

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



**MAY 2024
GRACE VINE
NEWSLETTER**



Pentecost Sunday

May 19, 2024

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Acts 2:1-4

Letter from Pastor Kris

“Now faith is the assurance of things *hoped for*, the conviction of things not seen.”
- Hebrews 11:1

The concept of hope is something that seems to make its way around to me more and more of late. It most recently came around again in an ad I saw on tv... the driving line of which is, “Don’t underestimate the power of hope.” I am also regularly hearing statistics and references to statistics concerning people’s outlook for the future and mental health especially among the younger generations and, frankly, it’s depressing.

I was reminded of a quote in a book I just started called *The Amazing Power of God Stories* written by the founder of Church Doctor Ministries, Kent Hunter; the quote is this, “Man can live about forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air...but only for one second without hope.” The quote may be somewhat hyperbolic, but I don’t think it’s too far off and, when you look at the mental health of a nation that increasingly identifies as “nones” (that is, not religious), it’s no wonder that the mental health of our nation and especially our youth is so anemic. Faith is about hope; where there’s an absence of faith, it naturally follows that there will also be an absence of hope. Or when faith is in the wrong thing(s), what hope one does have will prove to be a false hope and thus fail.

This got me to thinking: perhaps hope is the key to evangelism. I don’t know about you, but I have tended to think about evangelism in terms of Jesus appearing with Cleopas and the other disciple on the road to Emmaus opening the Scriptures and “beginning with Moses and all the prophets (i.e. the Old Testament), interpreted... all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). As I think about it, though, that would actually be more along the lines of what now tends to be called discipleship... that is: after someone has initially heard the Good News of God in Christ, growing them in Christian faith. Perhaps the work of evangelism is much simpler than that. I wonder if it would be more helpful to think about evangelism along the lines of what Peter writes in his first epistle, “always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you...” (1 Ptr. 3:15). And maybe we really don’t need to worry so much about the defense part but just be ready to share the reason for our hope... And actually the word that gets translated as “reason” is the same word used in John 1 when John tells us that “In the beginning was the Word... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” It’s the word *logos/Word*. And the word defense can also be translated as an answer or a reply. In fact, it might be better to translate this passage, “always be prepared to give an *answer/reply* to anyone who asks you for the *logos/ Word* of hope that is in you.” I don’t know about you, I feel like this removes a lot of pressure to have to be able to back up and defend every teaching and doctrine of Christian faith and brings this to a very do-able level: when somebody asks you where you find hope, you are ready and able to say, “Here’s where I find my hope.”

And what is this word of hope that is in us? Well, at the end of the day that word is Christ Jesus himself and alone: he is the *logos/Word* of our hope. But we can say a little more than that because we actually rehearse this little reply every time we gather for worship, “I believe in God the Father almighty... and in Jesus Christ his only Son... and in the Holy Spirit.” It is summed up very simply in the Creed. In fact this is why we have creeds: simple summaries that bear witness to the faith and hope that is in us.

Continued on next page

I believe in God the Father, etc.: I am purposefully made, I am not an accident. In the words of the Psalmist, “I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps.139:14). As creator of the world, I don’t only believe that he made me but that he made everyone and therefore I will treat you and every person with dignity and respect because you also are his creation, fearfully and wonderfully made.

I believe in Jesus Christ, etc.: I am a fallen and broken creature (this by the way is why we need hope in the first place), but God loved me so much that he came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ who died to forgive my brokenness and make me whole and he was raised from the dead to give me the hope of eternal life. And he didn’t do this only for me but also for you, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only son...” (etc.).

I believe in the Holy Spirit, etc.: I have come to this faith and hope because the Holy Spirit has given it to me as a gift through the preaching of this word. And I am sustained in this faith and hope through the fellowship I share with others who have also been given this same faith and hope. In fact, without that fellowship and hearing, I would not and could not believe it or hold to it because I am too broken of a person, I have committed too grievous of sins, and the world around me – beautiful as it is – is also too broken and full of death and disappointments. But I hear this word and share in this fellowship and this faith and hope is kindled anew and I find strength to meet the challenges of the day, of the week, of life itself.

Our world is in such desperate need of something to hope in, can you share the hope that is in you? I know what some of you will say, “So many people find our message foolish and even ridiculous.” Perhaps we can swallow our pride a little bit though and acknowledge the foolishness of our message. St. Paul himself did in his first letter to the Corinthians, “For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and **foolishness** to Gentiles, but,” he writes, “to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.” (1 Cor. 1:22-25).

Who knows, maybe I’m off here. But maybe I’m not. All I know is that our society cannot continue on the trajectory it’s currently on and we have the one thing that’s actually big enough, strong enough, powerful enough to turn it all around. The creation is eagerly waiting for us and the hope we have to share, dear church; will you reveal yourself and fulfill her longing?

Your partner in Ministry,
Pastor Kris



Based on John 14:12-14

Heavenly Father, we pray to You today for our nation and the world. Darkness looms. I ask for the Great Counselor, the Spirit of Truth, to re-enter the hearts and minds of all peoples. John 14:14 says, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (NIV). Jesus, Son of God, we pray in this time of great need on bended knees to You. You know the outcome. Help us to teach the world to trust in You. Amen.

We say we are the hands and feet of Jesus. Now, more than ever in this world consumed by fake news and media overload, may those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ be ashamed of their slander. Thanks be to God for all those fighting COVID-19. Thanks be to God for all those heeding the call to use their God-given time, talent, treasure and testimony according to His will. Let the Light of Christ so shine within us for the world to see.

As you pray, pray for family and friends, leaders and teachers, our government and authority, the weak and the sick and lastly yourself. Pray that through this pandemic, the Great Commission and the Great Commandment will be fulfilled like no other time in history. This is our great challenge. This is our great battle. Let us win victoriously, through Jesus Christ, the Father and the Holy Spirit. From Malachi 3:10, "Bring the whole tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me on this," says the LORD Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it'" (NIV). "Test me on this," says the Lord. Go ahead, He's asking you test Him! Take this challenge. May our storehouses be filled for those in great need in the days ahead. May our Bibles be our constant guide in the days ahead. May God bless you and keep you in His grace.

Written by Ms. Polly Lamkin. Ms. Lamkin is a member of the NALC's Living and Giving Stewardship Team.

SEMI-ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Semi-annual meeting will be held on May 19th following the second service. We will vote for two council members and dual affiliation with the NALC.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH INVITES YOU TO **FAMILY FUN NIGHT** TAKE A BREAK THIS SUMMER

FRIDAY, JUNE 14TH 6PM-8PM
HAMBURGERS, HOT DOGS, BINGO AND PRIZES
INVITE FRIENDS AND FAMILY
ENJOY FELLOWSHIP AND FUN

 **Grace** Lutheran Church
502 N. NORMA ST. + RIDGECREST, CALIFORNIA
FREE WILL DONATIONS ACCEPTED

MAY 19TH, AT 8 & 10:15 SERVICES GRADUATE RECOGNITION SUNDAY

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.

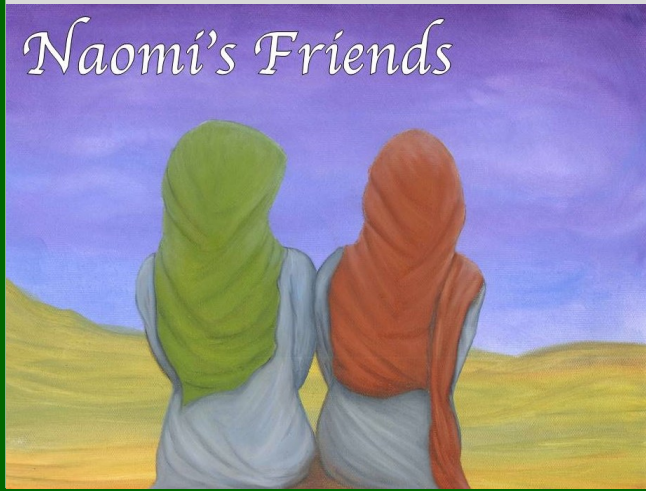
Here's the link: <https://gofund.me/2534a5c8>

Thank you,

Roxanne and Jeff Johnson

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

Naomi's Friends



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.



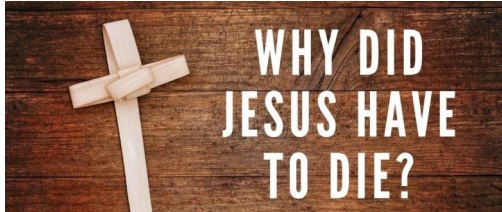
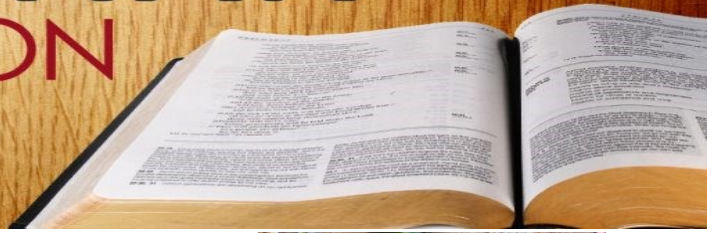
Grace Care Center

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.

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.

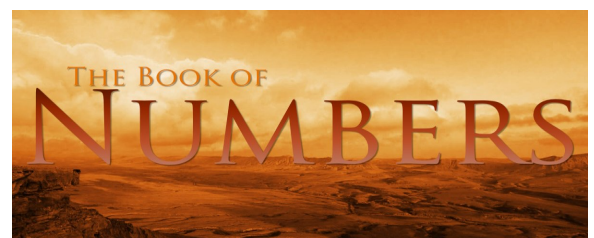
Intergenerational Catechism Class



Join us Sunday mornings at 9:15 am in the fellowship hall.



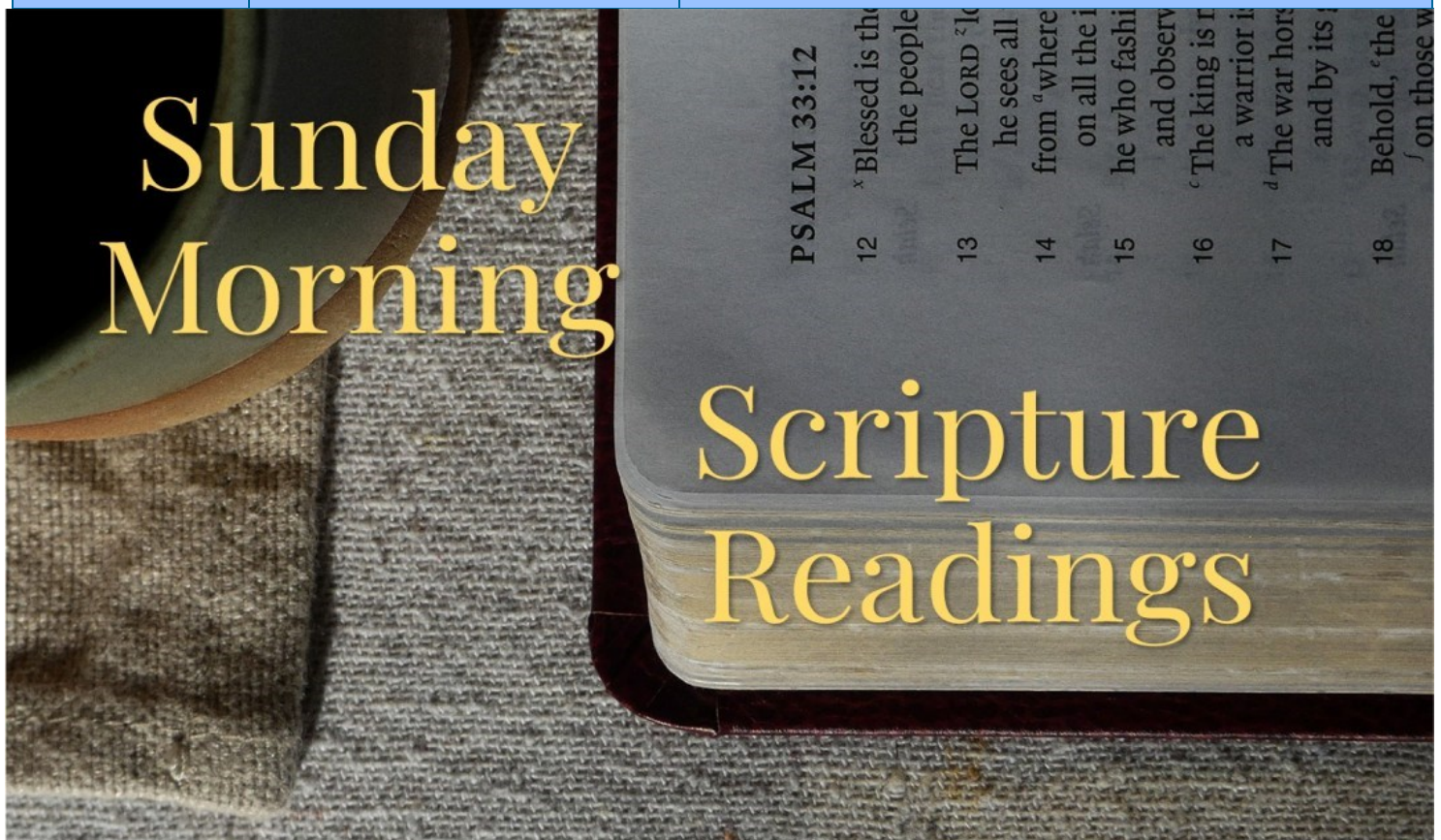
Join "A Bible and a Pencil" Bible study via Zoom on Tuesdays at 1:00 pm. The study is on the book of Exodus. Please contact Mark Brynestad via email at marknsue78@gmail.com for further information regarding this class.



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 May

Date	Gospel Reading	Additional Readings
May 5th	John 15:9-17	First Reading Acts 10:34-48 Psalm Reading 98 Second Reading 1 John 5:1-8
May 12th	John 17:11b-19	First Reading Acts 1:12-26 Psalm Reading 1 Second Reading 1 John 5:9-15
May 19th	John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15	First Reading Ezekiel 37:1-14 Psalm Reading 139:1-16 Second Reading Acts 2:1-21
May 26th	John 3:1-17	First Reading Isaiah 6:1-8 Psalm Reading 29 Second Reading Acts 2:14a, 22-36



May 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 5:10 pm Praise Band 7 pm Choir	3	4
5 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am 9:15am TEAM 784 9:15am Catechism Class 6pm Youth group	6 LIMBO 6:30pm	7	8	9 Parkinson's Support Group 2:30pm 5:10 pm Praise Band 7 pm Choir	10	11
12 Mother's Day Worship 8:00 & 10:15am 9:15am Catechism Class	13 LIMBO 6:30pm	14 Naomi's Friends @ Ale's Crab House 11am OWLS 1:30pm	15 Peace Bible Study 9 am	16 Sr. high pizza in Mr. Vargas' classroom 5:10 pm Praise Band 7 pm Choir	17	18
19 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am 9:15am Catechism Class 11:30am Congregational Meeting 6pm Youth Group	20 LIMBO 6:30pm	21 Council Meeting 6:30pm	22	23 5:10 pm Praise Band 7 pm Choir	24 12 pm Missions and Service Team meeting	25
26 Worship 8:00 & 10:15am	27  Office Closed	28 Naomi's Friends @ Ale's Crab House 11am OWLS 1:30pm	29	30 5:10 pm Praise Band 7 pm Choir	31	
						

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

