

PASTORS THOUGHTS



Dear Sisters, and Brothers of the Grace-Bethel Cooperative Parish.



As I write this letter we are just finishing up a rehearsal for the children's Christmas program; our young people will share the brightness of the Christmas story tomorrow morning; the 4th Sunday of Advent. A story that is inspiring, amazing, and filled with the wonder, and hope of what can be.

Jesus; Emmanuel; God with us. We will celebrate his birth again in an afternoon worship on Christmas Eve; and on Christmas day we will share the joy, the sadness, the hope, the fear, the miracle of God's love for us with family, and friends. This event is not just one of opening presents, and enjoying family meals; it is also an occasion to ponder who this child is in our own hearts, spirits, and lives.

You see as wonderful as opening presents, and sharing in yummy food with family is; this time can remind us of those who are no longer here to share the moments with. It gives us pause to reflect on God's love, and work in our lives.

My prayer for all of you is that this season brings the confidence that only comes with the birth and resurrection hope of the Christ. The Christ who was born in the most unlikely of places, lived a life that stirs us to love our neighbors, and died the death of a criminal because of the radical resurrection life he lived. It is the life we are called to as gospel people.

May Christmas inspire each of us to live into the possibilities of who we are created to be, and to be encouraged in the times, moments, opportunities, and relationships gifted to us.

"Arise, and shine your light has come!" A bright and blessed Christmas to all!

Pastor Ann

The Gift That Keeps Giving

Have you ever received a gift that just keeps on giving? Sloganeers love to invoke this phrase in advertisements to entice gift givers with the promise of a gift so good that it will unleash its original sense of excitement long-term. In most cases we can spot the sales pitch, but in other cases we may have received gifts we cherish so much that they truly do feel like they "keep on giving." It might be a cozy sweater you've worn until it's pilled and tattered, or a painting you look at every day, given to you by a friend. Maybe it's a tool or appliance that has never ceased to amaze you with its versatility, or a book you've read multiple times and can't stop talking about.

Today's gospel describes the gift of Jesus—his life, his work, his words, and his actions for us and for our salvation. "From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace," the gospel writer gushes (John 1:16). These words flow from the witness of those who followed Jesus and experienced his presence as a gift that never stopped giving. As the disciples watched him transform the lives of person after person and community after community, they experienced ever new wonders at his side. The Gospel of John aims to pass the fullness of all these gifts to other communities, places, and times so that the grace made known in Christ may never stop giving.

As you gather in Christian community today, you are invited to participate in the collective witness of the church—in words shared, hymns sung, prayers lifted up, bread broken, wine poured, and the declaration of the mystery of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Today the presence of Jesus Christ continues to give, pouring out grace upon grace on all those gathered, so that this assembly might also become Christ's witnesses in the world.

Stand by Me

Jesus stands in the shallows of the Jordan River, his feet in the mud. Wading toward John the Baptist, he is surrounded by the confused, the wandering, the lost, the sad, the broken, the fearful. People like us. They come, confessing their sin and hoping it is still possible to change their lives and know the fullness of God filling them.

Jesus does not come to John to repent or confess sin, but to take his place in the drama of God’s saving love. His baptism is an act of commitment to God’s holy purpose. A great story is unfolding, in which he and John must play their parts: John prepared the way, calling people to renew their commitment to live as God’s chosen ones and to get ready, for the Lord was coming to them. Jesus’ place is to stand there, among and with sinners who lose their way and forget who they are.

Jesus had a mission to fulfill that is written into the names by which we know him. His very name, *Jesus*, means “God saves” (Matt. 1:21). He comes into the world to fulfill God’s promise of one who would be Emmanuel, “God with us” (Matt. 1:23). And here he is, already at his baptism—*with us*. He fulfills all righteousness by revealing that the Holy One is with us “always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20), no matter our struggles or stage of life.

The divine voice tells us what we need to know: “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” The Beloved One comes to stand with us, that all the love in him may flow into our hearts, filling us with the fullness of God’s love. Our prayer today is simple: “Stand by me, Lord Jesus. Stand by me.”

Ladies of Grace Activities :

January 9th —9:00 AM—Business Meeting. Hostess: Rita Galloway Lunch: Blanquitos San Benito.

January 16th—9:00 AM--Bible Study. Leader: Flora Gunderson Hostess: Barb Lomelino

January 19th—10:00 AM—Winter Texan Appreciation Brunch

January 23rd—9:00 AM—Prayer Shawl

The women are collecting children’s underwear to take to Maggies House. Please bring donations to Parish Hall.



Notes from the Office: Office Closed January 1st **HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!**

Installation of Grace’s new Council members will be January 5th.

Council Meeting will be January 11th @ 10:00 AM

Our ‘Noisy Offering’ will be on January 12th.

The sign up sheets for worship servers is in the narthex please take time to sign up for any service you can help serve. Thanks!!!

Newsletter updates due January 27th.

Suzanne will be updating the directory for 2020. There are clipboards in the Narthex with name, address, phone number and email (if avail) please make sure the information is correct or make changes as needed.

FOR SUPER BOWL 2020 WE WILL BE DOING SOMETHING DIFFERENT!!!!

We are going to have two boxes in the narthex one for nfl and one for afl. We would like to collect monetary donations for which ever team you think will win. Lets see which team can raise the most money!!

We also want everyone to bring a can of soup each Sunday in January. All proceeds will go to local food pantry.



Hailey Rivera	1
Judy Denato	2
Blake Ramsey	2
Phyllis McKee	14
Wally Krueger	21
Betty Domask	23
Pam Ramsey	26
Orville & Bethine	30
Roger & Becky Morken	31

If we missed anyone PLEASE contact the office.

AMONG THOSE FOR WHOM WE PRAY ARE:

Congregation members: **Sherry Brooks, Edna Gross, Marvel Devine, Gary Albertson, Wally Krueger, Jeana Lute, Frank Sommerfeldt, Bonnie Morton, Virginia Anderson.**

Family members: **Connie Dawe, Mason Lomelino, Karen Carmichael, Frances Ballard, Darwin Gunderson, Shane Gray, Bruce Johnson, Lydia Gutierrez, Janis Hunt, Rosalinda Rodriguez, Helen Gray, Barb Lute, Barb Fitzpatrick.**

Congregation friends: **Jason McGinnis, Mason Spradling, Al Lundy, Cheryl Dear, Luanne Ruffle, Carolyn Pierce, Donald Wernecke, Michael Sanchez, Judy Schorman, Sandi Jaeger.**

Those who serve: **Dustin Dunbar, Adam Troy Gutierrez.**



PRAYER CHAIN 2019

Phyllis McKee	425-5776	Elaine Krueger	428-2895
Carol Heesch	564-1031	Betty Longoria	970-2053
Barbara Lomelino	357-1490	Sherry Brooks	797-2615
Jeana Lute	402-720-9431		



The rock is often used as a symbol of the Lord, our strength and firm foundation. A cross rising from the rock echoes many Bible verses that proclaim Christ as the rock of salvation; for example, "He alone is my rock and my salvation ..." (Psalm 62:2, ESV).

Sunday School—After worship.

Confirmation Class—Begin January 22nd



PANTRY NEEDS

- Pasta Noodles
- Canned Tuna
- Applesauce
- Oatmeal
- Snack Bars
- Juice
- Toilet Tissue



A prayer for the journey

The following prayer, almost 1,000 years old, was written for pilgrims walking the Camino de Santiago (the Way of St. James) — 500 miles across northern Spain. Use this adaption as you journey into the new year:

God, you called your servant Abraham from Ur in Chaldea, watching over him in all his wanderings, and guided the Hebrew people as they crossed the desert. Guard your children, who seek to grow in you this year. Be their companion on the way, their guide at the crossroads, their strength in weariness, their defense in dangers, their shelter on the path, their shade in the heat, their light in the darkness, their comfort in discouragement, and the firmness of their intentions. Through your guidance, may they be enriched with grace and virtue, and be filled with salutary and lasting joy.

—from the 12th-century Codex Calixtinus

How to find peace

Blessed are the single-hearted, for they shall enjoy much peace. If you refuse to be hurried and pressed, if you stay your soul on God, nothing can keep you from that clearness of spirit which is life and peace. In that stillness you will know what his will is.

—Amy Carmichael

Love in action

Martin Luther King Jr., whose life and legacy we honor this month, spoke often about the power of love. In fact, he equated the practice of nonviolence with “absolute commitment to the way of love.”

Love, declared the minister and activist, “is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.” And, he said, anyone who’s “devoid of the power to love” is “devoid of the power to forgive.”

King distinguished between true love and “empty sentimentalism,” however. He taught — and showed — that love is “the active outpouring of one’s whole being into the being of another.”

Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross is the ultimate “active outpouring” of love, and we can choose to follow his example daily.

“Because of Calvary I’m free to choose,” writes Max Lucado in *When God Whispers Your Name*. “No occasion justifies hatred; no injustice warrants bitterness. I choose love. Today I will love God and what God loves.”

Bible Quiz



According to Matthew, who was present at Jesus’ baptism? (Choose as many as apply.)

- A. John the Baptist
- B. The Spirit of God
- C. Jesus’ mother, Mary
- D. His first disciples

Answer: A and B (See Matthew 3:13-17.)

**GRACE EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELCA**

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Deadline for the February
Newsletter is Monday January 27th.
Please get all information to the
church office, secretary@gelelca.org,
or the office mailbox.

THANKS

The February Newsletter will be
ready by email Friday January 31st
and in the Narthex Sunday February
2nd.

We're on the Web
<http://www.gelelca.org>
We are also on face book!!



MISSION STATEMENT

God's purpose for Grace
Lutheran Church is:
Welcome to Grace,
Welcome the Message.

Principle Values:
Jesus is Lord
Everyone is welcome.
All serve in different
ways.
Seek and share the
message.
God's love is life
changing.

2020 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Schlossnagle, Ann	Pastor	503-707-7406
Demro, Jan		956-497-6950
Morton, Ron		956-873-1312
Longoria, Betty		956-970-2053
Morton, Bonnie	Treasurer	956-226-7301
Kester, Debi		956-202-5958
Lomelino, Barb		
Poulos, Ann		
Ramsey, Pam		



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



SERVICE SCHEDULE

	January 5	January 12	January 19	January 26
Ushers	Floyd & Barb Lomelino	Floyd & Barb Lomelino	Floyd & Barb Lomelino	Floyd & Barb Lomelino
Lector	Ron Oestmann	Ron Oestmann	Ron Oestmann	Ron Oestmann
Acolyte	Congregational Youth	Congregational Youth	Congregational Youth	Congregational Youth
Altar Guild	Carol Heesch	Carol Heesch	Carol Heesch	Carol Heesch

PUZZLE PAGE

Bible Wordsearch

The Trial of Jesus

Wordsearch 292

Matt.26:50-75

M G N I V I L S A S P O K E N
K E E R U T U F R I G H T W L
C R O W E D Y E O E C U O R R
F D E T R E S E D H H R E P I
S E R V A N T L R R T C C R G
H D R A W Y A I C H O H A I F
T E B E T A S L Y E T W F E A
A L S H B T N A O E H B S S T
E L G S S E G G R O I R R T H
D I H B N I L A E T K E S I E
M F U E V O Z L T L D B D P R
N L I E A A I E I L S U U E O
C U S S N V R G E O E I O T A
U F P O T L E N E U N L L E T
T P E W Y S S N F L E D C R H

ABLE ANGELS
CHRIST BITTERLY
CLUBS CLOUDS
DEATH CROWED
DRAW DESERTED
FACE ELDERS
FISTS FATHER
FLED FULFILLED
GIRL FUTURE
GIVES GALILEE
LIVING HEAVEN
LOOK LEGIONS
MIGHTY NAZARETH
OATH REBELLION
PETER REBUILD
PRIEST SERVANT
RIGHT SPOKEN
SWORD TEACHERS
WEPT WORTHY

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

MORE PUZZLES AT:

<http://biblewordgames.com>

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Each day remember this: "I am a child of God.
That is how God sees me in Christ."