

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.

Grace Congregational Parking Lot Meeting

It was a very different setting for the Grace Lutheran Semi-Annual Congregational meeting on Sunday, July 26. Pastor Al Berg delineated the parking spaces using string and styrofoam blocks. Marijo Brantner and Al Smith signed people in, and Jim Little showed everyone where and how to park. A wireless microphone and speaker was rented. People either remained in their cars, or stood just outside them. Everyone wore their masks.

It was a brief but important meeting as two new council members, Fellowship Minister Jim Norman and Worship and Music Minister Ann Bambrick were voted into office. Thanks were expressed to outgoing Ministers Lucy Hladecek and DeeDee Norman for their service. Scholarships were awarded to Theo Dunlap and Andy Dinkelmann in the amount of \$1000 each; Sonia Frojen received \$839.

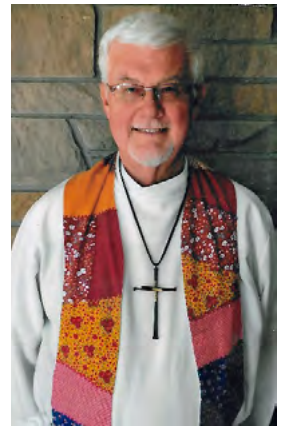
Thank you, everyone who came out that beautiful Sunday afternoon.



Photos by Linda Gaenicke

Thoughts from Pastor Al—

I never considered myself as much of a “runner.” I played in and enjoyed sports in high school and a little bit in college, but never considered myself much of a track and field man. Back when I was much, much younger—a fellow pastor challenged me to run with him in a fund-raising event. It was for Lutheran Social Services of the Tri-Cities, and I was goaded into running a “half marathon” by my good friend and a number of my “loving” parishioners. Now, the Tri-Cities does not exactly have Port Townsend climate in the summer months! You can only imagine—as my fellow pastor friend and I decided that we would “run-together” to encourage one another... laughing and joking at the *two/three* mile mark...sweat pouring by the *five/six* mile mark...grimacing but still trying to smile by the *eight/nine* mile mark...catching a glimpse of my friend who looked like “death warmed over” and wondering whether I looked the same at the *11/12* mile mark. We finished staggering to the finish line and stood there afterwards, bent over and holding our knees for the longest time. We finished in...well, let’s say, *not-so* record time...



Thinking back to my “ordeal,” I remember another vivid event in my “memory bank” that maybe some of you might remember. Perhaps you might remember watching Olympic events on television “back in the day.” It was the summer of 1984 when the Olympics were held in Los Angeles. It was the first-ever women’s 26.2 mile Olympic marathon run through the hot streets of L.A. My family and I watched as millions from around the world saw Joan Benoit, a 27 year-old runner from Maine, win the event in 2:24:54. She received applause and generous cheers. But then immediately, the sportscasters began to turn the audience’s attention to a scene that was developing behind the winner of the event. The cameras panned back to a runner “who was in trouble” near the finish line. Ms. Andersen-Schweiss was suffering from heat-exhaustion. As she lurched and reeled in an almost drunken gait, she finished in an agonizing long protracted “walk-run” while 70,000 spectators inside the Coliseum (and my family at the edge of our couch) cheered her on. Medical officers approached her, and yet, she veered away from them. She was going to finish. It took her five minutes to finish that circuit around the stadium. When she finally crossed the finish line and collapsed into the arms of the attending physicians, the ovation she received was thunderous and deafening...much more than for the winner Joan Benoit.

Ms. Schweiss finished 37th that day in a time of 2:48:42. Later she said, *“The last two kilometers are mainly black... it always seemed longer to finish than I thought.”* Lately I have been thinking about Ms. Schweiss’ last lap of that ’84 Olympic marathon. As we run the marathon of the coronavirus pandemic, sheltering in place, wearing masks, keeping designated distances, suffering through and living with countless losses and waiting for things to “return to normal,” or to a “new normal,” or at the very least something other than what feels like the eternal *now*... it seems longer to the finish line than we thought. As we run the ultra-marathon of dismantling systemic racism, working for justice and equality for *all* people, it seems longer to the finish line than we ever thought. As we persevere in prayer... and as we strive to be faithful, hopeful and loving... and as we wait for God’s new heaven and new earth, the fullness of God’s rule and reign and the healing of the nations, it seems longer to the finish line than we thought.

Perhaps it’s time to “visualize.” It’s an old-as-the-hills sports strategy. Practice seeing and living into God’s way of love, life and truth. I “visualize” Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, together with what the writer of Hebrews calls “*the great cloud of witnesses*,” cheering us on, and that keeps me in the race. I imagine God’s will being done *on earth* as it is in heaven, and that keeps me in the race. I imagine a new heaven and new earth, and no more death and no more mourning and no more crying and no more pain and God wiping away every single one of our tears...and that keeps me in the race. Stagger on, dear friends, you have a running mate, and we’ve got a ways to go *together*.

Pastor Al Berg

Things to Remember in This Pandemic Time

We must act to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of all who gather as well as the whole community.

Jesus called us to not run away from challenges. As followers of Christ, we are to show patience and resilience while dealing with the frustrations and challenges of this pandemic.

We must act in a way that shows primary concern for the well-being of others being especially mindful of those who are most vulnerable to the virus.



Grace in Transition



The Transition Team is starting their work, and they will be contacting you soon if they haven’t already. Think about what Grace means to you. What you enjoy. What you might want to see here at Grace.

Community

by Linda Gaenicke

In a recent issue of the *Voice of Grace*, I wrote an article about community and Grace Lutheran. Now more than ever, we need each other. It seems that the virus will continue for some time. We cannot visit, hug, or worship together, but we can send cards, email, and call each other. I feel lost without you. Yes, the online worship fills some needs, but the fellowship and personal contact is missing. I am sure most of you also long to be together again. We must now find other ways to keep our community alive, and that needs to be done. Don't give up, dear friends, we will be able to worship together again and enjoy our coffee hours, Bible studies, and choir. We will be able to outreach to others in our community to show that God works through us to help others. Remember, God's Work, Our Hands. This is printed on our shirts when we work on a Habitat House. Now, we can find small ways to help; we just need to be aware of the needs of others and jump in to help. With so many out of work, money contributions to the Food Bank are needed right now.

The Friday Men's Bible Study continues with masks and distance seating. This has been such a joy for David to look forward to each week. Quilting on Mondays is also done by setting our tables apart and working six feet or more apart, opening all the doors and wearing masks. Just being in the presence of others and creating quilts of beauty fills a much-needed desire to be with other believers.

As most of you know our son Andrew died on July 9th. The outpouring of love and care flowed from our fellow Grace members to embrace us during this time. A primary concern of ours now is for his sons, Hunter and Austin, and what they are going through. Our daughters, Angela and Miriam, are in contact with us almost every day, and together we share memories of Andrew and are accepting each day and emotion as a healing process.

With the outpouring of concern and love, and Pastor Al's visits, Grace has again filled our hearts with gratitude and thanks. Our Lord has sent strength to us to handle each memory we have with compassion.

For now, we are a community apart trying to accept what is happening in the world. We must remain together in prayer for each other in the Grace Community. Our prayers must also reach out to those in the Port Townsend community and the world who are ill or have lost jobs and income because of the virus. Even though apart, we are strong, and Jesus provides us with the strength to look forward to a better time.

Library News!

by DeeDee Norman

The Grace Church Library is on hold, thanks to the pandemic. But plans are being made how we can proceed in the future to make the library a part of Grace Lutheran's



worship life. The library has an assortment of books from biographies and non-fiction to resources for your prayer life and Bible studies.

One idea for the library is to coordinate a book club for our members focused on anti-racism and related topics. I thank Beverly Williams-Hawkins for this suggestion. If you are interested in joining the book club or have some questions, please contact me by August 15. Another suggestion is to have a scrapbook containing newspaper articles about our members. That will take everyone's help in collecting the articles.

Please think about your library at church and ways that we can make it better.

Quilting

by Linda Gaenicke



In December 2018 the quilters donated 31 quilts to the homeless shelter.

The Monday Quilters are meeting each Monday at 10:00. Masks are worn and the work tables are set up with lots of distance between them. We are careful that only one person is in the storage room at a time. After quilting is done, tables are sanitized along with the chairs and bathrooms.

We welcome anyone who would like to come and help. Right now we need people to tie knots on the finished quilts. There is always material to wash, sort and cut. We take a little break for lunch, and we eat outdoors. We bring our own snacks and make sure that we wash our hands before and after eating.

If you want a little fellowship and something to do, drop by and visit us.

Quarantine Notes

by Sonia Frojen

This time of quarantine (since late March), has been both a blessing and a wake-up call. I've realized how much I rely on others in both my Grace Lutheran Church fellowship, as well as my Recovery fellowship (I'm a member of Alcoholics Anonymous) for spontaneous in-person interaction. I rely on others to share their voice and add to the tapestry of storytelling that helps me formulate my personal spiritual blanket – to develop prayers and remember blessings in thanksgiving. My personal relationship with God, the quiet voice inside, has grown as a result of this isolation. I've realized that what I seek, seeks me. What a powerful way to grow!!



Wildflowers at Marmot Pass

Photo by Sonia

miss hurrying up the steps and in to church (usually almost late), to find a seat up front and be greeted with smiles, and waves, to sit in quiet reverence of the sanctuary and to listen to Lisa's prelude on the piano, and to take a deep breath of gratitude and actually 'arrive' for service.... Now, in Covid times, I listen to the service either from my hammock in the front porch of my house, or from my futon (sometimes in my pajamas!). Sometimes I listen to the service later in the week. My communion bread is a tortilla chip, my wine is a spot of tea. I sing along with the hymns, and find myself smiling as I am brave enough in my solitude to harmonize along with whatever angelic voice is leading hymns that week. I am much more able to listen attentively and take notes from Pastor's Sermon from the comfort of my couch.

To notice the Holy Spirit throughout the minute / hour / day / week feels like: praying the names on the prayer list and the prayer requests, reading an entry from the

devotional Jesus Calling and actually having time to think about the words, walking at dusk to see the clouds turn pink and the glow of sunset paint the sky, sending texts and emails of love and prayer to members of my recovery and GLC church community, and sometimes even sending and receiving letters through the post. Zoom calls even bring moments where a story or challenge is shared through the window of technology and God is there too.

I see God in many places these days, maybe because I am keen to connect, or maybe because suddenly I have more time and space to pay attention without the usual hustle and bustle. I see God in helpers at the Food Bank loading boxes into cars, in the Devotionals shared by Pastor Al, in the courtyard as I sit in quiet, in smiles and tears on zoom calls, in the wildflowers at Marmot Pass in the Olympic Mountains, in singing songs and playing guitar with Joel and Liam, in walks at the beach, in mowing lawns and weed-eating fellow GLC member's yards, in puppies that I get to snuggle, in stories of essential workers who have not had a break in months, and in our Church Council who continue to discuss and problem-solve for the health and safety of the congregation of Grace. I see God in the work of Pastor Al and Crissy as they beautifully weave together the pieces of recording to create a service each week, and as they continue to organize 'the flock' so that we can all stay connected in this time of uncertainty and waiting for what will happen next. When I feel overwhelmed by all that I do not know, I pray.



A favorite verse I've posted on my fridge, that brings me strength in these uncertain times when the world feels dark and ominous, is from John 1:5.

*The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.*

May your inner light shine bright with God's love, and may our hearts be full as we continue to live generously. May we be open to learn all that we do not know, amidst the discomfort. May we be humble and love our neighbor as ourselves.

I am hoping to begin a new *Voice of Grace* tradition that is simply a way for members to interact and share thoughts about various topics. I will collect and curate, gather and edit for this corner of the newsletter. I will call it AGAPE, which is simply defined as selfless love. I want to continue to explore my own spiritual path, with the help of your voices! The first 'call-out' for submissions will be to answer the question, "What does Faith feel like in this Covid time?" The next *Voice of Grace* newsletter will share snippets of whatever thoughts I receive. Please submit to me at my email: soniafrojen@gmail.com

An Ocean Visit

by Laura Anderson

My two friends and I were feeling cabin fever one day. Since they had never seen the Pacific Ocean, we decided to take a road trip!

We stopped in Sol Duc and hiked a half-mile loop hike trail called Ancient Grove. It was beautiful; it felt as though elves and fairies would appear!



Ruby Beach, photo by Laura

Then, we went on and drove through Forks to Rialto Beach where I enjoyed the waves while they took a walk. From there, we went on to beautiful Ruby Beach. There was a roadside stop with an easy, short access to the beach where I walked in the waves. It was so wonderful! While I was doing that, they walked way down the beach and found some tide pools with sea stars and other sea life. Next, we got back in the van and drove on to find what is called the “big cedar tree,” and, yes, it was HUGE! We spent the night there in the van, listening to the frogs. It was so peaceful. The next morning we headed back home. It was a wonderful trip and an awesome break in the monotony of being homebound.

Quilters Celebrate the Petersons

by Linda Gaenicke

On Monday, July 20, the Quilters held a goodbye lunch for Sue and Dave Peterson, who have moved to Poulsbo. Sue has been a long-time quilter with us and usually was busy at a sewing machine. She also oversaw the boxing and marking of the boxes for shipping. Dave, along with the other Monday Men’s Quilting Group, helped roll the quilts for shipping. Monday quilting just won’t be the same without the Petersons.

We wore our masks and kept physical distance.

From Grace President

And It Goes On..

Here we are, still in the throes of this pandemic. Who knew? I, for one, thought back in May, which seems a long time ago, that by now we would be leading normal lives again. What, you say? Will there ever be “normal” again? And, what is that? We just don’t see change coming any time soon.

This monstrous little molecule has turned the world upside down. Our lives and habits, our ways of doing things have all been changed. I, and I bet you, too, miss doing the things we used to do and seeing the people we used to see. But, you know, there are still good things, if one looks for them.

I miss going to church and enjoying the fellowship we shared. Now, we have audio services to listen to in the comfort of our homes. They are pretty awesome...many of us have participated in them by reading the lessons and the prayers of the people, and by singing the hymns. We hear excellent sermons given by Pastor Al. We are able to take part in communion. Lisa continues to bless us with the preludes and postludes we have always enjoyed. Can you imagine what things would be like without the technology we now have? Pretty bleak, I think.

Lectionary studies are changed. We can’t meet as we did in the past in the conference room, but we can meet via Zoom on our devices for bible study and sharing of experiences and emotions. Today’s electronics enable us to keep on going and sharing. God’s work in action,

I have a lot of solitude time, and I know I am not alone in that. Alone-time can be pretty lonely. But, I have noticed that I appreciate a little more some of the “small stuff” that I didn’t pay much attention to previously. As an example, as I wrote this, I was watching the children, ages 6 and 11 who live on the corner, racing their go-cart around and around the cul-de-sac. They were so fun to watch and listen to! Children at play=God’s work in action.

Solitude allows time to be still, and time to spend with God. I wonder how many of us are finding this special kind of time to be in His presence. Is He using this time of enforced slowdown to bring His people closer to Him?

*Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation,
be constant in prayer. (Romans 12:12)*

Blessings and peace,

Mary

Grace Gallery

Finding Order in a Chaotic Life

by Nina Daly

Let's face it, life is anything but normal these days! I have found that finding patterns can be soothing. I remember sitting in church and noticing that people wearing the same colors tend to sit in the same area. One time there was a group of people wearing polka dots! Great minds think alike.



Have you ever noticed that cars of the same color often park near each other? Next time you are in a parking lot, check it out. I decided to have a little fun and do a colored pencil/pastel drawing on this subject. I love old cars and trucks so enjoyed having them in my drawing.

Editor's Note

Calling artists of any kind! While we aren't able to enjoy our Gallery in the Fellowship Hall at church, we can still enjoy seeing our artists' work in the *Voice of Grace*. Please submit photos of your work to maryeronen@gmail.com, they will be featured here. We still want to see your work!

Favorite Book Pick Following Jesus

by Nina Daly

Finding Our Way Home in an Age of Anxiety, -

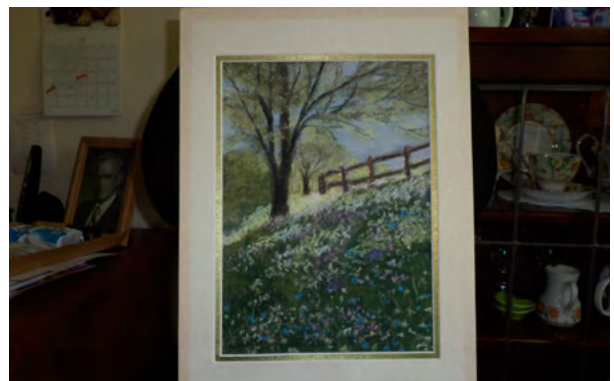
by Henri J. M. Nouwen

Reading this book makes me feel like I am wrapped in God's comforting love. Each chapter ends in a prayer. Henri Nouwen is a favorite author of mine. His writing emanates compassion and the love of Jesus. If you would like to know more about him and access free devotions, go to henrinouwen.org.

Glora's Art

by Glora Sutton

Below are some of my new pastel paintings. One is from a photo I took at the beach in Fort Worden of a path leading up off the beach. The other with the flowers is from a photo I found online. The flowers on our windowsill are called Linaria, and they are mini snapdragons. We have two beds of them in the yard.



Photos by Glora

Pandemic Art

by Nina Daly



As we continue this journey, I am very thankful for my friends at work who are talented when it comes to sewing. Selflessly, they have created many different styles of masks to

keep us safe. I, too, wanted to be a part of this creative masking, but alas sewing is not something I do well. In fact, the rare times I bring out my sewing kit, my husband Tom eagerly brings me clothing that needs to be mended before I change my mind.

I decided to buy some plain masks and use them like a canvas. Acrylic paint works well as it dries quickly and is resistant to soap and water. I recently sent off a mask with bluebonnets, the state flower of Texas, to a life-long friend who lives there. Another mask went to a dear friend who lives in Port Townsend.



Photos by Nina



*Seen on a walk in uptown Port Townsend,
photos by Sonia*

Mystery

Miracle

Madness

Ministry

Mission

Marvelous Majesty

The star in the East

appeared

moved

Wise men followed it.

Mystery

A babe was born

in a stable

to a virgin.

His name is

Jesus

Miracle

The King, King Herod

jealous, afraid

had every child

2 and under

killed

Madness

Jesus lived

grew up

at 30 began to preach,

heal and perform

miracles

then was killed and

Resurrected

Ministry

2000 plus years from then

Religious wars

different denominations

but a lot of people who

love God

Mission

A child of God

passes

spends eternity united

with the Creator

in His glory and love.

Marvelous Majesty

Praise The Lord.

*dedicated to those saints who have passed
on before.*

by Judy Best

The Bulletin Board

A Prayer for Now

Loving God,

Help us

to focus on what we have
not on what is removed or changed.

Strengthen us

when we feel discouraged
or overwhelmed.

Embrace us

so that we know your loving presence
within us and among us.

Walk with us

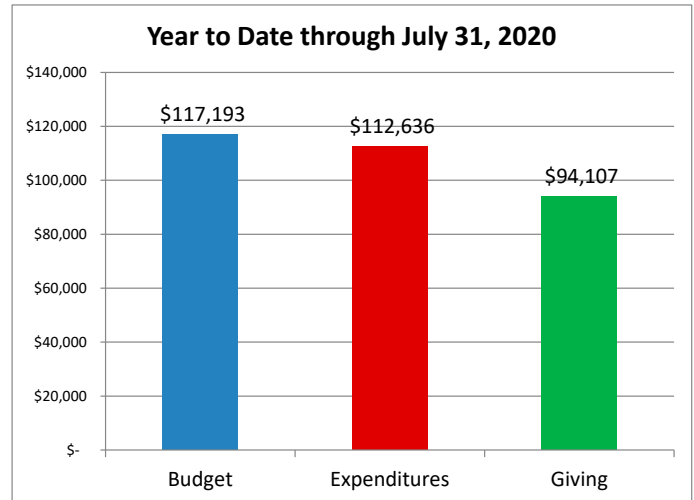
as we bring your love,
and carry your light,
into our world.

Amen.

- Sandra Lucas, MDiv., BCC



Grace Financials



Women, Let's Pray Together

submitted by Linda Gaenicke

The Women of the ELCA *Bold Connections* e-newsletter is encouraging women to pray every Tuesday at noon. Since we are all so isolated and so many negative things are surrounding us at this time, this might be a great way for us to just set a prayer time. We will not only be connecting with each other, but also asking God for strength during this time. Prayer is such a wonderful way to connect spiritually with each other and to also strengthen ourselves. You don't have to do a formal prayer, just pray from your heart. Pray for those on our prayer list, friends who are ill or lonely, for our congregation, and family.



The Quilters held a work party on June 1 to clean up the courtyard and grounds. Can you tell who is who behind their masks? Photo by Pastor Al

Church Council

President: Mary Ronen
maryeronen@gmail.com

Vice President: Al Smith

Secretary: Betty Oakes

Ministers:

Resources (Treasurer): Jeff Corwith

Fellowship: Jim Norman

Facilities: Jim Little

Worship/Music: Ann Bambrick

Stewardship: Joel Peterson

Social Concerns: Marijo Brantner

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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.