

Grace Messenger

February 2021

ALWAYS ABOUNDING

Each calendar year I choose a theme verse for my life and ministry. This verse serves as a reminder to me of a truth that God has in store for the coming year. At the end of the year I am usually very amazed at what I see.

Last year, long before I had any significant focus on things related to the coronavirus, my selected verse for 2020 (a year of vision) was this:

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? (Isaiah 43:19a)

This year I have been led to these verses which speak to our 2021 theme "Always Abounding!"

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:57-58)

This theme and theme verse remind me that it is never enough simply to "do" what Christ calls us to do. Our call is to "abound" in it. "Doing" carries a sense of simply "going through the motions," whereas "abounding" communicates joy, purpose and meaning.

We should always abound when it comes to matters of faith and service for the Lord. Our abounding is based on the truth that we are already victorious. The outcome has already been determined. God has given us the victory. The things we do for the Lord's sake are never wasted effort.

Let me encourage you to memorize this year's theme verses. Hide them in your heart so they take root and inspire you this year. And then, abound! - Pastor Thomas Brodbeck

For This

Standing before Pontius Pilate on the final night of His life, Jesus was asked, "Are you the king of the Jews?" It was a politically and religiously charged question, of course. A "yes" response would easily brand Him a threat to Rome and a blaspheming heretic to the Jewish leaders who wanted Him crucified. Jesus did not sidestep the question. His response was clear: "*For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world...*" (John 18:37).

That response clearly presents the theme for our 2021 Lenten season: For This. Why did Jesus leave the comforts and privileges of heaven? For this. Jesus came for this.

Our Lenten focus begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17. We will worship at noon and 7 p.m. Both services will include the imposition of ashes. This service will be a somber beginning to the seven-week long season, reminding us at the outset of our sinfulness and our need for a Savior. The 7 p.m. service will be live-streamed.

Beginning Thursday, February 25 and proceeding through March 25 we will worship at 7 p.m. These five evening services will be modeled loosely on the Service of the Word. The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served. Pastor Brodbeck's sermons will focus on the Seven Sayings of Jesus from the Cross. (The final two will be part of the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services.) These Thursday evening services will not be live-streamed.

Palm Sunday, March 28, will begin with a celebration of the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, including the waving of the palms as we sing the opening hymn. Palm branches will be available for those who will choose to worship remotely that day.

On Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, we will also worship at noon and 7 p.m., with the evening service live-streamed for those choosing to isolate themselves. The evening Maundy Thursday service will feature the First Communion of several Grace young people. Holy Communion will not be served on Good Friday.

Easter will be a glorious victory celebration. We eagerly look forward to proclaiming "He is risen." We will worship at our regular worship times (8 and 10:45 a.m.).

Our devotional for the season is titled "The Marks of Love." It was created by the Lutheran Hour, with readings based in the Gospel of Mark. This will be available in printed form on Sunday, February 14 and will also be made available online as well. We will also be distributing the Lenten nails for you to carry, and will be inviting you to bring those to the Good Friday service with you.

MESSAGE FROM GRACE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Hello Grace Members and Grace Friends,

We are all happy to see 2020 in the rearview mirror and look forward to the new year. However, it is foolish to think the challenges and struggles of last year would simply vanish. Covid-19 is still with us and the events in our nation's capitol, and the aftermath that will continue, are things we just have a hard time processing. The sense of unrest, lawlessness, irrationality and the widespread lack of respect for our government, elections, leadership, media and law enforcement, are cause for concern. These are problems of our own making. These are human problems.

The good news is Jesus still prevails and promises us a life with him. His Grace and Truth are real and He gives us hope for the future. 1 Peter 1:3 tells us: *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living HOPE through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."* That is the truth and light at the end of the tunnel we know is there and no one can take it from us. Praise be to God!

Your 2021 Grace Council will keep our Lord and this congregation at the forefront of all decisions made this year. If you ever have questions or comments you wish to share with Council, feel free to contact me or any Council member.

May the Lord bless and keep you!

Mark Klopfenstein

FEBRUARY OUTREACH CORNER



February is one of our months to help distribute food at St John's Food Pantry. This will take place Wednesday mornings. Please reach out to Judy Fredrich if you have any interest in helping. (937-925-1177)

In honor of St John's, for the month of February, we will be collecting hygiene items to help fill their shelves for donation. Most needed items are toothpaste and bar soap, but will also accept shampoo, lotion, tissues, toilet paper, etc. Please bring in your items by Feb 28th and place in box in the front entry way.



CHARITY AUCTION RESULTS

We brought back the Charity Auction this year and while it was a very different view, it was a success. We raised \$4,060.00 for H.O.P.E. ministries! Jackie Mounts, executive director of H.O.P.E., was present for the auction. Jackie told us that H.O.P.E. usually serves dinner three times a week to their teen center, Rock of Hope. The teen center consists of about 50 sixth through 12th grade students.

When it was announced that school would be closed, they knew it was going to be a real problem for their kids. H.O.P.E. partnered with Dream City Church to provide two meals a day to their teens and the community. With the assistance of over 50 volunteers, businesses and restaurants, since March they have served over 70,000 meals.

We had numerous items made and donated for the auction. Based on the purchase prices, they were very well received. I know we wouldn't normally pay the price we did for some of the items but when you are raising money for such a good ministry, you just reach deeper into your wallet. It is so much fun to get into those little bidding wars. Thank you to everyone that participated, whether you were a donor, a buyer, a server (of great sweets), a runner, a teller or the auctioneer, you were all appreciated. Hopefully, we can do it again next year with all being in the same room.—Janet Rice

THE PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO TEAM

This is a team without a leader.....or a team. So, here's my thought on this one. The entire congregation is the team.

If there is something that happens in the life of the church and you grab your camera (phone) and take a picture, please forward that picture to me. I will set up a folder for all the pictures. When we need them for a report or just to let everyone know about something that has taken place, we'll have it. It doesn't matter if I receive more than one picture of the same event, they will probably have different views.

There was an event on Christmas Eve that I missed but I'm hoping someone took pictures of the children's procession at the 6:30 service. If so, please email them to me.

To all my team members, please share your photos with me at: Janet.Rice@grace-nalc.org

SPOTLIGHT ON GRACE ACOLYTES

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. Isaiah 60:1

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. Psalm 119:105

Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. John 8:12

What is an acolyte? An acolyte is a non-ordained person who assists a member of the clergy in a liturgical service by performing minor duties such as lighting candles and carrying out other duties. What does acolyte mean? The word is derived from the Middle English term *acolit*, taken from the Latin *acolytus* which came from the Greek *akolouthos* (attendant) and *akolouthein* (to follow). Webster defines it as an attendant or follower who assists in worship.

It has been stated that the role of the acolyte may have existed as early as 250 AD. Astonishing! Research shows that for over 1,500 years, there have been "attendants" or "followers" in Christian worship services. Acolytes first helped with the worship service by carrying candles in processions. They lit candles on the altar, assisted with Holy Communion, and were helpers for the clergy and for others who managed all the objects needed for worship.

The Bible makes no mention of the work of an acolyte; but, as you can see, serving as an acolyte is no small task. Their presence is so much more important than just lighting candles. The candles on the altar and in the chancel are representative of a time before modern day heating systems and electric lights. They represent a time when the church was heated and lit by flames. Today, we can think of the candles as highlighting the activities being played out in the sanctuary as *something very special*.

Grace acolytes follow a process that acknowledges the reverence of the cross at the beginning and at the end of each service. At the beginning of the service, they help set the tone for worship. At the end of the service, they help set the tone for how people should reflect on what they just experienced and what they need to do as they leave worship. The actions of the acolytes during the gathering and sending process of the service help to sharpen the worshippers focus on the reality of God's presence in the Word and Sacraments. It is symbolic of God's light which has been ignited within us and is to be carried by us into our daily lives. **We love our Grace acolytes.**

Michelle Kouse, the team coordinator for this ministry, sets the schedule for who is to serve and when they will serve. Since the restart of corporate worship in June of 2020, we have relied on six very special young Grace leaders. They are: Rachael Cline, Chance Fitzgerald, Leah Fraker, David Leeth, Justin Maurer and Cooper Quesenberry. Matt Rugh reminded me that special "kudos" needs to be expressed to David Leeth and Justin Maurer. These seniors have served since the 5th grade. They have not shied away from this opportunity just because they're "too old." Thanks to you, David and Justin.

I take this opportunity to say, "THANK YOU GRACE ACOLYTES FOR A JOB WELL DONE."

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. Revelation 21:23

Carol Carpenter

Inclement Weather Information

The policy for how and when Grace worship and/or other ministries might be closed or cancelled due to inclement weather is as follows: Pastor Brodbeck will contact at least two members of the executive committee for consultation and assistance. If they decide to cancel activities or worship, we will use the One Call Now service that allows each of our households to receive a phone call when we cancel services and a cancellation notification will be sent on the Grace app. Television station WHIO channel 7 and radio station WEEC will also be alerted. A response message will be placed on our telephone answering machine system at Grace.

Another option for receiving notification is through the WHIO channel 7 web site, by registering to be notified via e-mail if Grace is closed or worship cancelled. For more information, go to www.whio.com.

Heartfelt Thanks

Hello,

I want to thank the Grace members for the cards that I have received during Bob' sickness and during his passing forward. The cards have been wonderful comfort and has given me strength and peace. I want to thank everyone that has sent the cards. This has meant a lot to me. Thank you again, Mary Dunn

I'm sending my gratitude for all of your birthday wishes celebrating my January birthday. Jane Kreider

Do you share with Mrs. Potts the spiritual gifts of Encouragement & Generosity?



"You see, with a cup of tea along with some conversation, I can make anyone feel better. The Bible tells us "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up." And if you are gifted with the spiritual gift of generosity (like me) you know that you receive the joy of love as it is given away."

If you have these spiritual gifts, please prayerfully consider sharing your time and talent with Hospitality Ministries and/or Grace Guilds !

Our MACs are sharing some of the Spiritual Gifts that are pertinent to their Ministry. Please consider your Spiritual Gifts and the many ministries in which you can benefit. For more information please contact Donna Stelzer or Janet Rice, 937-399-6257.

CURRENT RESIDENT OR



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