

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.



Pastor Sean and Ugandan AIDS ministry leader Kenneth Kasule met for lunch June 23 while at the worldwide Rotary convention in Calgary. Sharon Dembro, who brought the ministry to Grace, pieced together they were each scheduled to attend as representatives of their respective clubs. Dining at the Centre Bar & Eatery in the Cowboys Casino next door to the BMO Centre at Stampede Park convention center hosting the event, Kenneth shared his inspiring story with Pastor Sean. From an abusive household and impoverished, he had to find full-time work as a child laborer to pay for his schooling. His own plight drove him to ensure as many children as possible would not have to endure similar trials to get an education. His organization, with support from Grace and other partners in the U.S. and Canada, has facilitated orphans of the epidemic in becoming doctors, nurses, teachers and small business owners.

Worship - Sundays 10:30 a.m.



Fall 2025

Grace Lutheran Church, 1120 Walker Street, Port Townsend, WA 98368 - (360) 385-1595 www.gracelutheranpt.org

Pastor's Message

Green. Red. White. Green again. White again. Blue.

The seasons are changing.

Red. Yellow. Orange.

Those are the colors ubiquitous on the trees. Fall is — believe it or not — almost halfway through. Drive down Beaver Valley or Discovery Bay roads if you haven't yet had the opportunity... before the wind has whisked the last of the deciduous leaves away.

But the initial assortment marks the liturgical calendar whiplash from ordinary time to Reformation Sunday (Oct. 26) and All Saints (Nov. 2) back to the ordinary for two weeks. Then the Reign of Christ Sunday (Nov. 23) that will cap one church year and take us into the next with Advent getting underway Nov. 30.

In the meantime, say farewell to an hour of daylight (coinciding with All Saints) and embrace the darkness. It arrives whether we want it to or not.

Gobble up the last of that Halloween candy and get ready for a gobbler fresh off the oven grill for Thanksgiving. (Or not. Our family has gravitated more toward ham these past few years. All due apologies to Babe, Wilbur, Miss, Peppa et al.)

It's exhausting just thinking about it, nevertheless living it. So good thing the year of our Lord 2025 has been such a breeze up until this point, right?!!

Some people are saying it. Nobody I know and I doubt anyone who will read this. But some people. I'm sure. Just don't ask for a real source.

Tomorrow's headlines are predictable in seemingly just one way.

They will be bad.

The world is in turmoil and as overwhelming as the demand of the seasons' change may be, it is even more so keeping up with the uncertainties of government function and dysfunction, war and ceasefire, law and disorder, the love of Christ and the hate perpetrated in his name... just to name a few.

This is a time it is not so difficult to fall into — the phrase commonly borrowed from the 16th-century mystic St. John of the Cross — the dark night of the soul.

For my own part, I have not gotten completely trapped in it in years, an experience I have no interest in repeating. But I will admit I have felt as though I have slipped into its twilight every so often since violent immigration raids started becoming commonplace, since the U.S. Constitution we were taught to hold so dear became reinterpreted in unprecedented ways and sometimes ignored altogether; since the cancer we pray intentionally against each month kept impacting the lives of this community more often and more deeply; since I felt myself losing track of cruelties because there have been so many new ones to layer upon layer of them.

At the depths of frustration, I keep being led back to the question: What are we even doing here?

Eventually, each time, I shake it off. What we do is keep going.

Hold on to hope beyond reason. Consider the thought: "Even if I knew the world were going to end tomorrow, I would still plant an apple tree today." This sentiment is often attributed to Martin Luther but Minneapolis Area Synod Congregational Organizer for Climate Justice Johan Baumeister tracked down the earliest record of the now-legendary quote that appears nowhere in Luther's known writings.

Merely 398 years after he shuffled off this mortal coil but who's counting?

In his article, "Tree of Resistance," Baumeister recounts:

Hessian pastor and Confessing Church leader Karl Lotz used (the quote) in 1944, while encouraging and reassuring his colleagues through difficult times. Lotz's colleagues in the Confessing Church movement, which was founded 10 years prior, had failed to stop or even truly blunt Nazi brutality. They were not alone in that failure, nor were their attempts to succeed free of risk or cost.

The world was ending, in a sense, and it might well have felt like the Confessing Church had not done enough. Even as totalitarian thugs threatened doom for every even remotely "disloyal" word or act, Lotz was planting and watering seeds of hope and persistence in the minds of his colleagues.



In the village of Putten, in the Netherlands, the month of October 1944 opened with a nighttime ambush by members of the Dutch resistance on a single car carrying two Wehrmacht officers and two corporals. One German lieutenant was mortally wounded. In retaliation for the Dutch resistance attack, the Germans raided the nearby village of Putten and took the entire male population aged 16 and older and deported them to concentration camps. More than 550 men and boys — 90% of the 16+ male population of Putten — perished. The world would indeed end for them in a very near tomorrow. But as the train departed, these men and boys of Putten did not rage. They did not curse their captors. Instead, they sang the verses of Psalm 84:

Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.

They chose to reply to vengeance not with curses or despair, but by planting a sapling of hope in God's blessings in their own hearts and in the hearts of those who would remember them. Their hope was in their Creator and the Creator's Kingdom, and their actions imply that their commitment to that hope lasted to the end.

I really don't know if I could have that kind of courage. To be completely honest, I have my rather strong doubts.

But each day I will wake up intending to do one thing.

Follow Jesus.

See where that leads.

We know the answer may just be a cross. But we also inherit a promise there is something on the other side of that cross and death. It is abundant life and though it can be obscured, it cannot be extinguished.

There is tumult, yes, but as the Northern Irish hymnist Cecil Frances Alexander wrote in 1852: *Jesus Calls Us, O'er*.

*Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult
of our life's wild, restless sea,
day by day his clear voice sounding,
saying, "Christian, follow me."*

*As of old St. Andrew heard it
by the Galilean lake,
turned from home and toil and kindred,
leaving all for his dear sake.*

*Jesus calls us from the worship
of the vain world's golden store,
from each idol that would keep us,
saying, "Christian, love me more."*

*In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,
"Christian, love me more than these."*

*Jesus calls us! In your mercy,
Savior, make us hear your call,
give our hearts to your obedience,
serve and love you best of all.*

God's peace which passes all understanding be the peace that is with you all,

Pastor Sean

Pastor Sean went on a spiritual retreat to the San Juan Islands in late May/early June for continuing education. Pictures below show a few of the many sights he observed along the way.



Uganda Update

by Sharon Dembro

I spoke with Kenneth recently and asked what effects the USAID cuts are having in Uganda. He said that so far it has meant shutting down AIDS treatment, pre-natal services and family planning services.

He proposes Christmas gifts for our children of a pair of shoes and a mosquito net at a cost of \$45 per child. Please make your donation early if possible so Kenneth can purchase these items before prices go up.

The following is a letter from Kenneth Kasule:

Dear Members of Grace Lutheran Church,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Hope all is well with your congregation at Grace Lutheran Church. We extend our sincere appreciation for all the support. I bring to you greetings from all our sponsored students. They are all in school studying for their third term, which is also the term concluding their academic year 2025. They are all doing well.

We are now in political season. We have entered the general elections, and we have had a tendency to experience all sorts of bad political experiences where many people's freedoms have been infringed upon in the past, and the current situation already signals we may have more of the same violations as in the past general elections. There were a lot of killings by security organs of civilians, and to date, some opposition people are still kept in prisons without trial. Kampala city becomes a killing zone as political unrest becomes the order of the day during the election/politicking period.

That being said, I suggest we get our Christmas gifts in time to avoid the chaos in Kampala during the election period. I will keep them safe at home. Additionally, prices tend to increase because many suppliers avoid shipping to Uganda during the election period, as it is often perceived that our political future here is uncertain.

Please keep us in your prayers.
God Bless you so much,
Kenneth



Cleaning (My hHeart)

by Kari Albrecht

I have a question for God. Or several, maybe.

Why don't I get what I want? Why don't things go my way?
Why do I feel unheard? Why, why, why?

I know what this means, I've felt this way before. It happens most often when I have more on my plate than I believe I can handle. I start feeling resentful, put upon. I know this is not what God wants for me and that there is but one cure for this: Song.

This is from Psalm 41 and has been used in Christian churches for many, many years. My favorite version is from the Chicago Folk Service (1960s for you youngsters). It's not staid as so many versions are; rather it's a dance-like plea for God to straighten me out. Sometimes it takes six or seven times before it sinks in. God answers my prayer and I can move on through my day joyfully, knowing that Jesus is by my side. Here it is:

Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your spirit free.

Create in me a clean heart oh God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Amen!



No storm can shake me

Beloved creator, in this season of political tension and social unrest due to inequity, we are surrounded by people who strive to speak more loudly, often with violent rhetoric or actions, in the hope of being heard. It can be hard, in this chaos, to discern who is on the side of hope, mercy and compassion. Amid the swirl of activity, the pain of division, the emptiness of grief and the pressure of injustice, we find a small, still place of peace in you, O Holy Source of Grace and Love. Leaning on your everlasting arms, we remember that we are held and loved. This is not a comfort we earn, but a solace given from the very nature of the Divine – the heard of all that is holy and whole. Above the din, I listen for that endless song's refrain:

*“No storm can shake my
inmost calm
while to that rock I'm clinging.
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
how can I keep from singing?” (ELW 763)*

This message is excerpted from “God of grace and geysers” by Julia Seymour in the September/October 2024 Gather magazine

The Bells

by Linda Gaenicke



Memories come and go. Some days I manage to take a little time to record small things that I remember. Memories of my life in Germany during the 70s usually come with something I have learned or experienced.

In Germany and other European cities, church bells were a special thing. Our town Neuenstadt am Kocher also had a church tower with bells. St. Nikolauskirche had its first bell installed in 1595. Through the years the church burned or had damage during wars and the bell (or bells) were replaced as the church was repaired. The church itself was the residence and kapelle for the Prince of Wurttemberg-Neuenstadt Herzoge von Wurtemberg. His job was to collect taxes in the region for his brother the King of Wurtemberg.

We could see the church tower from our home. It was only one block away.

The bells marked the time of day and events in the town. First there was a sweet bell that rang for two reasons. It rang when a baptism was taking place. Then the town knew when the ceremony was taking place and could remember the child with prayer. This bell rang when our third child Miriam was baptized. The bell's next job was to ring while the Lord's Prayer was being said during the service; those who were ill or could not attend that Sunday could say the prayer along with the congregation.

The middle sounding bell chimed the hour, quarter-hour, half-hour, and three-quarters of the hour. After a few weeks, we took the bells as normal. When we heard it we remembered the hour and went on with our daily activities. Wednesday was a "quiet half day." At noon, the bell tolled and the stores closed. Children went home from school and a half-day of rest was observed. This only happened in the small towns—I fear that it might not be observed today.

Then there was the largest and deepest bell. This bell's main job was to announce a death in the town. It was a deep mournful tone and its sound seemed to vibrate through one's bones.

On Sundays all the bells would start to ring about 15 minutes before church. In such a small town, most of the people walked to church. I always felt that the bells were leading our family into the sanctuary.

Our first Easter was truly a bell-ringing experience. David had three congregations to write sermons for and was usually up late the night before. He needed a good night's sleep for the busy day ahead. But before dawn that Easter, we heard the bells start to ring. Looking out the window, we saw four trumpeters standing in the bell tower. Then all the bells started ringing. Our windows rattled, our dog joined the others in town barking and our family along with the rest of the town was wide awake. The trumpets played and the bells rang for 15 minutes. There was no doubt that it was Easter morning.

The bells would repeat their ringing on Christmas Eve and again Christmas morning. On Christmas Eve the tower would be covered with snow and it was a beautiful picture to behold. On New Year's Eve they rang in the New Year with fireworks.

I doubt that I will ever forget the bells. I miss them.



Grace Lutheran Church

Presents A Piano Series

Art & Our Schimmel Grand

Rachelle McCabe

Music by Mendelssohn, Schubert, Bartók & Debussy

Sunday, November 16, 2025, 3 PM



1120 Walker Street, Port Townsend
Suggested Donation \$20 Information: gracelutheranpt.org

Holiday Shopping!

Do your shopping right here at Grace Lutheran in December—when the quilters will offer several quilts of different sizes for sale.



The money from this sale will help pay for quilting supplies: fiber fill for each quilt, sewing machine maintenance, shipping costs to Baltimore, and expenses for whoever delivers the quilts to Seattle.

Include a quilt on your Christmas gift list this season. Help support this wonderful ministry of Lutheran World Relief all around the globe.

Recently our quilters and their auxiliary packed up and sent off 80 quilts to the Ballard facility.

Quilters' Beatitudes

*Blessed are the quilters:
for they are the piecemakers.
Blessed are the quilters:
for they make ends meet.
Blessed are the quilters:
for they know how to cut corners.
Blessed are the quilters:
for they keep you in stitches.
Blessed are the quilters:
for they make great comforters.
Blessed are the quilters:
for they patch things up.
Blessed are the quilters:
for they pick up the pieces.
Blessed are the quilters:
For they save you energy.
Blessed are the quilters:
for they put color in your life.*



***Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly June 14
Bishop Election***



The finalists in the call process for Synod bishop assemble on the stage.



Notice was broadcasted to the Assembly of the election of the new bishop.



Bishop-Elect Keith Marshall, pastor of Hope Lutheran Church in Enumclaw, addresses the assembly at Olson Auditorium at Pacific Lutheran University upon his election.



Pastor Michelle de Beauchamp-Olafsen, of Saron Lutheran-First Presbyterian Church in Hoquiam, presents a letter of gratitude to retiring Bishop Richard Jaech and receives a hug.



Grammy Award nominee John McAndrew on piano during an August 11 concert.

The Women of Grace met Sept. 21 to discuss having a social/Bible study at Grace Lutheran.

Those that attended decided that we will meet the second and fourth Thursday of the month at 11:00 a.m. Bring your lunch. Coffee will be provided.

We will use the *Gather* magazine Bible study.

This time together should be a fun time to share and become closer to each other. All suggestions are welcome to help us grow as the Women of Grace Lutheran.

Hope to see you on Oct. 23 at 11:00 a.m..All are welcome.

Grace and peace to you all! As I officially begin serving you as your bishop today, I want to offer my greetings, introduce myself, and share a bit about what you can expect in the months ahead.

Since Synod Assembly, life has been a whirlwind of change, marked by farewells, joys, grief, and excitement. Throughout this journey, I have been sustained by Christ and by the prayers from many of you on behalf of myself, my family, Hope Lutheran, and our entire Synod. I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for the overwhelming support and encouragement you have shown me over the past month and a half!

As I go around our synod, I hope to do much more listening than talking. I want to hear your stories, your insights, your hopes, your concerns, your wisdom, and your passion for ministry here in the Southwestern Washington Synod. You are the ones already faithfully rooted in your corners of our synod, and I'm eager to learn from you! As we begin a visioning and strategic planning process for the SWWA Synod, listening to you will help synod staff, synod council, and myself discern where God is leading us together.

In Christ, Bishop-Elect Keith Marshall

Bishop-Elect Keith Marshall

A Word from Retiring Bishop Rick Jaech

3 I thank my God every time I think of you, 4 constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, 5 because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:3-5)



It has been a joy to serve and work with you as bishop for these past twelve years. I give thanks for all of the wonderful ways in which you have expressed and shared God's love with the people of your congregations and communities. You have done this as pastors, deacons, lay people, chaplains, teachers, retired volunteers, medical workers, emergency response workers, business people, parents, students, and in every other vocation you have followed. You have heard the call that comes from the heart of God and have responded with your own hearts and lives.

You have often heard me speak with appreciation for the unique word Synod. In Greek, it literally means "walking down the road together." We in the Southwestern Washington Synod have committed ourselves to join with God in the mission of cultivating God's shalom, grace, joy and justice in every person, place and corner of creation. As we have walked this road together, we have experienced the blessings that come when we also collaborate with ecumenical, inter-religious and community friends. I am thankful that I could participate with you in this journey, first as a pastor in this Synod

for 26 years and then as bishop for 12 years. I am thankful as well for the eleven years before that, when I served as pastor in San Francisco, and the summer season at Holden Village, where Satya and I worked as volunteers in 1986.

As I thank you, I also want to thank the wonderful Synod staff people who were key to the ministry we did. Starting from the earliest to the most recent, I thank Allison Kies, Melanie Wallschlaeger, Kim Latterell, Rebecca Shjerven, Joey Ager, Stefanie DeZarn, and Melissa Anderson Trust.

Wherever we go, by God's grace we continue to walk that road together. I pray God's blessing on you always and I end with this passage of blessing and hope from Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to God, who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

Bishop Rick Jaech

A Word from Retiring Bishop's Associate Rebecca Shjerven

Dear Friends in Christ,

As you read this, I will be wrapping up my call as Bishop's Associate in the Southwestern Washington Synod. Over the past six years I have learned so much about the landscape of ministry in our Synod and beyond. I have witnessed the variety of ways the Spirit of God is at work in this small corner of God's vast realm. I have been inspired and challenged, frustrated and energized.

It is impossible for an institution like the Church to organize or contain the work of God's Spirit, which is wild and free. And yet, a large chunk of my work over these past years has been to steward processes designed by our larger Church body, by people seeking to be faithful to the movement of God's Spirit while trying to develop norms and standards for trustworthy public ministry. A fool's errand? I don't think so. But work which requires humility, adaptability, prayerful discernment and an enormous amount of grace.



I am so grateful to all of you who have been partners along the way. I especially want to thank those of you who, with fear and trembling, said "yes" when asked to step into leadership roles. We never quite know what will be asked of us when we answer a call to serve in this way. But we know that God is faithful and we know, come what way, we are held securely in divine love and grace.

Thank you for the honor of serving you these past years. I am eager to see where the Holy Spirit leads us in the years to come as we continue to live as Christ's body in the world.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Rebecca Lucky Shjerven

Editor's note: Pastor Shjerven, though retired, has stepped in to fill the role of interim pastor at United Lutheran Church in Tacoma.

ELCA Bishop Yehiel Curry



Yehiel Curry was elected July 30 to serve a six-year term as presiding bishop of the ELCA. The election took place during the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly held July 28–Aug. 2 at the Phoenix Convention Center.

Curry was elected on the fifth ballot. There were 799 votes cast, with 400 votes needed for an election. Curry received 562 votes, and Kevin Strickland, bishop of the ELCA Southeastern Synod, received 237 votes. Curry will be the first Black presiding bishop of the ELCA.

Speaking to the assembly after his election, Curry reflected on his membership at Shekinah Chapel in Riverdale, Ill., where he eventually became a lay mission developer. During that time he participated in the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries program, which prepares individuals for ordained ministry in the ELCA, with a focus on emerging ministry contexts like ethnic-specific, multi-cultural, and both rural and urban settings. He spoke to the assembly about his initial hesitation in accepting that first ministry role.

“I’m what a return on your investment looks like,” he said. “Perhaps I’m out there in one of you. I never saw myself as good enough, so for two years, I said no. I finally said yes. When I said yes, your support, this church’s support, of that ministry meant everything. So if you want to know what your benevolence dollars look like, it looks like me. And I want to say thank you. Thank you for your investment.”

Curry has served as bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan Chicago Synod since 2019. He previously served as mission developer (2009-2012) and pastor (2012-2019) of Shekinah.

He received a Bachelor of Arts from Lewis University in Romeoville, Ill., in 1995 and a Master of Divinity from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) in 2013. LSTC is one of seven ELCA seminaries.



The Rev. Keith Marshall is consecrated Bishop of the Southwestern Washington Synod Oct. 11 by ELCA Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Olympia.



The newly elected and installed Presiding Bishop of the ELCA Yehiel Curry is keeping up his predecessor’s “Selfies with the Bishop” effort; Pastor Sean introduced himself and snagged one at the reception for SWWA Synod Bishop Keith Marshall’s installation.

A path lined with welcome, love and grace—Get to know Bishop-elect Keith Marshall

Elected bishop of the Southwestern Washington Synod on June 14, Keith Marshall feels the Spirit's call to keep "paying it forward." He strives to share with others the love, hope and belonging found in Christ that he first encountered in his Lutheran youth group years ago.

Marshall, who has served as pastor of Hope Lutheran Church in Enumclaw, Wash., since 2015, connected with *Living Lutheran* via email about the transformative power of sharing, through the church's words and actions, the good news that God loves everyone and gives us all a place to belong. He took office on Aug. 1 and will be installed on Sat., Oct. 11.

***Living Lutheran:* What is your vision for the future of the synod, and what do you see as its biggest priorities?**

Marshall: My vision for the Southwestern Washington Synod is to continue being a Christ-centered, Spirit-led church that shows up with courage, compassion and conviction for the sake of the gospel and the world. My hope is for our congregations and our synod to be healthy, thriving and growing, not for our sake alone but so the people in our communities will know through both our words and our actions that God loves them and that they have a place to belong.

I will prioritize proclaiming Christ boldly and with grace, supporting the unique passions and callings of each congregation. I will accompany the new leaders God is raising up and intentionally nurture strong, life-giving relationships among rostered ministers, congregations, ecumenical partners and the communities across our synod. Through prayer, discernment and listening, I hope to hear the hopes and needs of our congregations, members and communities so that I can equip and encourage them to address these needs.

None of this can be accomplished without acknowledging the significant challenges the church faces today, such as declining membership, the rise of Christian nationalism and the weight of grief and change that many of our communities carry. Despite these challenges, I hold a deep and abiding conviction that by embracing a Spirit-led vision, we will faithfully step into the new things God is already doing in our midst.

How did you feel when you were elected?

My initial response to being elected was shock. (*Really? Me?*) Even though I had prayed, prepared and opened my heart to the possibility, the reality of hearing my name called caught me off guard. It was a holy and disorienting moment—one I will never forget.

What followed was a deep sense of relief. For months, I had been in a liminal space, unable to fully live into my role as pastor at Hope because I didn't want to start some of my summer programming I wouldn't be able to see through. At the same time, I couldn't fully envision stepping into the role of bishop. The long season of discernment had finally come to a clear and Spirit-filled conclusion. I felt a weight lifted, not because the journey was over but because I could now begin stepping into this new calling and envision how life [would move] forward and begin to take shape.

I experienced an overwhelming wave of gratitude. I felt grateful for God and for every person who walked alongside me, prayed for me and encouraged me along the way. I was also grateful for the other candidates who, like me, had felt a nudge to be open to the calling of bishop. Finally, I was grateful for my family, the people of Hope Lutheran Church, and colleagues, mentors and friends throughout the synod who believed in me and reminded me that I was not on this journey alone.

What experiences in your ministry do you feel have best prepared you to serve as bishop? What have you learned in your ministry that you might incorporate into your approach to leading the synod?

Looking back on my ministry and life in the church, I can see a clear path that led me to this moment. As a teenager, lost and hurting, I found myself in the youth group of a Lutheran church. It was there that I first experienced welcome, love and grace unlike anything I had known before. In that community, I encountered people who deeply reflected Christ and revealed God's love to me in real and transformative ways.

From that experience, I felt a gentle but persistent nudge from the Holy Spirit, a call to share that same love, belonging and abiding hope we have in Jesus Christ with others. Over the past two decades, I have lived out that calling in various ways: through outdoor ministry, as a congregational youth director and most recently as a minister of Word and Sacrament.

What I've come to learn is that, regardless of age, life stage or circumstances, people long to know that they are loved by God. They also want their leaders to be present and to genuinely care about their passions, their stories and their lives. It's by living into these core truths that I've faithfully served as a camp counselor, youth director, pastor and now bishop of the Southwestern Washington Synod. From that initial nudge I felt as a teenager, I have come to understand that the call has remained the same. Only the context has changed.

Mandatory Viewpoint

by Jeni Little



On Sept.27 I participated in the Big Hurt, which is a multi-sport event in Port Angeles of mountain biking, sea kayaking, road bicycling and a road run. I finished before the cutoff time and placed second in the Masters Iron 'Woman'... * I was last place overall but more than happy to finish in one piece!

I used my dad's custom road bike, a mountain bike a friend gave me years ago and Jim's 30-year-old Kayak. As someone born during the tail end of the Baby Boom, it seems fitting that my gear was vintage.

During the 6+hours it took to complete the The Big Hurt, I reflected on my sometimes difficult relationship with my Father; and gratitude for my husband, mother and son who each supported me for this particular event and are my foundation every day.

This photo was taken on top of the Foothills Trail during the mountain bike leg of the race, where the race director had a mandatory stop to look at God's handiwork.

*Labor Day Vigil at the Haller Fountain "For Our Immigrant Neighbors,"
hosted by the Jefferson Interfaith Action Coalition.*





Chelsea Rosenberger presents the "Knights of the Banana Slug" Josiah and Holden with their banner at the Halloween Cub Scout pack meeting.



Josiah and Holden dressed as characters from the movie "Spaceballs" for Halloween trunk-or-treating at the Scout cabin.



The Rosenbergers' trunk was a real treat.

"God's work, our hands." Sunday, Sept. 7 at Blue Heron Middle School. Our congregation worked on landscaping and picking up trash on the school grounds.



Manifesto (A Call to Action)

by Sharon Dembro

I never thought I'd write these words but then came the Trump UN speech – the last straw – added to what was already a jaw-dropping list of actions, incredible actions, that have left me stunned. But exposing the world's countries to an hour-long meandering harangue of hate and lies was personally wounding after a career promoting U.S. interests, proud to represent a country where the rule of law, concern for human rights, scientific leadership, the health of the planet and combatting disease were unquestioned.

No longer.

Consider these heart-breaking examples:

The PEPFAR program put in place by President George W. Bush is credited with saving 26 million lives. Boston University estimates that elimination of this and other USAID programs will cause 124,277 adult and 258,673 child deaths this year from HIV/AIDS, malaria, diarrhea, malnutrition and tropical diseases. Our own Kenneth Kasule told me USAID cuts are already impacting AIDS patients, prenatal care and family planning in Uganda.

Trump has authorized the destruction of \$10 million in birth control products held in Belgian warehouses and destined for low-income countries. Cost to U.S. taxpayers of this destruction: \$167,000. This over Belgian government objections and offers to purchase and distribute these products by other aid organizations.

Trump plans to take away distribution of what remains of U.S. assistance from amazing organizations like Lutheran World Relief and hand over funds directly to governments to distribute as they see fit. This will force these groups to shut down. I have worked with LWR, Catholic Relief Services and others. They have decades of efficient corruption-free administration. Once destroyed, reconstituting them may not be possible.

Trump at the UN: "Global warming is 'the greatest con job ever perpetrated on the world.'"

And then there is ordering the Justice Department to go after media and political enemies, eviscerating scientific research that has made us a world leader, the pervasive corruption and enrichment of administration cronies and the billionaire class at the expense of those who will suffer from Medicaid, SNAP and education cuts. The list goes on and on and on. And it's not "fake news."

So where does that leave those of us at Grace who long for the country we thought we knew, who feel helpless, who wonder if evil is winning? What are our options?

We can give in to fear

We can sit on our hands and hope others will "do something."

We can be comfortable in our Port Townsend bubble and ignore what is happening in the world.

Because what difference can one individual make anyway?

We are each one drop of water. When joined with millions of other drops just like us, when people of faith live out their beliefs, when we commit to being God's hands, we are invincible. When we stand together with our Grace community we become stronger. If we stand together with our larger faith community, with those across the U.S. as committed to Jesus' teachings as we should be, we will surely defeat this evil.

We've already made a start. Those of you who attended the Labor Day vigil felt it. We have to let our community know that we who call ourselves Christians will stand up for the love and justice Jesus demands, that we have nothing in common with those who claim to follow Him but ignore the gospel. We will protest—take an hour every couple of weeks to show our commitment (making good use of our Grace T-Shirts). We will boycott businesses and organizations that kowtow to whims and threats. That is real power as evidenced by the quick return of Jimmy Kimmel after Disney lost \$4 billion in stock value and hundreds of thousands cancelled their subscriptions.

And, of course, we will pray—for our country, for one another, for God's will to be done.

Here is what Thomas Merton one of the great spiritual leaders of the 20th century, a monk but also a social activist had to say: "The great danger is that under the pressures of anxiety and fear, the alternation of crisis and relaxation and new crisis, the people of the world will come to accept gradually the idea of war, the idea of submission to total power and abdication of reason, spirit and individual conscience. The great peril is the deadening of conscience." He spoke during the Vietnam War but how true his words are for us today—a warning and a call to action.

Grace Lutheran member Sharon Dembro is retired from a career in the U.S. Foreign Service including posts as Deputy Ambassador to Norway during the Clinton Administration and head of the Political and Economical section of the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia during the Reagan Administration.



The Men's Group hosted a tour of the Naval Undersea Museum in Keyport on Saturday, Sept. 23. After the tour, the group enjoyed a barbecue lunch courtesy of the Men's Group.



Chuck Thompson took advantage of the nice weather on his motorcycle.

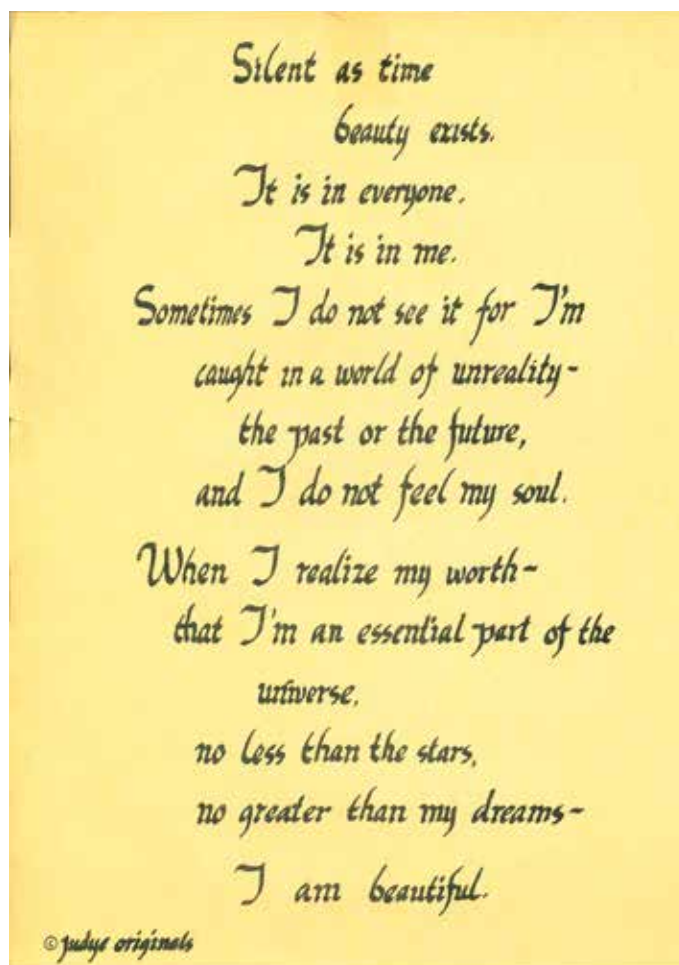


A few of the exhibits at the Naval Undersea Museum





We said goodbye to Judy Best on Saturday, Sept. 27, committing her ashes to the Grace columbarium.



A poem written by Judy Best.



A Note From the Editor

by Mary Ronen

In June I had the privilege of being a part of the 2025 Synod Assembly along with Pastor Sean and Steve Scherer. The main purpose of this assembly was to elect a new bishop to succeed Bishop Jaech who was retiring after 12 years of service. It was exciting to be among so many others, both lay persons and rostered pastors, all with the same goal: to find the right person to lead us. It felt even spiritual to me.

There were six candidates, all were well-qualified and each felt that they were called to serve. They were introduced and each had the opportunity to tell the assembly a little about themselves and their goals. On the 5th ballot, the Rev Keith Marshall was elected.

There was of course other business to tend to and that was accomplished as well. Two resolutions were read, voted on and passed. There was a resolution to "Honor the Contributions and Legacy of Bishop Richard Jaech" and a Memorial from St. Mark's by the Narrows "Standing With Our Bishops in Speaking Truth to Power." These are found at the Southwestern Washington Synod website.

(www.swwasynod.org)

Over the last few years here at Grace I've learned a lot about how church works and what it takes to keep it going. I've been blessed to be a council member and have had the opportunity to attend some synod meetings. Being involved gave me an understanding that I never had before of the challenges churches face today.

If you are called to participate in council or to attend a synod event, say yes. I don't think you will regret it.

Moving on – I've learned a little something else these last few months: Downsizing is painful. More on that later.

Ceaseless Love

*I love You and yet I do not frame
In words, the thousand wishes of my heart.
In a whisper, I speak Your name
Thinking of You, when I feel apart.*

*Yet, You need no words, for
You know me; It still remains, through You,
The love that we all share.*

*Though, I cannot always speak it
You know my love and heart.
Understanding the words not spoken:
Your Love that never ceases.*

....Elise Sinclair



Pastor Sean and Holden at the PT Pride event at Pope Marine Park in June.

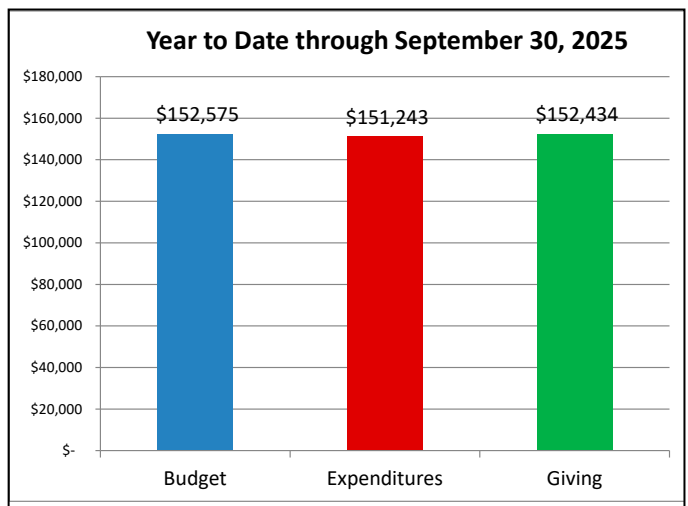


Holden's first fish! Caught on an excursion with Kit and Micah Rosenberger.



Pastor Sean and Lois Sherwood attended the Rotary International Convention in Calgary, in late June.

Grace Financials



Mark Your Calendar

Worship: Sundays at 10:30 a.m.
 Quilting: Mondays at 10 a.m.
 Prayers Against Cancer: Last Thursdays of the month, 2 p.m.
 Lectionary Study, Tuesdays at 2 p.m.
 Men's Bible Breakfast: Fridays at 8 a.m., The Cup, 600 W. Sims Way
 Women Bible Study, 2nd & 4th Thursdays, at 11 a.m.
 Council: 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 3:30 p.m

Grace Council

President: Al Smith
 alsmithinpt@gmail.com
Vice President: Lois Sherwood
Secretary: Stacy Toner
Ministers:
Resources (Treasurer): Dennis Struecker
Facilities: Steve Brantner
Social Concerns: Don Fristoe

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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.