

Amazing Grace

January, 2019

Volume 38, Issue # 1

A MESSAGE from Pastor Maggard

Dear Saints of Grace,

A new year is upon us already! In the Smalcald Articles, which are a part of our confessions in the Book of Concord, Luther says the first and chief article of our faith is that “Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins and was raised again for our justification (SA II.I.1).” This is justification by faith alone in Christ alone. Luther states that “upon this article everything that we teach and practice depends (SA II.I.5).” The turning of a new year is a good time to reflect on what we believe and practice.

“Lex orandi, lex credendi” is a phrase coined by St. Prosper of Aquitaine (390-455A.D.) in his battle against the semi-Pelagians. The semi-Pelagians taught that grace was not necessary for either conversion or endurance in the Faith. That heresy still affects the church today in the form of “decision theology.” Any church that teaches that works are necessary for salvation, even in the tiniest bit, is caught up in this false belief of semi-Pelagianism.

The saying that St. Prosper coined means what you pray becomes what you believe. Prayer here has a much richer context than how we use the word. St. Prosper meant it to include worship, prayer (the way we think of it), hymns, and the content of what was meditated upon. It included the whole worship life of the Christian. Whatever content you meditate upon through reading, listening, or watching influences what you believe.

A good example of this is the homosexual agenda. For our kids who have gone to public school, it does not matter what is taught at home or in church. They are inundated by their public education and the culture around them (T.V., movies, games, etc.) with the message that it is okay to practice homosexuality. This is contrary to the Word of God and natural reason, but our kids have been fed a steady diet of the homosexual agenda and it impacts what they believe.

What do you ingest on a regular basis? Is it entertainment (pop music, movies, tv, and sports)? Is it self-indulgence (popular fiction, magazines, etc.)? Is it, worst of all, mainstream Christian radio (like K-LOVE, e.g.)? Most praise music spouts heretical decision theology! If you ingest this on a regular basis, it does not matter how much I preach grace by faith alone. What you ingest on a regular basis will shape your beliefs. Do you visit Christian bookstores? I have been in many Christian bookstores and 95% of what they sell is steeped in decision theology! Again, it won't matter how much I preach against it, if the majority of your ingestion is tainted by this heresy!

Are we to become ascetics, then? That would be just as harmful! We take our sinful heart with us wherever we go. So,



Our mission to the Inland Empire is to be *heralds of the transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ, healers to our brothers and sisters in Christ, and upholders of God's will and Word.*

what is the answer?

Paul says in Philippians: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things (4:8).” If you have ever tried to learn something that is worthy of learning, you know it takes a long time to appreciate it. Appreciation does not come overnight. First, be patient.

Second, be discerning. Our hymnal is a great example. Just because a hymn is in the Lutheran Service Book does not mean it is actually good. Unfortunately, quite a few American Evangelical hymns (decision theology) have made it into our hymnal. You should have a hymnal at home. I find it helpful and edifying to sing the good hymns at home throughout the week. If you have a hymnal, compare “Amazing Grace” (LSB 744) with “By Grace I’m Saved” (LSB 566). “Amazing Grace” is not a bad hymn, per se, but it is not a great hymn. Jesus is never mentioned by name. Grace in the song is described almost as an impersonal concept. The focus is definitely not on Jesus and how He won that amazing grace! The focus in this hymn is really the feelings and experiences of the Christian instead of focusing on the person and work of Christ. “By Grace I’m Saved,” on the other hand, describes this grace in terms of who gives us this grace and the means by which He won that grace. It encourages the Christian to rest in Christ. I have used an example of best over good rather than best over worst. I encourage you to practice your discernment. Who or what does the hymn or song focus on? Will that warp your beliefs?

You might think I am being too nit-picky. We all need to be nit-picky. If you are worried about your weight, do you not watch everything that goes in your mouth? If you are worried about your financial situation, do you not watch every penny and where it goes? So, if you are worried about your spiritual health, I advise you to get nit-picky about what you feed your soul. As a radio alternative, you should check out Lutheran Public Radio (<http://lutheranpublicradio.org/>) and KFUO radio (<https://www.kfuo.org/>).

May God continue to bless you in this new year as you reflect on His Word in print, hymn, prayer, and meditation.

Pastor Maggard

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Dear Grace Family,

As we enter the new year, we have a lot to be grateful for. We said goodbye to our beloved longtime Pastor Eric Kaelberer and said hello to our new Pastor Bill Maggard. We are a faithful group of Gods children and are very willing to share our time and talents with each other. Whether it is supporting the church financially or serving on the various boards and service groups. I want to remind everyone that we have some needs in the coming year for some of the church council boards. I want to thank Kathy Holm for agreeing to serve the Board of Evangelism, but we have a vacancy in the Board of Youth and several Elder positions. We still need someone to consider assuming the treasurer and financial secretary positions at the end of 2020. If you are interested in helping in any capacity please contact me and I can help you find a place to serve. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

In His Service, Chuck Stringham, President

EVANGELISM UPDATES

GOD'S BLESSINGS ON THE NEW YEAR!

Love thy neighbor! This commandment is repeated throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament. In Matthew 22: 37 - 40, Jesus responds to a challenge from a Pharisee as to which is the greatest commandment in the Law?: Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and Prophets." In Luke 10:25-37, Jesus is questioned from a lawyer about what he needs to do to inherit eternal life, and asks "who is my neighbor?", Jesus responds by telling the lawyer to follow the above commandments "...do this and you will live." Then Jesus proceeds to share the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

When we first moved to Rialto, I met and knew all of my neighbors on my block. We had block parties, our children played together, and we helped and watched out for one another. We shared each other's celebrations and challenges and we prayed for each other. I regret to say that things have changed on my block. Families have moved away, some have died, divorced, children have grown up and are living in their own neighborhoods. I don't know my neighbors or my neighborhood like I used to. I don't know about you, but I want to get to know my neighbors again. We have new issues in our neighborhood: mail and packages being stolen, coyotes roaming the neighborhood, water and blight issues due to the drought, etc. In getting to really know my neighbors, I can witness to them about Jesus, His Love and forgiveness. I don't know about your neighborhood, but my neighborhood needs more love, care, and prayer.

Fred Rogers of the "Mister Roger's Neighborhood" television show used Biblical principles and the two above

commandments to encourage loving your neighbor. It was evident in his theme song, "Won't You Be My Neighbor?" My challenge and goal for the new year is to reach out to my neighbors and your neighbors by approaching them with love and caring. My first mission was to deliver Christmas treats to all neighbors on my block. The next step will be to invite them all to a simple gathering at my house for refreshments and conversation. So let's start the New Year by following Jesus' example and Mister Rogers' by asking, "Won't You Be My Neighbor?"

FELLOWSHIP EVENTS:

January 4th, 2019 - Basketball Game in Ontario, **Citizens Business Bank Arena at 7pm**

February - Possible Daring Diners before, on or after Valentine's Day. Looking for suggestions.

March - May have a Relay for Life Fund Raiser, Bunco or ? In the planning stages

May 18 - Relay for Life Event at Summit High School. Sign up to be on our team, Grace Crusaders Against Cancer.

Kathy Holm, Evangelism Chair

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

ATTENTION

Teachers are **desperately** needed for our children. Volunteer for a month or a few Sundays here or there. As it stands now, there is only one teacher. Thank you for your consideration.

Kim Franzen

YOUR DONATIONS FOR THE LORD'S WORK

Total Offerings 2017	\$ 208,426.08
(2017	Monthly Avg \$ 17,368.84)
	2018
1st Quarter offerings:	\$ 45,357.81
2nd Quarter offerings:	\$ 46,369.50
3rd Quarter offerings:	\$ 51,918.00
.....	2018 Quarterly Avg. \$ 47,881.77
.....	2018 Monthly Avg. thru 2nd Qtr. \$15,960.59
October offerings	\$12,518.00
November offerings	\$14,158.00

May the Lord's Blessings and Gracious Love, abound with each and everyone of you and yours during this most precious time of year when we celebrate God's life giving gift to us!

CHURCH WEBSITE: www.gracelutheranrialto.com

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE JANUARY 15, 2019

KEEP IN PRAYER

Thank you for remembering our “shut-ins” **Jane Mathews, Margaret Dickenson, Esther Katt, Pamela Woodcox, Jan Mansell, Evelyn Smith, Charlie and Millie Thompson, Joyce McFarland, and Joyce Waters.**

We keep in prayer **Joann Miller, Kurt and Denise Wampole, the Weir family, and Tony Mantz.** Prayers of thanksgiving for the gift of the newborn baby boy to **John and Leslie Richmond. Expecting** in January **Justin and Tiffany Izzo.**

Also keep in prayer **the firemen, first-responders and those who have lost their homes, their lives, and loved ones in the terrible fires.** And more prayers for those **who lost their lives at the mass shooting in Thousand Oaks and all affected by this tragedy.**

We pray for all of our troops overseas and their families, and for our own young people in uniform - **Kurt Wampole, Jr., Noah Nery, Jeremiah and Summer Hart, Jacob Blanton and Jacob Livoni.**

A church secretary does so much behind the scenes for everyone! Dolores Smith has been serving us faithfully over 20 years! What a treasure she has been for our church! Thank you for your wonderful service

We wish you the best in retirement!

Pastor Maggard

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 01 Izak Wallis
- 08 Gail Picado
- 10 Alma Rich
- 14 Sus Nehls
Brian Smith
- 19 Kawai Kaelberer
- 29 Gail York

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 03 Greg & Jeanne Nelson
- 08 Larry & Judy Adams
- 11 Ron & Kim Pickinpaugh
- 19 Ken & Nancy Nobis
- 28 Carl & Lynda Olson

On Sunday, December 9th Pastor Maggard and wife Erin hosted a lovely holiday gathering with a feast of many American Mexican (southern-California style) delectable delights.

All who attended had a refreshing time with fellowship and plenty to eat and enjoy!! **A big thank-you** to all of you who attended and enjoyed the love and food!

An even **BIGGER THANK-YOU to the Maggard’s** whom as you are probably aware just recently acquired and moved into their new home!



LENDING A HAND –

January 2019

USHERS

All ushers need to try to be at church by 8:30 a.m. Ushers please call the Elder-of-the-Day the night before if you cannot serve. Thank you

- 6 Richard Franzen Jim Kline, Ron Pickinpaugh, Dave Nehls
- 13 Mike Miller Bill Choske, Mike Draney, Larry Adams
- 20 Randy York Glenn James, Allan Dellinger
- 27 Brent Rosen Chuck Stringham, Brent Rosen

Note-Communion Elder:

ACOLYTES

- 6 Elders or volunteer
- 13 “
- 20 “
- 27 “



GREETERS

- 6 Jim & Diane Kline
- 13 Grace Family
- 20 Dolores Smith
- 27 Richard & Kim Franzen

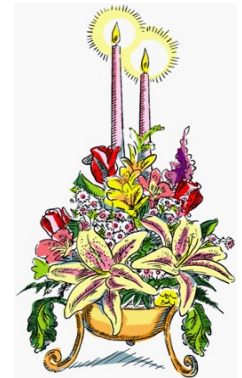


COUNTING COMMITTEE

- 6 Barbara Dellinger, Brent Rosen
- 13 Mike Draney, Mike Miller
- 20 Judi & Bill Choske
- 27 Betty Guinn, Maletta Miller

FLOWER CHART

- 6 Lynda Olson
Tamara Mahomes
- 13 Bill Choske
Sherry Herrera
- 20
- 27



ORGANIST/PIANIST

- 6 Gail James
- 13 Dolores Smith
- 20 Dolores Smith
- 27 Gail James

DONUT & COFFEE CLEAN-UP

- 6
- 13
- 20 Barbara Dellinger
- 27 Dolores Smith



- ALTAR CARE Kim Pickinpaugh, Maletta Miller
- NEWSLETTER DEADLINE January 15