

Voice of Grace

We are called to proclaim the Word and celebrate the sacraments.

We gather in Christian community for nurture and support. We are sent out in service to others.

Memories by Pastor Coe

In this, my last Voice of Grace article, I want to reminisce about some of the wonderful times of these last 10 years at Grace Lutheran. Thank you for indulging me.

Mary Ronen reminded me that many of you attended my ordination at Trinity Lutheran in Lynnwood on June 22, 2010. That means that you have been with me my entire career as a pastor. Wow! What a wonderful ride full of rich experiences. There have been so many wonderful times, here are some that really stand out.

Celebrations and Parties: I learned quickly that Grace Lutheran likes to party! Wow, what fun! Rally Day celebrations with costumes that were amazing. Christmas parties where I laughed till I cried. Your new pastor will love your party attitude.

Big Community Memorials: We had a number of memorial services with many community members and folks from different churches involved. These were wonderful experiences for me. It felt like Grace was the “community’s church.” What a wonderful ministry! We celebrated lives that made a difference in our community. I remember lots of tears, but lots of pride in Grace Lutheran and tremendous joy in our gracious, life-giving God.

Serving Those in Need In Our Community: Coming together to serve our community has been a wonderful experience. We presented the Food Bank with a huge check and celebrated. Evenings serving meals at the shelter were very special and sharing stories of the experience. Shoes for Children, Habitat for Humanity and so many others gave me great pride in Grace Lutheran. Thank you for loving your neighbors.

Prison Visits: Our visits to the Shelton and Purdy prisons moved my heart every time. We witnessed the baptism of 14 men at the Shelton prison and rejoiced in their shining faces as they emerged from the baptism pool. We were amazed at the love and welcome they showed us. We were the ones who came away blessed. Our visits to Purdy were extra special because we took our own band and led the worship ourselves. The music was such fun. Those women soaked up all the love of God that anyone could deliver. We prayed with them and praised God with them. Meeting Jesus in prison—it really happens.

Koinonia Gatherings: Our gatherings with Emmanuel Apostolic Church were special partly because they were so unusual and they took a lot of work to put together. It was an “all-hands-on-deck” effort of the entire congregation. When we worshiped in our sanctuary and Bishop Robertson and I served communion together, I knew it was heaven. Right there in little old Grace Lutheran—it was heaven. So much love. So much joy. It was heaven, indeed.



see page 2

Orphan Concerts: The orphan concerts were another community event that made me so proud of Grace Lutheran. Lisa and our excellent team organized the talent in our community and put on a wonderful concert for a wonderful purpose. Seeing people from Port Townsend turn out to support children across the planet was very moving. It was fun, it was impressive, and it was holy.

LifeCare Worship: Every time we led worship at LifeCare Center, I would think to myself this is what it's all about. This too is heaven. The dear people there were not usually able to communicate or participate. But they would open their eyes and wake up when they heard the 23rd Psalm and the Lord's Prayer. They loved the music and they would look me in the eye when I offered them communion and they knew, in that moment, God's precious love. Again, it was holy time. Thank you to all the wonderful musicians and supporters that have made this ministry possible through the years.

Serving Communion to Each of You: These last two memories are very personal to me. Serving you communion by name and making eye contact has been one of the most intimate experiences of life. Sometimes there were tears. Sometimes there were big smiles. But there was always Jesus and his love. I remember your faces at communion. I can see each one of you and will always remember you. As I am blessed to receive communion in the future, we will all be together, united in the Body of Christ, "your name," beloved child of God, this is the body of Christ, given for you."

Walking With You and Jesus Through Life: Many of you have shared the twists and turns of life with me. We have wept together, laughed together, lamented, and we have prayed, oh, we have prayed. The walls of my office have been papered with the prayers of the Grace Lutheran saints (that's you). It has been my immense privilege to walk through life with you and with Jesus. The ups and the downs, the hills and the valleys, the deserts and the springs, all of it—together. Thank you for allowing me to journey with you.

As we close our time together, I can't think of a better way than the blessing with which we have ended each of our worship services. I love you all. Thank you for this time.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you.

May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you
and give you peace.

Now and forever.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

From Our President's Keyboard

Haven't these last few months been a challenge?! For everyone: for each of us personally, for our pastor and soon-to-be interim pastor, and for our congregation as a whole. We have been blessed, though in that we have not experienced, so far, the devastating number of cases that have plagued other areas. As we hear continuously on our TVs: we are in this together, and we will get through it. Those statements, however, leave out one important thing—we will get through it With God's Help.

We at Grace are facing another kind of challenge—saying goodbye to our beloved Pastor Coe and Janet. I don't know about the rest of you, but for me the last 10 years have simply flown by. It seems just yesterday that we welcomed them to our Grace family. Now it is time to wish them well in their much-deserved retirement.

We'll miss them both in so many ways. He's been there for us whenever we needed him, whether in our spiritual lives or in the daily ups and downs of life. She's been there quietly getting things done and holding things together.

Change is hard, harder for some than others. But change happens—usually when we least expect or are prepared for it. For me, it has been especially hard to accept this change because of the many restrictions we have had to observe regarding staying home and avoiding large groups—meaning no worship in our sanctuary. I suspect that this is true for a good many of us. Pastor Coe's Hot Chocolate and Sermon Sundays, his Daily Devotions, the Zoom meetings, and his many phone conversations have been of great help in dealing with it all.

Now we have yet another challenge—the transition period coming up. I know that interim Pastor Al Berg, with God's help, will guide us through this time. We don't know when we will be able to worship in our beautiful sanctuary again, and this makes it as difficult for him as it is for us.

Join me in saying farewell to Pastor Coe, as in turn, we welcome Pastor Al.

God bless you all,

Mary Ronen

Visiting Tacoma Community House

Sonia Frojen - Tacoma Community House (TCH), 110 years of service: Rescheduled more than once, the Grace Lutheran Church trip to Tacoma Community House finally took place on February 14th with 4 folks attending. The goal of the field trip was to gather more information regarding resources in the Puget Sound area for immigrants; this conversation began in 2019 with Pastor Coe's circling up around immigration issues. We were curious to find out how Grace Lutheran Church might be able to support immigrants in our region.



Lauren Walker Lee, the Executive Director of TCH, met us in the lobby of the recently completed 4000 square foot facility, built in the original location of the 1910 Methodist Church house. The facility is dedicated to the 4 tiers of their mission: immigration, employment, education, and advocacy (for victims of domestic violence), serving immigrants, refugees, and US Citizens.

They serve over 3200 individuals annually, representing over 115 countries, providing 3500 program hours in services such as English as Second Language, GED assistance, Law-aid for immigration court, job preparation and computer skills for continuing education, and budgets and nutrition for growing families. About 50% of the services are for US-born citizens needing assistance to transition out of poverty, to find personal and professional success.

The tour consisted of seeing the brand new facility - there was incredible artwork of board members on the walls, of immigrants by immigrant artists, with photos of early 1900 gatherings in black and white in the historical gallery where the original TCH sign hung. The most impressive was the incredible facility that included classrooms and technology, color and light, and a lobby with a world map where conversations could be started and nourished between people from all walks of life. We ended the day in the world-map lobby with an hour-long library / book sorting project for a book-loaning library for ESL students. I hope we were more help than a hindrance! The Tacoma Community House has been greatly affected by the state-wide lockdown since COVID-19 pandemic, and they need our support.

Please visit tacomacommunityhouse.org for more info. The photo shows smiles of Coe, Ted, David and Sonia. This trip made an impression for the quality of work done at this organization, as well as the wonderful company in attendance from Grace Lutheran Church!



Find more about the artist Raisa Nosova at: raisanosova.com

Ted Gifford - The visit to Tacoma was full of surprises. Having lived there many years ago, I had a far too cramped vision of the tide flats and the Hilltop area. Tacoma Community House is nestled in the Hilltop. The ICE Detention Center is in the tide flats, surrounded by barbed wire and inaccessible to our group of four. We prayed outside and made no attempt to disturb the peace. The prayer flags hanging from tree branches in the area lead one to believe many others have done likewise. It was holy ground and spooky. I did not feel welcome.

Tacoma Community House is enormous and nearly new. It is bright, cheerfully constructed, and bursting with love, energy and a spirit of welcome to people of any nationality or religious background. We all were spellbound by the wall art and joy that emanates from everywhere one turns. If a willingness to listen and openness to change are marks of holy space, this place is holy indeed.

Pastor Coe - One of the highlights for me of our trip to Tacoma was the opportunity to pray together outside the Tacoma ICE facility. It is a long low building in the Tacoma tide flats industrial area surrounded by razor wire. There are many yellow ribbons fluttering on the wire fences. We gathered outside on a cool morning, held hands, and prayed for all within the facility. We prayed for those who are detained, separated from the families and facing what must seem like an impossible process to earn citizenship. We prayed for those who work there that they might treat everyone with care and respect. It was one of those circumstances that makes you thankful for the way your own life has turned out and makes you pray for God's blessing on those less fortunate. I am thankful to Sonia for organizing our trip.



from previous page

David Gaenicke - Welcoming newcomers and visiting sailors has been the purpose of the Tacoma Community House since its founding in 1910 by the Methodist Church Women. Since that time, by the guidance of its Board of Governors and other community officials, it has grown and developed into a square-block complex in the Hilltop neighborhood of Tacoma. Recently Sonia Frojen, Ted Gifford, Pastor Coe, and I had the privilege of visiting the Tacoma Community House. We were following our mission statement to care for the homeless and undocumented in our midst.

On our way, we also stopped and prayed outside the ICE detention center in Tacoma. We prayed for persons, that they had names and concerns for purpose in life, for the agencies to become more aware of their missions to assist these persons in their search for freedom. On our two-hour drive from Port Townsend, each of us shared our individual concerns and expectations regarding medical care, the national emphasis for dislike for undocumented adults and children and our collective hopes to change that attitude for more acceptance of others and their beliefs! We shared our ideas of becoming a sanctuary congregation and what that would mean for each congregation member.

For me the trip, the journey, was instrumental in helping me think like an immigrant, to put myself in their shoes, to be thankful for all my privileges of birth and education where I wanted to attend, who I called as friends, where I determined to live. This whole endeavor was a journey of awareness and change to put myself into the shoes of the newcomer. It was a real revelation of life. Thank you for this opportunity. I pray that I will continue to share my life with my neighbors and my understanding of neighbors as a lifelong challenge



When we take refuge in God, our lives are redeemed. Turning to God, we are renewed. I invite you, now or later, to turn to God, to spend time drawing yourself into the One who knows you, who loves you, who longs for your prayers, and desires to give you rest.

Take a moment to center yourself, to settle into yourself. Pray for the peace or rest that you need, asking God to help you.

Holy God, draw me into you, you who are a refuge in a time of trouble, you who bear my burdens and give me rest. Remind me that I cannot do it all. You are the Holy Three-In-One who shows us the way to be in relationship with you and with one another. Encourage me to release what I cannot control into your care. Shape me into a disciple who shines your light of love and care to the rest of your tired world, so that anyone who is weary and heavy-laden will know they can depend on you to relieve them. Fill me with your peace, your joy, your love. Amen.

This message is an excerpt of a September 2018 Cafe article by Jenna Pulkowski, "Those that cry out for rest and relief."

Quilters Switch Gears

by Sue Peterson

On Monday, May 4, the quilters changed roles and took to gardening! We worked 10 to noon and we were TIRED! Then we stopped and had a nice lunch in the courtyard. The whole event was with masks (except eating, of course) and properly socially-distanced!



At the Gallery

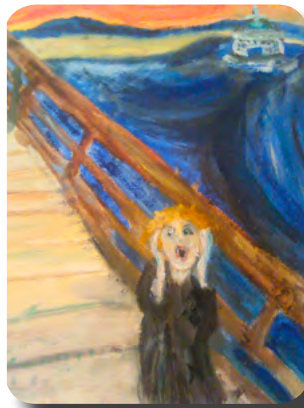
by Nina Daly

Grace Gallery has been postponed due to COVID-19, but my dear friends in Christ, art continues!

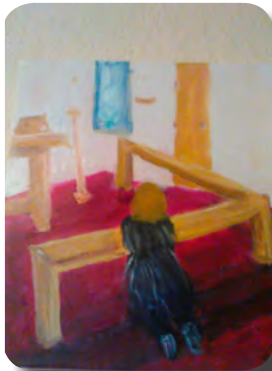


Nina

I remember in early March doing a Lent talk where I used my version of “The Scream” to show my anxious feelings about 2020. When I painted my painting, the corona virus was a distant story in the news. Little did I know that it would be our last service together at Grace before social distancing went into effect.



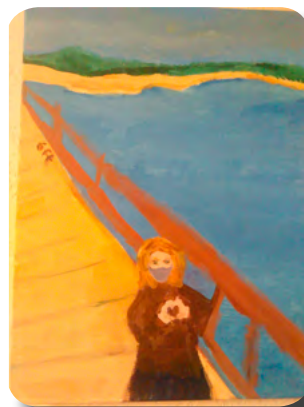
As I write this article, social distancing has been extended. Maybe we should start a new terminology for this time called God closeness? God is here, everywhere. We have left the building, but God is not just in the building. God is available 24/7!



The second painting in the series is of me praying at Grace. Even in the storms God is always present. There is a contemporary Christian song by the Afters called “I Will Fear no More,” one of many songs that I have been accessing and finding comfort in these days. There is a line in it that says “Even though I’m in the storm the storm is not in me.”

At that time I had decided to do a third painting; my intent was to show calmness and joy as praying brought about release from the worries shown in my first painting. I started the painting in that fashion, but it was not to be. Each day the news was more and more bleak. New storms, but in the midst of calm waters and flowering plants.

Life has changed in so many ways. Is there any joy? Joy is an interesting word. One can experience joy in God even in a time that is difficult. Joy is deep within the heart.



My life these days has changed and yet some things remain the same. I am still working full time. Many of my appointments are on the phone. When I do get together with clients in person, we try to use safe distancing. My car is stocked with gloves and masks. Zoom has become a big part of my life both at work and with my Grace family.

As I contemplated what to do with my third painting, I thought of my prayer group that meets on Saturday mornings. What a blessing it is to see and hear my dear sisters and brothers in Christ! I realize that while this is a hard time, it is also a time of valuing the people we have in our lives. It is a time of trying to connect and achieve God closeness with them while taking precautions to stay safe. As we leave our Zoom meeting, we make a heart shape with our hands showing our love for each other. My dear friend Sonia is an expert at this.

After our prayer group meeting yesterday I realized that this is what I needed to convey in my painting. In the paradox of darkness and light, God is ever-present and so is the love we have for each other.

Remembering Prisoners at Shelton

In the long list of cancellations, our trip to Shelton Prison was deeply missed. The men are finding that COVID-19 is further isolating them. Imagine being in prison and not having people from other churches visit you along with not being able to meet for church services. I received the prison newsletter that included a request for letters and poems to be put in the newsletter that the men receive. This is the poem I wrote for them. I hope in some small way it helped and that we may be able to continue this ministry in the future.

Missing You by Nina

An April date was set to meet with my brothers in Christ. Looked forward to another time of music and prayer. COVID-19 brought a cancellation; one of many. This cancellation was met with deep sadness.

A day of glorifying God and singing together.
Beautiful music; voices united in the Greatest of Loves.
No music, no voices; a deep loss indeed.

I truly believe that we will meet again.
In fact, you are with me now.
I close my eyes and can see your welcoming smiles.

Your greetings, the music, communion together.
Social distancing cannot take that away.

Close your eyes and reflect and remember.

We are still with you; you are not alone.
I can hear the music; prayers coming forth.
God give them strength, hold on to my brothers in Christ.

Let goodness and peace flow.
Let the glow of Christ shine through all of us.

Amen

Stay-At-Home Artist Glora Sutton

Glora has been making good use of her extra time at home. She has been learning more about pastels. Glora commented "I had never taken any classes in pastel, although I have always had a few in my studio. I did not really know how to use them. I bought a couple of videos, looked at YouTube demos, and have been practicing." As the saying goes, a picture (or in this case pictures) is worth a thousand words.



Lucy Hladecek's Hearty Black Bean Soup (Gluten-free)

1 small onion chopped
4 or 5 stalks of celery chopped
1 lb ground beef
1 small potato diced
1 ½ cups carrots chopped
¼ cup long grain rice
2 (15 oz) cans black beans undrained
1 (16 oz) can refried beans
1 (14½ oz) can crushed or diced tomatoes
1 (32 oz) carton gluten-free chicken broth
2 tbsp white vinegar (more if you like)
salt and pepper

1 - sauté onion and celery in small amount of butter or oil – remove from pot
2 – fry hamburger until done and crumbly in same pot, drain
3 – Add onion/celery mixture and rest of ingredients
4 – Stir, bring just to a boil on high; lower heat to medium and cook slowly, stir occasionally
5 – When thickened turn heat to low and simmer – keep soupy

Soup may be made a day ahead and refrigerated.
(add more broth or water if necessary)
May be doubled for soup suppers!



Have a favorite recipe? Submit it to the *Voice of Grace*, maryeronen@gmail.com

Can You Help?

Pastor Al Berg, our soon-to-be interim pastor, will be living in the parsonage for part of the week while he is working here. If you have a bed frame and/or mattress that you can loan or donate to the church for use in the parsonage, please let Crissy know. at (360) 385-1595. Thank you!

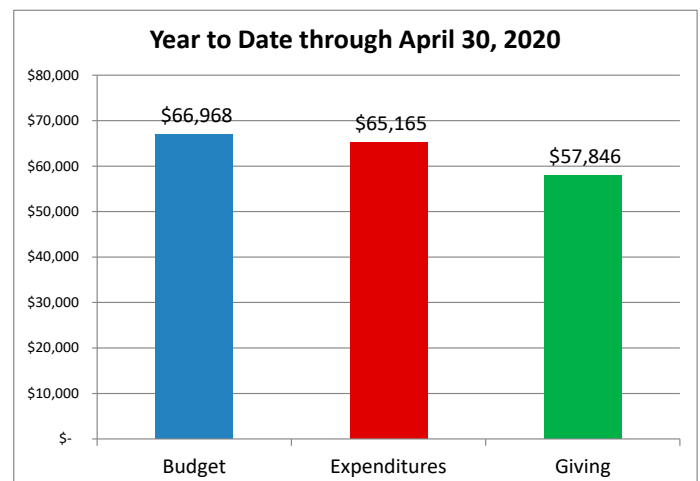
COVID-19 Update and Closures

The Governor has extended the stay-at-home order through May 31. Additionally, gatherings of more than five people are prohibited through June 15. In response to the Governor's orders, worship will continue to be offered only through audio worship available on our Grace Lutheran website through June 15. That means no in-person worship until June 21 unless the orders change.

We are making a special effort to make sure that everyone has access to the audio worship offerings. If you, or anyone you know of, are not able to access the online audio worship please let Crissy know at (360) 385-1595 and we will work with you to help you access the online worship offering.

Thank you for your continued efforts to stay home and stay healthy and for your willingness to help protect the rest of our community.

Grace Financials





Church Council

President: Mary Ronen
maryeronen@gmail.com
Vice President: Al Smith
Secretary: Betty Oakes
Ministers:
Resources (Treasurer): Jeff Corwith
Fellowship: Lucy Hladecek
Facilities: Jim Little
Worship/Music: Dee Dee Norman
Stewardship: Joel Peterson
Social Concerns: Marijo Brantner

Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Coe Hutchison
pastorcoeh@gmail.com
 cell 206-369-0606
Office Manager: Crissy Dunlap
gracelutheranpt@gmail.com
Organist/Pianist: Lisa Lanza
Choir Director: Colleen Johnson
Sunday School Superintendent: Linda Wolff
Editor, Voice of Grace: Mary Ronen, *maryeronen@gmail.com*
www.gracelutheranpt.org

Photos of church events may be published in print or online. If you do not want your picture included, please contact the office at *gracelutheranpt@gmail.com* or (360)385-1595.