

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



SEPTEMBER 2024 GRACE VINE NEWSLETTER



Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Ephesians 6:10-17

Letter from Pastor Kris

A Sneak Peak at Bible Studies & Small Groups



"We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ..." Ephesians 4:14-15



Preaching on Ephesians 4 last month I got to thinking about this phrase in vs.14, "we must no longer be children..." What I got to thinking about is the juxtaposition between this saying of Paul and Jesus' teaching about child-like faith, you know, "Unless you have faith like a child you will never enter the kingdom of God." It seems that most everyone knows this teaching of Jesus; I can't tell you how many different people have cited this teaching to me... I've even heard it in sermons. In fact I've heard this phrase so much that there was part of me that began to believe it actually exists. So I finally decided to look this teaching up and guess what... nowhere in Scripture does the phrase "child-like faith" or "faith like a child" appear. In Matthew 18 Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me..."* This passage is not about faith, but about humility and receiving the kingdom, the gifts of God, indeed Christ himself through the means by which God declared he will give these.

Now that some of your minds have been blown concerning child-like faith, let's come back to Ephesians 4. Leading into verses 14 through 15 Paul talks about the offices of ministry being given as a gift to the church for the purposes of "equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (i.e. the Church) until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ."** There are many ways through which we, here at Grace, are working to equip the saints and build up the body of Christ, not least of which is through small group Bible studies and other classes. As we are set to begin a "new ministry year" following the summer hiatus and classes, small groups, and other ministries start back up, I would invite you to consider joining such a group. Here's a quick glance at the various groups you might consider participating in:

Theology on Tap: This group is the only group that meets seasonally and we now meet in the Grace Center (the house on the north side of campus). The first priority of conversation is to discuss questions and topics that have popped up in participants own lives: why people suffer, what Jesus/the Apostles/ the Prophets mean when they say, "x,y,z", exploring deeper something you heard on Sunday morning or read in your daily devotions. The second priority of conversation is always something that I've prepared for the group; this season we'll be looking at *The Didache* which is an important document dating somewhere between the late first and early second century and takes up such matters as the Doctrine of the Two Ways, a manual for the administration of Sacraments, offices of ministry, and a word of watchfulness for the last day.

This is a BYOB group where the second 'B' might be (but certainly not limited to) a bottle of wine, a cold brewski, a delightfully flavored sparkling water, or your favorite cola. Theology on Tap begins **Wednesday, Sept. 11 at 6pm** and will run 13 weeks (up to Thanksgiving).

*Mtt. 18:2-5 (ESV)

** Eph. 4:12-13

Limbo: This group meets **every Monday** at the “parsonage” located on the south end of town (aka the Smee’s residence) and is lead by Pastor Carleton. Dinner is served at **6:30** and is followed by prayer requests and Bible study. This group is in the midst of a study in the book of Acts and will continue to be in Acts for the foreseeable future. It’s never too late to get in on this study as it is very possible – even likely – that Jesus will have returned before this study is complete. The Smee’s address is in the directory or you can contact Pastor Smee or the Church office for the address.

Faith Bible Study: This group meets on **the third Wednesday of the month** at 9am in the conference room right next to the church office and is led by Anna Garcia. This group just began a new introductory study to the 4 Gospels in August and they would love to have you join them.

Online Bible Studies: There’s a saying amongst pastors that pastors never really retire, they just find a congregation where they can do what they want, when they want, and not be held responsible for anything. This is true of Pastor Mark Brynestad (“Retired” 2017). If you can’t make an in-person study or perhaps travel for work makes participation difficult, Pastor Brynestad offers *two* Zoom Bible Studies **every Tuesday**. At 1pm is Bible and a Pencil, this group is in the midst of a study on the book of Exodus; the 7pm group is beginning a study on “A Biblical Study of Evangelists.” Both studies will recommence on **September 10**.

Sunday Morning Christian Education Hour: Once again we’ll be offering two inter-generational classes on Sunday mornings between the services (9:15-10:15).

Team 784 will begin the year with a five week introduction to the Bible: How to use your Bible and the tools and resources therein, an overview of languages and translation issues, a brief overview of the books of the Old and New Testaments, and finally other available resources for assisting you in your studies. From there, the class will begin a study on the BIG STORY of the Bible from Creation to the early Church. This class is **geared for children and adults** alike.

The Augustana: Article 2.5 of Grace’s constitution says, “We accept the confessional writings of the Book of Concord as published in 1580, as a valid interpretation of the faith of the Church.” Do you know what the confessional writings of the Book of Concord are? Many of you are at least familiar with *The Small Catechism* because of our Catechism/Confirmation classes or you’ve heard Pastor Carleton and/or me talk about it, but what of the other six documents? This year I will be teaching a class on the most important of those other six documents, The Augsburg Confession. In this class we’ll work through the chief teachings (doctrines) of the Church, how these teachings relate to and build on each other, the source and grounding of these teachings in Holy Scripture, and how these ancient teachings inform and shape our life in faith still today. We’ll also do some comparing and contrasting of the teachings of the *Augustana* with the teachings of other church bodies/confessions. This class is **geared for middle school through adults**.

Growing with you in Christ,
Pastor Kris



Based on Matthew 20:1-16

Shaping a vision for generosity and giving is always grounded in this one simple yet profound truth — God who created everything, owns everything. Living a life of generosity is especially difficult because even though we may be more than willing to acknowledge intellectually God owns everything, on a daily basis we do not functionally live this way. As long as we live in the flesh, we have to wrestle daily with the lingering ghosts of our own selfishness. St. Augustine said it well, “God is always trying to give good things to us, but our hands are too full to receive them.”

In the Parable of the Workers. After a few disgruntled employees complain that they worked more hours than a new hire and yet all received the same pay, the owner of the business goes on to say, “What’s it to you. It’s my business. It’s my money to spend and invest anyway I see fit. Are you going to be envious and resentful because I chose to be generous? So, the last will be first and the first last.”

Jesus’ words “the last will be first” (Matthew 20:16), “whoever saves his life will lose it” (Matthew 16:25) and “if you want to be truly free, you must be a slave to all” (Matthew 20:26-27), echo the same trajectory. The human heart, our flesh truly struggles to let go. Jesus’ words require of us a self-emptying and a self-sacrifice. And yet our hearts cry unfair and unjust. I earned it all. It is mine.

Think about it for a moment, we are consumed with “this is mine” — my life, my career, my home, my vision, my church, my pastorate, my ministry, my investment portfolio and my rights. Do you see how this mindset, “this is mine,” is so embedded in our thinking that at times we don’t even recognize we’re saying such a thing — it is our default?

Shaping a vision for stewardship begins and ends with the generosity of God. God is Giver. Although he owes us nothing, God gives us everything and His giving is flawless. When we look at the parable of the workers, entry into God’s kingdom is not gained by how many hours we work, or how hard we strive to perfect and acquire more fame, fortune or power, entry into the Kingdom is solely by God’s generosity.

If you would like to learn more about building a culture of generosity in your community, watch for our new 2020 offering RESET: The Freedom of Living Generously. To be released soon!

Written by Rev. Dona Johnson, chair of the Living & Giving Stewardship Team.

Does Grace have a prayer ministry?

Yes, several.

1. A prayer group is led by Kathi Bullard with 5-6 people who meet in person and a few others who connect via text. It was chartered by Pastor Kris Madsen in 2019. During the school year it meets weekly. In the summer individuals pray over people in the Grace Church Directory as well as new people, 5 families per day. Meetings cover prayers for:

**Our pastors and their families
Prayers for our church, its ministries, council
Confirmation
Church families
Schools
Each session ends with the Lord's Prayer.**

2. A prayer chain is led by Francisca Ransom with 8 faithful prayer warriors. It was chartered by Pastor Rowland. Prayer requests can be called or texted in and she will set prayers in motion. This has been in effect for probably about 15 years or more. Requests are kept confidential among the chain.

3. People who need prayer can submit online requests through Grace website or contact the church staff for prayer.

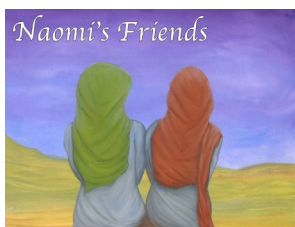
If you would like to join any of these prayers ministries, contact...Kathi Bullard or Francisca Ransom.

Theology on Tap

"It is better to think of church in the ale-house than to think of the ale-house in church."



Theology on Tap begins Sept 11 at 6 pm in the Grace Center.



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



**(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.**



Beginning Sept 1, the second service will begin at 10:30.



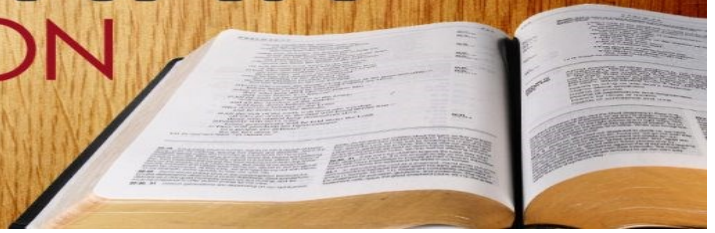
Grace Care Center

Grace fulfills an important need in our community for assistance with non-perishable foods and hygiene items. (SOCKS are always needed). They need fruit cups, canned soup, and canned peaches, 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.



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 *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

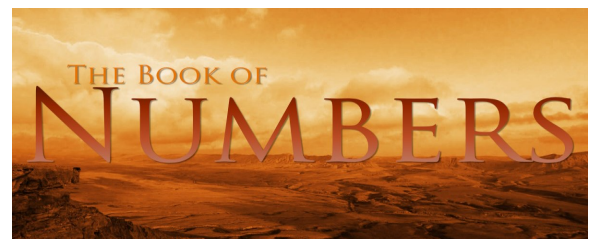
**Intro to the Bible &
The Bible's Big Story
with Pastor Carleton
Fellowship Hall**

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 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 September

Date	Gospel Reading	Additional Readings
Sept 1st	Mark 7:14-23	First Reading Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9 Psalm Reading 119:129-136 Second Reading Ephesians 6:10-20
Sept 8th	Mark 7:24-37	First Reading Isaiah 35:4-7a Psalm Reading 146 Second Reading James 2:1-10, 14-18
Sept 15th	Mark 9:14-29	First Reading Isaiah 50:4-10 Psalm Reading 116:1-9 Second Reading James 3:1-12
Sept 22nd	Mark 9:30-37	First Reading Jeremiah 11:18-20 Psalm Reading 54 Second Reading James 3:13-4:10
Sept 29th	Mark 9:38-50	First Reading Num. 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29 Psalm Reading 104:27-35 Second Reading James 5:1-20

Sunday
Morning

Scripture
Readings

PSALM 33:12
12 ^x Blessed is the
the people
13 The LORD ^z lo
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 ^d The war hor
and by its
18 Behold, 'the
/ on those w

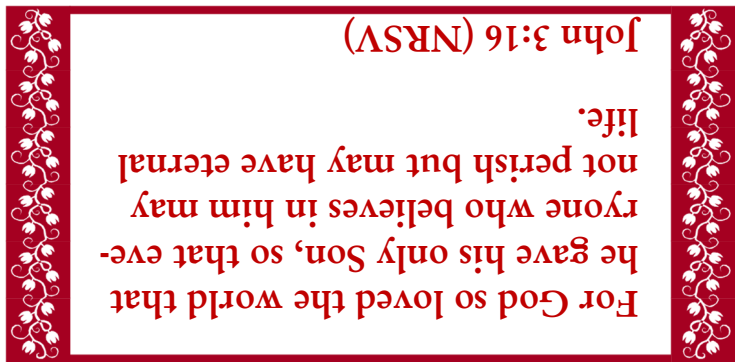
September 2024

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



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Ridgecrest, CA 93555

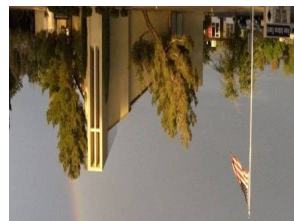
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www.gracelutheran.org
www.facebook.com/gracelutheran.org

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*



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