

# The Means of Grace

## February 4, 2024

*Psalm 147:4-6 - He determines the number of the stars; He gives to all of them their names. Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; His understanding is beyond measure. The LORD lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked to the ground.*

One estimate suggests that there are one septillion stars in the universe. That is a one followed by 24 zeroes. In other words, there are a lot of stars. We give names to some stars, like Sirius or Antares. Astronomers document other stars with letters and numbers, but these are human designations and estimates. God, whose "understanding is beyond measure," created every one of those stars. He "determines the number of the stars; He gives to all of them their names."

Our gracious, all-knowing God pays close attention to details, including numbers and names, and not just for the stars. Scripture sometimes mentions a few of those interesting details and numbers. In those days, five sparrows were sold for two pennies. God does not forget even those little birds, but we are worth so much more to Him than sparrows. He knows the number of hairs on our heads (see Luke 12:6-7). After Jesus' resurrection, Peter and some of the other disciples went fishing and hauled in a net "full of large fish, 153 of them" (John 21:11b). On Pentecost "about three thousand souls" were baptized and added to the church (Acts 2:41b).

God counts souls and stars, fish and sparrows—and sheep. In one of Jesus' parables, a shepherd leaves 99 sheep to find one lost sheep. The story is about Jesus Himself, who came to seek and to save the lost. Names and numbers fill the story of our salvation. Guided by one special star, wise men found the Holy Child named Jesus in Bethlehem. Years later, three crosses were set up at a place called Golgotha. On the center cross Jesus suffered and died to save the lost, to save us all! Then, on the third day after His death, the early light of dawn revealed one empty tomb. Jesus has risen from the dead! On the Last Day when He returns, "all who are in the tombs will hear His voice" (John 5:28b), and through faith in His Name, we will rise to live in His presence forever.

In Baptism, God adopts us as His sons and daughters. The Lord who gives names to the stars names us as His own: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine" (Isaiah 43:1b). One day we will stand before the throne of God in "a great multitude that no one could number" as we cry out in praise to our God and Savior, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:9b, 10b). We may not be able to number that multitude, but God can, and He knows every name.



**Sunday February 4, 2024-Epiphany 5**

9:30 AM Worship  
11:00 AM Sunday School  
11:15 AM Bible Class  
6:00 PM Basketball

**Monday February 5, 2024**  
Pastor Bitter gone

**Tuesday February 6, 2024**  
Pastor Bitter gone

**Wednesday February 7, 2024**  
Pastor Bitter gone

8:30 AM Chapel

**Thursday February 8, 2024**  
Pastor Bitter gone

**Friday February 9, 2024**  
Pastor Bitter gone

**Saturday February 10, 2024**  
Pastor Bitter gone

**Sunday February 11, 2024-Epiphany 6**

**Comm. Prep. Luplow**

9:30 AM WORSHIP with HOLY COMMUNION  
10:30 AM Fellowship  
11:00 AM Sunday School  
11:15 AM Bible Class / Confirmation Class  
6:00 PM Basketball

### IN PRAYER

**Iris Stoffer** who fell this past week, breaking her elbow. Her surgery this past Monday was successful.

**Juan Garcia and his family.** Juan's brother, Jorge, was call home to heaven.

**GONE THIS WEEK** Pastor Bitter will be gone from February 2<sup>nd</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>. Larry Glasheen and Justin will be assisting with worship next Sunday. If you need to reach pastor during this time, please call or text his cell 503-290-6316.

**THANK YOU!** Many thanks to all those who offered to help Carol Widmann a seated walker this past week. She is enjoying her new mobility!

**THANK YOU!** With deep gratitude the Hafners express their thanks for the contributions toward their van repair. Due the cost there is still opportunity to contribute! We are appealing to our family of believers at Grace church and school to join hands in covering the repair costs. Every contribution, big or small, will make a meaningful difference in helping the Hafners during this challenging time. For those willing and able to lend a helping hand, please reach out to Tyler Hafner at 402-957-8403 or you can contribute to the church member assistance fund. Your kindness and support will go a long way in demonstrating the strength of our ministry together. Thank you!





# Grace School – Restoration & Repair



During this past winter storm our Preschool and Kindergarten classrooms were affected by a pipe burst, necessitating a temporary relocation to the gym and office area. Thank you to everyone who has been able to stop in and lend a hand. You have made a significant difference! We also had a very large tree fall on our property. We are currently exploring various offers to help remove the tree.





Through the help of many people we have relocated our classrooms. The Preschool is now using half the gym and the Kindergarten is using the office area at the school while we dry out and renovate the classrooms over the next few months.







# Sunday SCHOOL

**ROOTED IN GOD'S WORD**  
*Growing in Faith Together*

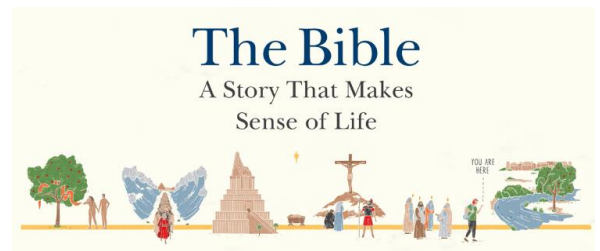
## Sundays at 11:00 AM

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 – 8<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in helping teach... please contact Pastor Bitter or Craig Baker.



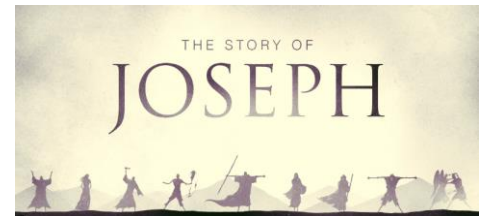
## Sundays at 11:15 AM

Please plan on joining us after worship on Sundays for Bible Class as we continue our study of the Story of Scripture. Teens to adults!



## Wednesdays at 6:00 PM

Please plan on joining us on Wednesdays by clicking on to our Google Meet study. This fall we will begin a new study on the story of Joseph. Join us as we discover the ways that God graciously equips us to bless others.



## Saturdays at 9:00 AM

We are beginning our Confirmation Classes for students who are not able to attend during the week at GLS. This class is especially for 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> graders but younger students are also welcome to attend.



## Our Next Saturday Meeting is February 24th

Men's breakfast and bible study! Bring your sons! Once a month we will plan to meet again for bible study and breakfast at 8:00 AM at the SCHOOL! Please let Pastor Bitter know if you'd be interested in attending or helping organize.



# What's Happening @Grace

**SUNDAY, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 11 AM**



Our semiannual voters meeting was opened on Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM. At this meeting we set the date for the actual business meeting and then recess until that day & time. The motion was moved and passed to continue the meeting on February 18. Please plan to attend.

## FROM THE WELS

For the next several weeks we will be highlighting different parts of the WELS Annual report

### Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

**Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) prepares men to serve in the pastoral ministry by providing them with spiritual, theological, and professional training.** Students attend classes for two years, serve as full-time vicars during their third year, and then attend classes and write a thesis in their fourth year. Throughout their time at the seminary, students receive opportunities to serve in a variety of ministries and to experience other cultures to help prepare them for their future calls.

**On May 26, 2023, 39 students graduated.** The day before, the seminary held its assignment service, where nine of those graduates were assigned to home and world mission fields, including Caleb King (pictured middle in the inset photo), who was assigned to a mission start in North Collin County, Texas. After the service, graduates met with their district presidents and in King's case, with representatives from WELS Home Missions, including Matthew Vogt (pictured right), a mission counselor.

Following graduation, the seminary provides pastors with opportunities for continued growth through its institute, Grow in Grace. Grow in Grace offers continuing education courses, a mentoring initiative for new graduates, a clearinghouse of resources for pastors, and an annual retreat for pastors who are celebrating milestones in their ministries.

The mentoring program in particular is a blessing to new graduates. Participation is optional but the program has proven so valuable in recent years that nearly every graduate chooses to have a mentor. Resignation from the ministry has significantly decreased since the mentoring program began in 2010.

For more information,  
visit [wisluthsem.org](http://wisluthsem.org).





## International Youth Rally

WELS International Youth Rally attendees come from huge churches in big cities and small churches in farming communities, from Alaska to Texas. And everywhere in between. No matter where you come FROM, when you come together at a youth rally, you're home! Home with your family of believers.

That's a big family! You get to say the Lord's Prayer and sing praises to our Savior with thousands of people. That WILL give you goosebumps.

A youth rally is designed for teens. Workshops hit timely teen topics. Performances and recreation are planned with teens in mind. There's time to discuss

issues, time to eat, time to play frisbee, and time to just chill!

Some have said that the youth rally changed their lives. I won't go as far as to say that it WILL DEFINITELY change yours or the lives of your church's teens. But it may: one may be motivated to pursue the ministry; another may meet a new lifelong friend; another may confide in a workshop leader about a struggle with temptation. Front and center at the youth rally is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## CANYONVIEW SILVERTON IS BACK... OREGON BIBLE CAMP!



Lutheran Bible Camp returns to beautiful Camp Canyonview in Silverton June 23-28. This is a wonderful opportunity for children going into grade 4-12 to make new Christian friends and spend time with old ones. Daily devotions, Bible studies, and the example of Christian adults will help feed and nurture the faith. Crafts, outdoor skills, sports, swimming, and other activities from the crazed mind of Pastor Tembreull provide fun for everyone and opportunities to build friendship and teamwork. Details on costs and registration dates will soon

follow but mark your calendars and make your plans today! If you have any questions call or email Pastor Tembreull: [pastor@corvallislutherans.org](mailto:pastor@corvallislutherans.org) or 5412316189. You can also follow Lutheran Bible Camp-Oregon on Facebook.





Be Still! I know I have said this to my toddler a few times. I am sure you have used this once or twice in your life too. In reality, I

need to hear it myself. I don't know about you, but things just seem busy. My focus is not always on the things they should be. God does give us the correction we need. In Psalms it says, "Be still and know that I am God." This is both a command and an assurance, to remember to focus on him when we act too busy but that he also brings peace during times of stress and turmoil. So, BE STILL, your God is with you.

### January look back:

- **Winterfest/TELSS Nights** was another hit this year with the dress-up days (check out our social media for pictures), many student games, and lots of prizes. If you were able to attend, we were able to witness a close game with a packed house ending in a victory. It was a lot of fun!
- **International.** We partnered with a new Japanese agency for international students. We have added a new 3-month program. (2 sessions: Oct-Dec and Jan- March). We are excited to offer this taste of Evergreen for those students and for our families to experience being a host family. We are currently expecting three students in each session.
- **Association meeting recap:** Thank you to those association congregation leaders and delegates. We are excited about the many projects we have going on at Evergreen and the impact we hope they will have on the future.
- **Future Eagle Night:** We welcomed 34 families to our Future Eagle Night. Our largest attendance in the last decade. We are excited about the amount of interest in our school and pray that Evergreen is a good experience for them during their high school years.
- **Property Fence:** We are days away from the final gates being put on the perimeter fence. We are very pleased with how it is turning out and the response we are getting from our families and others in the community.

### Looking ahead:

- **Drama Production** "Murder at Crimson House." We welcomed the grade schools from around the area for the Wednesday and Thursday performances. Join us for the Dessert performance on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Saturday Matinee on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, which are open to the public.
- **Career Day:** We are looking forward to representing over 30+ different occupations and connecting our students to those people willing to support them.
- **Accreditation:** Every 5-6 years, Evergreen goes through reaccreditation. Throughout this process we deep dive into over 250 standards of evidence, giving us direction on what we can work on and what we are doing well as a school.
- **Area Lutheran High School Conference (ALHS):** Kyle, Brandon (Board Chairman), and I will be attending the ALHS conference again this year. We will be joining the other area Lutheran high schools and collaborating on ways to support our ministry.
- **February 11th will be the next Evergreen Sunday** at Calvary Lutheran Church in Bellevue, WA. (The next one is on March 3 at Light of Life in Covington, WA.)
- **March 7-9 will be this year's Junior Eagle Classic.** We look forward to hosting over seven schools, with both boys and girls brackets for this fun event. Come and cheer your school on.
- **Auction April 13:** Never too early to start thinking about our auction. We encourage you to find ways to support. You can make a gift basket, talk to your employer for donations or sponsorship ideas, or invite your neighbor. Lots of excitement building up for another fun day supporting our school.

Thank you for all your support. We are all in this together. Thank you again for joining us in our mission.

In Christ,

Ryan Schmeling - Director of Mission Advancement



## Supporting Our Neighborhood Foodbank—December Mainspring Foodbank—Year end Update 2023

This past week I took the last donation of food and clothing for 2023 to the Mainspring Foodbank. We donated 26 pounds of food and 14 pounds of clothing. The totals for this Fall season are: 203 pounds of food, 32 pounds of clothing, and some school supplies. Lorren, Operations Manager at Mainspring, is very grateful for our continued support, and he looks forward to working with us in the New Year. Look for the next “donation date” towards the end of January, 2024. And again, thank you, thank you for your generous gifts to Mainspring. God bless you in 2024, Leann Breza



*“We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1Thessalonians 1:2-3)*

### MISSION TO THE CHILDREN - UPDATE

Thank you so much for your inquiry about Mission to the Children. As you are aware, at the moment we are unable to enter Sonora as the cartels have taken over the roadways and many of the cities. Your reference is to the people of Sasabe who have all fled the town, many coming to Tucson as the roads south to other parts of Sonora were unsafe.

MttC has located as many of the families who are in our area as we could reach, more than 100 people. Spanish services have begun at Grace Lutheran on a regular basis. While we cannot afford to pay rent for the refugees, we are providing clothing and making sure that no one is without food. Many have been visited in person by MttC Board members and transportation has been provided to events if needed.



MttC held an Epiphany Service in one of our parks where we had begun the outreach to the Tucson Hispanic community, so the refugees and our Tucson contacts were able to also meet each other. God blesses in the most unusual ways!! When we started our first Tucson gathering on Mexican Independence Day, we had no idea what the future held for Sasabe. So when our church members fled from there, we already had plans for a location for the services in the park, saving us much time and attempts to locate a space.

For now we are encouraging prayers for Board members and volunteers who are donating a tremendous amount of time and energy to keep the contacts viable. Also prayers for the congregants of all our Sonoran villages, our one continuing church in Altar and our multiple preaching stations. Their training via Academia Cristo is continuing via electronic contact is my understanding of their current status. We have also recently received a request for a Bibliabus in Cuernavaca and are continuing to pursue that avenue of development.

As to other support, we are asking for continuation of donations of money. Other needs such as food and clothing are available to us via Tucson churches. Postage to mail items has gotten very expensive.

Gratefully, Your sister in Christ,  
Ruth Schaller  
Past chair, Mission to the Children



*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing... If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. – John 15*

We are *One Together* in ministry. Jesus is the Vine we are the branches and connected to him we will produce much! In fact, connected to Him all things are possible! This fall we will be asking you consider what your “branch” is in our ministry together. Connected to Jesus what gift do you have to use? Our *One Together* logo will help us identify your branch and your area of ministry to use your gift in. It is our prayer that together we discover that while we all have different gifts and abilities we are indeed *One Together* in Christ.

**Look at the logo above. Think about what each symbol might mean and what area of ministry you can serve in!**

## Runners - Fellowship Events, Health, Well Being

**Bible** - Devotions, Bible Studies, Sunday School, Christian Education

**Hand w/Leaves** - Grounds Care, Altar Flowers

**Money** - Fundraising, Investment, Treasurer, Budgeting

**Chrismon** - Service Setup (Vestments Switching, Candles, Communion Setup/Cleanup), Worship Banners

## Globe - Outreach, Missions

### Open Door - Greeting

### Praying Hands - Prayer Groups

**Heart on Plate** - In reach, Shut ins, Ill/Injured/Hospitalized, Fellowship Refreshments

### **Gear - Trustee, Facility Cleaning/Repair**

**Music Notes** - Choir, Chanter, Vocalist, Instrumentalists, Organ, Piano

### Little Hand in Big Hand - Nursery Care, Assist New Parents or Parents in General

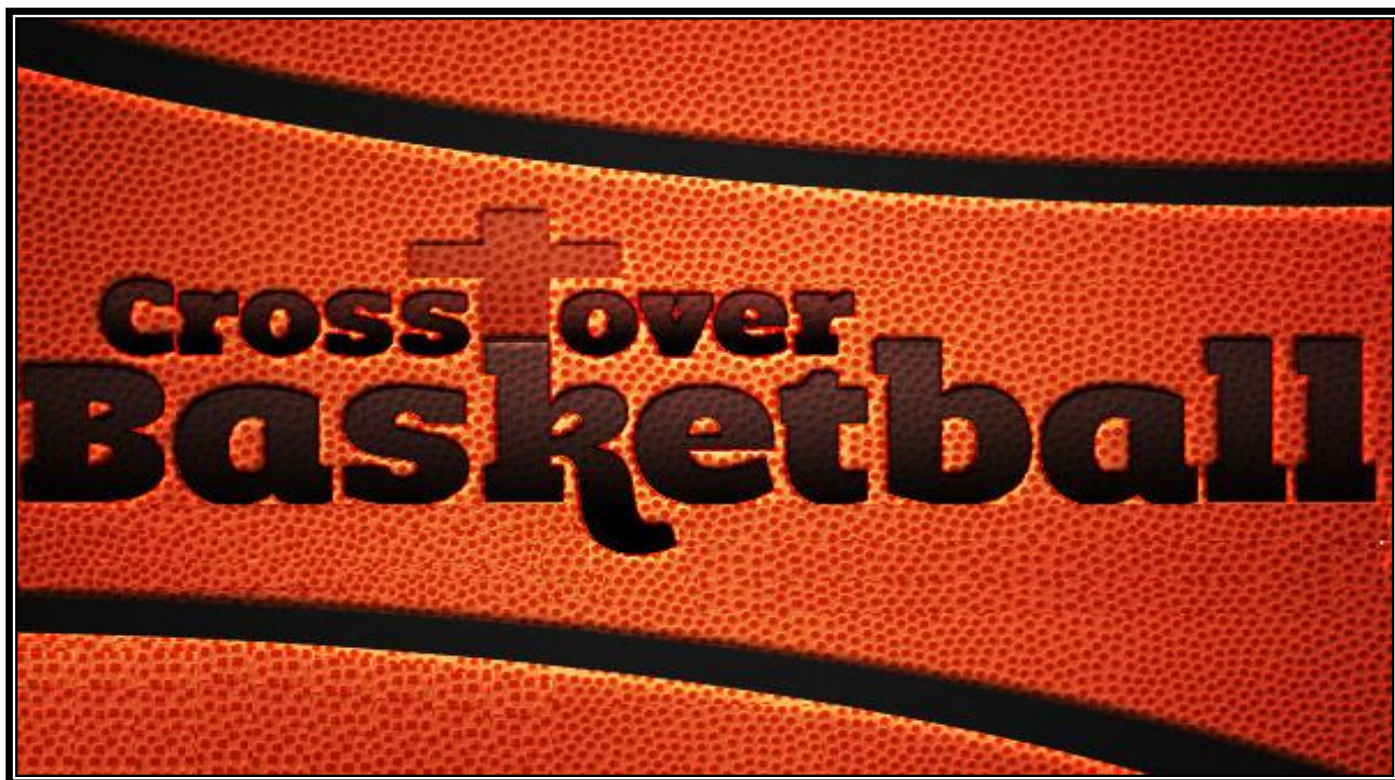
**Lectern** - Liturgy/Readings, Elders, Bible Studies

**Hand in Hand** - Serve on Committees/in Groups - Care Committee for Called Workers, Mary Martha, Ushers, Church Council Positions

**Dove** - Inreach, Visiting Shutins, "Sunshine Member" (sends cards on various occasions especially focusing on those that live alone)

### Wedding Rings - Couple's Inreach/Support, Marriage





**We would like to continue our “Cross-over” Basketball nights again at our gym at Grace School.**

**If you, or a group, would like to help organize, plan, and carry out these basketball evenings please contact Pastor Bitter.**

**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 someone.**

**Have fun.**

**Live your faith.**

**Contact Pastor Bitter or Ben Baker (503) 734-7038 if you’d like to play!**

# Boards & Committees at Grace

## Church Council

Juan Garcia – President  
Josh Luplow – 1 VP & BOE Chair  
Jon Cohrs - 2 VP & Secretary  
Larry Glasheen – Ministry CFO  
Dan Paschke – GLS Finance  
Thad Bitter – Pastor  
Justin Eternick – Principal



## Board of Education

Josh Luplow – Chair  
Michael Godish  
Dave House  
James Settje  
Tamm Godish - Preschool  
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  
Jacob Meyer  
Pastor Bitter



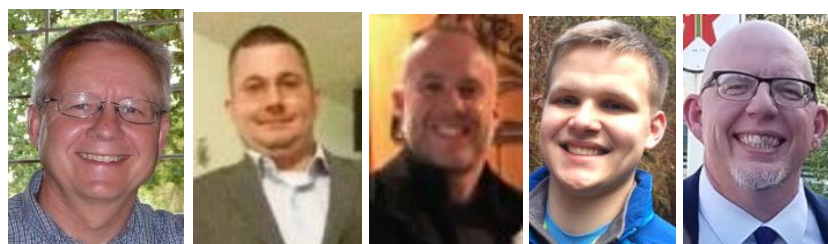
## Mary & Martha

Sara Hehr – President  
Elke Werner – Vice President  
Linda Bern – Secretary  
Cathie Gillespie - Treasure  
Leann Breza – LWMS  
Pastor Bitter



## Trustees

Ed Gillespie  
Brian Boyer  
Matt Ginnow  
Kyle Leitzke  
Tyler Hafner – GLS Custodian





# DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK OF EPIPHANY 5 2024

**Sunday**      1 Samuel 26:7-14

- What is this scene all about? How does Abishai see it? Is there more to it?
- Page through chapters 16-25 and read the headings. Also read 26:1-6.
- What was the disagreement between David and Abishai about?
- What was David's response to Abishai? Who would "take care of Saul"?
- What was David's hidden message in all of this?

**Monday**      1 Samuel 26:15-25

- What is the purpose of David yelling at Abner? What is David trying to tell him about God?
- What is the significance of the information David seeks from Saul?
- What is Saul's problem with David?
- How sincere do you think Saul is about his repentance and promises to David?
- Did David take Saul at his word?
- Why or why not?

**Tuesday**      Romans 12:9-16

- List and define all of the negative words and phrases regarding Christian living.
- List and define all of the positive words and phrases regarding Christian living.
- Agree or disagree: Avoiding the bad and doing good will make us acceptable to God.
- Is all of this "doable"? Explain your answer.
- Why is it vital to make every effort to be all of the above?

**Wednesday**      Romans 12:17-21

- What is God's stand on revenge, getting even?
- With what do our efforts to live at peace with everyone begin?
- What is the best revenge on someone who hurts us by word or deed? V. 21
- How might the advice of verse 21 work in your life?

**Thursday**      Matthew 5:38-42

- What was meant by the Old Testament adage eye for an eye etc.?
- What is Jesus' advice regarding our reaction to mistreatment by others?
- How would you sum up what Jesus has to say about "getting even" with those who mistreat us? What do you think of that philosophy?




**Friday**      Matthew 5:43-45

- What do you think of the idea of loving your neighbor and hating your enemy?
- What does Jesus suggest as an alternative to that philosophy? V. 44
- What is Jesus' rationalization for what he advises? Who are the beneficiaries of God's blessings?

**Saturday**      Matthew 5:46-48

- What is significant about the question in verse 46?
- What do even the pagans do? What is Jesus' point?
- What are our chances of accomplishing what Jesus says in verse 48? What point is Jesus seeking to make with this statement?

# Grace February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b> 8:00 AM 7-8 Confirmation	<b>2</b> 9:20 AM PK Jesus Cir	<b>3</b> 9:00 AM Confirmation
<b>4</b> Epiphany 5 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Sunday Sch 11:15 Bible Study	<b>5</b> 8:30 PM GLS Board of Education	<b>6</b> 3:30 PM GLS Staff Meeting	<b>7</b> 8:30 AM Chapel	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 9:20 AM PK Jesus Cir	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> Transfiguration 9:30 Worship Communion 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Sunday Sch 11:15 Bible Study / Confirmation Cl.  SUPER BOWL SUNDAY	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 8:00 AM 7-8 Confirmation  10:00 AM Mary Martha	<b>14</b> Valentines Day 8:00 AM Indv Confirm 8:30 AM Chapel 9:00 AM 7-8 Confirmation 2:30 PM Indv Confirm  ASH WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM WORSHIP	<b>15</b> 8:00 AM 5-6 Confirmation  6:30 PM Church Council Leadership Meeting	<b>16</b> 8:00 AM 7-8 Confirmation  9:20 AM PK Jesus Cir  Afternoon Member Visits	<b>17</b> 9:00 AM Confirmation
<b>18</b> Lent 1 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Sunday Sch  SEMI ANNUAL VOTERS MEETING 11:00 AM	<b>19</b> GLS - No School   PRESIDENTS DAY	<b>20</b> 8:00 AM 7-8 Confirmation  3:30 PM Worship Comm	<b>21</b> 8:00 AM Indv Confirm 8:30 AM Chapel 9:00 AM 7-8 Confirmation 2:30 PM Indv Confirm  LENT DINNER AND DEVOTION 6:00 PM	<b>22</b> 8:00 AM 5-6 Confirmation	<b>23</b> 8:00 AM 7-8 Confirmation  9:20 AM PK Jesus Cir  Afternoon Member Visits	<b>24</b> 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast & Bible Study   9:00 AM Confirmation
<b>25</b> Epiphany 5 9:30 Worship Communion 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Sunday Sch 11:15 Bible Study	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 8:00 AM 7-8 Confirmation  6:30 PM Elders	<b>28</b> 8:00 AM Indv Confirm 8:30 AM Chapel 9:00 AM 7-8 Confirmation 2:30 PM Indv Confirm  LENT DINNER AND DEVOTION 6:00 PM	<b>29</b> 8:00 AM 5-6 Confirmation	