

Amazing Grace

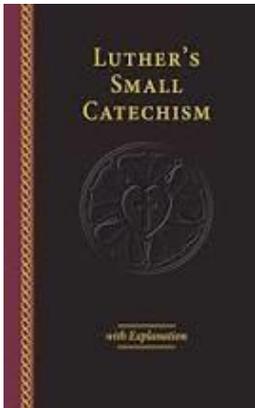
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A MESSAGE from Pastor Maggard

Dear Saints of Grace,



I have been thinking a lot lately how to catechize young people and adults. It has long been the custom of our church to add an explanation to the Small Catechism for the purpose of training young and old alike. The current edition is pictured above. I am sure many of you remember using the Small Catechism with Explanation in your Confirmation Classes (what I call catechism class). Hopefully, you learned in that class that catechesis lasts for the rest of your life. As Christians we love to learn more and more about Jesus and what He has done for us. Here are some catechetical-like questions and answers for your consideration.

Do I need the latest edition?

Not necessarily. There is something comforting about using the same catechism book for your whole life, and every edition CPH has put out is fine

for this use. The latest edition does contain a slightly different layout that I find helpful. If you want a new edition, they are available in our cry-room. Please help yourself!

Why do they put the preface to the Small Catechism in the back of the Explanation?

I have no idea! This still bothers me today. Properly, it is part of the Small Catechism and not the explanation part. It is well worth your time to read.

What about the Large Catechism?

The Large Catechism is the “original” explanation and is Luther’s most outstanding writing, in my judgment. It is worthy of your time and effort to read it. In fact, if you were only going to read one or the other, I would prefer you read the Large Catechism instead of the Explanation part. A free pdf edition is available at wolfmuellers.com/product/the-large-catechism/. If you want a physical copy, I can help!

What are some ways I can use Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation?

- Use the first section to test your memory of the Small Catechism. We all should work on keeping it in our memory. Of course, you can find many other places with the Small Catechism to test yourself.
- Read a page of the explanation part as you go to bed or wake up to meditate upon God’s Word. For example, you could read

page 215 in the new edition and meditate on how to find the church on earth.

- Use the 'Index of Topics' to find the parts in the explanation that deal with something you're interested in. A catch is that the references are to question numbers and not page numbers. For instance, you might wonder about angels. In the index, you find that questions 52, 126-30, 135, 228, 247, 287-88 all mention angels.

Is the Small Catechism with Explanation authoritative for our church?

Yes and no. The Small Catechism is authoritative. It has stood the test of time and proves itself to be the best catechism out there. The explanation part is not authoritative, per se. It was made by a committee of fallible men who tried their best. It is outstanding, but it is not at the level of the Book of Concord. We hold the Book of Concord to be authoritative. Your pastors vow to teach and live according to it. We believe, teach, and confess that the Book of Concord rightly explains Scripture.

Why, then, do we want the Small Catechism with Explanation?

The Small Catechism with Explanation helpfully categorizes what we believe in an ordered manner. If you want to know what Scripture verses teach about, you can easily find them in the index of the explanation.

It is also a helpful tool in catechizing both young and old. It is not the only tool, though. There are other ones out there. It is always the task of the current generation to find the best tools to hand down the Faith to the next generation. Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation is such a tool. We will continue to fine tune it so that it remains a great tool to hand down the Faith.

However, you decide to continue learning the Faith once handed down by the Apostles, God will bless your efforts. Lent is a great time to renew our efforts

in personal piety, especially the piety of learning the Faith and reading God's Word.

May God bless you richly with His teaching which comes from His Holy Word.

In Christ,
Pastor Maggard

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Grace Family,

I love how we come together as a family and support each other through good and bad times. I appreciate all the support that you give me as your President while we navigate through these unprecedented times. I am especially thankful for the generosity in time, talent, and financial gifts to support and keep the doors open of our great little church.

We are blessed with two fine Pastors that love and care for us as Shepherds do and make sure the Word is preached to us in its purest form. I am thankful that Ron Pickinpaugh can perform the duties as Treasurer and still find it in his heart to be an Elder as well. Let us all remember that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Be strong and be safe.

In His Service!
Chuck Stringham, President

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Tuesday, March 16th



EVANGELISM

Dear Fellow Christians,

Let Psalm 51 be one of the Bible passages that leads you through this Lenten season.

¹Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

³For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

¹¹Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Psalm 51: 1-3, 10 -12

God's Word is transformative. "You cannot read the very words and thoughts of the living God and not be inspired, comforted, convicted, and ultimately, changed." Lent is a season to prepare our hearts to enter a time of reflection as we recall Christ's suffering and death on the cross. We can prepare our hearts by reading God's Holy Word. "Because through Scripture, Christ speaks to your heart, convicts you, strengthens you, and encourages you as He sets you free from what keeps you bound (sin)."

Instead of giving something up for Lent, let's focus on a faith practice that we will begin to help promote our spiritual growth: devoting more time to reading the Bible, devoting more time to prayer, devoting more time to attend church Lenten services or Bible study classes, or devoting more time to sharing the Gospel with others who don't know about God's wonderful forgiveness and saving grace.

Dear Lord Jesus,

Open our eyes to the significance of the cross as we receive the forgiveness You offered. There is no depth of sin too severe to acknowledge it, for Your grace far surpasses our sin. Thank you for Your abundant love and grace! Amen!

Kathy Holm, Chairperson

STEWARDSHIP

I recently read an article written by Rev. Jeff Hemmer, "Grace and Every Blessing: The Gifts Hidden in the Commandments". We often look at the Ten Commandments as rules and measure how "good" we are by how many rules we keep, or break.

Many people turn against the church because they want to be independent; they want to do what they want...they do not want to be told what to do. Hmmmm....sounds sort of like a teenager. Parents impose rules out of love, it just may not be obvious at the time. Our God does not give us the Ten Commandments to stifle us or to show His power, but to show His love.

Through the Ten Commandments, God bestows blessings; gifts we can only receive through keeping His commandments.

1. **You shall have no other gods.** He gives us the gift of Himself and He is the only god of life and forgiveness.
2. **You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.** God gives you His name through your baptism. He marks you as His own and His name is a gift to call upon in every need, to pray, to praise, and to give thanks. He gives us access to Himself.
3. **Remember the Sabbath and keep it Holy.** He created worship and the Divine Service as a means to receive His gifts of

His Word and Sacraments. These gifts are free; you just have to be present.

Reverend Hemmer points out that, "Even when you know that the Ten Commandments are intended to enable you to receive good gifts from God, you can't keep them perfectly. Only Jesus did that. His perfect obedience, perfect righteousness, is the ultimate gift. This was given to you in Holy Baptism. It's reaffirmed in Holy Absolution. It nourishes and strengthens you in Holy Communion."

I won't go through all ten commandments right now and you may wonder where Stewardship comes in. We are here to be stewards, to make God's gifts known to all.

The annual financial report for 2020 showed GLC to be financially sound at the end of a difficult year. It is through your faithful giving we can continue to be good servants to others and to honor His precious gifts to all. We are blessed.

Barbara Dellinger, Chairperson

WORSHIP

When you attend a children's choir concert, you're not surprised when the children look everywhere but at the director. They wiggle, squirm, and poke

each other. They stand on tiptoes to search for parents in the audience. They raise their hands to wave when they see them. Oh yes, and they occasionally sing. We smile at their antics. The behavior is cute in children. It's not so cute when adult members don't watch the conductor. (ha-ha - you know who you are!) Good music depends on singers who pay attention to the director so they can stay together as they sing.

Christians sometimes are like singers in a children's choir. Instead of looking at Jesus, the great Conductor of the symphony of life, we are

busy squirming or looking at each other or watching the audience.

Jesus admonished Peter for such behavior. After He told him what would be required of him, Peter pointed to John and asked, "What about him?" Jesus answered with a question: "What is that to you? You follow Me." (John 21:22)

Sometimes we are distracted by what others are doing. We think God's plan for their life is better than the plan for ours. But God's plan for each of us is the same: Follow Jesus. When we watch Him intently, we'll not be distracted by God's plan for anyone else.

My times are in my Father's hand; How could I wish or ask for more? For He who has my pathway planned, will guide me till my journey's o'er.

---Fraser

Every child of God has a special place in HIS plan.

*Taken from *Devotions for Singing*

Debbie Schwartz, Chairperson

Celebrating March Baptisms

Gail Picado Joe Guerra

Do you know when you were baptized?
Please call or email the church office with
the details.

gracelutheranrialto@gmail.com

YOUR TITHES FOR THE LORD'S WORK

JANUARY	OFFERING	ATTENDANCE
3rd	\$ 2,040.00	**
10th	\$ 2,655.00	**
17th	\$ 5,594.00	27
24th	\$ 3,555.11	28
31 st	\$ 6,455.00	36

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

7	Isaac Smith
8	Carol Draney
12	Katryn Mantz
18	Larry Adams
18	Bette Howard
23	Noah Holm
30	Dale Telizyn

Happy Anniversary

17	Ted and Gail	Picado
22	Mike and Maletta	Miller
29	Justin and Tiffany	Izzo
30	Joe and Patti	Guerra

Funny Corner

What kind of garden does a baker have?

A "flour" garden!



PRAYER Requests

Thank you for remembering our "shut-ins" Margaret Dickenson, Bette Howard, Joyce McFarland, Larry Maudlin, Gloria Reinschmidt, Evelyn Smith, Ruth Spies, and Joyce Waters.

This month's added prayers: Richard Franzen's nephew – Jason and his wife, Tracy; Family of Janet Diekhoff in her passing; Dee Turquand's niece – Heather and family; Dolores Smith's friend – Pat Spindler; Family of James in his passing; Bill Choske's friend – Tim, Jackson and family in the passing of his wife – Erin; Justin and Tiffany Izzo and their unborn son; Dolores Smith's son – Mike and his team; Carla Del Rio's mom – Darlene and sister – Amy; Pastor Eric, Kawaii and Pastor Eric's dad – Jack; Ron Pickinpaugh's co-worker and wife in the loss of their unborn baby; Bill and Judi Parker-Choske; Brian Smith and family; Debbie Schwartz; Don Sidoti's Uncle Douglas, Aunt Marge and family.

We keep in prayer: Tony Mantz and family; Pattie and Richard Lowe; Anthony and Tamara Mahomes; Terry Pickinpaugh; Tamara Mahomes' friend – Zenida and her best friend – Windy, Windy's son – Jayson, his wife – Nikole and their unborn son; Mike and Betty Guinn; Bill Choske's co-worker – Fred and his elderly mother, Joanne; Glen and Gail James' friends – Chris, Sierra and their unborn child – Jack; Glen James' Aunt Jyrlene; Barbara Dellinger's dear friend – Pauline Johnson; Tamara Mahomes' friend- Vivian's son – Grant; Caitlyn Del Rio's best friend's family – especially, Azmoon; Carla Del Rio's friend – Maria; Hannah and Mike Villasenor and their unborn daughter and unspoken prayers.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.*

Psalms 51:10



Shared from a church member -

A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday.

He wrote: "I've gone for 30 years now, and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time, the preachers and priests are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all".

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column.

Much to the delight of the editor, it went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals.

But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today.

Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

When you are DOWN to nothing, God is UP to something!

Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible & receives the impossible!

Thank God for our physical and our spiritual nourishment!

IF YOU CANNOT SEE GOD IN ALL, YOU CANNOT SEE GOD AT ALL!

B. I. B L. E. simply means: **Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth!**



All the following evening services will meet at church and be online at 7:00p.m.

March 3rd – Wednesday Midweek
10th – Wednesday Midweek
17th – Wednesday Midweek
24th – Wednesday Midweek

April 1st - Maundy Thursday
2nd - Good Friday
3rd - Easter Vigil Service

EASTER SERVICES – Sunday Morning

4th – Sunrise Service – 7 a.m.
Pancake Breakfast – 8 a.m.
Divine Service – 9 a.m.

