

Amazing Grace

June, 2020

Volume 39, Issue 6



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,

Have we done the right thing?

This question has come to mind for many of us. We have gone along with the government mandate to not gather together (4th Commandment) out of love and care for our neighbor (5th Commandment) even though we know that God commands that we gather around Word and Sacrament (3rd Commandment, Hebrews 10:24-25). I think it is fair to say that we are anxious to come back together. I think it is fair to say that our Governor is taking an overly cautious approach. Our District President has sent a letter to Governor Newsom urging him to open up our churches! I pray that he does so quickly.

In hindsight, when the dust has settled, we might be able to identify areas where the government has overstepped its boundaries. This should allow us, in the future, to act with more wisdom. But you may wonder if we have done the right thing this time. That is a fair question.

Luther is famous for saying, "Love God and sin boldly," which is a paraphrase for the following: "Be a sinner, and let your sins be strong (sin boldly), but let your trust in Christ be stronger, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world."¹ There are many ways to understand this. The way that I understand it is this: we are tainted with sin so whatever we

decide to do is tainted by sin so act (sin) boldly and trust in Christ for the forgiveness of your sin. This is not an invitation to obvious sin. As Paul says, "Shall we continue in sin so that grace may increase? Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin live in it any longer?" (Romans 6:1-2) In many decisions in life, it is not clear what the best decision may be. As long as the options aren't obviously sinful, we are free to choose the course of action that seems best to us. Picking a college or what job offer to accept are great examples of this. Pick one and thank God for His blessings regardless of what option you choose. There is no perfect "God-pleasing" choice that you have to choose rightly to receive His blessing on that decision. You are blessed by God in your baptism. He continues to bless you in Christ!

We have decided to follow the government's recommendations out of love for our neighbor. We do not have to second guess our decision! It is the right thing for Grace to do, even if other churches are taking different actions. We can have clean consciences. God will continue to bless us in Christ.

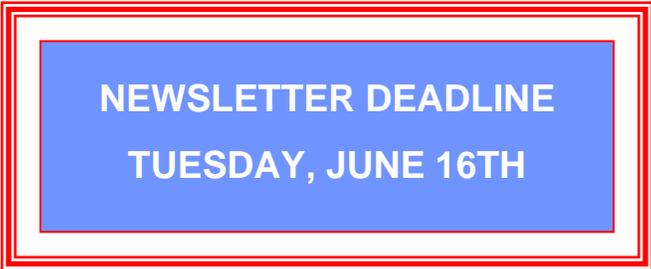
It should not be too much longer before we can come together again. When we do come together let us focus on God's grace and each other. We may need to have some serious discussion about what to do "next time," but we do not need to second guess ourselves this time. God continues to bless our decision in Christ.

Thanks be to God for His wonderful mercies which are new every morning!

In Christ,

Pastor Maggard

¹ Letter 99, Paragraph 13. Erika Bullmann Flores, Tr. from: *Dr. Martin Luther's Saemmtliche Schriften* Dr. [Johann Georg Walch](#) Ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, N.D.), Vol. 15, cols. 2585-2590.



NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
TUESDAY, JUNE 16TH

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we continue to hunker down through this COVID-19 stay at home condition, we praise the Lord for His faithfulness during this difficult time. We are definitely experiencing and living in a new age where we have voluntarily suspended our liberties and freedoms for the greater good for ourselves, friends and family.

I read on Facebook and other sources of information that some people claim that we should defy the orders of our Government leaders and participate in in-person church services. They say that God will protect us from COVID-19 and we should rely on His protection as we gather for church services.

My personal belief is that God is protecting us by way of the guidance provided to us by our civil governments. God instituted civil governments and granted earthly authority over us, and He expects us to follow their guidance. What's foolish is for a person to disregard the rules and place others at risk for infection, which could be then passed on to the other people. Not seeing our friends and family at church is hard, but we will be back together before we know it.

I appreciate the cooperation of each member of Grace to make sure we all get through this safely. I want to thank Pastors Maggard and Holm for the daily devotions and weekly Sunday services on Facebook Live. They have been an acceptable substitute for now but I am looking forward to the real thing very soon.

The subject of handshakes and hugs are on the minds of many right now and when we eventually gather again, we won't be fully rid of the dangers of COVID-19, which means we will still need to practice measures of social distancing and avoid handshakes and hugs to the best of our ability.

In closing, I want to remind everyone about the need to continue your tithing as best you can while not taking away from the needs of your families. We will get through this and emerge on the other side being thankful for what we have and praising God for His faithfulness to His beloved.

In His Service,

Chuck Stringham, President

EVANGELISM

Dear Fellow Christians and Neighbors!

Well, we are still sheltering in place! Who could have predicted this? No one, but God!

It reminds me a little of the early church when Christians had to meet in private homes, but in secrecy. During this pandemic, we can meet and worship with family in the privacy of our own homes, but no longer in secrecy because we have the guaranteed freedom to worship. Our technology age has allowed our Pastors and others to share God's Word through Facebook, YouTube, and Zoom or Google Duo.

Even though the early Christians had to meet secretly, God's Word prevailed and spread to far

distant lands. Even now as we are sequestered in our own homes, God's Word is still spreading and prevailing! It is a different sort of evangelism. By sharing the Noon Daily Prayer Devotions on Facebook, we are sharing our Christian and Lutheran faith with others. God's Word is powerful! Our Great Little Church of Grace is feeding members and others daily with the Old and New Testaments, Law and Gospel, prayer, hymns, Lutheran liturgy, and even art!

Speaking of Lutheran liturgy, it's been a blessing that the month of May's Portal of Prayer devotions have been daily addressing each part of our liturgy, from the invocation, confession and absolution, introit and kyrie to the Gospel readings, sermon, creed, prayers, offering, and benediction. What a blessing our liturgy is! If you have not had the chance to read those, please try to do so. The Portals of Prayer devotions are yet another way to share our faith with others because they contain God's powerful Word.

I cannot help but wonder, how the Holy Spirit is using these strange times of isolation to build up the church. I would not be surprised to see new visitors come to our Great Little Church of Grace once restrictions have been lifted because they have heard and been fed the Word of God through the gift of technology.

You can be an "evangelist" just by sharing our pastors' messages on Facebook, just by the press of a button.

Continue to stay well, stay safe, and share the Good News!

"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:11

Kathy Holm, Chairperson

STEWARDSHIP

Wow! It seems like it's been forever since we have all been able to gather and worship together... in person. But, as Pastor recently mentioned, we will quickly forget this agony of anticipation once the day comes and we can commune together with our Grace family; that joy of receiving the gift of our Lord.

If you have not driven by the church for a while, you will be pleasantly surprised with the cleaning, painting, and upkeep that has been going on. The church building has continued to be maintained and is ready to welcome you home.

All of this maintenance has been possible by the hard work of a few, but more so by the commitment of you all continuing to send in your offering during this absence. There have been recent news articles about how churches are suffering financially during this "lockdown". I am proud to report that we don't fall in that category. Our little church is great because of all of you!

Christ's blessings to you all. Stay safe and healthy until we meet again.

Barbara Dellinger, Chairperson

YOUR TITHES FOR THE LORD'S WORK

APRIL	OFFERING	ATTENDANCE
5 th	\$ 2,910.00	n/a
12 th	\$ 7,945.00	n/a
19 th	\$ 2,780.00	n/a
26 th	\$ 3,750.00	n/a

email – gracelutheranrialto@gmail.com

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Website: www.gracelutheranrialto.com



THE LUTHERAN WITNESS

Would you like a subscription for \$15.96?

Please make your check out to the church.

We will write one check for all of the subscriptions.

ANSWER TO PRAYER!

We are reopening on June 7th!

Thank you for remembering our “shut-ins” Margaret Dickenson, Bette Howard, Jan Mansell, Joyce McFarland, Larry Maudlin, Dick & Margie Nelson, Evelyn Smith, Ruth Spies, Charlie Thompson and Joyce Waters.

This month’s added prayers: Anthony and Tamara Mahomes and family; Tamara Mahomes’ dad - Richard Lowe and family; Don and Susan Sidoti and family; Don Sidoti’s dad – Tom; Brian Smith and family; Tamara Mahomes’ friend – Angela and family; Glen and Gail James, their daughter – Jennifer and son-in-law – Alex and new grandson – Daniel James Angel; Alma Rich’s niece – Ginger; Pastor and Erin Maggard; Pastor Maggard’s mom – Lyn Sperling; Alma Rich’s son-in-law’s brother – Dave; Ron Pickinpaugh’s niece – Carrie Pickinpaugh; Glen and Gail James’ cousin Sheila’s family.

We keep in prayer - Tony Mantz and family; Dave Nehls, Dave Weir and their families; Nancy Telizyn’s friend – Hilary and her mom – Helen; Marcy and Bryan Stringham; Debbie Schwartz’s niece – Arla.

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.

Funny Corner



What do you get when you combine an elephant with a fish?

→ *Swimming trunks*



BIRTHDAYS

1	Glen	James
4	Larry	Maudlin
9	Ross	Stringham
11	Kaitlin	Murdick
12	Kristen	Nehls
16	Robert	Klemm
20	Andrew	Herrera
	Brian	Kelmar
	Betty	Guinn
	Keith	Palmer
21	Caitlyn	Del Rio
24	Sandy	Stringham
25	Jim	Kline
26	Judi	Parker-Choske
28	Ruth	Wells
30	Sherrie	Smith
	Evan	Guerra

JUNE BAPTISMS

Do you know when you were baptized? Just send a quick email to the church office at:

gracelutheranrialto@gmail.com

JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

10	Charles and Desiree	Dellinger
19	Allan and Barbara	Dellinger
	Shane and Tami	Travers
23	Jon and Heather	Hathcock
25	Richard and Patti	Lowe