

The Means of Grace



MAY 2, 2021

Whom are you following?

Fifteen years ago, the answer to this question would be drastically different than what it is now. Today, “following” others and “having your own following” are commonplace among users of Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat. And who you follow can tell a lot about your personality and interests. Your targeted ads can be so spot on that you feel like they are reading your thoughts at times. Being an influencer is an actual job that can pay for bills and even give you celebrity status with the right following.

More recently, social media has become your voice, showing what you stand for and support. I have read some influencers get torn apart, make apologies, and even change their businesses all based on what their followers want them to believe and favor. I’ve also seen them get shamed for not openly supporting all the current agendas that the world declares should be followed.

I wonder what it would be like if Noah, Ruth, and Paul were on social media.

@noaharkbuilder

What would people think of @noaharkbuilder when he warned them of the coming flood? Do you think the comments on his ark progress pictures were responses like, “Way to go!” and “You’re so talented!”? I doubt it! Perhaps something more like, “Hey, stupid, why build a boat so far away from water?” I am sure there was a lot of unfollowing happening and people declaring, “What a joke! God judging us? Not going to happen,” or “How dare you judge me for what I believe! Who are you to say that God is going to destroy me!”

Yet despite what other people thought, God was pleased with Noah. He remained with Noah among the chaos. When the ark was finished, God closed the door to the ark. He stayed with Noah during the year-long float. Then he made his covenant with Noah under a rainbow ([Genesis 6:1–9:17](#)).

“By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith” ([Hebrews 11:7](#)).

THE STILL SMALL *voice* OF HIS WORD

Nathan Nass, pastor at St. Paul, Green Bay, Wis., shares more thoughts on the best voice to follow.

The loudest voices often aren’t the best voices to follow. Have you learned that lesson in life? Although people who shout stand out, their shouts are often foolish. How many times have you been deceived or misled or tempted by the loudest voice in the crowd or the group? The Bible gives this advice, “The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools” (Ecclesiastes 9:17).

That’s so true, isn’t it? Especially because the voice of God often isn’t the loudest voice in the room. Instead, God speaks to you through the still, small voice of his Word. There God promises life and peace in Jesus. There God comforts you with his presence and purpose in your life. In that Word, God shows you the path through this world into heaven.

If you’re listening to the loudest voices around you, you’ll miss the peace and joy God wants to share with you. Pay attention to his voice.

@ruthgatherssheaves

How about @ruthgatherssheaves? Ruth was widowed and left Moab with her also-widowed mother-in-law, Naomi. Times were tough, and she and Naomi had no means to provide for their very basic needs. Yet Ruth decided to remain with her mother-in-law when it would have been much easier to go back to her homeland, her previous gods, and an easier life. She chose to follow the way of the true God and stay with Naomi to help care for her.

Her following was sure to encourage her in the opposite direction. “Now is the time for some me time, Ruth. Take time for yourself. This isn’t the time to be worrying and caring for others.” “Get serious, Ruth. Get married again. There are plenty of good men here.”

But Ruth did not return. She told Naomi, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried” ([Ruth 1:16,17](#)).

@saulnowpaul

What about @saulnowpaul? His following was sure to be in an uproar as he took a full 180-degree turn from persecuting the Christians to becoming persecuted himself. Some might have posted negative comments: “He was stoned and left for dead. That’s where he should have stayed,” or “He ruined our businesses in Ephesus with all his attacks on our goddess Diana.”

Paul remained a follower of Jesus. “Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ” ([Galatians 1:10](#)).

@christiantoday

It seems as if it is getting more and more difficult to say and do the right things. Sometimes we have to take a step back and remember what we truly do believe because of so much that is on social media, on the news, and in the world around us. We can get tricked into believing something is good and right, when in fact the world just wants us to follow another way.

But this isn’t new. Jesus himself warned the disciples of this before he sent them out to proclaim the news about him: “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witness to them and to the Gentiles. . . . You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved” ([Matthew 10:16-18,22](#)).

There are countless other examples in the Bible of people believing and doing the right thing when it was difficult and uncomfortable or even nearly impossible: Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, Job, Mary and Joseph, John, and the disciples, to name a few. Through these examples, we can find encouragement to continue our walk with Christ when it’s not what the world would do and when the world posts negative and cruel responses to our faith. When we face persecution for what we believe, we can find comfort in the stories of the Bible and learn from our forefathers’ experiences.

@therealChristJesus

Jesus invites us, “Come, follow me” ([Matthew 4:19](#)). We can do so with confidence! “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” ([John 16:33](#)).

THIS WEEK AT GRACE CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Sunday May 2, 2021 Flowers for the Altar-Marilyn Baer

8:30 AM Adult Bible Study in person

9:30 AM Worship Service in person with Communion

and livestream grace-wels.net/worship or facebook.com/GraceWELS

OFFERINGS CAN BE MAILED TO THE CHURCH - 7610 NE FREMONT



Monday May 3, 2021

Tuesday May 4, 2021

Pastor in office

8:00 AM 5-6 Confirmation Class

Wednesday May 5, 2021

Pastor in office

8:00 AM 7-8 Confirmation Class

1:00 PM Distance Learning Confirmation Class

2:00 PM BIC at GLC

6:00 PM Google Bible Study – Messages from Jesus

Thursday May 6, 2021

Pastor in office

8:00 AM 5-6 Confirmation Class

Friday May 7, 2021

Pastor in office

8:00 AM 7-8 Confirmation Class

1:00 PM Distance Learning Confirmation Class

Saturday May 8, 2021

Pastor in office

Sermon Preparation

Sunday May 9, 2021 HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

8:30 AM Adult Bible Study in person

9:30 AM Worship Service in person

and livestream grace-wels.net/worship or facebook.com/GraceWELS

OFFERINGS CAN BE MAILED TO THE CHURCH - 7610 NE FREMONT

PRAYER REQUESTS

Dori Abernathy, Cara Luke, Joe Belter all who continue to rehab and heal from recent surgeries for cancer and a stroke. We pray for complete healing and recovery.



A landscape photograph showing a sunset or sunrise over a mountain range. The sky is filled with warm, orange and yellow clouds. In the distance, three crosses are visible on a ridge.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

**In Person & Live Streamed on Facebook
Starts Sunday, October 11th
8:30 – 9:15 AM Grace Church**

A landscape photograph of a green field with a line of trees in the background. A rainbow is visible in the sky above the trees. The scene is misty or foggy.

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS
ENDURES *Forever*

**Bible History Lessons
With Applications
From Luther's Catechism**



Sunday School Lessons for Remote Learning

Attention Parents! In light of current challenges related to classroom gathering, our church is introducing a new approach to Sunday school!

This year Sunday School lessons will be taught by experienced WELS teachers and will be available free via YouTube. The engaging and age appropriate Lesson Videos will tie to printed Student Lessons that our church will provide to you at no cost. This new approach presents an easy yet meaningful way for you to encourage your child's faith in Christ.

Each week, you will receive an email from Pastor containing all the lessons and the YouTube links. Simply print the appropriate lesson and click on the appropriate You Tube link for your child and bring Sunday School into your home!

Each week we will also feature a book of the bible. In the announcements we will include the book from the previous week and the new book feature for this week.

We will also include the YouTube link for the previous week's Chapel Chat from Grace School with Pastor Bitter or Mr. Eternick.

May God bless your child as we together continue to share His love with the next generation!

Pastor Bitter

HOSEA

AT-A-GLANCE



O.T. BOOK #28

AUTHOR: THE PROPHET HOSEA

WRITTEN: 750-710 BC

Hosea was sent to remind Israel of her unfaithfulness and of God's deep and faithful love.

Old Testament: 39 Books

28

New Testament: 27 Books

Hosea's message is harsh. Hosea's message is tender. Hosea's message is heartbreaking. A story of rejection and betrayal... rejection and discipline... restoration and reconciliation.

FAMOUS STORIES INCLUDED:

Israel had left the one who had saved her, loved her, and made her His own. The Southern Kingdom of Judah wasn't far behind. So God tells a man named Hosea to marry a woman, Gomer, who would be unfaithful. Hosea marries her, and has children. But she leaves him and commits adultery. Then God tells him to go after her and bring her back. Through Hosea, the Lord tells the story of Israel's disobedience, His discipline, and His steadfast, faithful love.

MOST FAMOUS VERSES:

Hosea 3:1 The LORD said to me, "Go again. Show love to a woman who is loved by another man, a woman who keeps committing adultery. Show love just as the LORD loves the people of Israel, even though they keep turning to other gods and loving the *raisin cakes."

**Raisin cakes were sometimes shaped into images of the goddess Asherah.*

Hosea 11:1 When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

Important Points about the Book:

- Hosea directed his early prophecies to Jeroboam II, the 13th king of the Northern Kingdom around 750 BC. Israel was full of idolatry. God planned to allow Assyria to invade if people didn't repent. They didn't.
- He prophesied at the same time as Isaiah and about 10 years after Jonah was swallowed by the great fish and told to prophesy to Nineveh.
- Hosea obeyed God and married a woman who would not be faithful to him. He thus was able to prophesy with great passion about how God felt about all Israel's unfaithfulness.
- The book contains warnings of the coming Assyrian invasion on the Northern Kingdom and the Babylonian invasion of the Southern Kingdom. The northern invasion was right around the corner, occurring in 722 BC. The invasion of the Southern Kingdom by the Babylonians, would happen 150 years later. Nobody listened to Hosea.
- This book contains the famous prophecy about Jesus living for a while in Egypt as a child (see Hosea 11:1 above). His parents took him there when Joseph was told in a dream that King Herod was trying to kill the young Messiah. They returned from Egypt upon Herod's death, as noted in Matthew 2:15.



Wednesday Evenings at 6PM

Online via Google Meet

(invite will be sent via email)

**ALSO ... you can join in person
at Grace Church if you prefer at
6:00 PM.**

For the next few weeks, as a trial run, we will offer the class in person at Grace Church to see if there is enough interest in adding in person to our Google Meet.



everyoneoutreach.com

The WELS Commission on Evangelism has developed a new program called “Everyone Outreach” to help focus congregations and their members on Jesus’ command to make disciples.



“If you look at WELS churches that are growing, the main ingredient is that they have an outreach culture,” says Eric Roecker, director of WELS Evangelism. “The idea of this program is to create that culture so that every member and every ministry are focused on reaching the lost. Then it becomes clear that outreach is not an afterthought or something the evangelism committee does. It is who we are and what we do.”

This personal witnessing mindset is important in post-Christian America. “People who aren’t interested in Christianity in any way aren’t going to be reached by corporate outreach for the most part,” says Roecker. “It’s going to take each of us showing love to our unchurched friends and neighbors and then looking for opportunities to lead them to the gospel.”

Roecker is quick to point out that Everyone Outreach is not going to train people how to do outreach. Instead, it is designed to help a congregation discover its thought habits and develop new thinking and behaviors that build a culture of outreach.

The program begins with a two-day workshop at the congregation, where facilitators will use group exercises and reflection, grounded in God’s Word, to explore and adjust the congregation’s culture.

But it isn’t just a one-and-done experience for the congregation. Attendees will leave with an outreach partner and their own personal commitment statements for accountability and encouragement. The program also will provide ongoing support through e-mails, text messages, meeting starters, and sermon thoughts, which will reinforce the changes that were discussed in the workshop.

The commission has worked closely with Kurt Nitz, a lay member at Christ Our Savior, Rockford, Mich., and also an expert on culture transformations, to put together the program. This spring, 40 pastors will be trained to facilitate the workshops, with the plan to start offering workshops to congregations this fall.

Learn more about Everyone Outreach at everyoneoutreach.com.

Next Mary and Martha meeting has changed to May 18^h at 10:00-12:00 in the fellowship hall. All COVID-19 precautions will apply. That said, there will be coffee and treats! Bible study and lots to discuss! Hosting is Cathy Gillespie

Mary and Martha are collecting old medication bottles for use in the Africa Medical Mission. Please bring them to church by June 6th. You may leave the medication bottle in the church kitchen. If you have any questions please contact Faye Rutstein at 360-931-9020





The Eagle Message
Grace Lutheran School
DECLARE His PRAISES

April 27, 2021

Bottle and Can Fundraiser continues this week!

Help us add funds to our **BottleDrop** account, continuing through this Friday, April 30th to **receive a 20% match** from **BottleDrop**. Gather up your cans and plastic/glass bottles and bring them in to school to support this fundraiser between now and the end of April! **Blue collection bags** are available from the office – just ask for them. Thank you to everyone who has already brought us over 50 bags of cans!

Financial Aid applications DUE THIS FRIDAY

Financial Aid applications) **completed by April 30, 2021** will be considered in the financial aid decisions. Any applications received after this date might not be eligible for consideration. Please remember, there are limited financial aid funds for each school year and the funds will be dispersed only if they are available. Families will be informed of the Board of Education/Grace Lutheran Church voters decisions regarding financial aid by **June 30**.

Re-enrollment continues!

Many of our classes are beginning to fill up. Please be sure to complete your re-enrollment in [Gradelink](#) to secure your place for next year. If you know someone who is thinking about applying, please encourage them to apply soon.

Precious Lambs Preschool NOW ENROLLING

Our Preschool is now accepting students for the 2021-2022 school year. Please contact the Preschool Director, Mrs. Tammy Godish, at tgodish@grace-wels.net or 503-312-4230 for more information or to register.

Construction Work on I-205 and SE Division St.

A construction project has begun at the interchange of **I-205, SE Division Street and 96th Avenue** to improve safety and reduce crashes in this busy intersection. Those of you who drive through this area may be impacted by some of the construction being done. Thank you for your patience.

Openings available for Recess Helpers

We are looking for more daily Recess Supervisors to oversee our students during the noon recess time – **11:30 to 12:30**. If you, or someone you know, can assist our school for one day or more per month, or even on an “on call” basis, we’d surely appreciate it. Please contact Mrs. Kraklow in the school office (503-777-8628 or lkraklow@grace-wels.net) if you can help us out. Thanks!



Does anybody need a **push lawnmower**? Contact Tom Larson, dad of Hugo and Magnus, for more details. supertommy68@yahoo.com

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH IS EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE A NEW MISSION PARTNERSHIP WITH:



The dawning of another Easter morning
reminds us that the Victory is won!

We Worship

This past month at Cruz de Cristo we have been feverishly working towards completing the building project enough to have our inauguration service there on Easter Sunday. Many are excited to be a part of the cleaning, decorating, food prep, etc. Invitations are going out to all the community via paper flyers, WhatsApp, and Facebook. The gathering will be the culmination of nearly a year of construction and food assistance during Covid-19.

We will share the message of triumph through the risen Jesus with so many as they come to see the church and new community center! Praise God with us for this opportunity as we also ask blessings on your Easter meditation. Below are song lyrics of a piece that will be played at our English/Spanish service. Following the lyrics, you will see our invitations and an Easter banner from former years.

Join us at our YouTube channel. Click on the link below.



<https://youtu.be/GUwRTZJVKXc>

Online donations may be made at www.Costamayaministries.org
or by check payable to

Costa Maya Ministries

c/o Fred Starck
2818 Jennifer Lane
Johnsburg, IL 60051

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK OF EASTER 5 2019

Sunday 1 Samuel 20:12-13

- ❖ The situation: King Saul has fallen out of favor with God and David is his successor.
- ❖ What is this conversation between David and Jonathan about?
- ❖ What seems to be the fear of Jonathan, Saul's son?
- ❖ What is Jonathan's request of David, the next king?
- ❖ What is the immediate concern of Jonathan regarding David? What is Saul planning to do to David?

Monday 1 Samuel 20:14-17

- ❖ What kind of kindness is Jonathan asking for from David when he becomes King?
- ❖ What is the content of Jonathan's covenant regarding David's enemies? \Who is David's worst enemy right at this time?
- ❖ What was the feeling between David and Jonathan? What words might describe it?
- ❖ How should the relationship between Christians be? Why? Matthew 5:42-44

Tuesday 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

- ❖ What are some of the great gifts which Paul talks about here and might have had?
- ❖ But if he is missing one item what does that do to the rest? What is that one item?
- ❖ About what love is Paul speaking? Why is that love so critical for life?
- ❖ Define unconditional love? Who alone has that gift and alone can share it with us? Rom. 8:38-40

Wednesday 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

- ❖ What are some of the fruits of love we noted yesterday? Discuss and define them.
- ❖ Why can our love produce such fruit? To whose love must our love be connected?
- ❖ Describe the love of God in Christ which produces our love and its fruits.
- ❖ What would we be without God's love? What are we with it?

Thursday 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

- ❖ Why does love never fail? When can love be indestructible?
- ❖ What are some attributes we have in life that fail?
- ❖ What do verses 10-12 mean to you? What is the time of completeness?
- ❖ Why is love the greatest of the three basic attributes a Christian has?

Friday John 13:31-32

- ❖ Who had just left? What had just happened as described in the previous verses?
- ❖ How would Jesus and the Father be glorified in the betrayal of Jesus by Judas?
- ❖ How are the events of Friday through Sunday which were about to take place a glorification of Jesus and God?

Saturday John 13:33-35

- ❖ Where is Jesus going the next day where the disciples can't come yet?
- ❖ Where will he go forty days later where they can't follow yet either?
- ❖ What significant command does Jesus give them? How does he describe their love?
- ❖ What is the most telling characteristic of disciples of all time including us?
- ❖ Describe how this works for us? John 8:42.