



HOLY COMMUNION OFFERED EVERY SUNDAY

GraceGram

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



OUR
MISSION

Saved by Grace.
Called to Worship.
Sent to Serve.

May 2016

INSIDE THIS EDITION

From the Pastor's Desk

Welcome to a new church direction

by Pastor Paul Kuhlman

Can you see it? Are you able to make it out? Maybe the community cannot see it yet, but I can, and so can many of the members of Grace. Grace Lutheran is beginning to make a slow turn to move in a new or different direction. Changes are about!

The turn is a definite announcement to everyone that Grace wants to be a church that welcomes the community and is intent on making our presence and message known in Hastings, the county, and the world. The next several months will reveal the change in our outlook and in our ministry. It will begin with a renovation of our building, but it will continue with a renovation of our mission and witness. The time is right now to take notice and gather together as the Body of Christ to witness to our name—Grace.

The change in our building and ministry is not for ourselves but for those not among us—the community. We want to be a welcoming, warm, and carrying community that communicates such an image in our actions, in our words, and in our surroundings. We want everything we do and say, not just say but shout, “We want you to join us in discovering the truth of the Gospel in Christ Jesus. We want you to know that Grace is more than a name, it is the message and the content of our actions!”

Welcome to a new church with a new direction—Grace Lutheran Church. Discover Grace!

- **Constitution Update**
- **Geraniums**
- **Great Gathering of “Stuff”**
- **Vacation Bible School**

A Look @ Next Month—June 2016

Theme: “Green, Green Everywhere”

- **Constitution Update**—possible “First Vote” dates
- **June Building Renovation Plans**—What is next on the docket?
- **Graduate Sunday**—June 12.

Deadline for inclusion in the June GraceGram is May 17, 2016

Send your articles to Victoria Alt at: parishadmin@grace-hastings.org

Living Liturgy—Pentecost—“Easter or something else?”

by Pastor Paul

Pentecost is a major festival of the church, but presents some interesting questions for us. Is Pentecost part of the Easter season, as it is indicated in Sunday and Seasons, the official publication of the ELCA? Or is it the beginning of a new season, a kind of “Pentecost” season, as revealed in the name of the Sundays that follow?

In former days of American Lutheranism (the days of the Service Book and Hymnal—the old red hymnal) or The American Lutheran Hymnal (the old brown hymnal), when we talked about the “different” synods of Lutheranism in America, Pentecost was viewed as its own particular one-Sunday season. The Sundays that followed were considered the Sundays after the Trinity. Pentecost, other than being the day the church was born, carried minor importance in the worship life of the church. I remember more importance placed on Holy Week and Easter than on Pentecost, way back in time.

With the advent of the Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW—the green hymnal), a significant shift began to occur. Inspired by the liturgical research and development that motivated to the publication of the LBW, the Sunday of Pentecost took on new meaning. Pentecost became connected to the Easter season, though its original color “red” remained. The Sundays that followed, excluding Trinity Sunday, were referred to as “Sundays after Pentecost.” Pentecost was remembered not just as the birthday of the church, but as the day it was empowered with the Holy Spirit.

The Sunday of Pentecost actually comes after the 7th Sunday of Easter, which follows the Ascension of Our Lord Father. Ascension Day is the 40th day of Easter, and portrays Jesus leaving his disciples alone to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. For the next 10 days the disciples of Jesus are pondering the significance of Jesus’ resurrection appearances and his ascension. The meaning of these events is only made clear when the Spirit rests upon the disciples on Pentecost morning.

Pentecost Sunday is a remarkable time in the life of the newly-born church. At this point, the disciples begin to understand and cherish the events of Jesus, because the Spirit brings wisdom. From this time onward, the disciples no longer hide out of fear of the authorities, but begin their ministry of expanding the church through their proclamation of Jesus to the world. Pentecost really is the birthday of the church, and thousands join that day.

The Sundays that follow Pentecost have their grounding in the coming of the Holy Spirit. The texts for those Sundays usually focus on the teachings of Jesus. After Pentecost the church celebrates the second half of the liturgical year with the color green, interrupted at times with celebrations of the church’s heroes and saints.

Yet, the gift of Pentecost is the advent of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of the church. Jesus made clear that the Holy Spirit would not bring anything new, but would help the church remember the words and actions of Jesus, and would give the church the courage to extend the his ministry. In fact, Jesus promised that the Spirit would motivate the church to do “greater things than Jesus was able to do.” Pentecost is a great ending to the Easter season, grounding the church in the ministry of the resurrected Christ.

So, is Pentecost part of the Easter season, or is it something else? It obviously establishes the church in the faith and ministry of Jesus. It also begins the “in between” times of the church, the time between the first coming of Jesus and his second coming, and liturgically speaking, it is the time between Jesus’ ascension and the expectant time of Advent. This is the time in which the Church grows to be the visual sign of the Body of Christ through service, sacrifice, witness, and suffering.

How would you answer the question, “Is Pentecost part of Easter, or something else?”

Words from Bishop Satterlee

by Rev. Craig Alan Satterlee, PH.D., Bishop

Our 2016 Synod Assembly is May 15-17 at the Crowne Plaza in Grand Rapids. You can find information at:

<http://mittensynod.server303.com/events/assembly/>

The theme of our assembly is, “For the Life of the World.” My reflection on this theme is on the website and will be in the assembly book. Here I would like to offer some highlights.

MONDAY AFTERNOON TRACKS – On Monday afternoon, the assembly will divide into three tracks that celebrate being a church for the life of the world. I am very excited that leaders within our synod are planning these tracks and that the best I can offer is my “take” on what will happen. Last year, I was wondrously surprised, even amazed. I expect to be this year as well.

The first track—**PRAYER THAT LEADS US TO SEEK JUSTICE IN THE WORLD**—is a spiritual retreat within the assembly in which participants will pray in ways that lead them to share Christ’s love and life in the world through acts of justice and mercy. This is a quiet, meditative time with plenty of silence. Worship will be integral to the retreat.

The second track—**EQUIPPING OUR CONGREGATION FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD**—is a set of seven “affinity groups” in which participants will engage in facilitated conversation on topics that will strengthen congregations’ capacity to be a church for the life of the world. Topics include global engagement, food and water scarcity, helping our children confront and respond to racism, and the refugee crisis plaguing our world. Worship will conclude this track.

In the third track—**MEETING CHRIST IN THE WORLD**—participants will leave the assembly to encounter Christ in the Grand Rapids community. Opportunities include Bethlehem Lutheran Church in downtown Grand Rapids, and Maple Creek, a senior living facility operated by what, at this writing, is still named Lutheran Social Services of Michigan. Worship will begin the track.

ALLED FORWARD TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A PROOCCESS TO DECIDE THE ELCA’S FUTURE DIRECTION— On Tuesday morning, ELCA Representative Rev. Daniel Rift, Director, World Hunger and Disaster Appeal, will lead the assembly in structured conversation aimed at helping our young church—the ELCA is only 28 years old—take a look at where we are as God’s people and try to understand what God has in store for us as we approach the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. We want to create a vision for the future ELCA—as a church with solid foundations excited to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and make a difference in the world locally and globally. We

also desire to be a church that we can be proud to pass on to our children. These conversations are occurring all across our church. You will be able to take the process home and use it in your congregation. You can learn more at <http://elca.org/future>.

WORSHIP – I am particularly excited about worship at this year’s assembly. Sunday’s Evening Praise features the band from our synod day at the ELCA Youth Gathering last summer in Detroit, and reflections from young leaders as the sermon. On Monday afternoon, each track includes a service of Holy Communion that is integral to its theme. We conclude our evening on Monday with the beautiful Prayer Around the Cross for the Healing of the Nations, and our sending Eucharist on Tuesday includes the baptism of James Justin, son of Pastors Jessica Rivera and Justin Walker.

OFFERING— The assembly offerings will be divided between the ELCA’s World Hunger Appeal and our newly established disaster response fund. The situation in Flint helped us to realize the importance of having money available to share quickly when disaster strikes communities on the territory our synod.

And, of course, we will also conduct some business—budget, elections, compensation guidelines, and two resolutions—all for the life of the world!

President’s Perspective

by Doug Neeb

As I get older, one of the things I have to deal with is my inability to do physical things the way I used to. I often lament that a task that would have taken me a few hours of hard work in the past, now takes days to accomplish, and I have to pay the price of sore muscles and joints for an extended period of time. I remember the excitement of competition, the feeling of invincibility, of first love. Years of experience and father time have tempered those intense feeling and I lament their mellowing. In the words of one of my favorite music artist, Bob Seger, I feel like I am running “Against the Wind”.

I sometimes think we at Grace are running against the wind too. Running against the wind has a different meaning to me now than it did when I first heard the song in the 80’s. I now think of the wind as being God’s spirit and running against the wind is not following God’s will. In our church life together we need to find what God is calling us to do and follow him. We have a small group of people who meet every Wednesday night to pray for the direction, to determine where God is leading us into service. We need more people to be involved in this discipline to help direct our church body. When we get this right, and stop running against the wind, we will start moving forward and I am excited to see where this leads us.

Notes from the Veep

by Chris Bush

I recently sat down with Pastor Paul to get some ideas for how I could improve (maybe “start” is a more appropriate word) my daily Bible study and prayer life. I need to make my own faith-building more of a priority in my life, a discipline. He gave me some ideas and I’m going to give them a try.

Later that day, I was preparing the Middle School’s Faith-Building (Sunday School) lesson for the coming Sunday. Our group uses the “Here We Stand” curriculum, which teaches about the Lutheran “flavor” of Christianity. I have found that, even though I have been using this three-year curriculum cycle for at least eight years, thus repeating some lessons, I usually learn quite a bit during my prep work.

That evening, as I planned what points I wanted to discuss with the class on Sunday, the mental light bulb came on: being a Sunday School teacher has helped me build not only the faith of the young people in my class but also my own faith. Now, I’m not trying to get out of the studying I signed on for with Pastor Paul, mind you. But I feel like less of a self-proclaimed slacker now. And now that I’ve acknowledged that I have been doing some faith-building all along (and it didn’t hurt!), I can try another means of spiritual growth and believe it will happen!

Do you serve during worship on Sunday mornings?

by Lorie Gladyness

If you are currently serving or are interested in serving during worship in one of the following roles:

- Usher
- Assistant Minister
- Lector
- Table/Chancel Guild
- Acolyte

Please join us on Saturday, May 21st at 10:00 a.m. for Worship Leadership Training.

The meeting will begin with an introduction from Pastor Paul on worship followed by group breakout sessions. A worship committee member will work with each group reviewing the role. The meeting will be concluded by noon. Please sign up at the bulletin board.

Any questions feel free to contact me, Lorie Gladyness (616-889-7216) or Pastor Paul.

New Member Bulletin Board

“Open the Doors and See All the People”

by Pastor Paul

Do you remember the thing our parents taught us to do with our hands, making a church with a steeple? Then we would sing a short jingle, opening our hands “to see all the people?” Is this jingle still taught these days, or is it just another thing lost to a previous generation?

What is not lost to us at Grace are the faces of new members joining us in mission and ministry. You can see their pictures on the bulletin board, just outside the sanctuary, the “red” bulletin board. Run by and take a look, especially during coffee hour. See if you can locate them during coffee.

Oh, by the way, they will have a hard time getting to know us if we do not wear our **nametags**. I am told that one of our newer visitors was looking for members to ask for some help with a church project. She gave up trying to find them, because only about 60% of us wear our nametags. You may think everyone knows you, but that is not true. When we do not wear our nametags we are saying to our visitors and newer members “we do not want nor need to get to know you.” How is that welcoming?

Just look at the creative people who have come to know us and want to join us. God is good, for sure. Let us give thanks for the new blessings among us, and may we all grow, learn, and change to become the signs of the Gospel Jesus calls us to be.

Brothers in the News

by Joe Longcor

25 years and still just a "PICKIN." Brothers of Grace picked up Grace’s two miles of M-43 North of Hastings. Now in our 25th year of doing God's work in a very small way to save His planet...brothers and a sister totaling seven (7) collected 14 plus bags of trash. A HUUUUUUUUUGE thank you to all that helped and have helped in the past. Next clean-up is in mid-July.

Joe Longcor, [269-623-2348](tel:269-623-2348) if you're interested in helping with a future pick-up date.





Education News

by Lorraine Freedlund

The final Intergenerational gathering for Sunday School will take place on Sunday, May 22, from 9:30 am to 10:30 am in the fellowship hall. All Grace members and youth are welcomed. There will be a theme selected with crafts and food to enjoy.

Community Outreach News

by Bill Freedlund

Our last Community Outreach meeting was opened with a review of Chapter 4 of *Living Lutheran by Dave Daubert*. These are the highlights of the chapter. – – The prime point of being the church together is to allow refocus when we are together so that we can be effective when we are apart. God can finish his work alone but He invites us to help. To be a friend of Jesus is to participate in the helping. The church does not exist primarily to serve its members but to serve as Christ's body out in the world.

The April food drive has been completed with donations going to Barry County Cares and Barry County Food Pantry.

There will be a New Member Welcome Brunch on Sunday, May 15th between the services. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Wendy Johnson presented information about Honduras missions at Grace on April 3rd. Money from the Honduras Fund at Grace has been mailed to this program at the synod office.

Information is being gathered to see if there is any way Grace can help with the Barry County homeless program. More information will be available later.

The Annual Grace Car Show has tentatively been set for August 7th with more information available as the show develops. We will need the support of Grace members in a variety of ways, so please watch for updates.

The committee has sent in initial registration paperwork for Summerfest participation by Grace members on Saturday, August 27th. How we will participate or contribute to this event has yet to be decided by the committee.



Cry Room

by Kate Watson



The Cry Room, located at the back of the sanctuary is being reorganized to serve families who feel the need to temporarily take children out of the sanctuary during worship. It is in transition, but when finished, we plan to have a stocked diaper change station, a selection of toys, and comfortable chairs for caregivers. From the cry room, caregivers can still see and hear worship, but children will have more space for movement and play than when sitting in a pew.



Constitution Update

by Chris Bush

Usually when I envision “the light at the end of the tunnel,” that light is tiny because it’s still a ways off. Well, I am seeing a great beam of brightness as we approach completion of the Constitution document! We are hoping to have this ready for the first congregational vote in late June.

The Constitution Task Force has reviewed the comments received during our forums and made adjustments to the language. We have also nearly completed (as I write this article) the language for the bylaws and continuing resolutions. The revised document will be brought to the Council in May, with a motion to present it to the Congregation for a vote. Assuming that Council votes to send this to the Congregation, we will mail it to the membership and announce the date of a Special Congregation Meeting to vote on it. The package will include a Responsiveness Summary that will show all the comments received and how the Task Force responded to them, to be transparent. We will make sure that we point out areas that are major changes to what we have in the current constitution, AND we will have availability sessions between services for three Sundays before the special meeting, if you would like to talk to a Task Force member (Chris Bush, Margaret Wood, Doug Neeb, and Pastor Paul).

Thank you for your patience and your input throughout this process!

New Website Has Gone Public!

by Pastor Paul

Yes, the new website is up and running. You can see it at the address listed below:



www.grace-hastings.org

For the last several years we have invited you and the public to view us at www.discover-grace.org, yet we have communicated with you all through the email addresses of grace-hastings.org. We have been paying for two domain names, and decided that we could operate with just one. Since our email addresses are harder to change, we have agreed to drop the discover-grace.org name and stay with the one listed above.

Ah, go ahead! Take a look! We have something that is new, pleasant to look at, welcoming to visitors, and yet very useful for members as well. Websites are NOT finished products that one develops and forgets. This is an on-going project, and will be updated, renewed, and transformed throughout the year. Let us know what you think!

Sunday Morning Adult Forum— Samuel 2

by Pastor Paul

The last Sunday for the Adult Forum will be May 22. We will continue our discussion of 2 Samuel. If our discussion ends before May 22, then we will find another topic over which to maul.

Feel free to join us in the Conference Room, between services every Sunday morning. The discussion is always lively, and it is always vital for the faith of our congregation. Through the Word of God we are shaped into the Body of Christ. Jesus invites you to be a part of the shaping process.

Geranium Sales!!! Flowers-a-bloomin’

by Joe Longcor

The Grace Geranium Sale is in full "bloom" and pick up is May 14th, from 8:30 am to noon in the Grace parking lot. All geraniums are RED, strong 5-inch cuttings, and are \$4.75 each. There is a sign-up list on the bulletin board outside the music office at Grace.



Grace’s Youth

by Jana Bishop, Joe Longcor
& Gwen Hansen



High School youth had a lock-in at the church in March and approximately 10 youth attended. Thanks to everyone who helped with the evening, it was a great time. You can check out the pictures on the Grace Facebook page. The High School youth continue to meet every other week on Sunday night from 6-7:30.

Plans are in the works for the Geranium sale on May 14th and we’re hoping to have the homeless event revitalized this year in mid-June.

On April 17th, the High School group had a guest speaker share her personal story as a high school youth making some poor decisions that added to, led to, shaped her faith path and her now strong belief and trust in God. Her testimony and story challenged youth not to give in to peer pressure, to stay true to their values, and to know that God is "always with us" ... we are the ones that step away. His arms are wide open.

Please do hold each of the high school youth in your thoughts as they rush through their busy schedules, plan for college and careers, seek or balance their first jobs, experience young relationships, and find their own paths to God's work. Our future lies in their hands, may they be in our prayers.

Middle School youth had a great time at Rebounderz in Grand Rapids on March 25th. We had a couple extra friends join us for a total of 8 youth. Thanks to the Patton's for helping chaperone and the Barnaart's for the last minute use of their vehicle to transport the group!

We continue to meet every other Sunday at the church from 5-6:30 and are doing a study on Faith, Hope and Luck by Andy Stanley.

Our Middle School group has shown interest in having another shooting event similar to the one we had several years ago so we are working on that.

4 MS Youth worked the 62 mile check station of the Barry-Roubaix with 4 adult volunteers from Grace – a great inter-generational opportunity to be in the community.

God’s Children - Lisa Pohl was poised and ready on March 16th but unfortunately no youngsters were available. She will be ready again on April 20th from 5:30-7 and will have a meal for the kids. We always look forward to seeing more families take advantage of this opportunity!!

Don’t miss May 1st worship service... youth will be providing the Stewardship moment. You won’t want to miss it!

Pentecost Day New Member Brunch

by Pastor Paul

We are happy to say that on May 15th, 2016, Pentecost Sunday, several new members and families will join us at Grace for mission, ministry and worship. As an expression of our joy and honor to have new people join our congregation, we will offer a New Member Brunch between services that Sunday, beginning at 9:00 am.



New members are encouraged to come, and bring friends with them. The members of Grace will load the serving tables with the kind of eats that would make the wealthy blush. During the brunch, the pastor will introduce the new members to the Grace family, they will have an opportunity to say something about themselves, and we will all affirm our commitment together to the work and ministry of the Body of Christ.

The brunch will take place after the 8:00 am service and will begin in the Fellowship Hall in the west end of the building. Members are encouraged to bring their favorite brunch dish to share, and we promise to serve plenty of coffee.

Most of the new members have participated in the pastor's new member class, "Becoming One Body," and have been participating in the worship life of the community for several months. Members' names are presented to the Congregation Council at a regular meeting for approval for membership, and the process is completed with the brunch.

Membership has its privileges, to quote a memorable commercial. Members participate regularly in worship, contribute to the mission of the church, volunteer to serve in areas of need, vote at all congregational meetings, and can serve as leaders on council and committees of the congregation. Most importantly, Jesus invites his members to invite and welcome others to the truth of His words.

To see a complete list of our newest members and their pictures, find the bulletin board in front of the office, just outside the worship space. As you greet them before and after worship, you will discover our newest members bring real and important gifts to Grace. May the Body prosper!

Grace and Hastings Having a Yard Sale

by Pastor Paul

The city of Hastings sponsors a city-wide yard sale every year, and this year the sale takes place on the weekend of May 13-15, 2016. The difference about this year's sale and years past is that this year Grace Lutheran Church will participate in the sale, in a big way. In all, it promises to be a great day of fun, laughs, and finding that item or two your home cannot live without. The sale will be open from 7:00 am until 4:00 pm, both Friday and Saturday.

During the past several weeks in April, the members of Grace have gone room-to-room to clear out the clutter and unnecessary "specialized items" that have taken up room in our building. Much of this "stuff" will be offered in the yard sale, along with the items our members donate from their homes. We will spread the items out on the parking lot on tables and throughout the church building so that the residents of Hastings and the surroundings have a chance to choose and pay a nominal fee for the items they would like to take home.

Furthermore, the Brothers of Grace (a men's service organization of the church) will attend several grills loaded with burgers and dogs that will be offered to any and all attendees who need a special lift in the day and would like to make a donation to the cause. A Bake Sale will also be available to top off burgers and chips with a dessert made by the creative and talented hands of our members.

When asked about what the church would do with the funds that are generated by the yard sale, Pastor Paul replied, "Over the last several months we have begun a renovation project in our building, to make it more welcoming to visitors and members alike. We hope to use the money from the sale to kick-start our carpet and flooring fund. New carpet and flooring will give the building a great new appeal."

Remember, this yard sale is city-wide. So plan to cruise around the whole city and you may just find that one item for which you have been looking for for so long. Plan to spend your lunch money at the sale in Grace's parking lot. You will find a warm welcome, guaranteed!



The Great Gathering of “STUFF”

We need your help

by Pastor Paul

On May 13-14 Grace will open its parking lot and church to the community, offering a host of items they cannot live without. The church has gathered a host of items from our building that we no longer need or use that we will offer for sale.



We want the members of Grace to donate items to this sale to help with the Carpet/Flooring Fund for our building. Look around your home, garage, basement and barn and find items you have wanted to pass on to your neighbors but never found the time to do it. Bring those items to Grace, on May 12, and offer them as a donation to the church for Hastings’ “Greatest Yard Sale in History.”

We also need volunteers to welcome the visitors to our sale, to help keep things straight on the tables, to help carry items to the vehicles of our visitors, to bake goods for the Bake Sale, to help with pricing, and a host of other duties. You can sign up on Sunday morning on the Participation Card or online, at our website. Everyone can help with this project, either by donating items or at the sale itself.

A Yard Sale Team is being called to help organize the event. You will hear from them throughout the preparation time leading up to the sale. EVERYONE is needed, so join the project. Sign up to help and look for items to donate. Let’s make this the *Greatest Yard Sale* in Hastings’ history.

One Year Passed -How Much is Left?

by Pastor Paul

It doesn’t seem like 12 months, but I have been at Grace for a whole year, and what a year it has been—full of challenges, changes, and good news. We have lost some members, we have gained new ones; we have stopped doing some things, and have begun doing new things; we will be putting a clean face on some parts of Grace, and taking down walls in other places. We have accomplished so much in these 12 months, and there are so many things yet to do before my time is up.

Yes, there is an end-time to my stay at Grace. This is not forever, and we knew that when I came last year. I was assigned to Grace by Bishop Satterlee to accomplish the task of an Intentional Interim Pastor, and then move on to a new assignment (or retirement, whichever comes first). I believe that I am now more than halfway through this assignment.

After several turbulent months, I feel that much (certainly not all) of the emotion at the loss of a pastor has begun to temper, and the frustrations that plagued this congregation have been turned to hope and early signs of joy and thanksgiving. We are in a new era at Grace Lutheran Church, Hastings, and there are reasons to be hopeful.

We are looking at making some significant changes to the building, to make it more welcoming and pleasant to those who visit us. I hope and pray that the changes will bring a renewed pride in the gifts God has given us, and a more willing heart to share these gifts with the world.

We are making some significant and much-needed changes, but they are not the last ones we will be asked to make in the months and years to come. We need to change some of the culture of the congregation so that we can be as welcoming and gracious as God wants us to be. Changes will need to be made as we ponder the calling of a new pastor.

During the summer your council will be discussing the formation of a new Transition Team in the early fall to help Grace formulate its congregational profile and develop a new vision for ministry and mission. The task of the Transition Team may take till the end of 2016 to complete, but you can be assured that it will be done well, and will express the missionary purpose of Grace. I would like to see the formation of a Call Committee by early 2017. This timetable has the blessing of the bishop.

Grace is in the position to begin looking forward, no longer backward, for examples of ministry and leadership. Change marks the spirit of the last 12 months, but you haven’t seen anything yet. The process of calling a new permanent pastor will bring more changes so that Grace can deepen and strengthen its commitment to Christ, the Gospel and the world.

We will be selling about 350 plants this year (and about 150 were already sold at this writing) ... sooo ... get your name on the list if you want plants. Funds will be used to support high school youth projects.

If you have any questions, please contact Joe Longcor, H.S. Youth Co-leader, [269-623-2348](tel:269-623-2348)



VBS starts July 10!

by Chris Bush

Why announce in May that Vacation Bible School happens in July?? Well, VBS doesn't just happen – it takes a lot of planning and that's happening NOW! Chris Bush is



strategizing with story, music, craft, game, science, and food leaders so that children can dive deep into God's Word with the "Great Bible Reef" program.

"Hey, can you hear the voice of Jesus calling?" (That's the first line to one of the songs!) Here are just a few ways everyone can help:

- be a group leader, the friendly face that will welcome the children and bring them around to the various activities
- teens (Middle School and High School) can be junior leaders, helping out your group leaders by encouraging and participating with children
- help out with or lead the various activities, whether it's welcoming parents and children to Grace and making sure they are registered and connected with their group or having snacks and beverages ready and waiting for our participants or helping children apply glue and glitter to a craft
- sponsor dinner one of the evenings, to show hospitality and share fellowship
- pray for a Spirit-filled week of safe, fun learning

There are more tasks involved to make VBS happen smoothly each night. Watch the Worship Participation card in the bulletin later in May for an opportunity to volunteer a couple of nights or the whole week (July 10-14, starting in the early evening). Already know how you want to be involved? Let Chris Bush know (517-614-5546).

Thank you!

Church Mice—the many members who have begun decluttering of the church—junk out, space in!

Church musicians—the many musicians of our church who blessed us so very much on Easter Sunday.

Adult Choir—for their wonderful music during Holy Week and Easter Sunday.

Going Out on a Limb with God

Or, How the "Hang in There!" Kitten Is Connected to "The Duke"

by Kate Watson



The Adult Sunday School Class spent a few minutes discussing faithfulness and courage at our last meeting. Faithfulness is one of the 9 fruits of the Holy Spirit that Paul lists for us in his letter to the Galatians.

²² By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

Merriam Webster defines the adjective faithful as "steadfast in affection or allegiance" or "firm in adherence to promises or in observance of duty." As a class, we discussed that some keys to faithfulness are letting go of ourselves and our own ideas (being humble because we seek God's plan, not ours) as well as letting go of the "success" of our faithfulness. We are called to do God's will faithfully. We are not called to meet a metric. There are no "sales goals" in heaven. God will not say when we return to Him, "how many disciples did you make during your life on earth?" No, He's far more likely to say "I am so pleased by every time you did what I asked of you." The reason is because the results of our faithfulness are all in His very capable hands. We do what He asks, and He brings forth the results successfully.

I'm going to cite a different source for the definition of courage: John Wayne. Affectionately known as "The Duke" and a vivid character of my childhood (my Dad loves his movies), he defines courage as "being scared to death, but saddling up anyway." In fact, one of our Sunday School class members shared that she has a poster of the Duke and this quote in her house. I would argue that "saddling up anyway" is a form of self-control, which lands courage right in the midst of the fruits of the spirit.

There are many times God asks us to do things that "scare us to death." It could be anything from talking to someone new about your faith to forgiving someone that has hurt you badly. Or maybe, it's being asked to change something that has been done the same way for decades. The Congregation Council was called to courage immediately upon their

installation last fall. I have been witness to the Holy Spirit guiding us through several issues that scared us to death. During that time I witnessed the Council's faithfulness. We have repeatedly prayed for discernment, met together to listen to the Holy Spirit, and been faithful to where we feel we've been guided. Are we perfect? Certainly not! And please don't mistake what I've written to mean that, but I do believe we have all been mindful of how faithful we can be to mission and ministry and God's promptings. That has taken a great deal of courage this term.

So what are the results of faithfulness accompanied by courage? Often we won't even know or see them, but sometimes God blesses us by giving us a glimpse or a confirmation that we're moving in the right direction. I shared last fall with the council that I felt like God had stopped sending people our way because we had a very deep wound in the unity of our church family. As a congregation, we couldn't be trusted to be examples of peace, love, joy, and the other fruits of the spirit to a bunch of visitors walking through our doors. I felt that as we straightened out some of our issues, and turned to focus on our mission and ministry rather than ourselves, that God would resurrect the unity of our congregation and bring people through the door. I believe that the great group of people (11 family units!) we are about to receive into membership is one of God's little confirmations that we are moving in the right direction. There has also been a lightness and a sense of joy among us when we gather that had previously been absent. Easter this year was as joyous a day as I have seen since I became a member, and I felt a great unity and harmony was present with us.

The coffee hour move from the Fellowship Hall to the Narthex was another decision that took courage from those leading it. In response to that step out on a limb, we've had several people remark about how welcomed they felt. Pastor Berger, from Food for the Poor, mentioned what a pity it is that many churches make you walk all the way to the back corner of their building for coffee, and how welcoming it was for us to have it up front. Another visitor poised to be welcomed into membership at Pentecost remarked that she probably would not have "made it" to membership if it hadn't been for that up-front coffee hour where people talked to her, and she didn't have the option to duck out the door.

So what does this all have to do with that "Hang in There!" Kitten? Well, I believe that faithfulness and courage are being able to see the *unseen* in that poster. When God leads us out on a limb, and we feel like that poor little kitten hanging on for dear life, what we *can't* see are God's hands moving everything around that kitten to work his courage and faithfulness for the good of God's plan. God called him out there, and God's got a plan to be served by his being there. Courage is believing the plan is there even when you

can't see or feel it. Faithfulness is being willing to walk out on the limb without knowing what the plan is.

So, fellow members of GLC, keep listening to God's calling and walking where he asks. I know He has a plan for us, and I know that it is good and prosperous.

Children's Church Pilot Project Has Begun

by Kate Watson

April 17th was the first meeting of Children's Church during the 10:45 worship service. Children met in the elementary Sunday school classroom during the sermon and prayers and were led by volunteers Doug and Diane Neeb in a lesson based on that Sunday's gospel reading from John Chapter 10: *No One Can Snatch Them From My Hand*. The group shared about what it means to belong to God, and what a Good Shepherd does. Then they played Good Shepherd Hide and Seek! In upcoming Sundays, the lessons will include: *God's Love is for EVERYbody*, *The Holy Spirit is Coming!*, and *Paul and Silas in Jail (and Out!)*.

Children's Church is being held in lieu of a Nursery attendant (10:45 service only) through the end of May. We are excited about serving those youth who attend worship, but don't always make it to the Sunday School hour. We are also excited to welcome all children to worship at those services in lieu of having them in the nursery. Children bring a natural God-created wonder and perspective to worship that many of us benefit from. For more on this, take a look at the new "For Parents of Young Children" cards that were recently placed in the pews. There is a great article on the back of the cards about what we might be missing out on when the children don't worship with us. We also hope that these cards will communicate to visiting families that we acknowledge how difficult and scary it can be to attend worship with small children, and that we as a congregation wish to offer our support and minister to them in the midst of this challenge.

If you have any questions, constructive feedback, or wish to volunteer as a leader, contact Kate Watson at 269.205.2462 or kp0027@gmail.com. Lesson plans and materials are provided for the leaders; all you need to bring is a sense of fun and willingness to share your faith perspective with our children.



May Birthdays

5-2	John Fear
5-3	Sharon Varkula
5-9	Cheryl Drumm
5-10	Irene Loughlin
5-13	Kay Howell
5-15	Todd Pontius, Zarek Rudesill
5-17	Russ Trongo
5-19	Melissa Golembeske
5-23	Jan Tossava
5-24	Ann Bolton
5-28	Tim Schoessel

May Anniversaries

5-6	Jane & Bob Power
5-19	John & Teresa Burdick
5-22	Cherie & Bret Clements
5-22	Bill & Lorraine Freedlund
5-24	Bob & Jan Tossava
5-24	Scott & Cindy Olson-Larson
5-30	Tina & Todd Pontius

Memoriam

5-4-2010	John De Broux
5-11-2002	Vern Mosteller
5-16-1990	Homer Bauchman
5-17-1993	Louise Loughlin
5-20-2009	Barb Leary
5-24-2000	Jennifer Rase
5-25-2005	Laurain Sheffield
5-27-1976	Joel Buehl
5-28-1986	Tony Young
5-29-1992	Charles Converse
5-31-1988	Mildred Morgan

In Our Prayers

Continuing Prayers

Ervin Daugherty, Joyce Daugherty's stepson

Shawn Nunnick, Joyce Daugherty's granddaughter

Healthy pregnancies

Jessica Green

Jessica Zimmerman

Births

Military

Kayla Pohl, *daughter of Rob & Lisa Pohl*

Myrina Clements, *daughter of Cherie Clements*

Joshua Wright, *Eve Wright*

Tim Krewson, *grandson of Mary Rider*

Aaron Endsley, Adam Miller, Alyssa Mills, Amber Reid, Andrew Ferguson, Ashley Gillons, Austin Endsley, Ben Curtis, Carl Franson, Charles Krewson, Cole Davis, Dylan Kelmer, Edward Frost, Greg Scott, Jena Harwood, Jon Ingran, Jordan Swank, Josh Lewis, Justin Ogden, Lena Jordon, Noah Daniels, Phil DeVries, Ryan Davis, Spencer Reid, Taylor Gould, Tom Fenoseff, Zackary Green

Companion Synods in Honduras, Papua New Guinea, and Latvia

Nursing home residents . . . Beth Oehler, Dorothy Mayo, Deb Wood, Vivian Allerding

Shut-ins . . . Dave Bolton, Ilene Hilson, Jamie Coplin, Opal Gillons

Grace Lutheran Church

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Our Staff:

Pastor: *Paul Kuhlman*
gracehastingspastor@gmail.com

Parish Admin: *Victoria Alt*
ParishAdmin@grace-hastings.org
Mon – Thurs 8 AM - 3PM

Custodian: *Nathan Freedlund*

Minister of Music: *Cindy Olson*

Choir Accompanists:

Marcia Bowman, Chris Bush

Bell Choir Director: *Kim Domke*

Organist Emeritus: *Donna Buehl*

Executive Committee:

President: *Doug Neeb*

Vice President: *Chris Bush*

Secretary: *Kate Watson*

Treasurer: *Randy Teegardin*



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Winter

(1st Sunday after Labor Day - May)
Sundays @ 8:00 & 10:45 a.m.

Summer

(June – Labor Day)
Sundays @ 8:00 & 10:00 a.m.

5th Sundays

Sunday @ 10:00am

Advent and Lent

Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.

Nursery* and Cry Room are available

*Nursery will not be available at 10:45 service in lieu of
Children's Church during the month of May*

All Ages Faith Building/Sunday School

Winter

(1st Sunday after Labor Day – May)
9:30 AM

5th Sundays

Sunday @ 8:45 am



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Committee Chairs

Brothers of Grace – *Joe Longcor*

Community Outreach – *Bill Freedlund*

Congregational Care – *Margaret Wood*

Faith Building – *Lorraine Freedlund*

Property – *Tom Peck & Phil Poholski*

Sarah Circle – *Kay Howell*

Social Activities – *Diane Neeb*

Stewardship – *Tim Schoessel*

Youth & Family – *Jana Bishop*

Worship – *Lorie Gladyness*