

Equippier

Equipping God's people as we celebrate, teach, and share God's Grace.



January 2021

And Still He Loves Us, Romans 6:1-11

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Another Christmas season has come and gone. Our New Year's Day celebrations are now over. I find it pretty much a rule that after the buzz of Christmas and New Year's Day has come and gone there's a bit of depression that sets in. Not to mention the fact that we still feel we have a long road to go before we are out of this Covid-19 Pandemic. The good cheer and hopeful anticipation for the new year has had a chance to fade, and the real matter of living gets back to its normal routine.

That's where the rubber meets the road, isn't it, especially for the Christian—the *normal routine*? As we reengage with our colleagues in the workplace and with our neighbors, friends, and family members how does our living reflect the gift of the Savior we have just finished celebrating? As we head out on the road, how quickly do we find ourselves silently (or not so silently) staring down the other drivers around us? Is it possible for the light from Bethlehem's star to illumine our lives with the hope and joy of the Savior beyond the last Christmas Carol heard and the last goodbye to visiting family and friends?

It's easy to take for granted the new life we have been given in Christ. How often the world suffocates our desire to live a life that's pleasing to God. How often it leaves us with nothing but junk. "*Think! Think!*" I urge myself, looking for some internal resolve against old habits and knee-jerk reactions. "*Watch out for the landmines and the dodgy situations! Do the right thing!*" you might say to yourself.

But even as we slip and slide through life, sinning here and there, God loves us. He knows our weaknesses and shortcomings, our secret sins and indefensible excuses, and He loves us anyway. Jesus is proof of that. He "*came to seek and to save the lost*" (Luke 19:10b)—and that includes you, and that includes me. And by His death and resurrection, He has given us newness of life. And what better knowledge than this can we have in the new year?

THE PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank You for the new life You have given us in Your Son. May our lives glorify Him—the One who came to save us. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

See you in worship,
Pastor John M. Taggatz

National Lutheran Schools Week

January 24-30, 2021

National Lutheran Schools Week provides more than 1,900 preschools, elementary schools and high schools with the public opportunity to proclaim and celebrate God’s work among us in schools of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We thank God for the opportunity to provide excellent academic preparation for the children we serve. We are most grateful for the opportunity to share Jesus’ amazing love with children and their families. National Lutheran Schools Week gives us an opportunity to proclaim these great blessings within the communities we serve.

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS ARE “*SENT TO SERVE*” Lutheran schools serve a diverse population of children, from preschool through high school. Lutheran schools serve as a partner with Christian families in nurturing the faith of children. Lutheran schools serve local Lutheran congregations by being mission outposts to their communities. Lutheran schools serve the world with the Gospel.

They also serve in the name of Jesus. The National Lutheran Schools Week theme, “*Sent to Serve*,” is guided by Matthew 20:28: “*Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*” Lutheran schools serve every day and in every context because Jesus was “*Sent to Serve*” as our Savior. Jesus’ saving service brings us forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

Our schools are amazing incubators for faithful witness of God’s love for us through Christ by teachers and students alike.



Presidential Proclamation

Whereas, God loves us and sent His Son to be our Savior; and

Whereas, “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20: 28); and

Whereas, Lutheran school teachers and students rejoice in this Good News of God’s love in Christ Jesus; and

Whereas, We are all called to “serve one another” through love (Gal. 5: 13); and

Whereas, Lutheran schools prepare children for their individual callings to serve God and their neighbor; and

Whereas, Each baptized child of God is sent forth to serve their neighbor with the love of God in Christ; and

Whereas, Christ’s love compels us to live for others (2 Cor. 5: 14–15); and

Whereas, God’s gifts of creation are given to us for the benefit of our neighbor; and

Whereas, Lutheran schools instruct people to serve God and His people with those gifts; and

Whereas, During National Lutheran Schools Week, we rejoice that we are all “Sent to Serve”; therefore, be it

Resolved, That Jan. 24–30, 2021, be officially proclaimed as National Lutheran Schools Week in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison

President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

National Lutheran Schools Week



STEPHEN MINISTERS SERVE AS GOLDEN PARACHUTES

Many of us go through difficult times in our lives, such as the death of a loved one, a divorce, unemployment or health crisis. We may experience stress from serving as a caregiver to others, changes in our lives that are upsetting to us, empty nest, any number of reasons. No reason is too small.

As a Christian we know we are not alone, God loves us and listens to our thoughts and prayers, but sometimes that does not feel like enough support because we cannot see or hear Him. When we are feeling stressed out, alone, lost or in serious need of tangible comfort and support, we need someone here on earth to listen to our concerns and to physically be with us through our challenging times.

To fill our need, God provides Stephen Ministers to act as our golden parachutes. So when you feel like you have been pushed out of an airplane and you don't know where or how you're going to land, a Stephen Minister can help you glide to a safe landing in a peaceful place. All you need to do is ask for one.

Stephen Ministers don't try to solve or fix your problems. Instead, they skillfully listen to you, pray for and with you, and care deeply about you for as long as you need. They walk through your problems with you in confidentiality. If you're in need of a golden parachute, or you'd like to learn how to become a golden parachute for others, contact:

How can you get a Stephen Minister? If you or someone you know could benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister, you can talk to Pastor Taggatz 715-467-1231 or to one of the Stephen Leaders Jeanne Meyer 423-0010, Chris Cotter 324-9768, Lori Kachelmeier or one of our Stephen Ministers, Bob Morgan, Jan Barrett, Pat Lemmer, Donna Wenzel, Beth or Richard Jackson, Adam Voss, Gail Olen, or Pauline Parker. Our Stephen Leaders are also Stephen Ministers.

Stewardship Corner

As we look back on this past year and all the challenges that we have faced, we need to look to the upcoming year with stewardship in mind. Remember, every day is sacred: everyday presents opportunities to live more fully in relationship with God and our neighbors. Every day is for love and joy and peace and fulfillment. This month consider making a resolution on stewardship of your time - how you spend every day God gives you.



A Note from the Evangelism Board

"For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. Ephesians 1:15

Dear Congregation,

This is what Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus when that congregation had contributed to help fellow Christians in need. Your Evangelism Committee at Grace can understand how Paul felt about his congregation because that is how we feel about you. When we were asked by Military Bible Sticks and Faith Comes by Hearing to run the Military Bible Stick program during this time of Covid and decreased church attendance, we weren't sure what the results would be. Like the Ephesians back in Paul's day, you have exceeded any expectations. You have generously given more than our goal. We were able to collect and send a total of \$1,190.00. The people at Faith Comes by Hearing expressed their thanks for your generosity. Your Evangelism Committee thanks God for you and asks God's blessings on all of you.

Thank you,

Evangelism Committee

(Jeanne Meyer, Richard Jackson, Suzie Mirenda, Barb Huber, Diane Pielsnik)

January Announcements

SUNDAY SCHOOL & BIBLE CLASS—Adult Bible Study is held in the narthex of our Church building from 9:15-10:15am on Sunday mornings. In the Adult Bible Study, we are studying the Sunday morning Bible Readings for worship.

Our Sunday School Students are meeting in our Church Sanctuary from 9:15-10:15am on Sunday mornings. Please join us as we study *God's Word* together!!!

Please Note

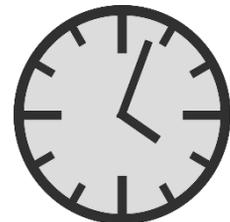
Call the church office at 414.762.8990...

- When a member of your family is admitted to the hospital, so a visit can be made by Pastor Taggatz.
- When your group plans to hold a meeting, so it can be cleared and placed on the church calendar.
- When your address, email, or your home or business phone number have changed, so church records can be corrected.
- When you are planning to move either out of town or locally.
- When you know you are pregnant so that we will be able to assist you in any way we can with prayers, encouragement and support.
- When a new baby arrives in your family and/or in the family of another church member.
- When you are planning a wedding or baptism.

REMINDER: If you have any announcements and/or additions for the *Equipper* please forward to Sarah Anderson at church@graceoakcreek.org by the 17th of each month.

Pastor Taggatz Office Hours

Monday	8:30 am-1:00 pm
Tuesday	8:30 am-1:00 pm
Wednesday	8:30 am-1:00 pm
Thursday	8:30 am-1:00 pm
Friday	(Pastor's Day Off)
Visitations:	Monday-Thursday afternoons



For appointments or emergencies, call church office or Pastor's cell phone.

Church Office: 414-762-8990

Pastor Taggatz: 715-467-1231

2021 Altar Flowers

- The sign-up sheet for 2021 Altar Flowers is posted on the white board in the narthex.
- Place your flower order directly with Parkway Floral: 414.762.0246
- Flowers should be brought or delivered to church before the Thursday service
- You can also supply your own arrangement. Rachel Miliacca will provide you with a vase liner.
- Your flowers will be refrigerated after the Thursday service so they will stay fresh for Sunday's services.



Your 2021 Grace Lutheran Offering Envelopes are available in the narthex of the Church. Please feel free to pick your envelopes up and we thank you for your continued support of our Church, School, and Early Childcare Center through the stewardship of your time, talents, and treasures! God bless you! If you have health concerns due to COVID-19, please call our church office and we will arrange a way for you to receive your envelopes.

Greeting Card Ministry

The greeting-card ministry consists of volunteers mailing cards and notes of encouragement to people in nursing facilities, who are homebound, or otherwise can't be at church regularly. *'Think of your neighbor, love your neighbor.'* This is the way people answer that message, letting people know they haven't been forgotten. If you would like to share in this ministry please take a card which is provided for you on the table in the narthex. Remember...you are giving joy to these people.



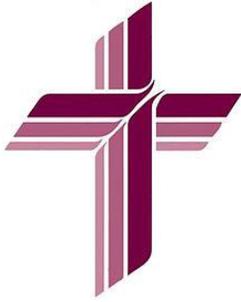
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE THAT IS A GREAT COOK? We are still looking to hire a hot lunch coordinator for our school hot lunch program. Duties would include, but not limited to:

- Creating a healthy, well balanced monthly hot lunch menu.
- Order food and supplies required for daily meals.
- Cook, serve, and clean up daily for the hot lunch program.

Interested individuals should contact Mr. Gettelman directly at:
principal@graceoakcreek.org or 414-762-3655



Grace Lutheran Oak Creek Youth Group Meeting-On Friday, January 15th at 4: 30pm we will be having a Youth Group Meeting at Grace Lutheran Church to talk about our plans for the year of 2021. We will be discussing when our Youth Group will be meeting on a monthly basis here at Grace, about future events for our Youth Group, and the possibility of attending the 2022 LCMS National Youth Gathering. Youth at Grace ages 5th through 12th Grade are eligible to attend.



LUTHERAN FOR LIFE CELEBRATION

Sunday, January 17th, 2021

Private Communion Service

We would like to encourage those that have not been attending worship services due to COVID-19 to come and partake in private communion. We will provide this service once per month starting on Monday, January 4 from 10:00am-12:00 noon. We have eight 15-minute time slots available so that you and/or your family can come and take communion. Social distancing and thorough cleaning will occur between each visit. Please contact Sarah Anderson Tuesday-Thursday between 8:15am-1:15pm to reserve your slot. If this date does not work for you please contact Pastor Taggatz directly at 715.467.1231.

Scrip Coordinator needed for the church. If you are interested please contact our church office at 414.762.8990. It will require only a minimal amount of work. Scrip is Fundraising while you shop. Grace Lutheran Church will raise money instantly when families use retail gift cards to pay for everyday purchases, like gas and groceries, instead of credit or debit cards, cash or check. *This volunteer must be a member of Grace Lutheran Church.*

Power Point Team

Pastor Taggatz is looking for a few people who are willing to run Power Point during our worship services. If interested, please contact him directly.



Thank you to all who placed poinsettias for Christmas!

We had 20 poinsettias placed this year. A complete listing of donors was included in the December Equipper.

GRACE TIME & TALENT SURVEY & COMMITMENT FORM

Please fill these out and bring to church or return it to the church office when convenient. I, as your Pastor ask that, as you approach your commitment decisions and how you can use your God given time, talents, and treasures for service in God's Kingdom and in His Church, you seek God's guidance in prayer. Let the love of God guide you in your decision.

"It Was so Simple"

What Christian ever tires of hearing the Christmas story? First, we hear about the Angel Gabriel. He was a busy guy, delivering messages from God. He must have enjoyed this task, though, because he was bringing good news. To Mary he said, *"You're going to have a son, and you shall call His name Jesus."* To Joseph, who understandably was a little unsure of how to proceed with Mary, Gabriel said, *"Don't worry Joseph. This is God's doing. Mary's going to have God's Son."* Simple, right? Just follow God's plan.

Then there's a decree from Caesar Augustus. He had no idea he was just a pawn in God's hands. As the powerful ruler he was, he issued a decree: *"Everybody has to go to his hometown to be registered for the census."* And everybody went, including Joseph and Mary. Even though Mary's pregnancy was quite advanced, she went on that arduous trip. Why not? She was in God's hands, too, although far from a pawn. She was God's channel. Through her God would bring to earth the greatest gift ever received.

Just in time, the innkeeper said they could stay in his barn – just in time for the birth. No hospital and no neonatal unit – God brought His Son into this world.



Some poor shepherds were out in the fields that night, just like most nights. But it wasn't like most nights, for the night sky filled with light as angels appeared and *"the glory of the Lord shone around them"* (Luke 2:9). Those shepherds looked and listened, and then they acted. *"Let's go see what God's been doing in Bethlehem,"* they said to each other, and they went. And they believed, and they told others what they had seen and heard and now believed.

Sounds simple, doesn't it? Not complicated like the world is today? Not exactly true. The world was complicated then, too. Political intrigue abounded; wars were being fought; the greedy still coveted more and more; some people then, as now, were too busy to see the angels or hear their message. But not everyone! Then as now, some will put aside the hustle and clamor. We'll slow down and listen for angels' wings, and we'll hear the message of *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"* (Luke 2:14). We'll take time to peek into the manger and worship God's Son and we'll eagerly *"[make] known the saying that [has] been told [us] concerning this Child"* (Luke 2:17).



COMMITMENTS TO CHRIST AND OUR CHURCH

"Bearing Fruit for Jesus" (John 15:5)

I COMMIT TO BE FAITHFUL WITH MY TIME:

I will spend an average of _____ minutes per day in personal Bible reading over the next year.

I will attend _____ group Bible study(ies) per month.

I will faithfully worship _____ times per year.

I COMMIT TO BE FAITHFUL WITH MY TALENTS:

I will do the following _____

I COMMIT TO BE FAITHFUL WITH MY MONEY:

As a steward of God's resources, my/our percentage commitment to Him through my/our church will be _____ percent which is \$ _____ per week.

(Prayerfully consider the faith goal of tithing).

Name (s): _____

_____ (Please print)



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(Prayerfully consider the faith goal of tithing).

Name (s): _____

_____ (Retain this half of the form and return the other half on commitment Sunday).



*"Each one should use whatever gift
he has received to serve others,
faithfully administering God's grace in
its various forms"*

1 Peter 4:10

*"Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were
serving the Lord, not men..."*

Ephesians 6:7



**Service Opportunities at Grace
Lutheran Church, School, & ECC**

(Please check areas of interest)

Church Boards/Committees

- Communion Set-Up
- Christian Education Sunday
- Church Properties
- Council
- Board of Elders
- Finance
- Evangelism
- Stewardship

Music

- Instrumentalist
- Adult Choir

Women's Ministry

- LWML

Building Maintenance

- Carpentry
- Church Clean-up Day
- Handyman
- Heating/Cooling/Electrical
- Painting
- Plumbing

Care Ministry

- Adopt a shut-in
- Funeral Luncheons
- Prayer Chain
- Provide Transportation
- Visitation of homebound & hospitalized
- Odds & ends projects for the elderly
- Stephen Ministry

Children's Ministry

- Sunday School Teacher
- Substitute Teacher
- VBS Teacher

Worship

- Greeter & Usher
- Invite friends/inactive members
- Lay reader
- Offering Counter

Property Maintenance

- Landscaping
- Shrub Care
- Shoveling Sidewalks
- Mowing

Youth Ministry

- Chaperone
- Event Driver
- Youth Leader

Tell us about yourself!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Special Talents/Skills:



What is your current time availability?

- Once per month
- Twice per month
- Once per week
- Afternoons _____ Evenings
- Weekends only
- Project-Centered Commitment
- As needed



LADIES GUILD

Rise & Sonshine Bible Study

Continuing our awesome study in the Lord's prayer. 8-9:30am at church.

Saturday, January 9
Saturday, January 23

Any questions, please contact:
Jennifer Olen 414.305.3740

Grace Ladies Guild Meeting NO JANUARY MEETING

Thank you for filling our **Mitten Tree** with physical and emotional warmth! We will have the official count of items next month.



Blessings for Baby

****A Place of Refuge****

January is the month we celebrate Life Sunday.

Locally we support *A Place of Refuge* - advocacy program supporting women facing crisis pregnancy.

www.aplaceofrefuge.org

We will be collecting items thru January 27th
...look for the box in the narthex.



Items of Need:

Winter infant sleepers-
9-18 months

Bibs

Infant Board books

Infant wash clothes & towels

Infant toys

Infant socks

THANK YOU!

Adult Membership Class at Grace Oak Creek – “God Connects”

We are forming a new adult membership class. It will be on Sundays in January and February 2021 starting on Sunday, January 10th at 1pm and it will go till 3pm each Sunday until Sunday February, 7th, 2021. Whether you have questions about Christ or want to deepen your faith in Him, this class will explore what the Bible says about our God, and how His love gives direction and meaning to your life today and forever.

This class is designed for those who are interested in learning or reviewing the foundations of the Christian faith. Attendance at the class may lead to membership in our church, but there are no obligations. Please let us know if you need child care to attend this new members class. Watch an introductory video at www.lhm.org/GodConnects.

Also, members at Grace Lutheran, is there someone at work, in your neighborhood, or at your dinner table who is not a member of a Christian church and is weighing heavily on your heart?

Invite (or refer) a friend to our adult membership class! Feel free to talk to pastor if you would like ideas on how to craft your invitation. You can explain to them that *God Connects* is a video series explaining the Christian faith in a way that makes it easy to invite a friend, family member, or church visitor. *Please let them know the information about the class that is listed in the above paragraph.* Plain language and helpful illustrations present God’s work of salvation in a concise manner. This series is ideal for those with questions about sin, judgment, redemption, Jesus, the believer’s life, and more. *God Connects*—an excellent resource for amplifying and sharing key concepts of the Christian faith. Who has God put in your life that needs to hear His message?



Today's date: _____ Your name: _____

Name of person you are referring: _____

Indicate all that apply:

- Please pray for my friend.
- I am giving/sending my friend the **GodConnects** info card.
- I have invited my friend to join me at the next **GodConnects** class.
- My friend is committed to attending, so keep praying.
- I plan to attend the class with my friend.
- My friend is non-committal, so keep praying.
- My friend would enjoy a conversation with pastor or (other) _____.
Please call me about this at _____.
- Please call my friend directly at _____. She/He (circle one) is expecting your call.

Friend's Contact Information:

Address: _____ City and State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Preferred phone number: _____

Today's date: _____ Your name: _____

Name of person you are referring: _____

Indicate all that apply:

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Friend's Contact Information:

Address: _____ City and State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Preferred phone number: _____

- 1 Jeannette McLain
- 1 Danny Rolefson
- 1 Nicole Rolefson
- 3 Erica Juarez
- 4 Pam Umanski
- 7 Kathy Gaudian
- 11 Matthew Morrissette
- 12 Evie Gamroth
- 12 Michael Rekowski
- 13 Willow Zunker
- 16 Madilyn Hundt
- 17 Austin Bahr
- 19 Jennifer Olen
- 22 Nicholas Smith
- 22 Benjamin Tindall
- 23 Patrick Manoil
- 25 Ernest Groth
- 26 Joy Lussier
- 27 Jeanne Willms
- 28 Lisa Kamprath
- 31 Tricia Dachel



Anniversaries

1/31 David & Amy Pankow



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Radio Worship Service

"The Lutheran Hour" can be heard every Sunday Morning at 6:00 AM on WGN 720 AM, Chicago or at 6:30 AM on WTMJ 620 AM or at 11:00 am WRRD 540 AM, Milwaukee.

"The Lutheran Hour," which began in 1930, is the world's oldest continually broadcast Gospel radio program. This weekly half-hour program, now heard on more than 1,200 radio stations, pro-claims the message of Jesus Christ to a world-wide audience.



Prayer Hot Line



In order to request prayers by members of Grace, please contact one of the following people. Your request will be made known to all members if our Prayer Line. Prayer requests for worship service should be directed to the church office or Pastor Taggatz.

10AM – 3PM

Carol Thurber, 762-9615

3PM – 9PM

Pauline Parker, 764-5574

Internet Prayerline

Pauline Parker

paulinemom@aol.com