



Grace Messenger

March 2021

PASTOR'S REFLECTION

"In like a lion, out like a lamb" has always seemed like a fairly easy-to-understand proverb. I don't keep a scorecard on things like this, but it seems logical enough to me. The beginning days of March are still considered winter days. By the end of the month, we have shifted into spring. The time has changed. (That happens on Sunday, March 14, by the way.) The vernal equinox has happened. And a few Major League baseball games have been played. These are all signs of spring, right?

This year that proverb takes on an enhanced meaning in my mind as the end of March happens in the middle of Holy Week. Sunday, March 28, is Palm Sunday, when the Lamb of God enters the city of Jerusalem. We will remember the Last Supper, and the arrest of Jesus that follows on Thursday, April 1. By the time the month ends, our religious focus will be squarely on Jesus as our Perfect Sacrifice. The Lion of Judah will now become the Lamb of God.

You know, in our "enlightened" culture, we cannot imagine participating in animal sacrifices. There are many who find that component of our Christian heritage to be so distasteful they've chosen to reject God altogether. But God had to have a way to communicate how awful our sin was. There was pain associated with it. Sin is so costly that it requires the sacrifice of something that has great value. Enter the Lamb of God.

Because of His great love for us, God no longer requires us to pay the price for our sins. As the hymn writer expressed it, "Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe." Thanks be to God!

I pray that you are fully engaged in the Lenten journey we are taking this year, and especially so during Holy Week. We will worship at our regular Sunday morning times of 8 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, and at noon and 7 p.m. on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. The 10:45 and 7 p.m. services will be live-streamed.

"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)
Pastor Thomas Brodbeck

MESSAGE FROM GRACE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Dear Grace Members and Grace Friends,

I have some great news to share with you this month concerning our debt reduction. As of February 17, 2021, the debt from our Ministry Expansion Project of adding the Youth Wing and our Community Center was \$70,566.33. By the time you are reading this, it could be under the \$70,000-dollar mark. Praise the Lord! Only through the faithful and generous giving of Grace's membership have we been able to pay down our debt from the initial project cost of approximately 2.4 million dollars. Considering our debt was at over \$400,000 in December of 2019, and, we have been in a pandemic the past year, it is truly a blessing from God and a testament to our congregation in moving toward a "debt free" status for Grace.

A church with no debt has more freedom to enhance ministries within the church and become more impactful and influential in the community as a whole. We read in Romans 13:8, *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.* It is through our commitment to Christ and our love for one another that we will soon be able to say our outstanding monetary debt is no more. Let us all remain diligent throughout 2021 to make it possible to erase our remaining debt. What a sense of freedom we will share together on that glorious day.

Your 2021 Grace Council will keep you apprised of our debt reduction progress as we move through the year. As always, if you have questions or comments you wish to share with Council, feel free to contact me or any Council member.

Blessings, Mark Klopfenstein

MARCH 21 CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The spring congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, March 21 at 9:15 a.m. The agenda for this meeting includes the approval of the annual report and the election of the 2021 Nominating Committee. Financial updates on our rapidly decreasing debt, an announcement from our Endowment Committee about 2021 distributions, and our 2021 budget will also be included. This meeting also allows for ample time for your questions and other information gathering about the ministry, mission and vision of the congregation.

The annual report can be viewed on the Members page of the Grace website (www.grace-nalc.org). The four names on the ballot for the Nominating Committee are Cindy Casto, Dean Settles, John Smoot and Beth Szekacs. The meeting will be live-streamed on Zoom. A link will be posted the week before the meeting.

PALM BRANCHES



If you are planning to worship online with us for the Palm Sunday service, you might want to take note of these special arrangements. Palm branches (for use in the Palm Sunday worship service) will be available the week of March 22-26 during normal office hours (9-5).

Calling all Visionaries...Leaders...those who like to share Knowledge!

TEACH
encourage
instruct
MENTOR
PRAISE
INFLUENCE
GUIDE
INSPIRE

Is there anything more important in our culture right now than leading our children and youth to Jesus and spiritual growth? The Bible tells us..."and God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers...".

What could be more meaningful and exhilarating than being a positive influence on our younger generation?

If you have these spiritual gifts, please prayerfully consider sharing your time and talent with the Children and Youth Ministries!



KITCHEN MINISTRIES

Lori Fain has been coming to Grace since April of 2015. She has taken the Spiritual Gifts Survey and Service was overwhelmingly at the top. Lori lives her life gifts by serving through the Agape Guild, Table of Grace, Easter Breakfast, SummerFest and Altar Care. Lori also teaches Sunday School for 1st and 2nd graders.

Anyone who has had the pleasure of working with Lori knows she is always there and a delight to serve alongside. She has great ideas and will stay until the last dish is clean and put away. Lori says "I enjoy helping out in the kitchen, but really enjoy the fellowship while serving there. She is very thankful for God putting the right individuals in my path at the right time in my life. He continues to do so in deepening my faith. My God IS an awesome God."

MARCH OUTREACH CORNER

LifeWise Academy is a new and wonderful opportunity to reach our local school children with the Good News of the Gospel. Grace is currently in the early stages of becoming a pilot for this program in Springfield, OH. Please watch for more information to come and help us spread the word and gain support from our community to bring this awesome ministry to Snowhill School and Springfield Local School District.



Save the Date

On Sunday, April 11, Nikki Stefanow of Family & Youth Initiatives (FYI) will provide our next Outreach Break during our Sunday School hour. She will speak to our congregation about this Family-focused ministry in Clark County. Come and hear how you can get involved.

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Lay Ministry Fun Corner

With these words in mind, this month we are giving a "nod" to our Outreach & Evangelism Ministry. The Spiritual Gifts related to this ministry are Discernment & Evangelism. Discernment: Distinguishing true from false teachings, good from evil intentions, right from wrong actions. Evangelism: A passion for reaching out to others with the love of Jesus.



YOUTH MISSION TRIP

It's POPCORN time! Our 4th annual Popcornopolis Sale runs from February 14 through March 7. As always, proceeds (50% of every sale) go straight to the **Mission Trip** costs of our High School participants. This summer, we're taking a group of 21 youth and four chaperones to Imperial, Pennsylvania to repair and paint homes for disabled and qualifying underprivileged families, in the name of Jesus. Please either reach out to your "favorite" high schooler or just order at our Narthex display table the next time you are in church. You can also put an order in through the Grace App, or you can call the church and Matt will take your order over the phone. Your popcorn will be delivered by Palm Sunday Weekend (March 27-28). Thank you for supporting our youth!



CURRENT RESIDENT OR



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