

Grace Messenger

September 2020



OPEN MY EYES, LORD!

Each September our congregation focuses on the stewardship of our time, talent, treasure and testimony. This month our theme is "Open My Eyes, Lord!" Each week we build on that theme as we move toward Consecration Sunday, the final Sunday of the month. During that service we invite all in worship and all watching online to declare before the Lord how they will join God in His mission through the ministry of this congregation.

Pastor Brodbeck and Pastor McGee are preparing sermons that speak to a different component of the theme. One special highlight this month happens on September 13. Jeff Butterfield, for whom many thousands of prayers have been offered, will join Pastor Brodbeck during the sermon segment that day. Jeff will not only thank each of you for your prayers but will emphasize the importance of the Body of Christ in praying for and supporting one another. As you can imagine, Jeff's testimony is powerful. You will not want to miss that Sunday! We are also presenting Bibles to our children that day – another act of faithful stewardship on the part of this congregation.

Sunday School resumes in September. The adult series focuses on how stewardship is reflected in the way we respond to others and through the way we live our daily lives, as well as how we use our financial resources. This will be a hybrid course (offered both online and in person), and will use a combination of video instruction and small group interaction.

September is also a time when we remember how much our stewardship impacts the world and community around us. Kristie Ward (Naomi's Heart Mission) will remind us of our global impact. Janet Rice will help us see the possibilities for serving locally. Pastor Brodbeck will offer a vision-stretching picture of where God is leading.

The month-long emphasis concludes on September 27. On that day each person present in worship will be invited to come to the altar to lay before the Lord their 2021 Estimate of Giving card and their Time and Talent response form. These will be tallied in the subsequent days and will determine the size and scope of the 2021 budget and the makeup of the ministry teams for the following year. Online worshipers are encouraged to respond via the Grace app on that Sunday as well. It's an important day in the life of this church.

We will cap the month with a Celebration Luncheon in the Grace Community Center. This will be a "served" meal, featuring Lee's chicken, green beans, coleslaw and dinner rolls. Reservations are needed to ensure we have the appropriate amount of food. Use the Grace app to RSVP.

CONSECRATION LUNCHEON

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 FOLLOWING THE 10:45 AM SERVICE

Lunch will be "served" cafeteria style in the Community Center. We will need to know if you are attending so we will have enough food for all.

Please use the Grace App Sign Up Central, E-Mail (Janet.Rice@grace-nalc.org) or call (937-399-6257) to advise us that you will be attending. Please submit this notice by September 22.

These luncheons have always been fun and we anticipate this one being as enjoyable - if you are there to make it that way!

PASTOR'S REFLECTION

During this 2020 calendar year, my thoughts have focused on vision. I am not alone on this. Certainly, it is not an original concept. To that end I have been crafting a 10-year vision plan for our congregation. It is an interesting task, given that so much of what we have been doing is now curtailed and reformed.

God has been guiding me toward the Scriptures which center around what people see (or do not see). I have gained a new appreciation of how frequently those stories and teachings occur. Take today's reading, for example.

They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him.

²³ He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" (Mark 8:22-23)

What a great question Jesus asks this blind man: "Do you see anything?" I encourage you to read the entire story. It is fascinating, and full of great meaning.

After the first touch by Jesus, the blind man's vision is blurry. He sees things but cannot differentiate between them. People look like trees. His sight is an improvement over what had been, but it still is not the clarity he needs or the clarity the Lord desires for him.

Over these next four weeks, our corporate prayer is to see clearly what God is doing and wants to do in our congregation and through its various ministries. September is Stewardship Month, a time in which each of us is challenged to see what God is doing and to see how we can be a part of His great plan.

Our theme this year is "Open My Eyes, Lord." Our goal is that each person in our congregation will see clearly the movement of God in our midst. You will read more about what is happening this month in the pages of this newsletter. As you read, please let God ask you the question posed earlier in this reflection: "Do you see anything?"

As His mission becomes clear, please carefully consider how you will respond with your time, talent, treasure and testimony.

ESTIMATE OF GIVING CARD

One of the key components of our September Stewardship emphasis is the "Estimate of Giving Card." This neon green card provides a way for each of us to share our projected level of giving for the 2021 calendar year. It is an estimate, so it can be changed at any time as your giving capacity changes. A sample of the card is included in this newsletter.

The cards will be distributed to every Grace household by mail in mid-September and should be returned to the church by Consecration Sunday, September 27. You can bring the card with you that Sunday or submit it by mail. You can also submit the same information through the Grace app. Look for that option under the "Giving" tab.

Remember, the information on this card is completely confidential. Our church administrator is the only one who knows your level of giving.

Why is this important? Because our church is committed to only budgeting what its members estimate their giving to be. The scope of our ministry for 2021 depends on your response that day. Once the cards have been returned, we begin the process of building a balanced budget. So, please prayerfully consider what God is asking of you.

2021 ESTIMATE OF GIVING CARD

Take one step up for Christ and His Church!

In response to God's love and as a commitment to Christ and the mission of Grace Lutheran Church,
I/we offer this estimate of giving for the year 2021 Operating budget:

\$ _____ per week per month per year (**please check one**)

This amount should not reflect any amount pledge for the Ministry Expansion Project.

This card represents a faith estimate. It can be changed at any time by notifying Darla Kalifoot,
Church Administrator.

Name _____ Phone # _____

Address _____

E-mail address _____

TIME & TALENT SIGN UP

If you haven't received your Time & Talent Booklet, you soon will. This year you can use the Grace App to sign up for the ministries of your choice. They are listed under SERVE (Time & Talent). Select the Ministry area and then the team. It automatically fills in your name. Hit SUBMIT and I will receive your information.

GRACE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

I was recently asked to share my perspective about our Children's Ministry. Why do I feel the importance of teaching about Jesus to our little ones? I gave it serious thought and it came to be a simple answer. Jesus said in the Bible; "Let the children come..."

Jesus and children have a special bond. It's important they feel His love. We, as their Sunday school teachers, and you, as their guardians, need to help them feel loved by Jesus. It is the first step to learning about God and growing in His Word.

I learned about Jesus as a toddler. My mother gave me my first Bible and I carried it around like a friend. She read me the stories and I knew where to find them from the illustrations inside this wonderful book. My brother and I would walk to Sunday school and those dedicated teachers continued to share about Jesus and His love for us.

Jesus and Grace's Children's Ministry warmly invite your children to spend time with us. Our Sunday school teachers truly look forward to being with your little ones. We want them to know Jesus loves them and will always be there for them. Let's partner together to nurture their faith, gifting them with the knowledge, that no matter what happens, God will take care of them.

On a side note: when my mother was especially restless due to her dementia, I would sing the song, Jesus Loves Me, to her. Soon, the words would softly be coming from her lips. She couldn't tell me who Jesus was, but she knew He loved her. And that, my friends, was enough.

-Deb O'Neal.

PLUGGED IN

The first gathering of Plugged In was on Sunday, July 19 on zoom. It was an awesome kick-off and a great time together! Since then, we've been meeting every other week on zoom at 6 pm. During our time together, we've been talking about the importance of community.

Community: Starting Well is Andy Stanley's 8-week small group study that lays a foundation for the start of any healthy small group. It speaks of the way in which God has designed us to live in a restored relationship with Him, how we pursue God, and what that looks like in our daily lives. Pursuing a relationship with God, however, is only part of the equation; the other is pursuing healthy relationships with other people.

The mission of Plugged In is to get people plugged into a *life-saving* relationship with Jesus and a *life-giving* relationship with others. A life-saving relationship only comes through Jesus. And the result? Healthy, life-giving relationships with other people.

I would like to share with you our first in-person event. On Sunday, September 27 at 6 pm we'll be meeting at Ashley Cantazaro's house (851 Weybridge Drive) for a bonfire. It's going to be a blast - you don't want to miss it! The only thing on the agenda is to hang out together and have fun. If you'd like more information about Plugged In or want to connect, contact Pastor Brian at brian.mcgee@grace-nalc.org.

Bring a friend and let's continue allowing God to shape and form us to be the men and women of God He has called us to be. See you on the 27th! -Pastor Brian McGee



PLUGGED IN
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

BONFIRE

SUNDAY, SEPT. 27 @ 6PM
851 WEYBRIDGE DR.
SPRINGFIELD, OH 45503
COME WITH A FRIEND!

CONTACT PASTOR BRIAN FOR MORE DETAILS

WEDNESDAY NIGHT FUEL IS BACK

Need some spiritual fuel in the middle of the week? Wednesday nights at Grace is the place to meet that need!

Our fall GriefShare ministry begins on Wednesday, August 26 at 6:30 p.m. This 13-week, nationally recognized ministry helps those, who are experiencing grief, process their feelings through a time of teaching and sharing. The group will meet in the Grace parlor. You don't have to grieve alone!

Wednesday Night Dinners will return this fall, starting September 9. The meal begins at 6 p.m. and the fellowship continues through 6:45 p.m. Enjoy healthy, home cooked meals and get to know your Grace family as you share a meal with them. The meal is served in the fellowship hall. A \$5 donation is suggested but not required.

Also, on September 9, we begin a unique Bible study through an often-maligned book of the Bible. The course is titled "Lovin' Leviticus." It will be a 12-week, fun-filled journey through a section of the Bible you seldom read. Though ignored, the book is foundational to your understanding of the New Testament and the story of salvation. The course will be taught by our good friend Ithamar the Levite, the youngest son of Aaron and nephew of Moses. By the end of the course you too will be "Lovin' Leviticus."

STEWARDSHIP

In Jeremiah 29:11 the Lord declares that "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." I often ask myself how do Bible verses apply to me? Do they apply to us today? This verse was written to the exiled Jewish nation expressing a long-term promise from God. God said they were going to spend 70 years living in exile but then they would return home.

What other confirming scripture supports this verse and gives it direction to us? From these Jewish people came God's Son, Jesus, and Romans 8:17 tells us that we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

What does "plans to prosper us and not harm us" mean during these uncertain times of Covid-19, attacks on the police, and senseless violence? We have the promise of forgiveness of sins and the presence of Christ in our lives during our stormy times (Matthew 28:20).

What is hope in the phrase "To give us hope?" Hope is not just wishful thinking. Hope in the Greek and Hebrew means anticipation or confident expectation. What is our confident expectation? God is good. God is in control. (Luke 12:22-26)

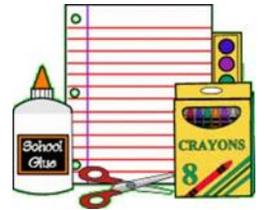
But what about "hope for the future"? Jesus Christ has prepared a place for us (John 14:3). "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9) Sounds like a great future! -Jim Leonard

OUTREACH CORNER



Mark your calendar for our next Outreach Break on Sunday October 4th. We will be hearing from some of our own Grace members talking about their experiences on Mission Trips they've had opportunity to participate in. We will then present some options for Grace Members to possibly participate themselves in a mission trip in 2021.

School Supply Drive: During the month of September, please bring in any of the following items to help our friends at Snowhill School: Thin black dry erase markers, small dry erase boards, 24 count Crayons, spiral notebooks, school boxes, pencils, pink block erasers, Headphones (not earbuds), glue sticks, wide rule paper, tissues, glue. Place items in the box marked School Supplies in the front entry way through the month of September.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

We will have shoeboxes to pick up in October for Operation Christmas Child. If you cannot shop for the shoeboxes, you may want to Build a Shoebox Online at the website:

<http://samaritanspurse.org/occ>

Most important is to pray for the child receiving your shoebox gift.

Our collection date for our church is November 8, 2020.



HEARTFELT THANKS

As you know, our congregation has made the commitment to go online with the livestream of Sunday services to keep the community in active worship. I have received many gestures of thanks for the small role I have had in this effort. So many in fact, that I am unable to respond to all of them individually. I wish to express my appreciation for the outreach to you all. I am very humbled and grateful for being part of a church that has a culture of gratitude. Please know that I consider myself very fortunate to be able to use any gifts the Lord has given me to continue to get His love, truth, wisdom and faith to all his beloved. There are so many behind the scenes that have been pivotal in getting this system working as well, and I express my gratitude to them as well. It's an all-hands effort to be sure, and I continue to offer what I can do to help spread the Word, as you all do as well. As one of my most beloved theologians and mystics, Emanuel Swedenborg reveals, "You love God the most when you love the things God loves." Thank you again for all your kind messages and notes. I pray we all have the wisdom to receive what the Lord gives us to be an instrument of His grace and love. It is an honor to be of service to Him and to you.

-Matt Cline

I wish to extend my thanks for the Grace recognition of my 90th birthday by the wonderful outpouring of cards received from many members.

- Bob Ogden

SERVING THIS MORNING		
	8:00 AM	10:45 AM
ALTAR CARE	Judy Fredrich	Judy Fredrich
COMMUNION ASSISTANTS	Leslie McKinney Janet Rice	Barbara Fain Amy Fraker
LECTORS	Jim Rolles	Sally Andrews
NURSERY	Carol Drown	Marsha Ackerman, Leah Fraker & Carol Drown
OFFERING TELLER	Mark & Suzanne Klopfenstein	Cathy Noyes & Lori Fain
PARKING ASSISTANCE	Terry Fredrich & Leslie McKinney	Robert Thompson & Ron Laucher
SAFETY STEWARD	Steeg Hertz	John Smoot
SIGHT & SOUND	Steve Garrett	Glen Whitley
USHERS	Darla & Brett Kallfoot and Mike Thompson	Ryan & Justin Mizer

NEW SIGNS IN THE NARTHEX

Grace has discontinued the worship bulletin in keeping with our Covid-19 precautions but the information is not lost. Informational signs in the Grace narthex will display who is serving in worship, give everyone the opportunity to fill out an attendance form, download worship resources and children's bulletins.



GRACE CHARITY AUCTION

We are moving forward with our plans for the Charity Auction on December 5. If you plan to provide an item or items for the auction, please email me to let me know what you will provide. We need to confirm we will have sufficient items to hold the auction.

Send your reply to: Janet.Rice@grace-nalc.org by September 30.



Commissioning to Public Discipleship Rite

Grace recognized high school seniors on August 9, 2020.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP RETURNS

Sunday, September 6 will see the return of contemporary worship at the 10:45 service. The praise team is anxious to lead our service that day with some of the stirring praise and worship music that we have grown to know and love. Let us lift our voices together so that, for each of us, God will "Open My Eyes, Lord" to show our love for Him and to share it with others with loving hearts.

GriefShare

GriefShare continues to meet on Wednesdays in the Grace parlor from 6:30—8:30 p.m. Topics this month: Sept. 2-Challenges of Grief, Sept. 9—Journey of Grief-I, Sept. 16— Journey of Grief II, Sept. 23-Grief & Relationships, Sept. 30— Why?.



www.grace-nalc.org 937.399.6257

