

# Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

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## August & September 2021

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**“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, [Jesus] departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.” (Mark 1:35; ESV)**

Dear Friends in Christ:

I continue to be amazed by the beauty of Wisconsin summers. This was especially true after I returned from visiting my parents in California in June. There are many beautiful parts of California, to be sure. However, in between the sandy beaches of the Pacific Ocean and the pine-covered mountains of the Sierra Nevada, much of California is hot, brown, and dry in the summer. In contrast, Wisconsin is lush and green, with fields of corn and soybeans covering the verdant rolling hills. And, though we do get a few hot, muggy days, the summer temperatures here are often quite pleasant. Our winters may be cold and snowy, but Wisconsin summers are wonderful. It's no surprise, then, that life slows down this time of year as people take advantage of the great weather to travel and get away.

I hope that you have had the opportunity to enjoy our Wisconsin summer, including spending time with your family and friends. I know many of you like going “up north.” Or perhaps you have a different favorite vacation spot. In some ways, it doesn't matter all that much where we go—whether close by or far away—but with whom we go. As I mentioned in a recent sermon, the older I get, the more I treasure seeing and being with my family, including my parents. Thank you for your support and understanding as I take time to see them.

Yes, it is good to get away to relax for a little while. In the Bible, we see that Jesus repeatedly went away to solitary places to spend time alone with His Father in prayer. Just as our body needs rest and relaxation, so our soul needs nourishment and refreshment from the Lord, too. And so, as you travel, make sure you bring your Bible and your *Portals of Prayer* or other favorite devotional material with you. If possible, attend a sister LCMS congregation to hear God's Word with your brothers and sisters in Christ. I enjoy visiting other churches when I can. Visiting a sister congregation is a tangible reminder to me that we are members of one holy Christian and apostolic Church that spans all times and places.

Life in this world is difficult. We need rest—physically, mentally, and spiritually. This is one reason why vacations and time away are so important. It's also why we need Jesus most of all. Even if we had the opportunity to travel often to the most beautiful places in the world, without Jesus life would be nothing more than an endless pursuit of seeking contentment, peace, and happiness, but never finding them. But, with Jesus, we have the promise of His rest today and the promise of His rest for eternity. Jesus says, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30; ESV).

Wisconsin summers are beautiful. I hope you can enjoy the gift and splendor of God's creation in this special place we call home. And as you spend time with your family and friends on vacation or in your backyard this summer, please spend time with Jesus, too. The beauty of Wisconsin is but a small

foretaste of the beauty and bliss that will be ours for eternity because of Jesus. He gave His life for you, so that you can find rest and peace in Him, both now and forever.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Brian Crane

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### **FROM THE BOARD OF ELDERS**

Parables, the earthly stories with heavenly meanings as Pastor Crane teaches the confirmation students, are meant to be some of the most relatable lessons in the Bible. And it seems purposeful to me that many parables deal with managing our expectations.

The woman rejoices because she finds a lost coin, not a lost fortune. The shepherd tirelessly seeks the one lost sheep, not a whole flock of sheep. A father is overjoyed by the return of his wayward son, despite the inheritance that son has thrown away.

These parables show the joy people find in recovering something or someone they thought was gone forever. They are a reminder of the divine joy our Lord and Savior feels when a lost member of His flock can once again be counted among His children.

I feel like we are also finding our joy in Grace in gaining back some of what once was lost this year.

Our pews have been gradually seeing increases in our members, additions of new members, and visits from non-members as this year has gone on. A small, but faithful, group has kept attending our Thursday night services over the past year.

Do our attendance numbers reach what they were 10 or 20 years ago? No. But what we do see is the blessing of being able to worship together, an opportunity we lost just last year. We have the fellowship of seeing our fellow believers here every week, greeting returning members, or meeting new faces.

The week before Vacation Bible School started, we had two children registered. Over the course of that week, we had 12 more join them. I was excitedly letting people know that we had more than 10 children that would be attending VBS in the week leading up to it. In previous years, that would sound like a disappointingly small group. But after having to cancel VBS in two of the last three years, it feels like a miracle.

We at Grace have known what it feels like to go without. To suffer loss. To miss out on what once was. But I feel an energy in this church as God continues to bless us with His grace and mercy. And I can't wait to see what blessings await us all in the future.

God's blessings,  
Matthew Olson

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**FROM THE SAFETY & SECURITY TEAM:** A friendly reminder to keep your vehicles locked while you're at church. A local church had vehicles broken into during their service recently. Also, the Washington Avenue door to the church will not be used during this construction season. There is currently no sidewalk. Thank you for your understanding!

**2021 FLOWER CHART** still has a few open Sundays available. The cost is **\$27.00** for two bouquets. To reserve a Sunday, please sign your name and the occasion on the sign-up sheet in the narthex. Please make your checks payable to "Grace Lutheran Church" and place in the secretary's box in the Communication Center. Thank you!

## FROM THE BOARD OF PARISH FELLOWSHIP

**National Night Out:** Don't miss this great opportunity to meet our neighbors and celebrate Racine's first responders. A poster with sign-up sheets for volunteers and food donations is located by the coat room. Please call Barb Galis if you have any questions or concerns.



**Ladies of Grace** will meet Friday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, at 12:00 PM at The Country Rose Bakery and Café on Washington Avenue (corner of Highways 20 & 45) in Union Grove.

**Game Day:** Join us for games and fun on Wednesday, August 18<sup>th</sup>. Bring a bag lunch at 12:00 PM; games follow at 1:00 PM.

**Coffee Fellowship:** Stay in touch with friends and family and enjoy a treat or two following Sunday worship.

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## FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1).

We celebrate this month (July) because of the freedoms and liberties our country has afforded us. We are right to do this. We should be thankful for these liberties – the freedom to gather together to worship and to live out what believe in our daily lives.

But freedom and liberty in our age have devolved. It has become a freedom from duty instead of a freedom for it. Indeed, freedom and liberty in our age has turned into licentiousness – a license to do what we want, when we want. This license is a submission again to a yoke of slavery. For freedom as license to do what we desire when we desire it means we are slaves to our desires and slaves to our passions.

Christ died to set us free from our desires. In Holy Baptism, our Old Adam is drowned and put to death along with all sin and evil desires so that a new man may arise and live before God in righteousness and purity. In Christ, we are a new creation. We are set free from the passions of the flesh so that we are free to do our duty and bear fruits of the Spirit.

Our duty is what God calls us to do as members of a family, society, and the Church. God calls us to believe in His Word and gladly hear and learn it. He calls us to pray for all people. He calls us to live in faith toward Him and in fervent love for our neighbor. He calls us to put the gifts He gives to us in His service. God calls parents to provide for their children and raise them in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

And God calls children to honor their parents and provide and care for them when they are no longer able to do so themselves. God calls the government to punish those who do evil and to reward those who do good. He calls citizens to pay their taxes and honor the governing officials as God's servants. He calls pastors to preach and teach the Gospel, repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And He calls hearers to support those who teach them with every good thing.

Christ died to set us free from the works of our selfish flesh, giving us the freedom and liberty to do our duty. Stand firm, then, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

## FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

All children three years old through sixth grade are invited to join our Sunday School classes beginning on **Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup>**, in the downstairs chapel. At Sunday School this year, we will be learning our New Testament stories. We have fun while growing in our faith and learning about our amazing God. Please join us and make Sunday School a part of your family's Sunday routine.

All seventh and eighth graders as well as High School students are encouraged to attend our Sunday morning Youth Bible study class resuming on **Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup>**. This year, we will be digging deeper into God's Word and studying 2 Timothy. Hope to see you there!

### Vacation Bible School

Grace was bursting with energy, enthusiasm, and excitement July 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> as we explored God's Promises on Life's Wild Ride at Splash Canyon Vacation Bible School. After not having VBS for a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was truly a blessing from the Lord to again be able to offer a week of exploring God's promises with the children of our congregation and the community. One week before the first day of VBS, we had two children signed up to attend. We decided to go ahead and still have it and trust that God would bring the children if it was His will. God is good and blessed us with 14 children! Of the 14 children who attended VBS this year, 2 of them are members of Grace, 4 of them attend another LCMS church, 4 of them do not have a church home, and 4 of them have a non-Lutheran church home.

Pastor Crane started and ended VBS each day with the children with a devotion, hymn, and prayer. The children then sang a variety of songs while learning the sign language to go with them. We then went to crafts. During the week, we made baby Moses in a raft, a wooden cross to remind us of the promise God has made to us of eternal life, a cross necklace, and others. After crafts, we split into groups by age and did our Bible Lesson and Bible Challenge. In Bible Challenge, the younger children went on adventures with Eddy the otter, while the older kids did science experiments that reinforced the lesson for each day. All these activities made the children pretty hungry! The kids snacked on "campfires," "smores," "fishing poles," and other goodies. After fueling their bodies with nourishment, we headed outside for games. This year, most of our games were water games!

Vacation Bible School would not be possible without the support of the congregation and volunteers who are so generous with their donations and time. Thank you to Pastor Crane for so faithfully leading us in our devotions. Thank you to Yvonne Blome for teaching the youngest children their Bible Story and Bible Challenge. Thank you to Cindy Cornwell and Lori Vanderheyden for making the snacks each day and helping with anything else that needed to be done. Thank you to Tony and Caleb Deltoro, Matthew Olson, Dawn Friend, and Al Blome for helping out in various ways throughout the week.

Please take a look at the picture board near the coatroom to see all the fun we had at Vacation Bible School this year!

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**ELEVATOR:** As of **July 21<sup>st</sup>**, the balance on our elevator loans stands at **\$272,288.53**.

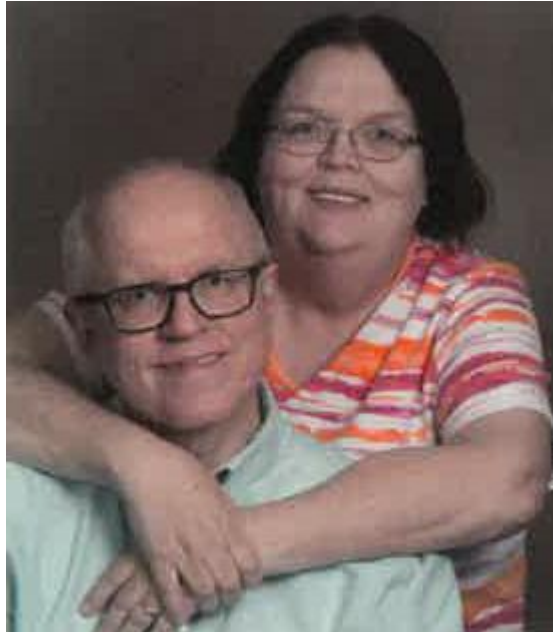
Thank you for your support and generosity!

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**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS** are Monday through Thursday from 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

**THRIVENT CARD REQUESTED:** Material or a \$250 Thrivent card would be greatly appreciated to continue our mission of making quilts, lap robes, and clothing protectors for the homeless and homebound. Please contact Ruth Anger.

## CONNECTION CORNER



**Michael and Jo Ann Brown**

**How is it you came to be a member of Grace?** We were looking for a more traditional Lutheran church than the one we were attending.

**Have you been a member of any other LCMS church?** Mike grew up in St. Mark Lutheran Church in North Tonawanda, NY (a suburb of Buffalo). Mike attended Concordia College in Bronxville, NY (a LCMS college). Jo Ann was born and raised Baptist, joining the Lutheran church when they married. They attended ELCA churches prior to relocating to Grace.

**What is your favorite thing about our church building?** Mike appreciates that it is similar, structurally, to the church he grew up in while living in New York. Jo Ann is appreciative for the construction of the elevator so that the church experience is more accessible to those who might otherwise not be able to attend.

**What do you like about our congregation?** With both Mike and Jo Ann working full-time, they have not been able to delve into the opportunities at Grace as much as they have wanted, but are looking forward to retirement in a few years and being able to be more of a part of the congregation. The members of the congregation have always been friendly and welcoming of their presence, for which they are grateful.

**Are there family members you'd like to share about?** Mike and Jo Ann have three daughters, all grown. Emily, the oldest, is an elementary teacher and the mother of Mike and Jo Ann's two grandchildren. Hannah, the middle child, is an RN at Aurora St. Luke's Hospital in Milwaukee. Rachel, the youngest, is a Ph.D. student (biochemistry) at Stanford University in California. Mike and Jo Ann feel God has blessed the family with members who provide separate, but important, ministries to their fellow man.

**What is one thing you're proud of in your life?** Mike is proud of raising the girls in the Christian faith. Jo Ann is proud of the spiritual gifts God has blessed her with so she can share God's salvation and grace to those she meets throughout her daily life.

## Daily Lectionary Readings August – September 2021

|                       |                                                   |                          |                                                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday, August 1:     | 1 Samuel 17:1-19<br>Acts 26:1-23                  | Wednesday, September 1:  | 1 Kings 18:1-19<br>Ephesians 1:1-23                   |
| Monday, August 2:     | 1 Samuel 17:20-47<br>Acts 26:24-27:8              | Thursday, September 2:   | 1 Kings 18:20-40<br>Ephesians 2:1-22                  |
| Tuesday, August 3:    | 1 Samuel 17:48-18:9<br>Acts 27:9-26               | Friday, September 3:     | 1 Kings 19:1-21<br>Ephesians 3:1-21                   |
| Wednesday, August 4:  | 1 Samuel 18:10-30<br>Acts 27:27-44                | Saturday, September 4:   | 2 Kings 2:1-18<br>Ephesians 4:1-24                    |
| Thursday, August 5:   | 1 Samuel 19:1-24<br>Acts 28:1-15                  | Sunday, September 5:     | 2 Kings 2:19-25, 4:1-7<br>Ephesians 4:25-5:14         |
| Friday, August 6:     | 1 Samuel 20:1-23<br>Acts 28:16-31                 | Monday, September 6:     | 2 Kings 4:8-22, 32-37<br>Ephesians 5:15-33            |
| Saturday, August 7:   | 1 Samuel 20:24-42<br>1 Corinthians 1:1-25         | Tuesday, September 7:    | 2 Kings 4:38-5:8<br>Ephesians 6:1-24                  |
| Sunday, August 8:     | 1 Samuel 24:1-22<br>1 Corinthians 1:26-2:16       | Wednesday, September 8:  | 2 Kings 5:9-27<br>Philippians 1:1-20                  |
| Monday, August 9:     | 1 Samuel 25:1-22<br>1 Corinthians 3:1-23          | Thursday, September 9:   | 2 Kings 6:1-23<br>Philippians 1:21-2:11               |
| Tuesday, August 10:   | 1 Samuel 25:23-44<br>1 Corinthians 4:1-21         | Friday, September 10:    | 2 Kings 9:1-13, 10:18-29<br>Philippians 2:12-30       |
| Wednesday, August 11: | 1 Samuel 26:1-25<br>1 Corinthians 5:1-13          | Saturday, September 11:  | 2 Chronicles 29:1-24<br>Philippians 3:1-21            |
| Thursday, August 12:  | 1 Samuel 28:3-25<br>1 Corinthians 6:1-20          | Sunday, September 12:    | 2 Chronicles 31:1-21<br>Philippians 4:1-23            |
| Friday, August 13:    | 1 Samuel 31:1-13<br>1 Corinthians 7:1-24          | Monday, September 13:    | 2 Chronicles 32:1-22<br>Colossians 1:1-23             |
| Saturday, August 14:  | 2 Samuel 1:1-27<br>1 Corinthians 7:25-40          | Tuesday, September 14:   | 2 Chronicles 33:1-25<br>Colossians 1:24-2:7           |
| Sunday, August 15:    | 2 Samuel 5:1-25<br>1 Corinthians 8:1-13           | Wednesday, September 15: | 2 Chronicles 34:1-4, 8-11, 14-33<br>Colossians 2:8-23 |
| Monday, August 16:    | 2 Samuel 6:1-19<br>1 Corinthians 9:1-23           | Thursday, September 16:  | 2 Chronicles 35:1-7, 16-25<br>Colossians 3:1-25       |
| Tuesday, August 17:   | 2 Samuel 7:1-17<br>1 Corinthians 9:24-10:22       | Friday, September 17:    | 2 Chronicles 36:1-23<br>Colossians 4:1-18             |
| Wednesday, August 18: | 2 Samuel 7:18-29<br>1 Corinthians 10:23-11:16     | Saturday, September 18:  | Nehemiah 1:1-2:10<br>1 Timothy 1:1-20                 |
| Thursday, August 19:  | 2 Samuel 11:1-27<br>1 Corinthians 11:17-34        | Sunday, September 19:    | Nehemiah 2:11-20, 4:1-6<br>1 Timothy 2:1-15           |
| Friday, August 20:    | 2 Samuel 12:1-25<br>1 Corinthians 12:1-13         | Monday, September 20:    | Nehemiah 4:7-23<br>1 Timothy 3:1-16                   |
| Saturday, August 21:  | 1 Kings 1:1-4, 15-35<br>1 Corinthians 12:14-31    | Tuesday, September 21:   | Nehemiah 5:1-16, 6:1-9, 15-16<br>1 Timothy 4:1-16     |
| Sunday, August 22:    | 1 Kings 2:1-27<br>1 Corinthians 13:1-13           | Wednesday, September 22: | Nehemiah 7:1-4, 8:1-18<br>1 Timothy 5:1-16            |
| Monday, August 23:    | 1 Kings 3:1-15<br>2 Corinthians 1:1-22            | Thursday, September 23:  | Nehemiah 9:1-21<br>1 Timothy 5:17-6:2                 |
| Tuesday, August 24:   | 1 Kings 5:1-18<br>2 Corinthians 1:23-2:17         | Friday, September 24:    | Nehemiah 9:22-38<br>1 Timothy 6:3-21                  |
| Wednesday, August 25: | 1 Kings 7:51-8:21<br>2 Corinthians 3:1-18         | Saturday, September 25:  | Malachi 1:1-14<br>Matthew 3:1-17                      |
| Thursday, August 26:  | 1 Kings 8:22-30, 46-63<br>2 Corinthians 4:1-18    | Sunday, September 26:    | Malachi 2:1-3:5<br>Matthew 4:1-11                     |
| Friday, August 27:    | 1 Kings 9:1-9, 10:1-13<br>2 Corinthians 5:1-21    | Monday, September 27:    | Malachi 3:6-4:6<br>Matthew 4:12-25                    |
| Saturday, August 28:  | 1 Kings 11:1-26<br>2 Corinthians 6:1-18           | Tuesday, September 28:   | Deuteronomy 1:1-18<br>Matthew 5:1-20                  |
| Sunday, August 29:    | 1 Kings 11:42-12:19<br>2 Corinthians 7:1-16       | Wednesday, September 29: | Deuteronomy 1:19-36<br>Matthew 5:21-48                |
| Monday, August 30:    | 1 Kings 12:20-13:5, 33-34<br>2 Corinthians 8:1-24 | Thursday, September 30:  | Deuteronomy 1:37-2:15<br>Matthew 6:1-15               |