



HOLY COMMUNION OFFERED EVERY SUNDAY

GraceGram

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



May 2017

INSIDE THIS EDITION

From the Pastor's Desk

by Pastor Paul E. Kuhlman

Easter – More Good News

In my family, as I was growing up, when someone was trying to be too funny or thought too highly of himself, we would always say, he/she was, "so full of it." What "it" was I never came to know, but I suppose that this year we could say that May is "so full of Easter." Though the season began in April, all of March is full of Easter.

That is a good thing, though, considering that the message of Easter is hope and good news. On the one hand we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. His faithfulness to the cross, a turning point in the God's salvation plan, is redeemed in the total expression of God's love in Jesus' resurrection. The victory over death is on display at Easter.

But there is more good news! Jesus is the "first-born of the new creation. Jesus' resurrection is a sign and promise that God intends to grant such new life to all of God's people. We heard and received that promise at our baptism; we died with Christ, but we also rose with Christ at Easter. Remember the promise Jesus spoke to Martha during one of our Lenten texts, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

But there is more good news this Easter. Come to worship on all the Easter Sundays of May and discover what other good news God has for you.

- VBS Planning pg 3
- Worship Time Change pg 6
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A Look @ Next Month – June 2017
Theme: "Pentecost—the Gift of the Spirit"

- *Call Committee – report*
- *Nominating Committee– hard at work*
- *Budget Review Meetings – when can we see the new budget?*

*Deadline for inclusion in the June GraceGram is **May 17, 2017.***

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

On the Cover – Easter in the Windows

by Pastor Paul

The Lamb is a symbol I have always enjoyed because of its connection to parts of the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation. Christ was often portrayed as the “new” Lamb that would or was sacrificed in place of the Passover lamb. We know this lamb represents Christ because of the halo of light that circumvents the lamb’s head. The lamb also carries a staff, shaped like a cross with a pennant or flag that also has a cross on it. Of course we remember that Jesus had to carry his own cross to Golgatha, but the pennant reminds us of the victory of Jesus over the cross. The Lamb rests on a book with is probably the Gospel or scripture. Jesus, the Lamb of God, is the source and content of scripture and the Gospel of John. The Lamb is often portrayed as looking back, as if calling the other sheep forward. Jesus, the Lamb was also Jesus the Good Shepherd.



Notes from the Veep

by Chris Bush

I am so excited that our Carpet Fund is nearly HALFWAY to its goal! The estimated cost of the carpet and padding is \$25,000, and we have over \$10,000 collected. We will install the carpet after we finish Phase Two of the renovations. Phase Two will be more complex than Phase One was, so the planners are carefully strategizing on the details. But in the meantime, if you have not made your gift to the Carpet Fund, do so as soon as you can and watch our progress on the bulletin board in the Welcoming Space. The Holy Spirit has moved this congregation toward an exciting, new time in our ministry!

Speaking of ministry, the Mission Endowment Fund (MEF) team recommended, and Council has approved, gifting three areas:

1. The Fund will provide 50% of the cost (up to \$3,950) of a Middle School and High School youth mission trip to Detroit this summer. Much of the work being done in the Motor City is a continuation of the mission work carried out by thousands of youth who attended the 2015 National Youth Gathering there. Want to support the youth even more in this outreach? Talk with Jana Bishop.
2. We will gift the Nashville (MI) youth-outreach program “Two or Three Together” \$250 to help with the costs of providing a Christian-based, safe place for teens to gather, relax, socialize, and be mentored. The leaders of this program will be giving a Temple Talk on Sunday, May 7, at both services. Be sure to welcome them to Grace and ask more questions during coffee hour! We plan to gift this group with another \$250 toward the end of

summer for them to help students get materials for the next school year.

3. The MEF team chose to donate the remainder of the earning, \$2,935, to the Carpet Fund, to enhance Grace’s ministry of hospitality and welcoming the stranger. Although a request had been received to make a donation of \$4,000 to Family Promise of Barry County, our discussion with Vision Team members led to a decision that Vision Funds would go toward Family Promise, as ministry for the homeless in Barry County was one of the specific goals on the Vision Team’s list.

(Heavy sigh.) After all that work on the constitution! The ELCA has made amendments to the “Model Constitution for Congregations,” on which we based the language of our updated document. At first glance, the amendments do not appear to be major changes, however, our Council will be reviewing them to learn how the new language may affect Grace’s constitution. You will hear more about this leading up to the annual meeting, since the congregation must vote on whether we accept the amendments into our document.

Victoria’s Vacation in June

The first days of June, 3-16, Victoria will be on vacation, a much earned vacation. That means we are down help in the office.

If anyone would be available to spend a few hours a day, 9 am – 12 noon, on any of the days from Monday through Thursday of Victoria’s vacation to answer the phone, get the mail and answer questions for visitors, please contact Pastor Paul as soon as you can.



Summer Reading List

by Pastor Paul

Well, I guess few have read any books they would like to recommend, or this issue just did not spark the interest I thought it might. I know that most of you are pretty heavy readers, and I was hoping you would be willing to share a few titles with us. The following are a handful of books two people suggested. Enjoy!

The Undoing of St. Silvanus; by Beth Moore

Thrift Store Saints; by Jane Knuth

Accidental Saints; by Nadia Bolz Weber

Martin Luther: A Life; by James A. Nestingen

Letters from a Skeptic; by Dr. Gregory A. Boyd and Edward K. Boyd

The Waiting Father; by Helmut Thielicke (you can find copies on www.abebooks.com)

In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day; Mark Batterson



VBS Planning for 2017

by Pastor Paul

A few things have been settled concerning Grace's VBS Program, 2017: The date is set for August 7-10; it will last four days, but begin on a Monday rather than a Sunday; the program begins each day at 5:30 pm and will end at 8:00 pm; parents will be invited to the dinners each day, and will begin for some at 5:15 pm; and the theme for this year is "National Parks."

We will need volunteers for certain parts of the program, so when the signup sheet appears or you see the opportunity to offer your help on the back of the Participation Card on Sunday, be sure you step up and step forward. This program is only as successful as the number of members who volunteer.



An attempt was made to invite other congregations of the community to plan a village-wide VBS program, but we were not successful in this endeavor. We will try again next year.



May Birthdays

- 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
- 5-23 Myles Rosenberger, Molly Rosenberger
- 5-24 Ann Bolton, Angela Pruitt
- 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

Thank you!

1. Everyone who helped last month with the Renovation Project.
2. **Worship Committee** for their excellent work in putting together the services for Holy Week.
3. All those who participated in the Cross Walk and contributed food for the refreshments.
4. For all those who gave their time and food for the Easter morning Breakfast and Egg Hunt. Outstanding!!!



Reformation Memories

by Pastor Paul

As we know and have learned, the 1520's were difficult and rapidly changing times for Luther and for Christendom. Luther himself experienced many changes in his life; an empty cloister, marriage, children, loss of an infant child, and health issues. He suffered serious health issues such as kidney stones and a mild heart attack, as well as depression, religious anxiety, and fear of his own mortality. Christendom was under attack from the Turks in the east, and religious divisions throughout the empire. These were certainly times that could "try men's souls."



Be clear, Luther was a Catholic, and he longed to keep the church united and favored remaining in the church. Nonetheless, Luther was forced to take steps that would move him and the followers toward a different direction. By 1525, it was becoming evident to Luther that something had to be done with the Latin Mass, the single most important element in Christendom. Luther made some changes that would become very significant in moving the Lutheran movement toward a different direction. He eliminated most of the references to "sacrifice" in his new German Mass, believing that humanity cannot offer any meaningful sacrifice to God, and that the church cannot "relive" or "perform again" the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for the redemption of humanity was one time and permanent. Luther believed that worship was not doing something for God, but experiencing God's gifts of grace and love through word, sacrament, and the community.

There were many challenges to Luther's new German Mass, many coming from his colleagues in Wittenberg. They questioned Luther's switch to German, the use of so many hymns in the new mass, and most importantly, the return to giving both the bread and the wine to participants in Holy Communion. These reforms were met with strong criticism throughout Christendom, since the Latin Mass, used throughout the centuries and throughout Christendom, was the one thing that made the church "one." The emperor, Charles V, looked past the theological implications of Luther's writings, but always challenged Luther's "corruption" of the Latin Mass.

The Lutheran or Reformation was still local and provisional by 1526, but Luther and many of his colleagues began to see that something needed to be done to care for the parishes affected by the movement, until the differences with the church could be settled. They resolved to establish visitation teams to visit the churches of the movement. The teams were usually made up of two theologians and two "canon" lawyers who would evaluate the parishes and make recommendations for reforms.

What the visitation teams discovered was disconcerting and challenging. Drunkenness among clergy, promiscuous and adulterous clergy, and the breakdown of the rule of celibacy were the prominent issues in the parishes. The women who became involved in these "illicit" relationships had no recourse if things went bad, and the children became outcasts in the community. Erasmus' earlier challenge to Luther was coming to light, that Luther's preaching on the freedom of the Gospel would lead to moral degeneracy. The problem facing the movement, Luther and his followers, was how to continue to preach the Gospel AND maintain a moral structure and character.

Luther said of the dilemma the movement was facing, "The world is like a drunken peasant trying to mount a horse. If he gets up one side, he falls off the other." What became evident to the reformers was a need to "lean a bit to the other side." Philip Melancthon, the closest reformer to Luther, revealed in a writing, *The Instructions for Parish Visitors*, that the role of the preachers were to make the law of God clear to those violating the moral law of infidelity and promiscuity as leaders of the church. Johann Agricola, the third leader of the Reformation in Wittenberg, argued that frightening the clergy with legal righteousness would not build faith. Johann believed that more of the goodness of the Gospel and its blessings would cause the clergy to want to change and be more like Christ.

The issue was discussed and nearly broke into open hostility between the different parties. Luther believed that both Melancthon and Agricola were only half right. Melancthon wanted the law to do what Christ could not do, while Agricola wanted Christ to make some laws. Luther wrote that the church had two jobs to do—the first was to, as always, proclaim the Gospel in word and sacrament; the second was to make clear the needs and role of the law while the church was still present in a world of sin and death.

The results of the visits to the parishes of the Reformation also led Luther to write the *Small* and *Large Catechisms*. The reformers found the spiritual life and knowledge base of the members and clergy of the congregations to be so bad, yet they were baptized and received the benefits of the sacraments. Luther decided to develop materials for instructions of the basics of the Christian faith for children, schools, parents and teachers. The *Small Catechism* was written for parents to instruct their children. The *Large Catechism* was written for preachers and teachers in the local schools. The *Large Catechism* is called that because it is longer than the *Small Catechism*. Both catechisms share a common format: The Ten Commandments come first, followed by the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

How Well Do You Know the Reformation?

by Pastor Paul

TRUE
 FALSE

1. T or F Luther was always the picture of health. He believed that he needed to maintain good health as an example for those who followed him.
2. T or F Luther longed to separate from the Catholic church and establish a church that would bear his name.
3. T or F The first liturgical changes made by Luther were minor in nature, except for his efforts to eliminate all references to the “sacrifice” in the liturgy of the church.
4. T or F Emperor Charles V agreed with Luther that the liturgy of the church needed reform.
5. T or F Recognizing that something needed to be done to attend to the churches of the reformation movement, Luther and his colleagues decided to visit the churches and make recommendations for changes.
6. T or F The main issue that confronted the reformers after they visited the churches of the reformation movement was how to deal with the problems and still preach the good news of the gospel.
7. T or F During the visitation of the reformation parishes the visitation teams discovered that the clergy were well prepared and fine examples of Christian morality.
8. T or F The Small and Large Catechisms were written by Luther to help the parents and children to understand and teach the basics of the Christian faith.
9. T or F The Large Catechism was written by Luther to help parents and teachers explain the faith to the children under their charge.
10. T or F The Small Catechism bears the title, “small” because it had to be printed in small type in order to save money on printing.

Answers appear on page 6.



The Bishop's Message

by The Rev. Craig Alan Satterlee, Ph.D., Bishop

Holy Saturday There is something eerie about our newsletter arriving in your inbox on Holy Saturday (April 15). Holy Saturday, as opposed to the Easter Vigil, is a time of waiting between Jesus' death on the cross and his glorious resurrection. Like Scripture's teaching on death itself, the readings appointed for this day provide different, even conflicting, perspectives on what happened to Jesus during the time that he lay bound by death in the tomb. With so much of what is happening in the world—hate crimes, chemical warfare, and another school shooting—so far removed from sunrise and lilies and, “Christ is risen indeed,” perhaps we would do well to take some time this Holy Saturday and intentionally reflect on Christ lying dead in the tomb.

On Holy Saturday, we can almost hear Jesus say, “God has made me sit in darkness like the dead of long ago. God has walled me about so that I cannot escape” (Lamentations 3:6-7). Yet, this is surprising since the speaker in Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24 offers a first-person description of his own horrendous suffering and a litany of God's deliberate destructive actions, specifically against this man himself. The speaker's suffering is intimate, personal, and anguished. If we imagine the speaker to be Jesus, the good news is that Jesus knows what it is to be so isolated, abandoned, and encircled so that there is no way out except by being set free. Even more, the speaker knows what it is to suffer at the hands of a God who lashes out, besieges with bitterness, isolates and imprisons, and refuses to hear prayer. Words that we heard on Palm Sunday resound: “And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” (Matthew 27:46). This is a God that too many too often encounter and experience. Imprisoned by death in the tomb, the speaker nonetheless dares to hope in this God, expecting this God to save him. This Jesus, who knows personal affliction and experiences God as his enemy, hopes in God's promise, which is sometimes all that we have.

Almost as an answer to Job's question and ours—“If mortals die, will they live again?” (14:14)—First Peter 4:1-8 proclaims the good news that not even the dead are beyond salvation in Jesus Christ. Paraphrasing John's Gospel, the dead are among those Jesus draws to himself when he is lifted up from the earth on the cross. According to First Peter, the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, “so that... they might live in the Spirit as God does” (4:6). While scholars may debate what First Peter really means by “the dead,” the good news on Holy Saturday is the hope that, in Christ, those who have died will receive new life through the gospel. The gospel is Christ's suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension as the motivation for the lives

of faithful Christians. As is true for the rest of Holy Week, the emphasis here is on “since ... Christ suffered in the flesh” (v. 1), rather than “arm yourselves ... to live” (vv. 1-2). More than suffering physically, Christ suffered in the world dominated by human desire, to triumph over human desire, live by the will of God, and battle against the forces of human desire. “The end of all things is near” (v. 7), for the dead as well as the living.

The gospel reading appointed for this day— either Matthew 27:57-66 or John 19:38-42—narrate Jesus’ burial by Joseph of Arimathea. The Matthean account was read on Passion Sunday and the Johannine account on Good Friday. On those days, Jesus’ burial is rightly overshadowed by the Crucifixion. Or, with hints of Jesus’ resurrection included in both accounts, Jesus’ burial might be reduced to a necessary stop on the journey from cross to empty tomb. Holy Saturday invites the Church to consider the significance of Jesus’ burial.

Joseph of Arimathea makes an important declaration by requesting Jesus’ body from Pilate, preparing it for burial, and laying it in a new tomb. Jesus had just been condemned and executed as an enemy of both God and the Empire. Joseph’s gesture might be interpreted as both blasphemy and treason. Joseph buries Jesus honorably, lavishly, royally. In Matthew’s account, a “rich” disciple wraps Jesus in a “clean” linen cloth and lays it “in his own new tomb” that is sealed with a “large” stone. In John’s account, Jesus is buried as a king. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus anoint Jesus’ body with a very large amount of myrrh and aloes, wrap it in linen cloths, and place Jesus in a new tomb. The manner in which Jesus is buried points beyond shame and humiliation to Jesus’ glorification and victory on the cross.

Now, perhaps we are a bit more prepared to keep the Great Vigil and to celebrate the resurrection dawn.

For the gifted and dedicated saints who serve the North West Lower Michigan Synod, happy Easter!

Worship Service Time Change



Remember, May 28th is the last Sunday for our regular Sunday worship schedule: 8:00 & 10:45 am. Beginning on June 4, the first Sunday of the month, we adopt the summer Sunday worship schedule: 8:00 & 10:00 am.

Answers to questions on page 5

How Well Do You Know the Reformation?

1. False Luther was not one to take care of himself, actually suffering a heart attack during his ministry.
2. False Luther did not want to separate the church and he did not appreciate his movement bearing his name.
3. True The most significant change in the liturgy of the church by Luther was removing all references to sacrifice. Beyond that, Luther preferred to keep the liturgy in tact.
4. False Charles V’s main challenge to Luther was over Luther’s changes to a liturgy that actually united the church before Luther changed it.
5. True The visitation teams managed to identify many serious needs and serious problems facing the churches and clergy of the movement.
6. True This issue cause great consternation among the reformers and threatened to divide them.
7. False They discovered just the opposite—promiscuous clergy and drunkenness among the clergy were several of the more serious problems found among the majority of the clergy of the reformation.
8. True Absolutely.
- 9 True This document also helped adults to more clearly and deeply understand basic Christian faith.
- 10 False The Large Catechism is a much longer explanation of the same topics found in the Small Catechism. So The Small Catechism is “small” because it is shorter than the larger catechism.

Our Prayers for

Healthy pregnancy – Danielle Gorman & Jessica Bakhuyzen

Nursing home residents – Dorothy Mayo, Deb Wood, Vivian Allerding

Shut-ins – Dave Bolton, Ilene Hilson, Jamie Coplin, Opal Gillions, Shirley Smith

Military members – Phil DeVries

Grace Lutheran Church

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gracehastingspastor@gmail.com

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

Minister of Music: *Cindy Olson*

Bell Choir Director: *Kim Domke*

Custodian: *Nathan Freedlund*

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

5th Sundays
Sunday @ 10:00am

Children's Church

1st Sunday after Labor Day – May
10:45 AM



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.

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Vice President: *Chris Bush*

Secretary: *Kate Watson*

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Margaret Wood – Congregational Care

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Kay Howell – Community Outreach

Diane Neeb – Social Activities

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