

Grace Messenger

February 2023

PASTOR'S REFLECTION

What are you giving up for Lent? That is a common question as we move closer to Ash Wednesday (February 22). Giving something up is a long standing tradition for many Christians. People have chosen to eliminate a wide variety of things: sweets, social media, alcohol, television and much more. Little children often try to convince Mom it would be good to give up vegetables. I usually spend time fasting during this season.

The tradition is meant to help us understand all that Christ gave up in order to come to earth. He left all the glory of heaven, the sinlessness of that environment, a place of unending praise to the Father. He gave up that, so we give up something.

I was recently challenged to switch my focus this Lent from "what I give up" to "what I receive because of this season." It is an interesting challenge. I receive the forgiveness of sin. I receive a home in heaven. I receive someone to help me through life's challenges. I receive peace, joy and love. This list goes on.

No matter your focus – giving up or receiving – Lent offers a time for us to focus intently on the price of our sin and the great lengths to which our God is willing to go in order to pay that price.

Below you will read of our plans for Lent. I pray you will join us in our focus on the Lamb of God.

BEHOLD THE LAMB!

When John the Baptist first saw Jesus, he told those around him "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). That verse will serve as our theme verse for our 2023 Lenten season. Throughout this very special time of year we will be encouraged to look closely at this Lamb of God and the great sacrifice He made for us.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday services on February 22. We will worship at noon and 7 p.m. Both services will include Holy Communion and the imposition of ashes. Sunday services will see the addition of a few items to help us in our time of worship, including the introduction of a new liturgy. We will be practicing that for the two weeks prior to Lent so that our time of transition will be smooth.

Thursday evening worship services on March 2, 9, 16 and 23 begin at 7 p.m. At each of these services worshippers will be offered the opportunity to be anointed with oil as a part of the communion experience. Then on Thursday, March 30, we will enjoy something totally different: a full Seder (Passover) meal, led by a Messianic Jew. We will be sharing more details about this as they become available.

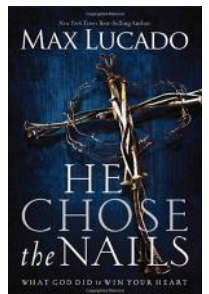
Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday worship on April 2. On Maundy Thursday (April 6) and Good Friday (April 7) we will again worship at noon and 7 p.m. The Easter Egg hunt happens on Saturday, April 8 and Easter worship is celebrated on April 9. Regrettably there will be no Easter breakfast this year. Past years have shown us that many people enjoy sharing in the fellowship but getting people to help with the cleanup is very problematic.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Adult Sunday School hour continues the series "One Minute After You Die" through February 19. Sam Poston is facilitating this fascinating look at heaven and eternal life. Don't miss the three remaining sessions during the first three weeks of this month.

When that series concludes, Pastor Brodbeck facilitates another Right Now Media series titled "He Chose the Nails," featuring the teaching ministry of Max Lucado. Many of us have enjoyed Lucado's writings over the years, and this series offers us a chance to hear his spoken voice as he again wonderfully communicates God's truth.

In *He Chose the Nails*, a five-session video Bible study, Pastor Lucado examines the gifts that Christ gave at his crucifixion. These include not only the gift of the cross, but also the gift of the nails, and the empty tomb. The cross is rich with God's gifts of grace, and as we unwrap them, you will hear him whisper, "I did it just for you."



NEW MEMBERS' CLASS

Our next New Members' Class will be held on the afternoon on Sunday, February 5 from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. An optional tour of the Grace facility will be offered following the class for anyone who may be interested.

"We call in a New Members' Class because we haven't thought of a better name," said Pastor Brodbeck. "Actually there is no commitment to join when you take the class. It is a way for people to become more acquainted with the Grace congregation and its priorities. Some who attend will choose to join; others will not. And both responses are fine."

Attendees will learn about our approach to discipleship, discover ways to get involved, learn about our long-term vision as well as our history as a congregation. Most importantly, the class will be structured so that the questions of those attending are answered.

Those who decide to then become members of the church will be received on Sunday, February 19. To register or to get more information see the Grace app's Connection tab or call the church office at 937.399.6257.

BLESSING OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES

On Sunday, February 12 we are planning a new and very special moment in each of our morning worship services. Following the message that day, Pastor Brodbeck will invite all of the married couples present to come to the front of the sanctuary and stand before the railing. He will provide a special prayer of blessing on each of those marriages.

"This event was inspired by something Karen and I experienced while vacationing in Germany this past summer," said Pastor Tom. "I found it to be a meaningful moment and wanted to bring it back to my own congregation."

This date was chosen because of its proximity to Valentine's Day and because it is in the middle of National Marriage Week (February 7-14, 2023). This annual celebration is an affirmation of the biblical standard for Christian marriages, recognizing the impact of both husbands and wives for families and for the entire society.

WELCOME TO OUR TWO NEW STAFF MEMBERS



Leslie McKinney, Director of Children's Ministry

Leslie joins Grace with 37 years of teaching experience including preschool special education training and experience. Leslie has served on Grace Council, taught Sunday School classes, served alongside Matt Rugh on one youth mission trip, and led Beth Moore and other Women's Bible studies.

Leslie will be leading our Children's Sunday School programming, coordinating the Easter Egg Hunt and Vacation Bible School, conducting special programs for Grace children infant through 6th grade and reviewing and developing faith education in our children, as well helping lay the foundation for Affirmation of Baptism.

Sandy Thompson, Executive Director

Sandy comes to Grace with 26 years in the healthcare field as a physical therapist and clinic supervisor. Sandy has served on Grace Council both as secretary and president, and as our Outreach Coordinator for the last 3 years. She has been on the Encompass Connection Center Board serving as Vice President two years.

Sandy will be performing staff administration duties, overseeing staff and leadership development. She will be reviewing and coordinating projects and ministries that have been on hold or not receiving as much attention since the absence of an associate pastor. Much of her role will be a work in progress as we see what the greatest needs of the church are and how she can help address those needs.



WITH JOY

John 13: 34-35 (The Message) Let me (Jesus) give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I (Jesus) loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples-when they see the love you have for each other.



Celebrate Valentine's Day with Joy. On February 14 from 2-4 pm our Joy Guild will host an Agape Celebration in the Grace fellowship hall for everyone to attend. Carol Carpenter will lead a devotion on agape love. Each person attending whether guest or member is asked to bring a signed Valentine card. Refreshments will be provided. For further information and RSVP please contact Judy Cary, judycary010@gmail.com, Barbara Blackburn, nbsblackburn@gmail.com, or Carolyn Thompson, 937-307-0082.

OUTREACH CORNER



Birthday Cake Kits for St John's Food Pantry: These have been a big hit in the past. February is one of our months to serve at St John's food pantry so let us put together some birthday cake kits to pass out. One kit would include a cake mix, frosting, pan and candles. Please turn in kits or items for the kits in the box in the Grace Narthex by Sunday, February 26. See Judy Fredrich for more information. Volunteers are needed to serve and pass out items at St John's Food Pantry.

HEARTFELT THANKS

Dear Grace friends, Thank you for the beautiful cards you sent after my knee surgery and my brother's passing. Some of you wrote lovely prayers within your notes and they are true blessings. I have kept all of the cards and plan to reread them. It meant so much knowing you were thinking of us during those difficult times. Love, Toyia & Harold Knasel

Dear Grace Family, Thank you all for your prayers, cards, and expressions of sympathy on the unexpected passing of Neal's brother, Darrel before Christmas. We are grateful for Pastor Brodbeck and Pastor Powell during this difficult time. Barbara and I are blessed to be part of a caring church family that is so supportive when sorrow enters your life. - Neal & Barbara Blackburn

Thank you to the Grace congregation and friends for your continued support of prayers, cards, visits, and concern for Gene these last four months culminating in his death on December 22, 2022. Thanks also to Pastors Brodbeck and Powell as they ministered to Gene, the girls, and me through visits and phone calls. Gene loved his church as evidenced by his deep involvement through the years. He touched many during his leadership roles, and lastly the Saturday Morning Bible Study group. He was reminded of his being missed at Bible Study just a week or so before his death by a couple members of the Bible Study. His life's journey is complete and is now in the arms of his Lord. Well done, good and faithful servant! -Elaine Roller, Lynda Farrell, & Kim Handrock

Dear Matt & Youth, Sorry this is a little belated but we wanted to thank you for all you did for Youth Sunday. The service was so meaningful and all of you did an outstanding job! The future of the "church" is in excellent hands! - Mark & Susan Russell

CHURCH NEWS

- **SAVE THE DATE!** Congregational Meeting Sunday, March 26, 2023 at 9:15 a.m. Annual Report available online February 26, 2023.
- **HELP US UPDATE OUR RECORDS.** Please help us by emailing Janet Rice, janet.rice@grace-nalc.org, your birthdate (with the year), baptism date (or approximate), and cell phone number.
- **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY.** 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 use the One Call Now service that allows each of our households to receive a phone call when we cancel services. Television station WHIO channel 7 will also be alerted. A post will be made on the Grace Facebook page, a notification will be sent out on the Grace APP and 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.

Jesus Loves Little Children



CHILDRENS VALENTINE CELEBRATION

We will celebrate the love of Jesus with our Pre-School through 5th Graders and their families.

Sunday, February 12th from noon to 2:00pm

Come and help us celebrate with heart-shaped pizza, games and art projects.

Please contact Leslie McKinney, Leslie.mckinney@grace-nalc.org, if you have any questions.

We look forward to celebrating with you!

CURRENT RESIDENT OR



www.grace-nalc.org 937.399.6257

Springfield, OH 45504

1801 St. Paris Pike

Evangelical Lutheran Church

Grace



Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Springfield, OH
Permit #158