

August MESSENGER



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

2024



Pastor's Reflection

Tom Brodbeck

As you know, Karen and I recently returned from 10-day vacation along the Rhine River, with stops in such notable cities as Basel, Strasbourg, Cologne and Amsterdam. That area of the world is known for its castles and cathedrals. We toured several of them and we saw many more.

As you may also know, worship attendance in those European countries was low even before the COVID virus made its impact. In many cities, the cathedrals are little more than tourist attractions that rely on the generosity of visitors at their gift shops and strategically-placed collection boxes. Beautiful Gothic and Romanesque structures, for sure. But largely empty.

In the days since my return to Grace I have been reflecting on what I learned while on this leave.

Among the first things to come to mind is how quickly a church can lose its focus on the mission given to it by Jesus. Those cathedrals were filled with worshippers once upon a time. But no more.

The first phone call I returned on my first day back was from a visitor who attended when I was gone. He simply wanted to tell me that we have a beautiful church. He is right. We do. It is a beautiful gift of God. But there is more. There has to be more.

Our focus is Jesus. We are here to help people move closer and closer to Jesus. Nothing else matters. And everything that detracts us from that mission is wrong. I have always believed that, and now the renewed and refreshed me is even more adamant about proclaiming it.

Onward we go!

Thoughts from the Executive Director: Sandy Thompson

Pastor Tom is set to return to the office on July 15th so by the time you read this, he will have been back a couple of weeks. Thank you all for your flexibility and understanding during his time away. We all welcome his return and pray for a smooth transition.

Thank you again to all of the lay members, staff and council members who help to provide continued ministry support during Pastor Tom's time away. We are truly blessed with very willing and capable servants.

August will be a busy month with the NALC Convocation on Friday August 9th, our mission district gathering on Saturday the 10th at Grace Eaton, a ministry fair on Sunday the 18th, and the prayer garden dedication in the morning of Sunday the 25th with Summerfest that afternoon. Please look for more information about all these exciting opportunities.

As we make our way through this final month of summer, we eagerly look forward to what fall will bring us with a celebration of 25 years in this building, a mission trip to Laurel Mission, new Adult Sunday School offerings, the return of Wednesday night fuel and much more.

August Outreach Corner



Snowhill School Supply Drive: During the month of August we will be collecting school supplies for the teachers at Snowhill School. Pencil pouches, black dry erase markers, glue sticks, and headphones (not earbuds) are a few of the needed items, but please see the list available in the narthex. Return items by August 25th. See Sandy Thompson for more information.



St John's Food Pantry: August is one of our months to serve at St John's food pantry. Their current needs are: crackers, ramen noodles, canned soup, and cereal. Please have donations turned in as soon as possible but no later than Aug 25th. Please place in the shopping cart in Community Center. See Judy Fredrich for more information and if you're interested in serving or helping, they could use more help.

Grace Outreach Impact

GRACE OUTREACH IMPACT



Breakfast Break 2nd Quarter 2024: \$1,101 donated to OnePlus God



May: Blessings in a Bottle, collected 18 filled bottles



June: Collected 27 Flood buckets, 12 health kits and \$225 in gift cards for NALC Disaster Relief

Adult Sunday School in August

Adult Sunday School

- August 4 and 11 will finish up the series featuring A Gospel View of Ezra facilitated by Pastor Tom Brodbeck.
- August 18 is our Ministry Fair- Please come learn more about our ministries!!
- August 25 is the dedication of our prayer garden

Be sure to look for the "Discipleship Opportunities" pamphlet in the narthex. It provides a thumbnail review of all the Adult Educational experiences through the end of 2024. As always, if you have ideas for topics you would like to study (or facilitate), please share them with Pastor Brodbeck.

Adult Discipleship Opportunities

As the month of August begins, adult disciples at Grace will be continuing its three session study of the book of Ezra. This course utilizes the teaching of Dr. Kwasi Amofo to show how this Old Testament book mirrors the story of Jesus. This class concludes on August 11, and is facilitated by Pastor Brodbeck.

On August 18, Janet Rice, our Director of Lay Ministry, will coordinate a Grace Ministry fair, allowing you to learn about the many areas to serve God through this church. Come and see where God might want to use you for His glory!

August 25 is reserved for a special service of dedication for our newly created Prayer Garden at the west end of the property. This short service will give honor God for the generosity of the donors and ask His blessing on all who are utilize it.

Remember a complete listing of all the Adult Discipleship Opportunities for the remainder of 2024 can be found in the narthex. Let's Grow in Grace together!



Children's Ministry



Sunday School 2024-2025

Our new Sunday School year will begin Sunday, September 8, 2024. Come and join our fun, faith-based classes! All lessons and materials are prepared for you and you will love working with the youngest members of our church.

Contact Leslie McKinney.



The Olympic Games in Sunday School

We are celebrating the Summer Olympics in Sunday School! Each week, we play a game in which everyone participates and earns an Olympic jelly bracelet. Each child also has a passport in which he/she can add a sticker from a country. We are having a great time!

From Stewardship Team

The Stewardship team will be collecting shoes in September for the Naomi Heart Foundation. Our focus is on children's sizes 10.5 - 3 in athletic shoes. These will be designated for children in the Philippines. Kristi Ward indicated that many of the children do not have decent shoes to wear for school. We are incorporating this ministry as a part of our Theme "Walking With The Lord" Information flyers will be available the latter part of August. Please contact Cathy Zernechel 937-925-2347 with any questions.

Financial Stewardship Team

Romans 6:14

"For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace."

Walking in grace according to Romans 6:14 means embracing a new identity and authority in Christ. Being "under grace" signifies a profound change in our relationship with God and our approach to life. It means recognizing that our acceptance and worth are based not on our performance but on Christ's finished work on the cross. This liberating truth frees us from the cycle of guilt and striving, inviting us to rest in God's love and to extend that grace to others. As we walk in grace, we reflect God's character in our interactions, showing kindness, patience, and forgiveness. This way of living not only transforms us but also impacts those around us, demonstrating the reality of God's grace in a tangible and powerful way.

Submitted by Jake Rembold

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