

# Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

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## April & May 2018

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**“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28)**

Dear Friends in Christ:

Starting with this newsletter, we will be publishing a bimonthly newsletter instead of a monthly one. I requested this change so that I can spend a little less time in the church office and a little more time visiting our church members.

Very early in my ministry, a veteran pastor told me, “A homegoing pastor makes a churchgoing people.” I have taken those words to heart, and I have found them to be very true. In addition to preaching and leading our worship services, I believe one of the most important things I can do as a pastor is to visit our people—whether it’s visiting homebound members, making hospital calls, or simply stopping by to say hello. The pastor serves as a tangible connection between the church and her members. And, in most cases, the closer the connection between the pastor and the congregation, the healthier the pastor and the congregation will be as a result.

I love serving at Grace. However, one of my early challenges here is finding adequate time to visit our people. I typically make several pastoral calls each week, and yet, I know that I still have not visited many of you. I am hopeful that this change to our newsletter schedule will allow me to make a few more visits, without hampering our ability to provide timely news and information to our church members. For additional news sources, you can go to our church website, [www.gracelutheranracine.net](http://www.gracelutheranracine.net), to read our weekly bulletin announcements and you can visit and “like” our Facebook page: Grace Lutheran Church, Racine, WI.

In Holy Baptism, Jesus made us members of His body, the Church. Because we have fellowship with Him, we also have fellowship with one another. I look forward to strengthening that fellowship by visiting with you—both here at church and also in your homes. If you would like me to visit you for any reason, please do not hesitate to ask me. One of my great joys and privileges as a pastor is to get to know and serve God’s people.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Crane

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**FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP**

Our Father in heaven sent His Son, Jesus, to be our savior. His atoning sacrifice is the firstfruits of all the dead, a pleasing aroma to His Father – and ours – so that His perfect life and death count for all who believe in Him.

He claimed us as His own children in Holy Baptism. He sustains and strengthens our faith with His Holy Word and His Body and Blood. As new creatures, who have put on Christ, we bear good fruit. We do the good works prepared for us, which He makes known to us in His Word.

By faith then, trusting in the Word of God, we do what he says because He does not lie and always keeps His promises. For “without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

And so, the Lord promises: “Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine” (Prov. 3:9-10).

How do we honor the Lord with the wealth that God has given us in His generosity? By giving it generously to those whom the Lord has called us to love and support: your family, your society, and your church. And His promise is that in so doing, you will never lack.

I can almost hear it now: “But that’s from the Old Testament!” But our Lord Jesus Himself gives us similar promises in the New Testament. He says, at the conclusion of the parable of the talents, “For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance” (Matt. 25:29).

And then at the end of the parable of the dishonest manager, he says: “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Luke 16:10–13).

And in His sermon on the mount, Jesus says: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:19–21).

We have become conditioned against these promises because of their misuse by the peddlers of the prosperity gospel – the guys on TV who say you get rich by putting God in your debt. And thus, we miss out on the fact that God does reward temporal faithfulness in temporal matters with temporal blessings.

It’s no quid pro quo. It’s all from God’s grace, His fatherly divine goodness and mercy. But those Bible passages just quoted do in fact say what they say! It’s not the Old Testament’s problem. It’s ours. It is almost as if we have become so jaded against this that we think it a virtue to be stingy with our offerings.

But our Father in heaven still loves to bless those who bless others. He loves to give to those who give freely and generously. In fact, he challenges us to challenge Him: “Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need” (Mal. 3:10).

And so, while we don’t give so that we would get, we do receive from the Lord in order to give, and He will bless your giving with more receiving. For “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things” (Rom. 8:32)?

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## **FROM THE BOARD OF MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM**

### **March 2018 Missionary Update on the Preus Family in the Dominican Republic**

Rev. David and Jennifer Preus along with their children Hans, Rebekah, Rolf, Lena, Soren, Leif, and Andreas moved to Santiago, Dominican Republic, in November of 2016, where David is a seminary instructor and chaplain.

The recent issue of Lutherans Engage the World features the new Concordia Reformer Lutheran Seminary and Mercy Center in which the Preuses are involved. The article, entitled “Making Empty Lives Full,” highlights David’s ministry preparing men from Mexico, Venezuela, Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia, and the Dominican Republic to spread the Gospel, plant Lutheran churches, and show mercy throughout the region.

David has made great strides in picking up Spanish, which is good since there wasn’t much orientation time for him before he was preaching, making pastoral visits, and now teaching seminary classes to native Spanish speakers. As is his habit though, he continues to hold himself to high standards for continued improvement in vocabulary and diction, while most importantly ensuring that the Scriptural message he preaches and teaches is correct and clear, no matter the language spoken.

Ever since seminary classes began in September, David has been stretched to balance both teaching and pastoral duties. Besides readings of Luther and the Psalms, preparing and teaching the history and theology of the Augsburg Confession and Church History in Spanish requires extra mental exertion. He is thankful for his

students' patience and assistance, and trusts that they are learning despite the challenges. Local pastors assist in the daily seminary chapel.

David says, "Starting a Lutheran seminary such as this is something that happens once in a century, and purely through God's good will, and nobody said it was going to be easy."

David's good friend Idjon Fritz was ordained as pastor in October. They work well together, and Idjon's love for the Gospel and desire to bring the message of Christ to the community and build up the church in Palmar is contagious. The four deaconess students were also consecrated for service in the church and community and five professors were installed in their respective faculty and administrative positions at the new seminary. Local parish visitations continue, especially among the newly baptized; however, in September visitations were interrupted due to hurricane warnings, heavy rains, and flooding on several occasions.

Having been on the island over a year now, Jenny can contentedly say they have come a long way toward establishing a "normal life" in Santiago! Understandably, a move with a large family to a foreign country is full of many hurdles and challenges (...like preparing for two Cat5 hurricanes within two weeks of one another!), plus the transition as mother and wife on the mission field has tested her mid-western all-American background!

But by God's grace and through patience with themselves and one other, they are finding their way. Jenny is making slow and steady progress learning Spanish through independent study and also speaking with their housekeeper, as well as during church activities with Spanish-speaking missionaries and seminarians. Driving around town and performing basic excursions is still a bit intimidating, but she is much more confident going to the grocery store on her own, taking the kids to the dentist or doctor's visit, or going on an afternoon outing.

After many visits this past spring to local schools and researching the application process, the Preus family discovered the logistics of getting the kids enrolled and transported daily to a Dominican school would not be possible for this academic year. They have opted to continue their studies at home while bringing in a Spanish tutor every weekday morning for an hour. The children also participate in the mission hand bell choir and attend a weekly time of games and crafts in Spanish along with their Spanish teachers and missionary-classmates.

Thank God for His hand of protection on the Preus family in September when Hurricanes Irma and Maria both passed over the island's north coast. Though their water supply was affected for months afterward, they were spared other significant damage.

The Preuses are very excited about the work our Lord is doing in the Dominican Republic and across Latin America. Congregations are growing in grace and truth, and the new seminary is thriving. They are confident that this labor will yield good fruit, and God will provide Lutheran pastors and congregations for his church.

Your continued prayers and support is such an encouragement to them and they thank God for each one of you as part of God's daily provision and undeserved mercy.

Birthdays:

- David - February 4
- Jennifer - July 22
- Hans - November 6
- Rebekah - September 30
- Rolf - December 17
- Lena - August 13
- Søren - July 1
- Leif - March 7
- Andreas - July 25

Wedding Anniversary: September 27

Mailing address:  
Preus Family  
Apartado 1356 Santiago,  
Dominican Republic  
Phone: 314-445-2350

FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/Preus.Dominican/>

To support the Preus's work financially, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:  
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
P.O. Box 66861  
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod or LCMS. Include "Preus-Dominican" in the memo line.  
Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website at [www.lcms.org/preus](http://www.lcms.org/preus).

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**EASTER BREAKFAST:** The Youth Group invites the congregation to attend the annual Easter Breakfast on Sunday, April 1<sup>st</sup>. Breakfast will be served from 7:30 to 8:30 AM and 9:30 to 10:30 AM. The menu will be pancakes, sausage, fruit, coffee, juice, milk, and various pastries. Freewill donations are encouraged, with all money going towards the Higher Things Youth Conference in Minnesota this summer and other activities and projects throughout the year. If you plan to attend, please sign up on the sheet located on the Office Equipment Room door. Please plan to attend and enjoy fellowship with your family and friends!

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**FAMILY FUN NIGHT** will be Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM downstairs in the Fellowship Hall. There will be no Family Fun Night from May – September. Have a great Summer!

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**THE GRACE YOUTH GROUP INVITES ALL YOUTH 7<sup>TH</sup> – 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE** to join us for FUN!

We invite you to also join the Grace Youth Group Facebook page, which you can find at Grace Youth Group (Racine WI). If you have any questions, please contact Laura Olson by email, phone, or on the youth Facebook page.

**The April/May Schedule:**

- **Sunday, April 1<sup>st</sup>** ~  
Serve Easter Breakfast  
~ 7:30 to 10:30 AM
- **Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup>** ~ Family Fun Night ~  
6:30 to 8:30 PM at church
- **Sunday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>** ~ Meeting ~  
11:30 – 2:00 PM at church
- **Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>** ~ Meeting ~  
6:00 to 8:30 PM at church



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**A REMINDER** to all Sunday School/Youth Bible Study parents! The Sunday School and Youth Bible Study students will be singing in church on **May 13<sup>th</sup> in both services.**

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**NEW SUNDAY SERVICE TIME:** If you have not already done so, please fill out a Sunday Worship Service time survey located in the back of the church by the collection box **before April 1<sup>st</sup>**. The proposed worship times are 8:30, 9:00, and 9:30 AM, with the Bible Study/Sunday School hour to follow. Thanks! Board of Elders

**SHIRTS** embroidered with Grace Lutheran Church are available in the Office Equipment Room. Limited number of shirts and sizes (medium, large, & x-large) are available for \$30.00 each. Proceeds go to the elevator fund.

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**GROWING STRONG WITH GRACE'S** April meeting will be on **April 18, 2018**, at 11:00 AM. Our guest that day comes from the Racine Police Department and Grace Lutheran Church. Grace member Dan Tredo will speak to us on safety and security for senior citizens. Our **May 16, 2018**, meeting will have Trish Kagerbauer from "A Place of Refuge" speak to us about her organization. We are also collecting needed items for this group in the coatroom. Please attend, as all will have a great time! Don't forget your dish to pass. Hope you can attend!

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**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2018!** SONRISE NATIONAL PARK Vacation Bible School is going to be a FAMILY VBS, being held **Sunday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> – Thursday, July 26<sup>th</sup>**. The times will be 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM. There will be classes for EVERYONE! We will begin VBS with a light dinner and opening and then break into groups with Pastor teaching an adult class and the children having their own classes and activities. Dinner, Opening, and Closing will be done as a group. VBS will conclude on Thursday evening with the children singing some of the songs from VBS in the 6:30 PM worship service. Invite your family and friends to this wonderful opportunity to explore God's Word!

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**ADULT INFORMATION CLASS** begins Sunday, April 8<sup>th</sup>. This 12-week class is for people who wish to join Grace and members who want to study the basics of the Christian faith. The class will meet Sundays from 12:00 – 1:00 PM.

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**SECURITY:** For the safety and security of our members and guests, beginning **Sunday, April 8<sup>th</sup>**, the northwest and northeast doors of the church building will be locked on Sunday mornings from 8:00 to 8:45 AM, from 9:15 to 10:15 AM, and after 10:45 AM. The south and southeast doors will remain unlocked during these times. We regret any inconvenience this may cause and thank you for your understanding and cooperation. – Security & Safety Team