

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



**AUGUST 2024
GRACE VINE
NEWSLETTER**

UNITY
Ephesians 4:1-6

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:1-6

Letter from Pastor Smee

LCMC Southern California District

Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lack diligence in zeal; be fervent in prayer; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer. Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality. – Romans 12:10-13

I love this passage, especially as Paul delineates the need for love of one another, showing honor, and sharing in the needs of the saints. It puts before us as churches this reality that Grace Lutheran Church does not exist in a vacuum but is part of a wider work and joins with churches across the world through the Gospel to bring forgiveness and mercy to all.

As many of you know, I have spent the last year or so serving as the acting secretary for the provisional Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) Southern California district. I joined with two other pastors to try to formulate this group for the sake of drawing together the 33 LCMC congregations that comprise Southern California in mutual accountability and fellowship. This finally came to fruition on Saturday, July 20th, with the constituting convention at Ascension Lutheran Church in Rancho Palos Verdes.

The reality is that for many of our pastors and congregations in the LCMC, the mindset is often “me and my church.” With this thinking, ministry becomes a proprietary thing where most pastors and churches will only commit or do something if it is of help to their ministry and church. If it is something that serves the wider church in the world or even means sacrificing something at their own congregation for the sake of another, it will often lose out to other more fruitful things.

The vision that we set out before the folks that gathered is one of sharing resources to help grow the faith of one another, assisting local congregations through crisis or pastoral changes, and uplifting future pastors through mentorship and opportunity. All of this being led by the local pastors of local congregations in Southern California for the sake of all the churches in the district. This vision is actually part of our DNA as a member congregation of the LCMC where we stand as free in Christ, rooted in the scriptures and confessions, discipleship and mutual care and accountability. The hopes are that we as congregations will see the need for the prosperity of all our LCMC brothers and sisters.

This last spring we joined the North American Lutheran Church out of necessity, because the NALC provides the denominational structure we need that the LCMC does not, which is a very good thing. This new SoCal District is a not new bureaucracy for the church to live under. What it is meant to be is a voluntary association where pastors and churches will actively work to share ministry, needs and lives so as to proclaim the Gospel, love one another, and be loved by others. I plan to have an informational gathering on Sunday, August 25th at 9:15, to share more with you, with the hopes that this January we might vote as a congregation to partner together in this district for the betterment of the wider church.

In Him,

Pastor Smee



Based on Matthew 14:13-21

The most challenging time for congregations financially is often the end of summer. June, July and August usually find parishioners away from Sunday worship — away from the gathered community, which unfortunately means a drop in offerings. And what about this year, when in most places the gathered worshipping communities have not been “gathered —” at least, not gathered in the church nave for worship? And for those congregations who have been able to gather for worship for a few weeks, it generally means not passing the offering plates. It remains to be seen whether COVID-19, the summer months, social distancing and the lack of normal worship services causes congregational offerings to drop more than usual as the summer draws to a close. Some have been predicting a potential 20% drop in congregational giving since the pandemic began. Some have suggested giving to the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) will reflect a similar downturn. Some have taken measures to address fears of a serious loss of income from giving.

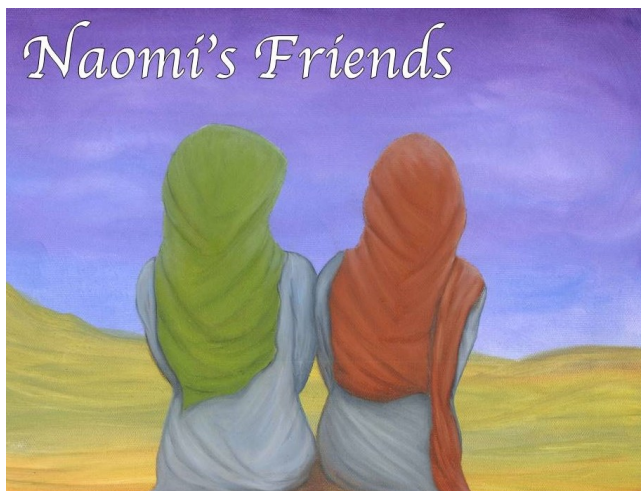
What are we hearing from our congregations in this regard? Surprisingly, and one might say miraculously, what we are hearing is that congregational offerings in some places seem to be up by 20%! How can this be?

As with the disciples gathered with Jesus and more than 5,000 people on the seashore, it seems that some of our members are responding to the need created by the pandemic by placing their resources in the Lord’s hands, that mission and ministry may continue and, indeed, be multiplied. This is the great miracle and message of the feeding of more than 5,000. In the Lord’s hands, as He takes our humble loaves and fish and blesses them, they satisfy human need yet still provide sufficient remains for the Church — a hint, manifested by the 12 baskets full left over — 12 being the number of the Church, founded upon the 12 apostles. What an encouraging message for us as disciples and followers of Jesus, for our congregations and the NALC!

By all indicators, we are not yet through the COVID-19 pandemic and there may indeed be financial stresses and strains within congregations and the NALC as a whole. And yet, let us be faithful stewards, as we are able, in this season of trial, uncertainty and challenge. In a time of great need and stress, the disciples of Jesus respond generously and sacrificially. Thanks be to God!

Written by Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel, assistant to the bishop for ministry & ecumenism.

Aug 4th at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall.



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.

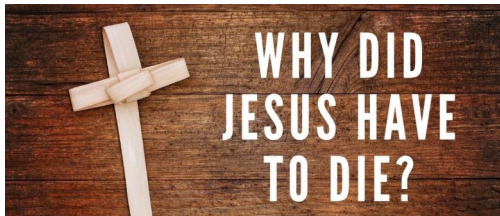
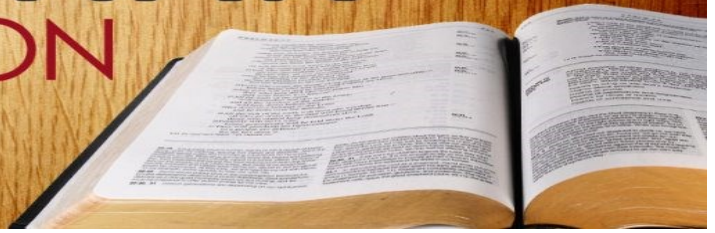


(Older Wiser Lutherans)
Meets for games, fun, and entertainment in the Fellowship Hall the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 1:30 pm. All are welcome to attend.



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



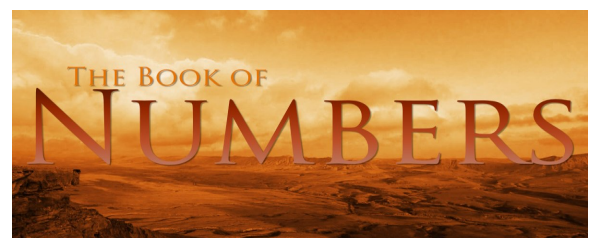
Peace Bible Study meets the third Wednesday of the month at 9 am in the CR. The study is called *Why Did Jesus Have to Die?*. All are welcome.



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 August

Date	Gospel Reading	Additional Readings
August 4th	John 6:22-35	First Reading Exodus 16:2-15 Psalm Reading 145:10-21 Second Reading Ephesians 4:1-16
August 11th	John 6:35-51	First Reading 1 Kings 19:1-8 Psalm Reading 34:1-8 Second Reading Ephesians 4:17-5:2
August 18th	John 6:51-69	First Reading Joshua 24:1-18 Psalm Reading 34:12-22 Second Reading Ephesians 5:6-21
August 25th	Mark 7:1-13	First Reading Isaiah 29:11-29 Psalm Reading 14 Second Reading Ephesians 5:22-33



Sunday
Morning

Scripture
Readings

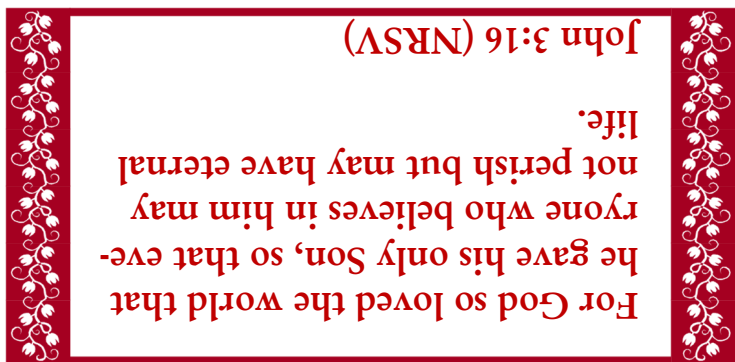
August 2024

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



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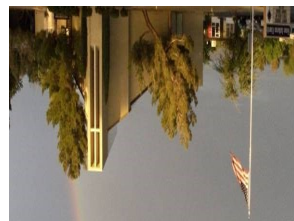
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We're on the Web at:

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