

I Am the Gate

As he prepared to return home near the end of three years in a state prison, the man wrote to the church where, before his arrest, he had worshiped, attended Bible study, and played guitar in the music program. While an inmate, he went to chapel and showed up at Bible study on a regular basis. He was ready and hopeful to return to his faith community. Days before his release, he received a letter from the church: “We cannot allow you to fellowship with us until our mission committee meets to decide whether to admit you.”

“I am the gate,” says Jesus, the shepherd and the bringer of life. Jesus is the one who opens the way. For all who suffer rejection—barred from entrance and denied community because of who they are, how they behave, where they come from, what they’ve done, how they look, or what they believe—it is shocking to hear Jesus say, “I am the gate, and I came to bring abundant life to all my sheep.” We may think, *Really? Me? Can it be so?*

To the religious leaders who saw themselves as gatekeepers—the deniers and allowers, the definers and approvers, the deciders and assigners—Jesus voiced his graced rebuke: “No! I am the gate, and the gate is open. All with ears listening and hearts aching for mercy, come this way. Enough of those who kill your hope, destroy your spirit, steal your worth! Thieves and bandits they are, in righteous disguise.”

And to the church, Jesus voices this nonnegotiable word: “I am the gate. The gate is open, bringing goodness and mercy to all. There are no exceptions and no exclusions. So, my sheep, pour my wine, break my bread, splash my water, serve my meal, spend my life, be my body, welcome all as my own. The gate is open.”

Jesus’ Prayer

Decades beyond her early childhood, from time to time she repeats the bedtime prayer she has never forgotten: “Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. Guard me, Jesus, through the night, and wake me with the morning light.” What then follows is the threading of names, precious like pearls, on a string. “God bless . . .,” she begins, then lists mom, dad, grandmas, grandpas, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, all by name. Then teachers she liked, friends nearby and hungry children afar, the sick neighbor, the old man in the library, the blind lady at the post office, the lifeguard at the beach. Sometimes there is an “Amen,” but often sleep comes first.

Jesus washes the feet of his disciples, shares a farewell meal with them, and teaches for the last time about his way of love. He promises again the presence of the Spirit and the coming of God’s peace. Then, at the end of the day, he prays that God will be with his followers—and he prays for each of us. Jesus prays for his disciples, that they might know the love of God just as much as they know the real person of Jesus.

Jesus’ prayer is also a prayer for unity. Jesus prays that we may be one just as he and God are one. Jesus prays, “All mine are yours, and yours are mine” (John 17:10). Following Jesus’ example, we also may pray for the unity of all people with God, and the reconciling of peoples and all creation. We pray that what the world rejects God will receive. We pray that what the world divides God will make one. We pray that what the world threatens God will protect.

May we be comforted by Jesus’ prayer for us, and may we be so emboldened to pray ourselves for the blessing, presence, and unity found in our risen Lord and Savior.



A prayer for Memorial Day

We remember, O Lord, all those people throughout the years who have made the supreme sacrifice for our country, for liberty, for us. Whenever we breathe the air of freedom or claim the right to justice or enjoy the privilege of worship, fill us with gratitude for those who selflessly gave the last full measure of devotion — their very lives — for our benefit.

May these brave men and women now know the joy of eternity and your presence. And may the families of the fallen receive comfort and peace amid their grief. Help us as we minister to their needs. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“God is not a workaholic”

In *Sabbath as Resistance*, Walter Brueggemann likens our consumerism-driven society to ancient Egypt. Hebrew slaves made bricks for storehouses for the wealth of the upper class, at the top of which sat Pharaoh. Now, as then, the push is always to do more, earn more, make more; we worry there’s not enough time or money. “In this system there can be no Sabbath rest,” says the author.

Yet, at the culmination of creation, “God rested on the seventh day. God did not show up to do more. ... God did not come and check on creation in anxiety to be sure it was all working.” And “because the creator is anxiety-free,” we can be too. “God is not a workaholic,” writes Brueggemann. “God does not keep jacking up production schedules. To the contrary, God rests, confident, serene, at peace.” God’s rest, in turn, gives us — who are created in his image — a “restfulness that contradicts the ‘driveness’” of Pharaoh’s Egypt and modern society.

Of patience and pruning

In many parts of America, Mother’s Day is the recommended date for planting flowers outdoors. Subjecting blooms to the elements any sooner is risky, though sunny spring days sure make waiting tough. Perhaps that’s why poet May Sarton calls gardening “an instrument of grace,” for it “slows us down and forces patience.”

Courage is also required. Gardeners “must be brave enough to cut back the old and sit with bare branches, awaiting new growth,” writes Cheryl Richardson (*Waking Up in Winter*). “And we must trust that it will come.” When God prunes us, we too must trust that new growth and new life are in store ... and then patiently wait.

Fed by the Father

God loves his little birds; for all his tender care he shows; a single sparrow cannot fall but its Creator knows. ...

God loves each little bird; but still more tender is his care for children who obey his will, than for the fowls of air.

—Anonymous



Trust the Artist

We must offer ourselves to God like a clean, smooth canvas and not worry ourselves about what God may choose to paint on it, but at each moment, feel only the stroke of his brush. ... It is the same with a piece of stone. Each blow from the sculptor’s chisel makes it feel .. as if it were being destroyed. ... All I know is that I must stay immobile in the hands of the sculptor. .. I have no idea what he is doing .. but I know his work is the best possible.

—Jean Pierre de Caussade

A Hard Blessing

She chopped deeper into her friend's thicket of grief and fear with these words: "This is a hard blessing for you, a privilege you never imagined or wished for; losing everything you've gained is an unhoped-for freedom few people receive." The winnowing encouragement pressed beyond the shocking rupture in his settled life. Bereft, one word commanded every spark in his mind, every contraction of his heart: *gone*.

What is there left to believe in when loss hollows your soul? How can courage be found? How can one imagine, let alone trust, that there will again be joy when the tomorrow you hoped for disappears like a wilderness trail after sunset?

Whatever can be made of the ascension account told in Luke and retold in Acts, there is no missing the severity of loss experienced by the disciples. It was a breath-hardening stupor that descended, making senseless Jesus' community of ragtag vagabonds. At the same time, the disciples were challenged to carry on anew after their Lord's strange departure. Even as there was grief and fear for the disciples, there was also "great joy" (Luke 24:52). Despite loss, still there was "power from on high" (Luke 24:49) and the Holy Spirit to accompany them (Acts 1:8). But, we can imagine, these gifts of joy and power were not gained without struggle and uncertainty: a hard blessing.

The last marvelous word of wonder in this Jesus story does not settle on his departure but on his arrival; not from whom he has gone but to whom he comes; not on the emptiness of loss but in the wholeness found in being claimed by God's love. The enduring wonder of Jesus' divine contradictions is not discovered in a supernatural flash—"Why do you stand looking up toward heaven?" (Acts 1:11)—but rather in the daily witness of God's grace and hope, which abound "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Ladies of Grace Activities :

NO ACTIVITIES UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.



Notes from the Office: I hope everyone is safe and healthy!!! We will keep in contact with everyone in regards to the situation with COVID 19 and let everyone know when worship can restart at the Church.

The office will be closed May 25th in observance of Memorial Day!!

If anyone needs shopping done or transportation please let Suzanne know, there are members who have volunteered to help with this.

You can view online worship on the Grace Lutheran Church Facebook page!!

Our 'Noisy Offering' will be restarted when worship can begin again.

Newsletter updates due May 26th.



Shirley Stang	5
Richard Johnson	10
Edna Gross	24
Frank Sommerfeldt	26
Brenda Piñero	27
Savvos & Sheila Poulos	27
Sheila Magoon	28



If we missed anyone PLEASE contact the office.

AMONG THOSE FOR WHOM WE PRAY ARE:

Congregation members: **Sherry** Brooks, **Edna** Gross, **Gary** Albertson, **Jeana** Lute, **Wally** Krueger, **Shanna** Longoria, **Celia** Scott, **Savvas** Poulos.

Family members: **Connie** Dawe, **Mason** Lomelino, **Karen** Carmichael, **Frances** Ballard, **Darwin** Gunderson, **Shane** Gray, **Diane** Frei, **Lydia** Gutierrez, **Helen** Gray, **Barb** Lute, **Barb** Fitzpatrick, **Brandie** Sherry, **Larry** Gutierrez, **Penny** Cook, **Joann** Fuller, **Cleo** Lute, **Frank** Fuller, **Gaston** Meza, **Abel** Longoria, **Jim** Downes.

Congregation friends: **Jason** McGinnis, **Mason** Spradling, **Al** Lundy, **Cheryl** Dear, **Luanne** Ruffle, **Judy** Schorman, **Sandi** Jaeger, **Emilio** Zuniga, **Ro** MacMillan, **Marsha** Guerrero Brown

Those who serve: **Dustin** Dunbar, **Adam** Troy Gutierrez, **Pfc Devon** Zepeda, **Ben** McCormick.



PRAYER CHAIN 2020

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	Pastor Ann Schlossnagle	503-707-7406



Violet

The violet, a symbol of humility, is used most often to refer to the Virgin Mary, whom St. Bernard (1090-1153) described as “the violet of humility.” The purple flower also is sometimes used to express Christ’s humility in assuming human form.

Sunday School—After worship restarts

Confirmation Class— TBD



PANTRY NEEDS

- Pudding Cups
- Jello Cups
- Fruit Cups
- Dry Cereal
- Snack Bars
- Canned Vegetables
- Canned Meats



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Deadline for the June Newsletter is Tuesday May 26th. Please get all information to the church office, secretary@gelelca.org, or the office mailbox.

THANKS

The June Newsletter will be ready by email Friday May 29th and in the Narthex Sunday May 31st.

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



Memorial Day

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	President	956-497-6950
Morton, Ron	Vice-President	956-873-1312
Ramsey, Pam	Secretary	956-454-1036
Morton, Bonnie	Treasurer	956-226-7301
Longoria, Mia		956-970-2017
Lomelino, Barb		956-357-1490
Longoria, Betty		956-970-2053
Kester, Debi		956-202-5958



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



MAY SERVICE SCHEDULE

	May 3	May 10	May 17	May 24	May 31
Ushers					
Lector					
Acolyte	Congregational Youth				
Altar Guild					

PUZZLE PAGE

Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 250

Matt.9:22-34

Jesus Heals

A E Y E S M E R C Y F O L D O
M L J T D E K S A S A R S E S
A A E U C R O W D I I E R N E
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AMAZED AFTER
ASKED AWAY
ASLEEP DAVID
BELIEVE DONE
CALLING EYES
CROWD FAITH
DEMONS FLUTE
DRIVEN GIRL
ENTERED HOUSE
INDOORS ISRAEL
LAUGHED JESUS
NOTHING KNOWS
OUTSIDE LORD
PLAYERS MUTE
PRINCE MERCY
REGION NEWS
RESTORED NOISY
RULERS OVER
SPREAD SEEN
STERNLY SIGHT
TOUCHED SPOKE
WARNED

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."