



Grace Messenger

June 2020

Pastor Brodbeck's Reflection

Last month, I asked you this question: "What have you been learning during this time of isolation?" I encouraged you to use the quietness of the days to tune your ears to what God might want to teach you. I look forward to hearing the stories that come from your experiences. (You know how I love a good story!)

One thing I hope all of us have either learned for the first time, or had re-emphasized to us, has to do with the nature of the "church." We have been very careful to never talk about the "church" being "closed." Have you noticed that? Nor will we talk about the church "reopening." The church cannot close or reopen because the church is the people of God.

We have been deployed, dispersed, distributed, and scattered, but never closed. Our ministries have adopted different formats. We have seldom been in face-to-face contact with each other. But closed? No way. Despite the terminology used by state and federal leadership, and in direct contrast to what we have even seen on more than one prominent marquis in our community, the church has continued to worship, teach, meet, pray, fellowship, encourage, and care for its constituents. We have developed new ways to spread the gospel and enhance the family worship experience. We have learned new technologies and developed a deeper appreciation for the Body of Christ. We have listened to the voice of God in our silence and have, hopefully, learned better to trust in God's care. Certain passages of Scripture (like Matthew 6:25-34) have taken on new depths of meaning.

If this brief article were a State of the Union address, I would confidently proclaim "The church is alive and well." And it is. Thanks be to God!

Now it is time for us as the people of Grace to return to our corporate life, and we will do so beginning on June 7. Our return will happen in three waves, the first of which will be a return to corporate worship. You will read more about that on other pages of this newsletter. Waves two and three will see us return to Sunday School and Bible Studies, followed by a return to full ministry programming.

But the challenge will be for us to never think of this return as "going back to the way it was." As much as I hate the phrase "new normal," the reality is that life will not be the same – nor should it be – even for us as a community of faith. God changed us during these past weeks (or at least He tried to change you). We cannot and will not think about ministry in the same way. We will experience this, and grow in it, together.

Like the children of Israel, we now join our voices saying "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'"

What Lies Ahead

This year our stewardship theme is "Open Our Eyes, Lord!" Our aim, in this 2020 calendar year, is to be able to see clearly what God has in store for us individually and together as a congregation. We want 2020 vision, so we pray that God would open our eyes.

I'm drawn to my favorite verses of Scripture as I contemplate this theme. You read them in Philippians 3:14-15:

Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

During the years I taught drivers' education, I would often remind my students that the windshield was larger than the rearview mirror because where you are going matters more than where you've been. That caution would be issued whenever I sensed those drivers-to-be worried more about the cars "back there" that may have been too close for comfort.

Even in our faith journey we can become preoccupied with the way things used to be or the former times we spent with others and with God. And while memories are nice, God is always calling His people forward – toward a prize He has for them in Christ Jesus.

I pray that these days your spirit will be drawn by God toward what lies ahead, and that you will be eager to strain for it. Focus on the windshield as together we launch into God's vision for our congregation.



Return

Grace Returns to Corporate Worship on Sunday, June 7, 2020!

It's time. After more than 60 days in "exile," we will once again open the doors to our facility at 1801 St. Paris Pike and invite the Grace congregation and community to worship together at 8:00 and 10:45 a.m. We are taking every possible step to make this a safe experience for all, but that requires your cooperation! The articles below detail our plans. Things will be different. Please carefully read these details so you will know what to expect.

A THREE WAVE APPROACH

Our return to worship will happen in three waves. Each adds another component of our corporate life, allowing leadership time to plan and manage the return process smoothly. Exact dates of the last two phases will be announced later, after we see the impact of our initial return wave.

Wave #1

A return to worship (June 7)

Wave #2

A return to educational ministries (mid-July)

Wave #3

A return to full ministry (mid- to late- August)

ONLINE WORSHIP CONTINUES

Grace had been planning to develop an online campus for several weeks prior to the onsite of COVID-19. The pandemic caused us to speed up the implementation of plans, that were already in the works. Thus, for the long term **future**, sharing our 10:45 a.m. worship experience in an online format will continue.

WHAT ABOUT HOLY COMMUNION?

We will continue to offer the Sacrament of Holy Communion, but with a "no contact" strategy. Both the wafer and grape juice will be offered in plastic cups by pastors and communion assistants who are masked and glove. After consuming, you will dispose of the plastic containers in waste baskets. The flow will be managed differently, and will be directed by the ushers. Social distancing guidelines will be maintained.

YOU SHOULD NOT COME IF ...

...You are feeling ill, even just a little bit.

...You have been exposed to someone with COVID-19

...You are at all apprehensive about returning.

At Grace, we extend grace in abundance to anyone who is not yet ready to return. You will be loved regardless!

WHAT CHANGES SHOULD I EXPECT?

- Face masks are not required, but are highly recommended. Think "others first" please.
- Only the front doors will be unlocked, and your access will be limited to the narthex, restrooms and sanctuary.
- No coffee or refreshments will be served.
- Upon arriving, you should go immediately into the sanctuary and be seated. After the service, when dismissed, you should leave the building immediately as well.
- No nursery service or children's activity bags.
- There will be no bulletins or other handouts. Hymnals and all other items have been removed from the pews. The worship resource will continue to be posted online.
- Every other row of seating will be blocked off to ensure 6' social distancing standards. Seats will be wiped down after each service.
- We will "Share the Peace" without moving around. A smile and wave will suffice.
- We will not pass the offering plates or prayer box. Prayer request should be emailed prior to the service. Offering plates will be available during Holy Communion.
- Doors will be propped open to eliminate the need for touching.

Adult Sunday School Class

The next Adult Sunday School class is titled "Return." It runs from June 7 through July 5 (five sessions). The class is inspired by the return of the Jews from their period of exile, as told in the Old Testament book of Ezra. The themes of that story are carried through the story of faith, and the story continues to be relevant to us today.

Because we are returning to worship on June 7, this class will be pre-recorded and released each week. That way you will be able to watch and interact according to the schedule that works best for you.

There is no auxiliary text. Instead, read the story of Ezra, particularly these passages: 1:1-11; 3:1-11; 6:13-22; 8:21-32; 9:1-15 and 10:1-17. Pastor Brodbeck will be facilitating the class.

Lay Ministry Highlight

This month we are highlighting the Visitation Ministry. Specifically, two of our veterans, Sandy and Robert Thompson. When asked "why do you serve in this ministry?" they replied:

Sandy writes: Robert started out by tagging along one time, but fortunately found the same joy in it that I did. So he started coming along more often. We both love getting to know these folks and to hear the stories about their lives. Spending time with them not only brings them joy, but us also. They become almost like part of the extended family and we love our visits. Sometimes we get busy and think we don't have enough time, but then we always feel rewarded by our time spent visiting these special people. They fill a special place in our life.

This is another great testimony of serving in one of the ministries at Grace. Sandy and Robert are using their Spiritual Gifts and sharing them with others. I am certain anyone that receives a visit with these two feels blessed and looks forward to their next visit.

Even with the current restrictions, it's still a great time to join this team and meet/visit with your assigned person(s) via telephone. Once restrictions are lifted, if you are unsure whether this ministry is for you or not, you can "tag along" as an apprentice and check it out. To learn more about this ministry, contact Bev Kaech, Ministry Team Coordinator.

June Outreach Corner

Thanks to everyone who helped distribute food at St John's food pantry in the month of May and also for all who donated food to the HOPE ministry.

Mark your calendars for July 12th. Jeff Pinkleton of The Gathering of the Miami Valley has been rescheduled to speak with our congregation on that date during the Sunday School hour. We pray to be live in person, but will do a Zoom meeting style presentation as needed. Plan to tune in and not only hear more about this awesome Men's ministry but learn how you can get involved and/or support the cause.



Grace and Disaster Response

Grace was involved with the Disaster Response for the North Dayton Neighborhoods in January.

This effort that took place over 5 days involved Grace's volunteers Deb Dawson, Joe Jordan, Neil Blackburn and myself. We were brought in to help with the restoration of the Heating and Cooling ducting system, basement clean out and mitigating mold that had set in while the basement was filled with water. The house was damaged by the tornadoes that ripped through Dayton on Memorial Day of 2019. Recovery has been slow with many families still waiting for home repairs. The picture attached was taken by Mary Bates the NALC Disaster Response National Coordinator. The Dayton response was scheduled by Tim Schubach, NALC's Dayton coordinator (see group picture).

Grace also responded in a big way to support the Nashville families and school children following the tornadoes that struck on March 2-3 of this year. Grace teamed up with Trinity Lutheran in Springfield to collect and send over 80 quilts hand made by the two churches Quilt Guilds, and more than 50 NALC School Kits containing essential school supplies for the children who lost their supplies to the damaging tornadoes that struck Nashville.

If any of Grace's members have an interest in helping in future disasters, they can contact Steven Schumacher (937-624-7074) for local response or Mary Bates at disasterresponse@thenalc.org for national response. Grace members can also send monetary support for area families affected by disasters.

Heartfelt Thanks

Dear Grace family, Thank you for the prayers, the beautiful cards and words of encouragement. You are a blessing. -Janet Weller

Thank you to our Grace family and friends that sent cards, provided meals and prayed for us during my illness. We are grateful for each and every one of you. -Gail and Henry Jones

Thank you so much to my fellow parishioners who sent me greeting cards following my recent fall. They were such a surprise and so delightful to open! I appreciate your kindness, concern, and get well wishes! Each day I am feeling much better. Thank you, Julie Hursh

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church's Class of 2020

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and recognize the graduating Seniors who have participated in ministries and events throughout their years here at Grace. Although the school year finished up in unprecedented fashion, these Youth have handled things with patience and "grace" and are looking forward to what's next for them in their life journey's. It's an honor and a privilege to present them to you.

Ty Craddock – Ty too has been a Grace member his whole life, but has really picked up speed in his Faith Journey during his High School years. He's been diligent in his Sunday School and Youth Group attendance (including the involvement of non-churched friends), participated in several Mission Trips, VBS leader, and a member of the Associate Pastor Call Committee. Ty graduated from Springfield High School where he was voted Most School Spirit for his senior class. He plans to attend the University of Cincinnati Medical Sciences Program. His highlights this year include student spirit section leader for football, making it to Districts for swimming, and hosting a German exchange student through the GAAP program. Godspeed to you Ty!



Sam McKinney - Sam has been a part of Grace since birth (and I have the Pre-K pictures to prove it!). He has made his mark at Grace in a variety of ways, including Vacation Bible School leader and Mission Trip participant. Sam has been a "wouldn't miss it" Youth Group attendee and has provided hours of entertainment and support to the rest of the Grace gang. He graduated from Kenton Ridge High School, receiving an Honors Cord for the Spanish Honor Society. He currently works at Subway and has been accepted to the Biomedical Engineering college at Wright State University. His interests include gaming, Greek Mythology, and music. Godspeed to you Sam!



Christian Rembold – Christian joined Grace with his family just a few years ago but immediately became a leader and role model in our programs. He has rarely missed a Sunday School class, retreat, VBS, or Youth Group during his high school years, and continues to show maturity in his faith journey and life walk. Christian has been home schooled and participated in extra curriculums at Graham High School. (continued on page 5)

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church's Class of 2020

Christian Rembold (cont.)— He currently works at Circle Lawn Farms (driving tractors to baling hay), and plans to attend Sinclair College to pursue a degree in Computer Science. He is one of 11 kids and loves soccer, as well as anything to do with technology. The highlight of Christian's year was proposing to his long-time girlfriend Payten Drewery...they are scheduled to be married August 1st. Godspeed to you Christian!



Ross Sherrock — Ross is another senior who has spent most of his years as a member of Grace (14). He has a real heart for kids, evidenced by the relationships he built while leading Vacation Bible School groups. Ross has been a consistent representative at Youth Group and other Grace events, and always provides a mixture of depth and good nature. He graduated from Springfield High School where he was inducted into the National Honor Society. He plans to work at Pepsi/attend Clark State for a year (rehabbing his knee so he can entertain the option to pursue baseball in college), then possibly onto Ohio University for Pre-Med. "Highlights" have been tough for Ross this year as he suffered a knee injury that cost him most of the "State Playoff run" football season, then, the loss of the entire baseball season. Throughout it all, we are proud of how this young man has carried himself and look forward to his successful future. Godspeed to you Ross!



Grace Van Fleet — Grace is a seven-year veteran of our church and has been active in multiple ministries in the Children and Youth programs including acolyte, nursery, 3-time mission trip attendee, and multiple classes, retreats and other events. Grace was diligent about bringing friends to the church, and dedicated to her spiritual growth. She graduated from Tecumseh High School where she was a member of the Student Council and DEFY, involved in the high school musicals for five years (assistant choreographer the last two), Marching Band for five years, along with concert/jazz/pep band duties. She currently works at Clothes Mentor in Beaver Creek and will be attending Bowling Green State University in the fall, majoring in Early Childhood Education. Her highlight this year — being accepted by her first choice of schools, BGSU. Godspeed to you Grace!



Grace Garden Update

I thought it important to update you in regards to the Grace Garden with all that has transpired. The Grace Garden is alive and well! Due largely to Jerry Angst's efforts, not only do we have the "early" crops planted but most are up with a good stand. This includes potatoes, onions, broccoli, cabbage, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, spinach, turnips, some beets and even the first planting of sweet corn. We also have more beets, radishes, carrots, green beans and yes more sweet corn. Other crops will follow in good time when soil temperatures increase and there is less chance of a cold snap.



I would like to especially thank Sam Shuey for deep tilling the garden last fall and all of you who have come out to help plant. Ken Asbell was a great help with garden cleanup. I personally thank our congregation members Terri Lininger and Shelly Clemens and Patrick Clemens for their volunteer efforts at Jefferson Street Oasis. Thanks to Bill and JoAnn Stapleton. Because of their fundraising efforts toward a chicken barn, we now have an ODA permit for pastured chickens at JSO. The inspector said we had a clean and very professional operation. For those of you who get eggs you will notice our official label that says "City Chicks".

I hope these bits of positive news will cheer up your day. Thanks for all you do to support our gardens.

God bless! Terry Fredrich

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