

The Means of Grace

March 26, 2023



Early in the morning He (Jesus) came again to the temple. ² At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴ and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” ⁶ They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷ When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸ Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. ⁹ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹ “No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go and sin no more.” (John 8:1-11)

Shame is a horrible thing. This woman had sinned greatly; yes, but who would not feel sorry for her, dragged out into the light of day to face public shame in front of the religious leaders at the holy temple—alone, possibly half-dressed, with no one to defend her. And, it takes two to commit adultery, where was guilty man? All by herself she knew there was worse to come. Such women were stoned for their sin. She would lose her life, and if she had children, they would lose their mother. There was no hope for her.

But though she didn't realize it, there actually was hope. Jesus Himself was there, in the middle of her horrible situation. But what was He doing? Writing on the ground? She didn't understand, but she knew one thing—He was not joining the chorus of condemnation all around her. He was silent, busy writing. When they kept bugging Him, He finally stood up long enough to say just one thing: “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her” (John 8:7b). And then He stooped down and wrote again.

You know the rest of the story—how the leaders slunk away, one by one, till nobody was left but Jesus. The woman was safe—and free. And Jesus' final word to her was “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more” (John 8: 11b).

Jesus shows an amazing gentleness to sinners caught in the deadly trap of shame. He does nothing to add to it; indeed, He gets rid of the audience that is gloating over her embarrassment. He reminds them of their own sin and shame, and they leave. And then, in private, He sets her free. The sinless Son of God refuses to condemn her. He will bear her shame and ours instead, on the cross.

This is good news! This is comfort for anyone who has memories that make them cringe in shame. Jesus calls us to Himself, not to condemn but to forgive, cleanse, and relieve. He takes our shame from us and puts it on His own back. He takes it away forever, and nails it to His cross. He sets us free—free of sin, free of shame, free to live as God's forgiven people. God loves you dearly! Even you. Even me.



Sunday March 26, 2023, Lent 5-HOLY COMMUNION

Comm. Prep Jensen
8:30 AM Choir
9:30 AM Worship Service
10:30 AM Fellowship
11:00 AM Sunday School/Bible Class
6:00 PM No Basketball this week



Monday March 27, 2023

NO SCHOOL-SPRING Break

Tuesday March 28, 2023

NO SCHOOL-SPRING Break
4:00 PM Worship Meeting

Wednesday March 29 - 2023

NO SCHOOL-SPRING BREAK
6:00-7:00 PM Lenten Dinner & Devotion – All About Hymn – The Songs of Lent

Thursday March 30, 2023

NO SCHOOL-SPRING BREAK
All Day – Every Member Visit signed up.

Friday March 31, 2023

NO SCHOOL-SPRING BREAK
Afternoon Elder Care Visits

Saturday April 1, 2023

9:00 AM **WORKDAY AT CHURCH**
10:00 AM BIC
Sermon & Service Prep

Sunday April 2, 2023 PALM SUNDAY

8:00 AM Confirmation Class
8:30 AM Choir
9:30 AM Worship (Procession of Palms / children sing)
10:30 AM Fellowship
11:00 AM Sunday School/Bible Class
6:00 PM Crossover Basketball

Todd Hafner, Tyler Hafner's brother, who continues the struggle to recover from long term COVID and all the physical and financial challenges that come with it. A go fund me has been running at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/toddo39s-covid-relief> if you wish to contribute.



Leann Breza's brother, Scott who while working in Vietnam, had an accident on his motor bike resulting in a broken hip. Scott had surgery this past week in Bangkok. We pray that God blesses him with quick healing and encouragement for his family.

Malawi – severe storms have cause flooding, destruction of crops, food shortages, and many displaced people. To read more and a link if you would like to help through our WELS Christian Aid and Relief, please go to: [Severe storms ravage Malawi](#)



WORK DAY at the CHURCH

Work Day at Church – April 1st (really, no fooling)

We will be having a workday at Grace Church on April 1st to clean the grounds, spread mulch and clean the inside of the church in preparation for Holy Week and Easter! Please plan to join us!

We will start at about 9:00 AM

Weekly Mowing!

Please consider signing up for spring and summer lawn care. The lawn at church needs to be cut every week... can you sign up for a weekend to cut.



Weekly Cleaning!

Please consider signing up for spring and summer church cleaning. The church building needs to be cleaned each week and we could use your help!

Weekly Fellowship Food & Drinks

Please consider signing up to host on a Sunday by providing coffee, drinks and food. A signup sheet is in the entryway at church.



Vacant Home Demolition

We hope to start Monday, March 27th!

Permits were tied up in several municipal offices this past week and the need to address old cesspools was scheduled. These things further delayed our start, but we are again hopeful for this week.

Since the initial cost does not include things like utility shutoff / capping; concrete driveway removal; new fencing; tree removal we will be asking for special gifts from the congregation to complete this important project.



CALL NEWS

This past week, our Principal, Justin Eternick received a call to St. Paul Lutheran School in Stevensville, Michigan to serve as their Principal and 7/8 teacher. Please keep Justin & Sara in your prayers as they deliberate where they can best serve God's kingdom in life and ministry.



St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2673 John Beers Rd.
Stevensville, MI 49127

Dear members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church:

On Sunday, March 12, I received a divine call to serve as your principal and 7th/8th grade teacher. I am humbled and honored by the trust you have placed by extending this call to me. I am grateful for the opportunity to consider how my gifts may best serve the kingdom of God, whether at St. Paul's or at my present call at Grace in Portland. I have received the call packet and I look forward to learning more about your congregation and school in the coming days and weeks. As I prayerfully consider this call to serve, I ask that you keep my wife (Sara) and I in your prayers. Your congregation will be in our prayers as well.

In Christ,


Justin Eternick



2023 PNWD Men's Retreat APRIL 21-23rd

Here I Stand - Lutherans finding their voice in Christian Apologetics

Welcome Presenter Mark Paustian from MLC! Mark will offer a working definition of Christian apologetics - what it is and what it isn't. Other topics will include: practical communication approaches to skeptical people, resurrection apologetics and the phenomenal reliability of the New Testament, handling the most important objections to Christianity in our culture, positive arguments for Christian truth, narrative witnessing, an apologetic of the Word... and "where do we go from here?"

The \$275 Cost* covers: 2 nights lodging at LOVELY FT. WORDEN, WA; Breakfast, lunch, and dinner on Saturday and Sunday breakfast; cost also includes amazing evening beverages and snacks for fellowship (Bring your own too if you'd like!); as well as helping give a gift to our presenter for his time! THANK YOU! **Our goal is 100 attendees this year! Please sign up ASAP!** We can't wait to see you all there!

Friends, Family, and members of Grace Lutheran Church,

I want to first express my sincerest thanks to everyone who has offered words of encouragement and advice to, and kept my classmates, teachers, and I in your prayers. I also want to thank all those, known and anonymous donors who gave so generously to my Zambia trip. All of these contributions have meant a lot to me. I would not have been able to go on this extraordinary trip without your support and contributions.



I want to share a little with you about our trip as a way to show my appreciation. We started our trip with an overnight layover in Dubai, United Arab, Emirates. It took about 15 hours from Chicago. During our short layover, we took a night tour of the beautiful city. The city is most alive at night with people shopping, out having fun, and is lit up by all the lights of buildings and cars. We made a quick stop at the Arabian Sea and the Burj Khalifa. This tour of the city took about 2 hours.

The next day, we flew the last 7 hours to Lusaka, Zambia. While we were there, we observed at 3 clinical sites: a government funded clinic, a few different sites of the Special Hope network (a clinic for children with developmental disabilities and their parents), and a children's hospital that specializes in orthopedic and ear, nose, and throat (ENT) surgeries. I was blessed to have the opportunity to watch an ENT surgery. That was probably the highlight of my trip.

We also had the opportunity to provide health teaching to two Lutheran grade schools in the Lusaka area and a rural clinic connected with the Central Africa Medical Mission (CAMM) in Mwembeji, about 65 km from Lusaka. Normally, this should take about two hours. However, with the way it was raining and how bad the roads were, it took about 4 hours to get there. I'll never complain about Milwaukee roads in the winter ever again.

After a very long week of adjusting to a new culture, a time change, and all the work we had been doing, we got to take a break and relax with a trip to Victoria Falls. While there, we visited the Falls and hiked (this was as close as you could get to Zimbabwe without crossing the border), went on a safari, and went an elephant excursion.

We were thoroughly exhausted by time we got back to the U.S. As busy we were going places and doing the things while we were in Zambia, we were probably more tired from culture shock than anything else. At first, I thought it was weird we were only going to observe for the most part. It was a good thing we focused on observing because you don't realize how much extra effort goes into understanding a different culture. We were there taking in new experiences and differences. We wouldn't have noticed these as much if we were distracted by other tasks.

One of the best parts of our trip for me was attending the Lutheran Church of Central Africa our first weekend in Zambia. It was different than the way we worship in the United States but just as glorious and pleasing to God. The singing was unbelievable; every song sang with harmony. At several points during the service, I thought to myself "And this is just a small piece of what heaven is going to be like? That will be so glorious!" The women danced traditional African dances while they sang. While the pastor read, they had an English and African dialect on the screen for scripture readings. Some songs were sung a cappella and some with organ recordings. Different, but all praise to God! What an amazing opportunity God granted me and has allowed me to share with you! I pray God continues to bless church on earth both here at Grace and all around the world!

With gratitude,
Olivia Baker

Every Member Visit 2023



Every Member Visit (EMV) with Pastor Bitter

In 2023 we are planning to give every member at Grace the opportunity to sign up and schedule a personal or family visit at Grace Church or School with Pastor Bitter and an elder to discuss your personal plan for ministry and how we can serve the Lord together with all the gifts he has given to Grace Congregation. The first sign up opportunities are today!

This week's EMV time slots are on Tuesday. Each time slot is 30 minutes and we will meet at pastor's church office.

LENTEN DINNER & DEVOTIONS

POTLUCK DINNER BEGINS AT 6:00 PM (if possible please arrive a little early so all the food can be out at 6:00). Please bring a main dish to share of your choice! Remember to bring enough to feed 10 or more.

EVENING DEVOTION WILL BEGIN AT 6:30 PM. Our dinner will be available throughout the devotional time so if you cannot arrive until 6:30PM please still come and have *dinner during the devotion!* We will "wrap up" everything by 7:00. Our hope is that we can offer an evening for your whole family!



March 8th—Dinner & Devotion 6:00 pm
John 17:1-7—Glory Be To Jesus

March 15th—Dinner & Devotion 6:00 pm
Romans 12:1-2—Stricken, Smitten and Afflicted

March 22nd—Dinner & Devotion 6:00 pm
John 19:5—O Sacred Head Now Wounded

March 29th—Dinner & Devotion 6:00 pm
1 Peter 3:18—My Song Is Love Unknown

Sundays in Lent

**HIS
FINAL
STEPS**



~~TO BETHANY – March 5~~

~~TO THE TEMPLE – March 12~~

~~TO BE GLORIFIED – March 19~~

TO HIS ENEMIES -- March 26

INTO JERUSALEM – April 2nd



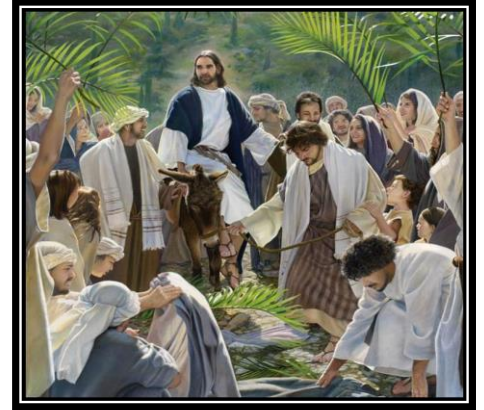
HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE



PALM SUNDAY

April 2nd, 9:30 AM

Come see how YOU can join the procession of palms with our children from Grace Church and School as we celebrate Jesus entry into Jerusalem! *“Hosanna, loud hosanna, The little children sang; Through pillared court and temple The lovely anthem rang.”* Please plan to join us for this important beginning to Holy Week – these are 8 days that saved the world! HOSANNA!



Maundy Thursday

April 6th, 7:00 PM



Maundy Thursday is the first service of “The Triduum” or “service of three holy days.” On this day, we celebrate the institution of Holy Communion which is commonly referred to as, “The Lord’s Supper” with its command, *“Do this in remembrance of me.”* The service ends with the stripping of the altar in remembrance of how after the supper Jesus and his disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus was arrested by soldiers and abandoned by his disciples and later denied by Peter. The stripping of the altar focuses our attention on the altar which represents the presence of Christ with us. The altar is solemnly stripped of its vestments in token of the Lord's abandonment and in preparation for Good Friday...

Good Friday

April 7th, 7:00 PM

On Good Friday the church remembers the crucifixion of her Lord with a service of **Tenebrae**, or "shadows". Tenebrae means "darkness." Good Friday is the second service of “The Triduum”. The service presents a series of scripture lessons on our Lord's crucifixion and our repentance over the sin that made it necessary. During the worship service the sanctuary lights are gradually dimmed as the candles are extinguish representing the life that ebbed from the Lord’s body on the cross. Following the reading of the burial of Jesus the church is placed into complete darkness as a time for silent prayer and meditation. The Lord is dead. After a substantial period of silence, the loud sound of the strepitus will echo through the church reminding us of the triumphant rending (opening) of Jesus tomb on Easter morning when he rose from the dead and "burst his three day prison". At this time the Christ candle is rekindled. While death brings darkness and sadness into our lives the strepitus reminds us of the resurrection which we too look forward to celebrating on Easter Sunday...



PLAN TO CELEBRATE EASTER MORNING – APRIL 9!

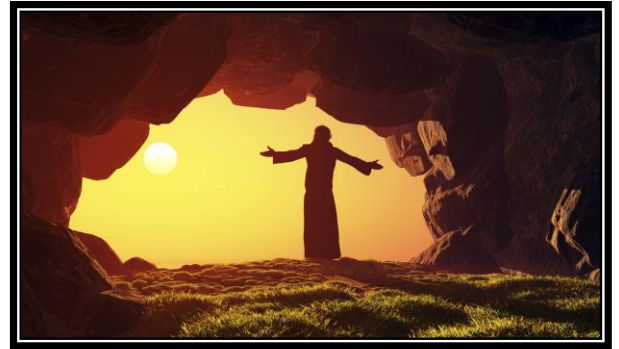
Easter Flowers!

We would love the church to be filled with flowers! If you would like to bring a lily or any Easter flower to decorate the church, please plan to drop off your flower on Saturday, April 8th.



EASTER SUNRISE at 7:00 AM

On Good Friday we mourned at the cross as we watched the death and burial of the Lord Jesus... just as the disciples and women must have mourned on that first Good Friday. Three days later, early on Easter morning they went to the tomb thinking that Jesus was still dead... they were going to the tomb to properly bury Jesus. Look at their emptiness: arms full of spices to anoint a dead body, eyes full of tears, hearts full of disappointment and fear. Listen to their low



expectations: **“We won’t be able to roll the stone away,”** says the mother of James. **“I heard there are soldiers guarding the tomb; they will probably turn us away,”** sighs Salome. **“Why did God let this happen?”** sobs Mary Magdalene. As the women approached the tomb they did not yet know the wonderful news that **“Christ is risen!”** Our Easter Sunrise service allow us to approach the tomb with fear and sadness but leave with great joy because **“CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!”**

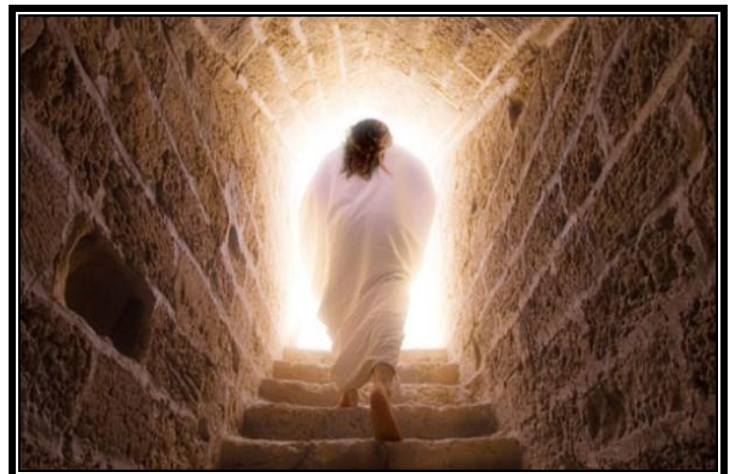


EASTER BREAKFAST at 8:00 AM

Please join us! We will have plenty of good things for you and your family to enjoy. If you’d still like to bring an Easter breakfast dish or item, you are welcome to do so! Easter breakfast will be served from 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM. See you in the morning!

EASTER MORNING WORSHIP at 9:30 AM

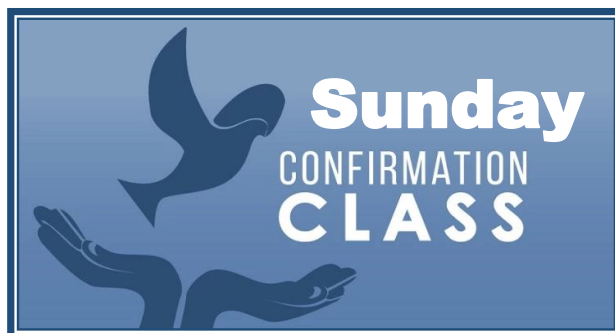
Easter celebrates the triumph of our Savior in his glorious resurrection. This day marks the end of all the struggles and sufferings that Christ endured. This day also marks the beginning of life that is really life. It is the celebration that assures us that because Christ rose from the dead, so we too will rise from the dead. Easter Sunday is the festival of festivals and the celebration of celebrations! Easter Sunday is an entire morning of joy as we again and again sing **“Alleluia!”** and announce that **“CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!”** Please join us for the celebration!



What's Happening @Grace

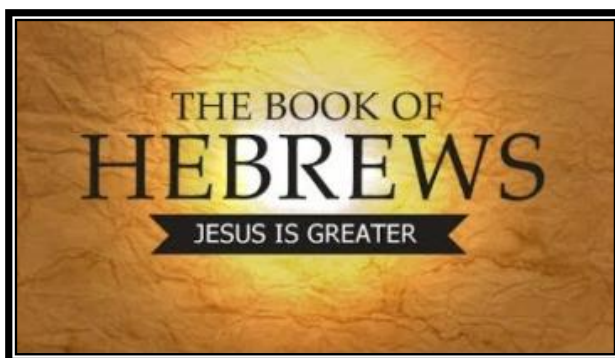
Sunday Confirmation Class at 8:00 AM

We are beginning our Confirmation Classes for student who are not able to attend during the week at GLS. An email was sent out last week to gauge interest and find a time that would work. We have decided to offer Confirmation Class on Sunday mornings at 8:00 AM before morning worship. This class is especially for 7th - 9th graders but younger students are also welcome to attend. Classes begin next Sunday, October 23rd at 8:00 AM.



Wednesday Google Meet at 6:00 PM

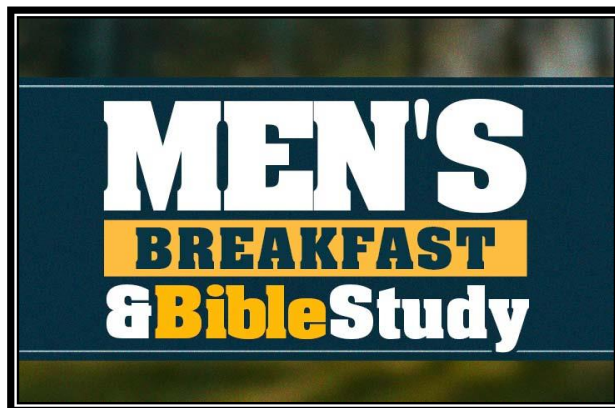
During Lent Google Meet will be replaced with our Wednesday Dinner and Devotions



Saturday Men's Bible Study

We are planning to begin a men's bible study on **Saturday, April 22nd**. To begin with, once a month we will plan to meet for bible study and breakfast.

Please let Pastor Bitter know if you'd be interested in attending or helping organize!



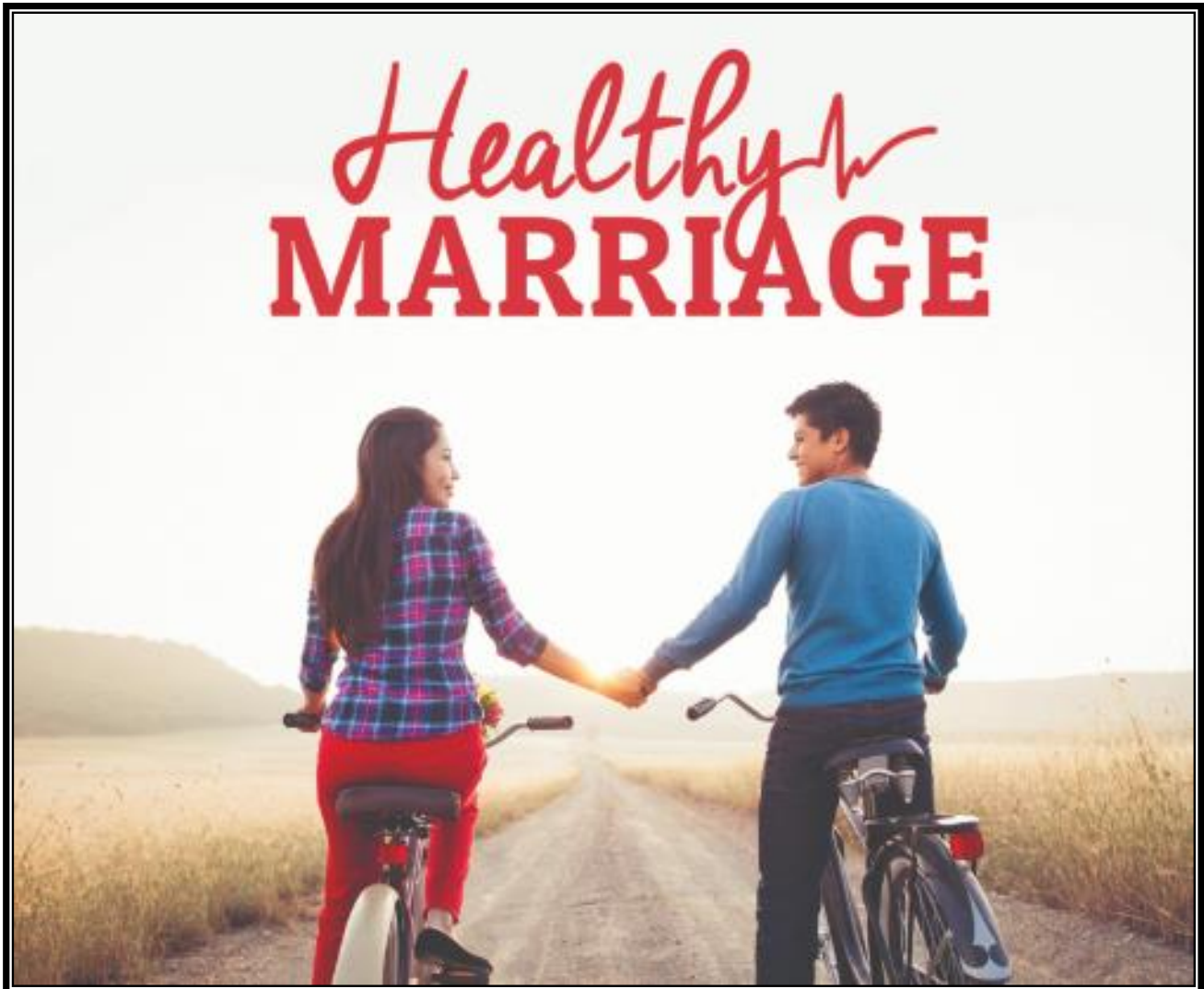
Couples Class – Coming Soon (Sat. April 29)

Getting married? Just Married? Been Married? This class is for you. We all want to have a healthy marriage.

Healthy Marriage will help you learn those “dimensions of a healthy marriage.” More than that, Healthy Marriage will equip to you to practice them and maintain the health of your marriage for years to come. Please look for more information about this class and opportunities to sign up in the coming weeks. We are targeting Saturday, April 29.



Coming in April 2023...



March is busy at Grace!

Midweek Lent. Every Member Visits. Spring Break. Conference.

So, instead of trying to squeeze in our new Healthy Marriage Class we are going to wait until after Easter in April to offer it.

Please look for more information and opportunities to sign up in the coming weeks! We are planning our first meeting Saturday, April 29.



1 1:00 AM

**SUNDAY
SCHOOL**

**&
SUNDAY
BIBLE CLASS**

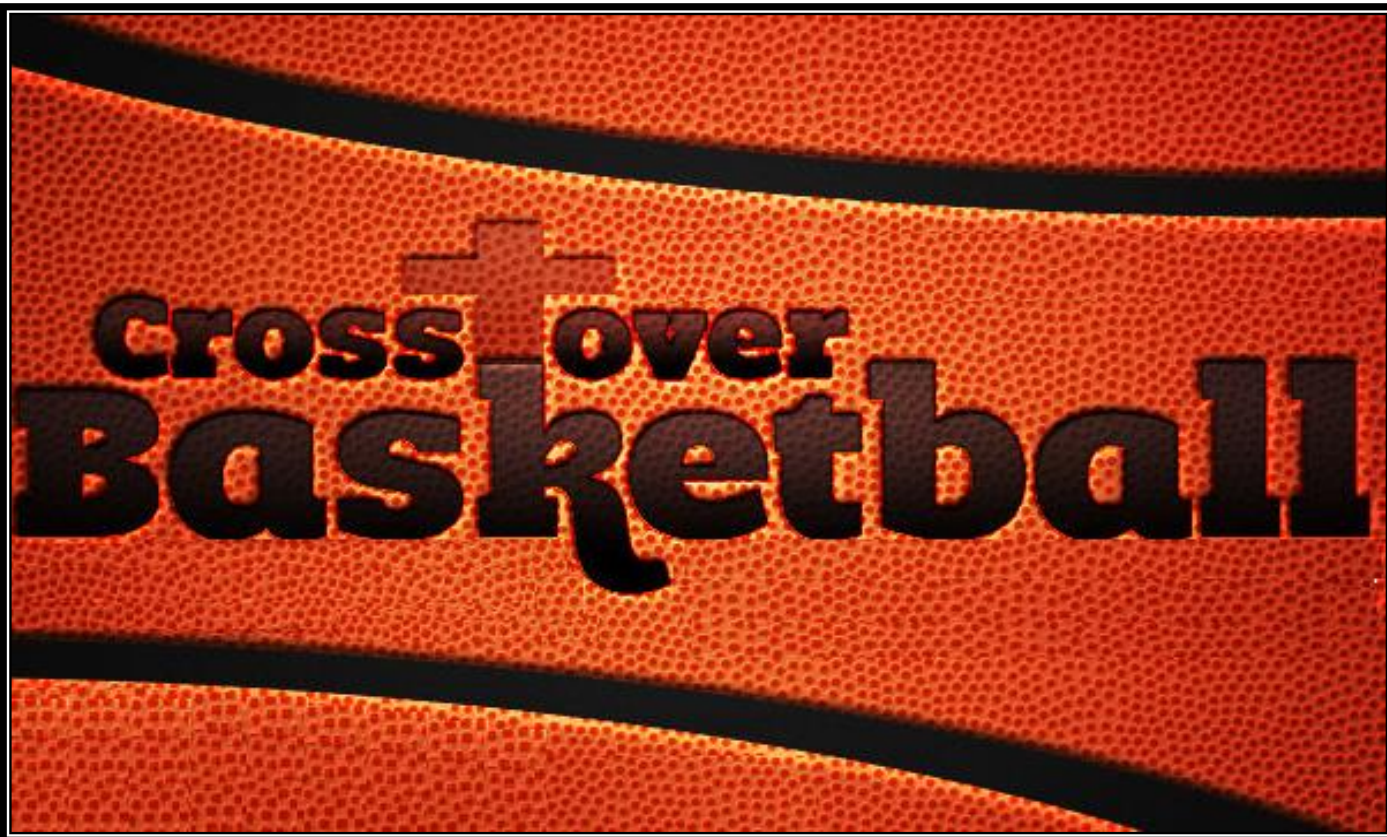
Please plan on joining us after worship on Sundays for Bible Class and Sunday for every age!

Following worship each Sunday we will continue to offer our refreshments & fellowship AND we will be adding to our opportunity for fellowship by offering Bible Class and Sunday School from 11:00 – 11:45. Please, plan to join us!

Sunday School will be offered for kids Preschool – 8th.

Bible Study will be offered for teens and adults.

If you are interested in helping teach... please contact Pastor Bitter or Craig Baker.



We would like to start our "Cross-over" Basketball nights again at our gym at Grace School again.

If you, or a group, would like to help organize, plan and carry out the event, please contact Pastor Ditter. All you need to do is come and open the gym!

This event is for adults - high school age or older.

Bring your friends.
Get some exercise.
Dunk on your own.
Have fun.
Live your faith.

THIS WEEK
NEXT PLANNED GAMES ARE APRIL 2 & 3

6:00 PM Sundays & Mondays

Boards & Committees at Grace

Church Council

Juan Garcia – President
Dan Paschke – 1 VP & BOE Chair
Jon Cohrs - 2 VP & Secretary
Thad Bitter – Pastor
Justin Eternick – Principal



Board of Education

Dan Paschke – Chair
Michael Godish – Board Member
Dave House -- Board Member
James Settje – Board Member
Thad Bitter – Pastor
Justin Eternick – Principal



Board of Elders

Craig Baker – Head Elder
Courage Mudzongo
Len Stadler
Josh Luplow
Pastor Bitter



Worship Committee

Marilyn Baer
Mark Leitzke
Sue Hartwig
Melissa Baker
Olivia Baker
Pastor Bitter



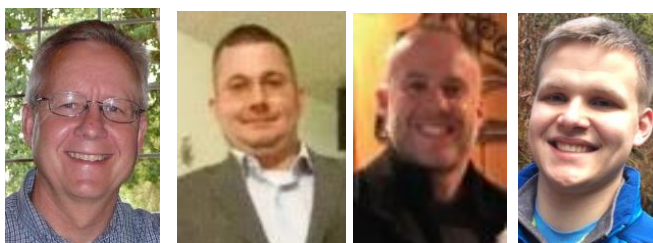
Mary & Martha

Sara Hehr – Co/Presidents
Susan Lewallen – Co/Presidents
Linda Bern – Secretary / Treasure
Faye Rutstein – LWMS Representative
Pastor Bitter



Trustees

Ed Gillespie
Brian Boyer
Matt Ginnow
Kyle Leitzke



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK OF LENT 5 2023

Sunday **Ezekiel 37:1-6**

- Where did God take Ezekiel? What did he see there?
- Is this a picture of Spiritual death or physical death? Which comes first in the mind of God?
- Think about the conversation between God and Ezekiel?
- Is there a possible rescue of either death? Genesis 3:15.
- What instructions did God give Ezekiel and what promise did he make?
- How does this apply to us? JOHN 11:25-26; Romans 1:16-17.

Monday **Ezekiel 37:7—10**

- Describe what happened when Ezekiel prophesied as commanded by God.
- Could this be a picture of Spiritual revival?
- Could it be a picture of the resurrection from the dead? Which is it?
- What must come before there can be a glorious resurrection from the dead?
- How does spiritual revival which leads to a glorious resurrection happen?
- Read John 4:50-53; 3:15; 6:40; 1Timothy 1:16.

Tuesday **Ezekiel 37:11-14**

- Who does God say all these people are? Revelation 21
- How does the Holy Church of God fit into what Jesus says here?
- Who are the members of the invisible Church? Colossians 1:24. 1 Cor. 12:21-29.
- How does this all relate to us? Romans 12:1-7.

Wednesday **Romans 8:11-13**

- What will the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead give us? What does this mean?
- Of what does that new life assure us? End of v. 11. Heirs of what?
- Like what do we not want to live? What is the flesh?
- What will happen if we follow the flesh? Whom will we follow?
- What should our relationship with the flesh and the Spirit be? Gal. 5:16-25.

Thursday **Romans 8:14-18**

- What does God consider us who are led by the Spirit?
- What does being children of God mean for us? v. 15 – 16.
- Explain the significance of 17. Describe the full meaning of this verse for us.
- How does Paul describe what God is offering us in comparison to the problems we might have in this life. Philippians 3:8.

Friday **John 11:17-27**

- Look at context to get picture. What was the situation when Jesus came?
- What veiled criticism did Martha speak against Jesus? V. 21. How did Martha soften the criticism? 22
- Consider the conversation between Martha and Jesus. 23-25-26.
- What wonderful response did Martha give to Jesus' words? 27

Saturday **John 11:38-45**

- What was Jesus next step in the lesson for Martha? vv.38-45.
- How is Jesus the resurrection and the Life?
- How do Jesus and Lazarus' resurrections affect us? Mt. 28:6; Jn. 6:40-44

Grace Lutheran Church - March 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 8:00 AM Conf. Cl. 9:15 AM Chapel 7:00 PM Lenten Worship at Grace Church (Postponed Ash Wednesday)	2 8:00 AM Conf. Cl.	3 8:00 AM Conf. Cl. Afternoon Elder Care Visits	4 10AM BIC Service / Sermon Prep
5 Lent 2 8:00 AM Conf. 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Fellowship 11:00 AM Bible Cl. 11:00 AM Sun. Sch. 6:00 PM Basketball	6 6:00 PM Basketball	7 8:00 AM Conf. Cl. 6:00 PM Elders Mtg.	8 8:00 AM Conf. Cl. 9:15 AM Chapel 6:00 PM Lenten Dinner & Devotion	9 8:00 AM Conf. Cl. Every Member Visit	10 8:00 AM Conf. Cl. Afternoon Elder Care Visits	11 10AM BIC Service / Sermon Prep 
12 Lent 3 8:00 AM Conf. 8:30 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship with Comm 10:30 AM Fellowship 11:00 AM Bible Cl 11:00 AM Sun. Sch. 6:00 PM Basketball	13 6:00 PM Basketball	14 8:00 AM Conf. Cl. 10:00 AM Mary & Martha 3:30 Worship Mtg. Every Member Visit	15 8:00 AM Conf. Cl. 9:15 AM Chapel 6:00 PM Lenten Dinner & Devotion	No School Teachers' Conference At Grace		18 7:00 AM FORGED Men's Bible Study & Breakfast 10AM BIC Service / Sermon Prep 
19 Lent 4 8:00 AM Conf. 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Fellowship 11:00 AM Bible Cl. 11:00 AM Sun. Sch. 6:00 PM Basketball	20 6:00 PM Basketball	21 10:00 AM Circuit Mt At Corvallis Every Member Visit	22 8:00 AM Conf. Cl. 9:15 AM Chapel 6:00 PM Lenten Dinner & Devotion	23 8:00 AM Conf. Cl. 6:00 PM Grace Leadership Meeting GLS OPEN HOUSE 5-7 PM	24 8:00 AM Conf. Cl. Afternoon Elder Care Visits	25 10AM BIC Service / Sermon Prep
26 Lent 5 8:00 AM Conf. 8:30 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship with Comm 10:30 AM Fellowship 11:00 AM Bible Cl 11:00 AM Sun. Sch. 6:00 PM Basketball	27 6:00 PM Basketball	GLS No School - Spring Break			31 Afternoon Elder Care Visits	