

Amazing Grace

JANUARY, 2020
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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.

A MESSAGE from Pastor Maggard

Dear Saints of Grace,

Happy New Year!

As you reflect upon the last year and look forward to the New Year, remember that your salvation does not depend upon your successes or failures. The Epistle reading for Christmas Day is a great reminder for us:

⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)

We have an eternal hope. We have eternal life. These things cannot be removed from us by anyone or anything. What a great comfort this gives us!

Natural law is the law that is written on our hearts. From natural law, there is no understanding of who God is or what He has done for us, but there is a general understanding of how things work. Books like Dave Ramsey's "The Total Money Makeover," or David Allen's "Getting Things Done," or Spencer Johnson's "Who Moved My

Cheese?" are fine examples of using wisdom obtained from natural law. (I only cite these because I've actually read them myself. There are a lot of great books out there!) These are tools we can use to evaluate our life and implement changes to our life to make it more productive. But they do not impact our salvation at all! Not even in the tiniest little bit!

If anything, these tools allow us to serve our neighbor more efficiently and effectively. And that should be the focus of these tools. If they are only self-serving, then they may hinder our salvation. When we are curved in on ourselves, we could be in danger of making ourselves our own idol! We might start to trust our own works for salvation instead of looking to Christ. That would be tragic and could have eternal consequences!

Take time to reflect upon last year and plan for this year. First and foremost, reflect upon Jesus by meditating on His Word. You are baptized and washed clean of all your sin. How healthy or sick you are; how rich or poor you are; how successful or not you've been, you have a God who died for you and cares for you. He will never forsake you!

May God bless you richly this New Year for the sake of Christ who has saved us from our sins!

Pastor



PRESIDENT

Come In, We Are Closed Part 3

The author of the book, Rev. Bramwell, used parables to teach the doctrine of closed communion. The first parable is “The Wedding Feast” Matthew 22:1-14.

The King, who gave a wedding feast for his son, sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast, but they would not come. The King sent out other servants to tell the invited that the feast was prepared and ready for them, they still didn't come. Ignoring the King they went on with their lives. The King was angry, so he destroyed those who ignored his invitation. The servants went out to the main roads and invited as many as they could find both good and bad to the wedding feast. The hall was filled with guests. The King came into the hall and noticed a man not in wedding clothes and asked, “how did you get in here?” The man had no answer, so the king bound him and threw him into the darkness.

In the parable, God is the King and Christ is the son. The servants are the pastors in the pulpit that preach God's Gospel message and we are the ones being invited to the wedding feast. When we repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, we receive Christ's robe of righteousness, the wedding clothes. Putting on the wedding clothes is RSVPing for the wedding feast. Since we don't know of the time of the wedding feast, we must always be prepared by constantly rehearsing our part. Communion is a foretaste of that feast to come. Communion is a rehearsal for the wedding feast.

Life's circumstances can cause us to diminish our rehearsal time or we stop going to the rehearsals altogether. Once we stop going to rehearsals, we stop putting on Christ's robe of righteousness. If we want to resume the rehearsals and wearing the wedding cloths, we must resume our preparations.

Closed communion is the church being honest at the rehearsal about what's to come. When Christ comes and we are not wearing the wedding clothes because we missed the rehearsals, just as the man in the parable, we will be bound and thrown into the darkness. You can't crash the wedding unprepared and expect to be welcomed. Until next time.

In His Service,

Chuck Stringham, President

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

**TUESDAY,
JANUARY 14TH**

EVANGELISM

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” Romans 1:16-17 (ESV)

“Luther was a tormented monk who could not find peace with God. What separated him so much from other monks in his day was his keen sense of justice. He had been trained in law and understood well its intricacies. He knew that before God, no matter what *he* did, he could never justify himself. God was too Holy and Luther was too far-gone in his sin. He was a Roman Catholic and believed that not only did he need faith in God to be saved, but he needed works as well. The “works” part of his view of salvation is what truly drove him mad. Luther tried as hard as he could to work his way to God through the sacraments and good works, but never felt like it was enough.

Ultimately, his freedom from guilt came in the form of a verse. Upon studying Romans 1, he finally understood. There was nothing *he* could do earn his salvation. It was his *faith* in another that would save him. One who had done what he needed on his behalf. Luther was made righteous by his faith in Christ. "The righteous shall live by faith." Romans 1:17 Luther finally understood that to be righteous before God he did not need works, he only needed faith in Christ. His sense of justice had run headlong into the Biblical proclamation of **salvation by faith alone**, and it forever changed him."

Welcome to the church season of Epiphany!

Our church celebrates Epiphany, the manifestation of Christ to the whole world on January 6th when the Three Wise Men or Magi came to see the Baby Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12). This church season of Epiphany continues until Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent.

Martin Luther had an "epiphany" or revelation after much torment, prayer, and rigorous Bible Study which led to the idea "By Grace Alone, through Faith Alone in Christ Alone according to Scripture Alone." Let us embrace the season of Epiphany in this new year of 2020, realizing that no matter how many New Year's resolutions we make to better ourselves, Jesus has already made us "better" (made us new) by His coming and with His death and resurrection on the cross which forgave all our sins and assured us of eternal life with Him. Let's also pray that the Holy Spirit will help us to share the Good News of the Gospel with our neighbors that we are saved by Grace Alone through Faith Alone in Christ Alone!

Kathy Holm
Evangelism Chair



Daring Diners will meet on Saturday, **January 18, 2020, 2:00 p.m. at Flor's Diner**, a family owned business, "Where Good Friends Meet to Enjoy Quality Food & Become Family", located at **821 W. Valley Blvd, Colton, CA.**

Lunch items include Salads, Hamburgers, Sandwiches, Wraps, Appetizers, Burritos, etc. We hope you can join us!

Please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex by Sunday, January 12th. We will need to make reservations that week. If you have any questions, please see Carol or Mike Draney.

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2020 Council Members

President - Chuck Stringham
Vice President – OPEN
Secretary – Kim Pickinpaugh
Treasurer – Diane Kline
Financial Secretary – Jim Kline
Education – Pastor Daniel Holm
Evangelism – Kathy Holm
Stewardship – Barbara Dellinger
Trustee – Allan Dellinger
Worship – Debbie Schwartz
Youth - OPEN





Thank you for remembering our shut-ins
Margaret Dickenson, Bette Howard, Jan Mansell, Jane Mathews, Joyce McFarland, Dick & Margie Nelson, Evelyn Smith, Ruth Spies, Charlie Thompson, Joyce Waters, La Verne Wichert and Pamela Woodcox.

This month's added prayers – **Sandra and John Scharlemann; Sandy Scharlemann's brother – Steven; Carol and Mike Draney's friend – Randie Goehring; Susan and Don Sidoti's brother's Father-in-law – David and family; Don Sidoti's father – Tommy; Kathy Holm's sister – Kristie and her husband's family; Kathy Holm's neighbor – Lisa.**

Prayers for Expecting Parents: **Andrew and Emily Dellinger.**

We keep in prayer – **Dave Nehls; Larry Maudlin; Tony Mantz and family.**

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.**

OUR TITHES FOR THE LORD'S WORK

NOVEMBER OFFERING ATTENDANCE

3rd	\$ 4,880.00	53
10th	\$ 7,533.00	51
17th	\$ 2,952.00	46
22nd	\$ 2,120.00	47

NOVEMBER offerings \$ 17,485.00

Year to date through 11/31 \$ 200,723.92



BIRTHDAYS

1	Izak Wallis
7	Sydney Mahomes
8	Gail Picado
10	Alma Rich
14	Sue Nehls
	Brian Smith
29	Gail York

JANUARY BAPTISMS

Kathy Holm
Alma Rich
Bryan Stringham
Chuck Stringham
Ross Stringham

Do you know when you were baptized? Just send a quick email to the church office at: gracelutheranrialto@gmail.com

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

3	Greg and Jeanne Nelson
8	Larry and Judy Adams
11	Ron and Kim Pickinpaugh
19	Ken and Nancy Nobis

Funny Corner

What did Frosty call his cow?

→ Eskimoo!

