

Grace Messenger

November 2020



Give thanks to **THE LORD**

PASTOR BRODBECK'S REFLECTION

My mind has been occupied with thoughts of Thanksgiving. No, not the coming feast of turkey, stuff and green bean casserole, but the service of Thanksgiving we will hold on the Tuesday before the feast. (You can read more about that service elsewhere in this edition of the Messenger.) My sermon text for that night will be based on the opening words of Deuteronomy 8:15: "He led them through..."

God has most certainly led us through this past year. We have walked with Him through painful decisions regarding closing and re-opening the Grace facility and sought His guidance as we tried to find ways to "be the church" without "going to church." We have worked with and wept with those who were unable to visit loved ones in the hospital and care facilities, including some who remained isolated while those loved ones passed into eternity. We have learned new technology (Zoom!). I have learned how to give a children's sermon with no children in the room. And so much more! Through it all God has been leading this church, just as He has for the past 105 years.

This year has reminded me of these wonderful verses in the Book of Isaiah:

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.
When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.
For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior... (Isaiah 43:1b-3a)

Yes, it has been an unusually trying year, but God has led us! And for that we give Him thanks. Make sure that during these days you remember to do that, please! Don't dive into the food and forget the God who has led you.

THANKSGIVING SERVICE

The people of Grace will gather in our sanctuary on Tuesday, November 24 at 7 p.m. for our annual service of Thanksgiving and Praise. This joy-filled service will give each of us an opportunity to express our gratitude to God for guiding us through this very unique year. As we have for a number of years, a portion of the service will be devoted to your personal expressions of thanksgiving and praise. This is always a meaningful time as we reflect on His goodness.

Pastor Brodbeck's message is titled "He Led You Through," based on a portion of Deuteronomy 8:15. We will enjoy wonderful music and experience God's presence as we observe the Sacrament of Holy Communion. What a great way to prepare your hearts for your Thanksgiving Day traditions. Please make this a priority in your holiday worship plans.

ALL SAINTS' DAY

Sunday, November 1st is All Saints' Day, a time for those gathered in worship to celebrate those who have joined the Church Militant and who have entered into the Church Triumphant. The commemoration will be included in both the 8 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. services.

The "Church Militant" is our term for all who have become a part of God's family through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. The three children who will be honored that day have begun the fight of faith as they begin their walk with God. Together with the rest of us, they are now soldiers in the battle against sin, death and the devil.

The Church Triumphant" refers to all who have passed forward from this earthly battle into heaven. This year, our list of those individuals is quite lengthy. You will see their names listed elsewhere in this issue of the Messenger. As we remember them, a chime will sound and a candle of remembrance will be lit.

"Year in and year out, this is always one of my favorite services," notes Pastor Brodbeck. "It is both solemn and uplifting, a good reminder of our hope in Jesus." The families of all those being honored have been invited to worship with us that day as well.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

I'd like to take this opportunity to give a shout out to the teachers who've been preparing Sunday School lessons for all the Grace children and youth in the past 8 weeks or so. Their commitment to our children during this ever-changing climate of Covid-19 virus awareness has been inspiring to me.

To those who don't have children/grandchildren in our programs, I'm asking for your full support of our Sunday School teachers by both personal acknowledgement when you get a chance, and in your daily prayers. For those of you who do have children/grandchildren eligible for Sunday School, please consider COMING BACK on Sunday mornings. We are following the same guidelines as local school districts and are having zero problems with compliance on the part of everyone. We continue to get great feedback from our teachers and kids who are attending, but **WE MISS YOU!**

The following teachers would LOVE to see more kids in their classrooms on Sunday mornings: PreK-Kg, Deb O'Neal; 1st and 2nd Grade, S-Ann Newport; 3rd and 4th Grade, Carol Rothfuss; 5th and 6th grade, Heather Maurer; 7th and 8th Grade, Amy Fraker and Kristi Leeth; High Schoolers, Matt Rugh. Please give this your prayerful consideration...God Bless!

GOING WITH GOD

In Exodus 33:13-17 verse 14 reads "The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

When Moses prays and asks, God gives him the promise of His Presence as the people of Israel journey to the Promised Land. As we, the people of Grace, seek God's vision for us, we too ask for His Presence. Have YOU ever felt His Presence?

On my "Walk to Emmaus" many years ago, I was a little uncertain. I like to know how the story ends before I begin a journey. Encouraged to pray in a small group, head bowed, I experienced an incredible warmth as women prayed aloud. I felt if I opened my eyes, I might see tongues of fire on all the women. "Surely the Presence of the Lord was in this place." I would be okay.

Often when writing for the card ministry, I seek His Presence. I ask for guidance, a verse, what does He want me say. He provides. I feel an indescribable warmth flow through my hand and onto the paper. "I can feel His mighty power and His grace."

Most recently, as I was being transported by Trans-Med to Mercy Hospital for an overnight stay for observation, I experienced a "closeness to God moment" that I will always cherish. Two young men, Cedarville students (one in ministry, the other in nursing), escorted me to Springfield. Not knowing what to expect helped raise my blood pressure. The young man riding with me sought to ease my anxiety by boldly and confidently presenting the Gospel! As we shared our mutual faith, he prayed for me and those who would be providing care. All anxiety vanished. At that moment, "I could feel the brush of angel's wings" as God's Presence was made real. I knew God would go with me, be with me, and it would be okay.

So, brothers and sisters in Christ from this place called Grace, may we feel His Presence. As we seek His Vision for 2021 during these unsettling times, rest in His Presence. It will be okay.

Melody Leonard

GRIEFSHARE

GriefShare continues Wednesdays, 6:30– 8:30 p.m., in the Grace parlor concluding on Nov. 18. You are welcome to begin attending our Griefshare group at any point. Each session is "self-contained" so you do not have to attend in sequence. You will be able to pick up any sessions you missed in our next 13-week cycle beginning in January 2021. Topics this month: Nov. 4 -Lessons of Grief, Nov. 11– Heaven, Nov. 18- What Do I Live For?

OUTREACH

NOVEMBER OUTREACH CORNER

November is one of our months to help distribute food at St John's Food Pantry. This will take place the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Wednesday in the morning. Please reach out to Judy Fredrich if you have any interest in helping! 937-925-1177.

GIVING TREE/WINTER COAT DRIVE

In late November/early December, Grace will once again be promoting our Giving Tree/Winter Coat drive, created to support needed families attending our neighborhood school, Snowhill Elementary. We will be receiving details for specific children (special requests, sizes, genders, etc.) so that all the gifts purchased by members will be matched up with kids/families. These events were very successful last year and we look forward to spreading God's love during Christmas 2020!

CHARITY AUCTION: DECEMBER 5

Donations for the auction are rolling in! But we still need more - yours! We will begin accepting these items for staging the week of November 30. Please put your name on the item and any particular notes you would like for our auctioneer to tell about it.

If you are planning to donate an item or items for the auction, send your reply to Janet.Rice@grace-nalc.org by November 20, so we can plan for the space needed to display all of the items. Thank you! Janet

SPRINGFIELD MANOR CHRISTMAS

Due to Covid Grace will not be holding Christmas worship and Christmas Party at the Manor this year. However, the Agape Guild will be able to give each resident a small gift of hygiene products and socks. Please consider donating a pair of men's/women's novelty socks by November 22.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The fall congregational meeting is set for Sunday, November 22 at 9:15 a.m. in the Grace sanctuary. This is the second of two annual meetings. We have a full and important agenda before us. In addition to receiving informational reports from some of the key areas of the church, those voting members in attendance will be asked to vote on four items.

First, the Grace Nominating Committee is putting forward these names for three-year terms on the Grace Council: Kristin Cline, Michelle Kouse, Jake Rembold and Cathy Zernechel.

Second, the Nominating Committee will present Tom O'Neal, Mike Ray and Roger Reed for three-year terms on the Endowment Committee.

Third, the Church Council will present the ministry plan for fiscal year 2021.

Finally, the North American Lutheran Church has presented two amendments to its constitution for approval by member churches. The full wording of these amendments is quite lengthy, so we have posted the complete document on the Grace website under the Member section. The amendments seek to accomplish two tasks. The first item will move us from meeting in our annual convocation every year to meeting every two years. The second item creates a method to allow for more lay delegates at each convocation, striving for a 50/50 representation of both clergy and laity.

We will broadcast this meeting and are working on details to provide a means for those members watching online to participate in the discussion and in the voting process. We hope to have something workable in place, but please know in advance you may be restricted to the role of an observer if we cannot find a simple solution.

HEARTFELT THANKS

Dear Grace family,

Thank you for your prayers during my recent surgeries for my kidney stone. I had a rough few weeks but I am so thankful to be back to normal. The experience, although not pleasant, reminded me of how wonderfully and intricately God created us. I also really appreciated all the cards and other gestures of caring which lifted my spirits on some very difficult days. What a blessing to be in the family of Grace! Kristi Leeth

Dear Grace family,

Thank you for all of the birthday cards and well wishes for my 93rd birthday. They mean so much to me. I miss being at Grace so much. Ruth Neff

BEHOLD

ADVENT WORSHIP SERIES: BEHOLD!

It may be hard to believe, but the last Sunday in November is the first Sunday in the season of Advent. Grace plans to worship each Sunday morning at 8:00 and 10:45 a.m., on Thursdays (December 3, 10 and 17), and on Christmas Eve at 6:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

The theme for Advent 2020 is "Behold!" Our emphasis will be on telling the birth narrative of Jesus. "Behold" is a word closely associated with the Christmas story. It evokes images of angels and God's message of salvation.

The Gospel of Luke will be the primary source for Sunday mornings, with the Gospel reading providing the preaching text. We will use Matthew's account of the Magi on Epiphany. Thursdays will focus on the use of the word "Behold" as it identifies the work and ministry of Jesus. The order of worship has been modified from the "Service of Word and Prayer" (WOP). The intent is to create a simple, solemn and contemplative worship experience.

We will have our traditional schedule of Christmas Eve services. The 6:30 p.m. service will focus on families. It will include the Stable Processional and Festival of Lights. The 9:00 p.m. service will also include the Festival of Lights, more special music and lots of congregational singing.

Our working definition for "behold" is "Stop what you are doing! Something important is happening right now. You don't want to miss it." That is a great encouragement for all of us as we seek to see what God is doing all around us.

We are creating an Advent devotional featuring the writings of our own Grace family members. We have a few open slots for writers. Please let Pastor Brodbeck know if you would be interested in writing one.

CURRENT RESIDENT OR



www.grace-nalc.org 937.399.6257

Springfield, OH 45504
1801 St. Paris Pike

Evangelical Lutheran Church

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