

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

3700 WASHINGTON AVENUE – RACINE, WISCONSIN 53405-2999

PHONE (262) 633-4831; www.gracelutheranracine.net

REV. BRIAN T. CRANE, PASTOR

(608) 567-9029 (MOBILE); (262) 583-2575 (HOME); revbriancrane@yahoo.com

October & November 2018

“Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:58; ESV)

Dear Friends in Christ:

A few days before I wrote this article, a beautiful steeple was mounted on top of the shaft that will soon house our new elevator. (The entire project is scheduled to be completed in December.) It was a very exciting morning as we watched a massive crane hoist the steeple over the power lines and then gently lower it into place. You can find some photos of this event on our church’s Facebook page.

The construction of our elevator addition has been exciting for me in many ways. I believe the elevator will not only help our current members, but it will also give us new opportunities for ministry in our community. It will allow us to use our building more fully by greatly improving access for those with physical limitations. One question we may wish to consider for the future is that besides worship, Sunday School, and Bible study (which are central), for what other purposes or ministries might we want to use our building? I am excited to begin these conversations.

However, my excitement for the future is also tempered a bit with the recognition that we must still finish paying for the elevator, as well as for any other new projects we choose to undertake. And, I know from experience that discussions about money are never easy.

Whenever we talk about money in the church, we often tie it in with the larger concept of stewardship. On the one hand, that’s natural, for money is a part of stewardship, to be sure. But, on the other hand, this close connection between money and stewardship has caused many to equate the two. This is unfortunate, though, because stewardship is about much more than money.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod published a helpful guide that gives us a much broader understanding of the concept of stewardship.¹ It defines Christian stewardship as follows:

“Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God’s family, the church, in managing all of life and life’s resources for God’s purposes.”

Then, it provides eight biblical stewardship principles to guide us in this area:

I. God’s stewards are God’s stewards.

God’s stewards are stewards by virtue of creation and their re-creation in Holy Baptism; therefore, they belong to the Lord.

II. God’s stewards are managers, not owners.

God’s stewards have been entrusted by God with life and life’s resources and given the privilege of responsibly and joyfully managing them for Him.

III. God’s stewards are saints and sinners.

God’s stewards rejoice in and live out what God has declared them to be through the cross. At the same time His stewards recognize they are sinners who fight sin and its consequences each day.

IV. God’s stewards are uniquely singular, yet profoundly plural.

God’s stewards recognize that their lives are not solo performances but are personal responses to God, lived out within the community of faith to benefit the whole world.

V. God’s stewards are in the world, but not of the world.

God’s stewards recognize that the Lord sets them apart from the world and by the transforming power of the Gospel sends them into the world to live out the Gospel.

VI. God’s stewards are loved and loving.

God’s stewards recognize that their stewardship flows out of God’s act of love for them in Christ which empowers them, in turn, to love others in acts of Christ-like love.

VII. God's stewards are served and serving.

God's stewards recognize that their stewardship involves a Gospel-powered style of life which is demonstrated in servanthood within all the arenas of life.

VIII. God's stewards live with an awareness of the present and future, of time and eternity.

God's stewards live intentionally in the light of God's eternal purpose while being firmly committed to His rule in the here and now.

As this definition and these principles remind us, Christian stewardship involves all of our life, not just money. Of course, money is important because, quite simply, money is needed to pay the bills, including paying for our new elevator. So, when it comes to giving money to the church, each of us needs prayerfully to determine what is most appropriate for our own situation. The Bible lifts up first, regular, and proportionate giving as the model for giving. Many Christians have found giving a fixed percent of their income to be the best way to be regular in their giving, increasing that percentage over time as their circumstances permit.

But in addition to money, Christians also give of their time and talent to the work of the church. As we are reminded in this stewardship guide, Christians are to manage all of life and life's resources for God's purposes.

One of the wonderful things about the church is that it allows us to do just that. There are so many opportunities for service in the church. Each of us can find our niche to serve the Lord and one another. Yes, money is important. But without the self-sacrificial service of our Grace members, our congregation would not be able to continue, let alone thrive and grow.

I am grateful to God for bringing me to a congregation that embodies these stewardship principles so well. I am also very pleased that Diana Raasch of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) will be at Grace on Sunday, October 28, to help us continue our discussion and consideration of Biblical stewardship. She will give a presentation about stewardship in the Fellowship Hall following the worship service. Please make plans to attend.

I am very excited for our future at Grace. With careful planning, hard work, and generous giving on our part, I believe the future is bright for us as we work together to share and proclaim the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ in this community. May the Lord bless our faithful service in His name, resting in His promise that in the Lord our labor is not in vain.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Brian Crane

¹ The guide and other stewardship resources can be found at <https://lcms.org/stewardship>.

FROM THE BOARD OF ELDERS

October is upon us.... The season of changing leaves, changing weather, schools & colleges in full swing, football, and the World Series. It's also "Pastor Appreciation Month." October is an opportunity for us to express our appreciation, admiration, and respect for all our Pastor does for us.

As the son of a pastor (and missionary), I understand what's expected of a pastor. If you were to list all the things a pastor does, and/or is expected to do...it's a long list. Certainly, I remember times when my father (and mother) were given genuine appreciation for the many different "roles" expected of them. But I also remember times when there were unreasonable expectations, and very little appreciation for their efforts to serve the Lord and the congregation.

Allow me to share a pertinent portion of an article written in March 2013, by Nathan Redman, from the blog **The Brothers of John the Steadfast**, entitled "Supporting Your Pastor":

To help support your pastor, you first need to understand what your pastor has been called to do in your church. Simply put, the role of your pastor is to preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments. Now there are plenty of times when he does more than that. He may design your church's website or help with the church's budget. These aren't examples of pastoral duties. When you pastor goes above and beyond word and sacrament ministry, he is acting out of love for his neighbor.

Your pastor should have a solid understanding of the scriptures and The Lutheran Confessions, to which he subscribes to at his ordination. With respect and love you should be able to talk to him about anything. You should feel comfortable to address any concerns you may have about your church's holding to the Word of God and The Lutheran Confessions. Along with the confession of the church, you should be able to confess your sins in private confession. While that may be uncomfortable, your pastor wants to help you with specific sins that trouble you by absolving them. He also wants you to hear the Word of God by attending the divine service. He wants your ears to be open to the scriptures and to receive the sacraments. He will always be your pastor, for the things he was called to do.

I encourage you to read the whole article, which can be found here:

<https://steadfastlutherans.org/2013/03/supporting-your-pastor/>

Here are just a few of the things we can do to show our appreciation for Pastor Crane: pray regularly for him, verbally (and maybe even in writing) communicate your appreciation for him, encourage him in his personal interests, and volunteer to assist him with some of the things he is doing or attempting to do in regards to his ministry to us as a congregation.

The certain mark by which a Christian community can be recognized is the preaching of the gospel in its purity.

~ Martin Luther

We at Grace have a lot to be thankful for!

Wes Gardner, Elder

FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Why do we give? Is it simply because God commands us to? Or is there more to it? To be sure, the instruction and Word of God in the Bible says we should give, and this is sufficient to encourage us to give (Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:7; Gal 6:6).

But there's more to it than just obligation. We're not just trying to fulfill a work of the Law. We are bearing fruits of the Spirit given to us by our Father in heaven through His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, we're not just doing what our Father said, we're also doing what He did.

Children emulate their parents. When they grow up they often carry many of the same mannerisms and characteristics as their parents, but there is more to it than that. Children copy their parents even on a more mundane level. They watch how their parents cross their legs, how they fold their hands, how they stand and sit and walk, how they do and say most everything.

And children try to copy it, which can be quite humorous when parents wish they wouldn't. It can be uncomfortable and embarrassing if a child copies or repeats something less than polite that they learned from a parent. Sitcoms thrive on these situations. It only happens because children emulate their parents because they want to be like them.

We are the children of God, by grace, through faith. In Holy Baptism, God the Father declares of us what He declared of Jesus at His Baptism in the Jordan: "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God the Father claims us as His own. He takes away all our sins, and in exchange He gives us His righteousness, His purity, His holiness, and His Spirit, by which we cry out, "Abba, Father."

We are born again, born from above, born of water and the Spirit, to a new life in Christ as His children. We are sons of God in Christ, through Baptism. And since we are sons, we are heirs – heirs who share in the glory of the Son of God. The inheritance is ours because of the Father's grace and mercy, His generosity in sending His Son in time to save us for all eternity.

And this is why we give generously of our income to the work of the church. We want to be like our heavenly Father. We want to emulate His generosity by being generous ourselves. We give to the work of the Church because we have witnessed the generous giving of our Father in heaven.

More than that, we are recipients of it. It is because we have received God our Father's gifts that we desire to give ourselves. And His gifts are not just spiritual. They are temporal and earthly as well. As the Small Catechism teaches in the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer:

"Give us this day our daily bread." *What does this mean?* God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. *What is meant by daily bread?* Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like."

In other words, God gives us everything we need for the care of both body and soul. His generosity knows no bounds. Therefore, we sit down at the beginning of the year, the beginning of the month, or the beginning of the week to set aside a generous portion of God's daily bread for His work in the Church.

We don't do this simply because He has commanded us so to do; it is because we, as His children by grace, want to emulate His generosity in our own lives. He is our Father; we are His children. And children want to be like their parents.

FROM THE PETERS FAMILY IN FORT WAYNE

Greetings in Christ!

It is hard to believe that it's already been 3 months since I moved to Fort Wayne. When I left Racine, I was coming down here to take Summer Greek. Well, that's one thing off my checklist of things to do. It was quickly replaced with a full schedule of classes this fall. Fortunately, I will get to keep growing in my newly acquired Greek skills as I continue to study God's word in hopes of bringing it to others in a faithful and effective way. I am thoroughly enjoying the classes, professors, and fellow students. CTSFW is a true blessing for our Synod and has exceeded my expectations. I am still adjusting to the lifestyle of full-time student after years of full-time employment, but I am making progress every day.

Martha and the boys joined me down here during my third week of Summer Greek. We have moved into an old farm house in the country just outside of Fort Wayne, in New Haven. It's pretty "rough" but we are blessed to have a solid house, kind landlord, and affordable rent. The boys enjoy sneaking tractor rides from the farmer and playing with the new baby kittens that were born within three weeks of our arrival!

Martha has been staying active in the classroom this year by substitute teaching at a variety of LCMS schools in the area. So far, she has helped out in 4 of the 18 Lutheran schools in the area and hopes for more. She also stays busy feeding kittens, painting rooms, and unpacking. She has made great connections with the seminary wives here, and they like to get together to have fun!

The boys are adjusting well to life on a farm. They enjoy the large yard we now have and climbing in the hayloft. But their favorite thing about the new place has to be the kittens. School is going well for them, and Paul and Frederick are playing soccer this fall season. Both Paul and Frederick are also in band; Paul plays trumpet, and Frederick plays the saxophone. Russell and Benjamin are very much enjoying their new friends and new school life.

It is exciting to see the pictures of the progress on the elevator project. We are looking forward to seeing you all in person sometime in the not-too-distant future. Thank you for all the prayers and support! They are a great encouragement as I pursue this noble task (1 Tim. 3:1) and while our family continues to settle in.

Blessings and love,
Mark, Martha, Paul, Frederick, Russell, and Benjamin!

12711 Stellhorn Road
New Haven, IN 46774

FROM THE BOARD OF MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM

October 2018 Missions 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 Palmar Aribba outside of Santiago in the Dominican Republic in November of 2016. David is a missionary, parish pastor, and seminary professor serving the Dominican Republic and all of Latin America.

In mid-August, the Preus family returned to the United States for a few months of home assignment to visit supporting congregations and update them on their mission work. The evening of September 13th, we at Grace were privileged to meet their family, enjoy a pot-bless meal, and hear David, Jenny, and some of their children present their ministry and life in the DR.

This past spring was very busy for David. In addition to regular parish duties, which include scheduled divine services Sundays and Wednesdays, ongoing evangelism in the community, seminary classes, meetings, and taking care of the family at home, he was privileged to take part in the seminary's first theological conference, as well as finish his dissertation and graduate with his doctorate in historical theology.

God has continued to bless the Dominican church and seminary with faithful workers and members who are dedicated to the proclamation of the gospel. Pastor Idjon and Rev. Preus, along with field workers from the seminary, visit every member at least once per month because most baptized and confirmed members of the less-than-ten-year-old Lutheran church still have shallow roots. The truth they learn on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening is not necessarily the life they live in their homes, and it is certainly not the life they see around them. Like every Christian, the folks in Palmar require constant pastoral care, constant instruction, and constant encouragement to live and "walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls [them] into his own kingdom and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:12).

Simposio 2018 involved leaders of six Lutheran church bodies, three seminaries, and five Bible institutes who gathered in April with over forty other theologians and church workers at Concordia "The Reformer" Mercy Center and Seminary in Palmar Arriba, Dominican Republic. The symposium, a collaborative effort of the seminary, Luther Academy, and LCMS Disaster Response, was held April 24-26, in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Heidelberg Disputation, which occurred on April 25, 1518. At the conference, David presented a paper in Spanish on "The Theology of the Cross in the Context of the Reformation". It was well received, and he took questions in Spanish and Portuguese! His favorite aspect of the conference was meeting so many Lutherans across Latin America and the need for mutual support. He is looking forward to next year's Simposio!

David rejoices that, by the grace of God, he has finally earned his doctorate! Over a decade ago, he started studying systematic theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, and he ended up writing his dissertation in the area of historical theology this past May. Jenny has been a tremendous support through his years of doctoral studies, during which God gave them five more children, a 5-year pastorate in Billings, MT, and now this incredible opportunity to serve in the Dominican Republic. He says the journey has been totally worthwhile.

It seems hard to believe that it has been a year since the grand opening of Concordia "The Reformer" Mercy Center and Seminary. Next year, God-willing, the first students will graduate, and this year, five are in vicarage. The students are a diversely talented and very dedicated group of young theologians and future pastors.

Jenny is thankful for continued good health and the companionship they have in one another. They are expecting another addition to the family in February! Their housekeeper, Fidelina, keeps their house clean and cooks Dominican lunches for them during the weekdays. She has become somewhat of a "grandmother" to their family, and they appreciate her friendship and care.

Their family was able to take a summer vacation in the US, during which they attended David's graduation with his PhD from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and a family wedding. Jenny and the kids took a bit of extra time to visit her family, attend a homeschooling convention, and participate in some field trip opportunities.

Back home in the DR, they finished up the final two months of school and Spanish studies. The kids found a way to escape the summer heat and humidity by cooling off in their inflatable pool in the afternoon. They all enjoyed the fresh seasonal fruit – mangoes, pineapple, papaya, bananas, and passion fruit.

The Preus family continues to be excited about the work our Lord is doing in the Dominican Republic and across Latin America. And they thank us for our continued thoughts, prayers, encouragement, and support!

Wedding Anniversary: September 27

Mailing address:

Preus family
Apartado 1356 Santiago,
Dominican Republic

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.

FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE BOARD OF YOUTH

Youth Group Schedule

October 7 th (Sunday)	Meeting – 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM
October 19 th (Friday)	Meeting – 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM
(Tentative) November 2 nd – 3 rd (Friday & Saturday)	Higher Things Retreat @ Zion Lutheran McHenry, Illinois
November 11 th (Sunday)	Meeting – 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM
November 30 th (Friday)	Meeting – 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

The Sunday School and Youth Bible Study students will be singing in church on Sunday, October 14th and Sunday, November 11th. Please have the students in the downstairs chapel by 8:30 AM to practice. The kids will go up to church and sit together until they are done singing. When they have finished singing, they will come and sit with their families for the remainder of the church service. Thank you for making it a priority to have your child(ren) attend and sing their praises to the Lord!

Jesus says in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew: "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." What a wonderful opportunity to make God a joyful priority in the life of the children entrusted to you by faithfully bringing them to Sunday School. All children three years old through sixth grade are invited and encouraged to attend Sunday School each Sunday at 10:30 AM in the downstairs chapel. We would love to have your child join us to learn more about Jesus through songs, games, Bible stories, and crafts. We look forward to welcoming you!

Youth Bible Study is underway! Please join us every Sunday at 10:30 AM for a study of God's Word that digs deep into the Bible and also addresses the issues teenagers face today. We hope to see you there!

VOTERS' MEETINGS: A Special Voters' Meeting will be held **Sunday, October 7th, 2018, at 10:30 AM** to assess our new Sunday morning worship schedule. Our next regular Quarterly Voters' Meeting will be held the following Sunday, **October 14th, 2018, at 10:30 AM.**

BARTZ SCHOLARSHIP FUND: The Board of Education would like to remind you that you can donate to the Bartz Scholarship Fund at any time. This goes to help our members who are studying to enter church work.

ELEVATOR FUND: So far, we have raised \$18,575.25 for the Elevator Fund. Thanks be to God for His blessings here at Grace! To make additional donations, you may use the specially marked white envelopes in the pew racks. Also, starting **Sun., October 7th**, embroidered "Grace Lutheran Church" shirts will be available for sale for \$30.00 in the Office Equipment Room. All proceeds will go toward the Elevator Fund.

PICTURE OF THE WEEK: As we proceed with our elevator adventure with great anticipation, it might be fun to look back on the building of our beautiful church building! A progression in pictures of this past adventure will remind us all of how God was with our forefathers and that He will be with us as we add to our beautiful church. Look for a picture each week in the narthex and catch the "can-do attitude" from God and our forefathers!

PORTALS OF PRAYER: Quarterly daily devotional books for October – December are available in the narthex. Please help yourself! If you wish to donate to cover the \$5.00 cost per year, please place in the appropriate slot in the narthex. Thanks!

FUTURE NEWSLETTER DELIVERY: We are looking into not renewing our bulk mail permit next year as a possible way to save money for the church. As we make this decision, we would like to know how you would like to receive your future newsletters. Would you like to pick them up at church, have them emailed to you, read them on our website, or continue to have them mailed to you? Please let us know your thoughts. You can contact our church office or leave a note in the suggestion box. Thank you!

THE GROWING STRONG WITH GRACE group will continue with our monthly meeting on **Wednesday, October 17th, at 11:00 AM.** Please bring a dish to pass. Hope you all can make it!

KWIK TRIP & SPEEDWAY GAS CARDS are for sale before and after both services in the Office Equipment Room. You can also purchase them any time during regular office hours from the church office. Grace gets 5% back on all cards sold. Cards are always available in \$25, \$50, and \$100 amounts. Many thanks!

FLOWER CHART is available for sign-up in the narthex. The cost is **\$27.00** for two bouquets. Please make your checks payable to "Grace Lutheran Church" and place in the secretary's box in the Communication Center. There are still Sundays available for 2018. To reserve a Sunday, please sign your name and occasion.

REQUEST FROM CHURCH OFFICE ABOUT HOSPITALIZED MEMBERS: Due to HIPAA Laws, we are no longer able to contact the hospital and find out if our members are hospitalized. Please call the church office and inform us of your hospitalization so that we can keep you in our prayers and pastoral calls can be made. Thank you!

CANCELLATION POLICY: When the Racine Unified School District is cancelled for the day or has early release because of weather conditions, all activities at church are cancelled. Please feel free to call the church office if you are unsure if a meeting or event will take place.

LARGE-PRINT BIBLE: A complete large-print Bible was donated to us by Lutheran Braille Workers. It is located in the Martin Room library.

QUILTS: We could use more people to cut squares. We also need king and queen flat sheets in good condition. Thanks! – Ruth Anger

CONTACT INFORMATION: Pastor Crane and Tabitha purchased Pastor Poppe and Cinda's home. The Cranes' new address is **1123 Monroe Ave., Racine, WI 53405.** Pastor Poppe and Cinda's new address is **4820 County Road P, Highland, WI 53543.**