Spring Tea 11:30am
28 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am 9:15am Catechism Class 9:15am TEAM 784 6pm Youth Group	29 LIMBO 6:30pm	30				



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Equip  
Share  
**Grace**  
Lutheran Church

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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](http://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

