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# Grace Lutheran Church & School



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Member: CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION



**Pastor:** John Hein (Cell 612-408-1635)

**Phone:** 763-784-8784

**Principal:** Ryan Libby (Ph. 763-784-6340)

**Grades:** Kindergarten-8<sup>th</sup>

**Church Year:** Last Sun. in Church Year

**Date:** November 20, 2005

## ✠ THE ORDER OF WORSHIP ✠

**Hymn:** ..... TLH 463, st. 1, 4-8: *For All the Saints*

**Liturgy:** ..... TLH, p. 5 ff.

**Introit** (followed by *Gloria Patri, The Kyrie*): ..... TLH, pp. 6-7

P: We are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth.

**C: In which righteousness dwells.**

P: Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days;

**C: Let me know how fleeting is my life.**

P: You have made my days a mere handbreadth;

**C: The span of my years is as nothing before You.**

P: But now, Lord, what do I look for?

**C: My hope is in You. Glory be to God!**

**Gloria in Excelsis:** .... TLH 237, st. 1: *All Glory Be to God on High*

P: All glory be to God on high, who hath our race befriended!

**C: To us no harm shall now come nigh, The strife at last is ended.**

God showeth His good will to men, And peace shall reign on earth again; Oh, thank Him for His goodness!

**First Reading:** ..... 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

Christ will demonstrate His complete victory when He comes again.

**Gradual:**

P: These are they who have come out of the great tribulation;

**C: They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

P: Blessed are those whose strength is in You,

**C: Who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.**

P: Alleluia. Alleluia. Jesus promises: "I am the Alpha and the Omega,

**C: The First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." Alleluia.**

**Second Reading:** ..... Matthew 25:1-13

As wise virgins with their lamps prepared, so are we instructed to be as we await our Lord's second coming in that He will take us to His paradise.

**Confession of Faith:** ..... Apostolic Creed, TLH p. 12

**Hymn:** ..... TLH 613: *Jerusalem the Golden*

**Sermon:** ..... Isaiah 65:17-25

(17) "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. (18) But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing, And her people a joy. (19) I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. (20) "No more shall an infant from there *live but a few* days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner *being* one hundred years old shall be accursed. (21) They shall build houses and inhabit *them*; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (22) They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, *so shall be* the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. (23) They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they *shall be* the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them. (24) "It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear. (25) The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust *shall be* the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD."

## "THAT'S THE WAY IT SHOULD BE"

**Offertory:** ..... TLH p. 12 f.

**Hymn:** ..... TLH 660: *I'm But a Stranger Here*

**Offering, Prayers, Benediction:** ..... TLH p. 14

**Hymn:** ..... TLH 212, st. 1, 5-7: *A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing*

**Silent Prayer:**

<b>Last Week's Stats:</b> Nov. 13, 2005		B.Cl.: 44	S.S.: 22	Worship: 139
Sun. Offering:	Grace:	2,615.50	CLC:	610.00
Weekly Need:	Grace:	2,933.00	CLC:	846.00
-Under / +Over:	Grace:	-317.50	CLC:	-236.00
Year-to-Date Offering::	Grace:	123,983.46	CLC:	39,408.00
Year-to-Date Need:	Grace:	134,918.00	CLC:	38,916.00
Year-to-Date (+/-)	Grace:	-10,934.54	CLC:	+492.00
Other Offerings:	Living Faith:	1.00	Tuition:	45.00
GLC Other:	MDF:	11.00	Kinship:	60.00
	ILC Bldg.	8.00	CEF:	27.00

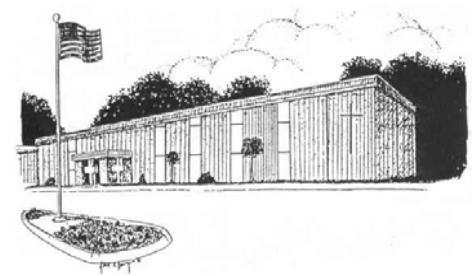
## † THE ANNOUNCEMENTS †

- ♦ **Thanksgiving Eve Service:** The Psalmist cries out: "Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness, And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:15). We have an opportunity to do this on Thanksgiving Eve at 7:00 pm. Come join your fellow Christians in worship to our God who provides great bounty!
- ♦ **Christmas Eve Service:** The practice bulletin for the Christmas Eve service is now available. Except for the pre-schoolers, each child has two parts and some joint recitations. We ask that the parents help their children so that they might know their individual parts by Sunday, Dec. 4. Help from the parents will be crucial to a successful Christmas Eve Service. Rehearsals will be according to the following schedule:
  - ★ Sunday, Dec. 4 & 11: 12-2 pm; Sunday, Dec. 18: 9-10 am
 On the 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> there will be a light lunch provided to the entire congregation during our regular hospitality time so that the children will have an opportunity to be well-nourished prior to the rehearsal.
- ♦ **Note to Parents:** Last Sunday the Council discussed some issues of having children in the classrooms on Sunday mornings. It is believed that some of the classrooms are in disarray following hospitality. As a reminder, parents please remind your children to leave things alone so that the teachers don't lose things or have extensive cleanup to do.
- ♦ **Parking:** The Council was approached about adding potential handicapped parking spots. They will be looking into this. However, they request that younger members park further away to permit those with physical impairments to be able to park closer to the church.
- ♦ **Music Recital:** Janelle Hein and Chris Lentz are organizing an opportunity for the children with musical talents in our midst to perform an informal Christmas recital. This would occur on Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> during hospitality. Those interested may speak with Janelle or Chris.
- ♦ **CLC News:** "Pastor Pastor Del Maas has taken a leave of absence from his pastorate in Phoenix. I have appointed David Reim to fulfill his term as Visitor. I pray that God would fill you and your people with wonderment at God's gracious gifts this Thanksgiving. Let your requests be known to God with thanksgiving. Pres. J. Schierenbeck."
- ♦ **Sponsors Needed:** The Project Kinship Committee reports that sponsors are needed for newly enrolled students at the CLCI seminary in India, as well as for children who were added to the CLCI orphanage. If you would like to become a sponsor for a student or child, or if you desire more information about the Kinship program, please contact: Pastor Tom Schuetze, 6768 Paw Paw Ave., Coloma, MI 49038; tschuetze@netzero.net. The monthly cost to be a sponsor for a student or orphan is \$35 and \$50, respectively. (The Kinship program currently supports a total of 42 students and 54 children in our mission fields in India and Africa.)
- ♦ **Sunday School Memory Work:** Ninth and Tenth Commandments

## Council Meeting Notes

November 13, 2005

Opened with prayer at 12:05 pm. Minutes from October were read and accepted. Treasurer's report from October was accepted as presented.



**Elders:** Still looking into dental insurance. Approval was given for a children's music recital during hospitality on Dec. 18. Discussion of the calendar, in particular to have Thanksgiving Eve service every year. School cleaning was adjusted to Aug. 12. Approval of having the Christmas Eve service rehearsal from Sat. morning to Sun. afternoon. A light lunch will be provided to the entire congregation during hospitality. Song service format to be a Candlelight service with readings and hymns.

**Board of Education:** Working on accommodating new requests on use of kitchen for school stuff. The former kitchen cabinets have been requested for Ann Radichel's room. Discussion on children in classrooms on Sun. mornings. A bulletin blurb was requested. The upper-grade lock-in went well.

**Trustees:** Insurance policy, currently accepted as presented. Kitchen work continuing. Snow removal – continuing for this year?

**New business:** Discussion on including delegates in letter writing committee to the CLC, recommendation to include Pastor, Secretary, President, and 3<sup>rd</sup> year Elder. Need to check on and clarify teachers calls. Announcement in bulletin on parking and discussion of handicapped parking spots. Some discussion on younger members support of the work that is needed at the church. Motion to move council meeting from Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> to Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> accepted.



## † TODAY AT GRACE †

Organist: Maureen Ochsner

Elder: Ed Lentz

Ushers: Paul Lentz; Bill Ryan; Brad Kitzman; John Auel;  
Rick Nelson; Elijah Wales; Keith Radichel

Counting Team 3: Don Auel; Brian Eichstadt; Jack  
Kirkham; Benno Sydow; Ole Olmanson

Hospitality Team 1: Phil & Jackie Radichel; Lynn & Janice  
Sandhoefner; Bill Ryan

Church Cleaners: Kitzman

School: Vandever

## † NEXT WEEK AT GRACE †

Ushers: Paul Lentz; Bill Ryan; Brad Kitzman; John Auel;  
Rick Nelson; Elijah Wales; Keith Radichel

Counting Team 4: Paul Lentz; Al Rosendahl; Dave Rust;  
Lynn Sandhoefner; Jeff Radichel

Hospitality Team 2: Janelle Hein; Chris Lentz; Peter  
Fleischer; Alice Weibye

Church Cleaners: Kitzman

## † OUR SCHEDULE †

<b>Today:</b>	9:00 am – Bible Class and Sunday School 10:00 am – Worship Service 11:00 am – Hospitality 11:15 am – Youth Bible Forum
<b>Wed., Nov. 23:</b>	12:00 pm – School Dismissal No Chiquettes 4:00-5:45 pm – Public School Catechism 7:00 pm – Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service
<b>Thu., Nov. 24:</b>	Thanksgiving Day
<b>Sun., Nov. 27:</b>	No Choir Practice 9:00 am – Bible Class and Sunday School 10:00 am – Worship Service
<b>Wed., Nov. 30:</b>	2:30 pm – Chiquettes (Little One's Story Hour, Theme: Apples) 4:00-5:45 pm – Catechism for Public School Children 7:00 pm – Midweek Advent Service
<b>Sun., Dec. 4, 11:</b>	12:00-2:00 pm – Children's Christmas Eve Service Rehearsal
<b>Wed., Dec. 7, 14:</b>	7:00 pm – Midweek Advent Services
<b>Sun., Dec. 11:</b>	3:00 pm – Christmas Caroling
<b>Sun., Dec. 18:</b>	9:00 am – Children's Christmas Eve Service Rehearsal 11:00 am – Christmas Music Recital During Hospitality 6:00 pm – Christmas Candlelight Service
<b>Sat., Dec. 24:</b>	6:00 pm – Christmas Eve Service
<b>Sun., Dec. 25:</b>	10:00 am – Christmas Day Service (No S.S. or Bible Class)

# Grace Lutheran Church & School



# HEAVEN

i s m y t h r o n e



t h e E A R T H i s m y

f o o t s t o o l .

I s a i a h 6 6 : 1

## **MAINTAINING OUR LUTHERAN HERITAGE:**

As Lutherans we claim our heritage from the Reformation, which the Lord of the Church worked through His servant Martin Luther. As time carries new generations further from that event, the appreciation of our heritage wanes. This is evident in the “dumbing down” of biblical confessionalism, and outright rejection of Bible truths within what is known as “mainline Lutheranism.” We are confident that Luther himself would have little to do with the theology and practices that are emanating today from churches, which call themselves by his name. Luther made himself quite clear: “Luther himself has no desire to be Lutheran except insofar as he teaches the Holy Scripture in purity” (WLS: II, para 2679). CPH Krauth said, “A Lutheran is a Christian whose rule of faith is the Bible and whose creed is the Augsburg Confession” (*The Conservative Reformation and its Theology*, p. 185).

We are true children of the Reformation. It is our intent, God helping us, to maintain our Lutheran heritage. We do not make this claim on the basis of some personal perfection. We do so on our conviction that the doctrines we teach are those that Martin Luther taught from God’s Holy Word. We believe as someone has said that the Bible determines what the church teaches, not vice versa! With Luther we say, “We teach nothing new. We teach what is old and what the apostles and all godly teachers have taught, inculcated, and established before us” (2689). We believe that it is faith alone in Christ that saves, and that in a confessional sense it is faith in Christ alone that makes a “Lutheran.” Whether we are true to our claim we let our critics determine, asking only that they *measure our teaching in the light of Scripture alone*.

We feel the burden to stand fast in the faith once delivered to the saints, so much the more as steadfastness to the Word of God is less and less to be found in our “post-Christian” age. We feel the burden from another perspective in that we recognize our inherent weakness and our all too frequent failures to fight the good fight. We are beset by our own flesh as well as by the devil to seek the easy way rather than expose ourselves to the danger to which Luther exposed himself by his steadfast confession at Worms.

In maintaining our Lutheran and therefore our Scriptural heritage, we must be alert to the danger of legalism. To fight against that error, we must continue to be students of the Bible, from the pulpit to the homes. We do not further the cause of truth or our Lutheran faith by empty “pulpit pounding.” Unless we are in the Word of God we are left with nothing more to the maintenance of our Lutheran faith than custom and tradition. While we cherish and respect custom and tradition, to make our case on the basis of custom and tradition is nothing more than a retreat to Rome from which the Lord delivered us through the Reformation! Customs and tradition serve as witness to our faith. They are not the foundation of our faith, nor the guarantee of our faith. God’s Word alone is the foundation and guarantee of faith - and salvation! Paul wrote to Timothy, “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:14,15).

We live in an increasingly illiterate society in which we told of college students who can’t write, much less read. As people cannot read or will not read, they obviously open the Bible less and less. If they care at all what the Lord says, they are left to hear it from someone else, rather than finding out for themselves. By default then, our generation is sliding back to Rome, which at one time forbade the reading of the Bible. Before Luther made the Bible accessible to the common people, they were left to the mercy and whim of the clergy.

There is another danger, to which we are exposed, and by which we are tempted. We are an entertainment generation. Churches in our land are falling into the snare, and in fact are encouraging it. Whether intended or not the *Word of God becomes secondary*! One premise of the so-called Church Growth Movement (CGM) is to establish “User friendly Churches.” The intent of the CGM is to “build the church.” The standard of success in this movement is statistics. One critique of the CGM written by a pastor in a community church in Sarnia, Ontario (found on line) explained one of the principles of the CGM as the need to “pay attention to what they [the people] want: worship services that are informal and relaxed, music that is contemporary and sermons that are not too long but practical, relevant, interesting, simple, positive and even entertaining. They want drama, skits, dance and other more visual ways of expressing the faith.” He further says that it is important to speak to people’s “felt needs” in an amusing and entertaining way. “Felt needs” leave no room for preaching the Law, an essential to appreciating the Gospel. How does one teach the Law in an amusing way? Another CGM critic wrote, “Bad doctrine is tolerable; a long sermon most certainly is not ...long windedness has become a greater sin than heresy.” The aforementioned Ontario pastor correctly said, “When we gather as believers we do not gather to be entertained, but to worship the God who has made us and redeemed us from our sins.”

As Lutherans who appreciate our Lutheran heritage, we are under the gun. Few congregations in our small church body are large. For many years our growth in the Church of the Lutheran Confession has been static. Desperately we would like to see more people in our pews so that we can share with them the means of grace. But therein lies also a temptation. We dare not become so statistically conscious at home or overseas that we seek innovative ways to make our church, our services, and our fellowship more attractive to the masses, or measure success by statistics. The stated goal of the CGM is to “build the church,” or “make disciples.” That expression is as misleading as the goal is wrong. Where did the Lord commission us to “build the church?” First of all what is the church? CMG gurus are not referring to the Holy Christian Church, the spiritual body of Christ, but to the church on the corner! Furthermore, we cannot “build the church.” If that expression makes any sense at all it is the Lord Who builds the church. We can live with the translation of “make disciples,” in Matthew 28, as long as the whole passage is quoted, to wit, “Make disciples of all nations (by) baptizing them, etc ...” But even then it is not we who make disciples. We are simply the deliverers of the means of grace through which the Spirit of God creates disciples. On Pentecost, Peter preached the Word, and the Spirit added to the Church.

In defending our Lutheran heritage, we must recognize that emotion is the staple of much religious activity today. The charismatic movement through its music, its body swaying, tongue speaking, hand holding, and subjective experience is predicated on whipping up emotions. We acknowledge that the Gospel of forgiveness through the shed blood of Christ creates emotion in the penitent heart. But the Gospel is not emotional. Further, very little if any emphasis of the charismatic movement is on the cross of Christ. When the day of death arrives there is no comfort in personal subjective feelings and emotion? The comfort and peace of the dying Christ believer is outside of himself - in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ!

This all brings us back to appreciation of our Lutheran heritage. We recognize that rote recital of passages, and empty repetition of our liturgical service week after week is of little value, and in fact can give us a false sense of security. If we will worship the Lord in spirit and in truth we will worship the Lord with our lips *and our heart, the essential of the two being the heart!* (Romans 10:9,10).

Concerning translations, we recognize that God speaks in every language. Because we have become used to and prefer a particular translation, does not mean we must be wed to that translation as the only way God speaks. Much less dare we insist that everyone bow to our desire, and make judgments on one's orthodoxy by the translation that is used. To *insist* on a particular translation as an *absolute* necessity is another step back to Rome. Our only concern should be that the translation we use is faithful to the original.

As far as the hymnal is concerned, *The Lutheran Hymnal* is not the last word in hymns. There are many fine hymns (and tunes) that were not included in the hymnal. Some were written after 1941 when the hymnal was published. Nevertheless, one of the strengths of *The Lutheran Hymnal* is the substantive message and devotion of its hymns. We maintain that if we would lose our catechism, we could teach the whole way of salvation through our hymns. Also, there is no finer book of prayer than our hymnal. Take time on Sunday morning before the service to read some hymns. For different reasons, there is a proliferation of new hymnals within Lutheranism. In use among many of us is the *Worship Supplement*, produced by one of our own. The strength of it is that it is in language that people speak. It includes some new hymns. In its liturgical services it remains steadfastly faithful to the Scriptures. It is Lutheran! The hymns and music of our church are important expressions of our Lutheran heritage.

There can be no valid objection to consideration of a new hymnal. However, the attitude that drives the consideration is critical. If a new hymnal is published in order to make it politically correct, and gender comfortable there is good reason to view it with suspicion and even reject it. There apparently has been "felt need" to publish new hymnals with hymns that are more socially conscious. We need to be alert to hymns that offer little more than catchy tunes, or others that are high on emotion and short on substance. Hymns should be faithful to Scripture. Music does stir the emotions. As Luther said, it arouses the souls of men. With respect to our hymns we want the message in song to stir godly emotions that redound in praise and thanksgiving to our Lord. Music in the church should be worshipful, solid, and instructional, and obviously glorify God. We should resist hymns and music that is more

calculated toward emotion and entertainment than to worship. As important as Luther's music was to the Reformation, we should be as careful that our heritage is not undone by music!

In contending for our Lutheran heritage, we should be careful before we cast aside that to which we have become accustomed. Changes and practices that might of themselves be acceptable, may on the other hand be unacceptable when confession is called for. What might other wise be acceptable, may be unacceptable if it blurs the distinction between truth and error, or makes our confession (Reformation Lutheranism) indistinguishable from the bland Christianity of our age. We need a better reason than a "felt need" to make our church more attractive, and our worship more palatable to the masses. If we feel compelled to make our worship and worship forms more enticing to such as are excited by entertainment, and turned on by emotion, we will not be speaking to the real need of souls. Sound preaching of Law and Gospel is still the only way to arouse the heart, and create godly excitement, to say nothing of confidence of salvation.

Consider our liturgy. Scripture prescribes no form of liturgy. Therefore it is not contrary to Scripture or our Lutheran faith to use variations of liturgy, so long as the liturgy is faithful to the Scriptures. Our liturgy is respectful, worshipful and instructive. It is based soundly on Scripture and is rock solid in its theology. It presents the whole message of salvation. Our liturgy stamps us as thoroughly Lutheran in a day when it is difficult to determine a Lutheran Church from one that isn't except in name. The fact that our liturgy has served the church in good stead for many years is not in itself reason to keep it. But in that it has spoken to many hearts and strengthened many people of God with its message and its orderly worship form is good reason to be careful before we discard it as something outdated.

Every congregation has some provision in its constitution declaring that "all hymnals and textbooks for instruction in Christian doctrine used in this congregation are to conform" to sound Christian teaching drawn from the Bible. This dissertation is not to inveigh against change. It is a plea that we stand against the ill winds that are buffeting the church, and to which many have succumbed. If change is necessary in our form (worship service, liturgy, music) and our forums (our youth camps, adult camps, both of which seem to be increasing among us) then let it be done with caution. We have every confidence that we are all committed to faithful adherence to Scripture. Yet history shows us that what frequently started innocently has led some down a path to where in the name of making the church more attractive and more in touch, the Lutheran heritage has been jettisoned.

Krauth wrote, "Must Lutheranism be shorn of its glory to adapt it to our times or our land? No!" (p. 208). If that was true in 1871, it even more so today. Our charge is quite simple: Preach God's Word faithfully! Confess it before the world without shame. The fellowship of like-minded Lutherans gathered around Word and Sacrament creates its own joy. We are so bold to say that it is the only hope for a world spinning out of control, unfortunately abetted by nominal Lutherans who have forsaken their true Lutheran heritage.

Written by Rev. Daniel Fleischer (11/20/2005)