

✠ TODAY AT GRACE ✠

Organist: Maureen Ochsner Elder: Al Rosendahl

Ushers: Roger Ochsner; Jeremiah Boe; Bob Maki; Jack Maki; John Maki; Joel Stifter

Counting Team 2: Gary Gunther; Rick Nelson; Bill Rust; Bob Vandever; Clint Welker

Hospitality Team 7: Jan Davis, Chad & Amanda Hestekin; Ryan & Mikey Oman; Eli & Laura Wales

Church Cleaners: F. Radichel School: Bluhm

✠ NEXT WEEK AT GRACE ✠

Ushers: Roger Ochsner; Jeremiah Boe; Bob Maki; Jack Maki; John Maki; Joel Stifter

Counting Team 3: Brian Eichstadt; Phil Flesner; Chad Hestekin; Benno Sydow

Hospitality Team 2: Brian & Maureen Eichstadt; Janelle Hein; Jenny Kleifgen; Chris Lentz

Church Cleaners: None School: Ecker

✠ OUR SCHEDULE ✠

Sun. Sept. 25: 9:00 am – Bible Class & Sunday School
10:00 am – Worship Service
11:00 am – Hospitality

Tue., Sept. 27: Grace School Field Trip (Aamodt's Apple Orchard)

Wed., Sept. 28: 4:30 pm – Catechism for Public School Students
7:00 pm – Midweek Bible Class

Sun., Oct. 2: 8:30 am – Choir Practice
9:00 am – Bible Class & Sunday School
10:00 am – Worship Service w/Lord's Supper
11:00 am – Hospitality
12:00 pm – Council Meeting (Early Due to Mission Festival)

Oct. 4-5: Minnesota Pastoral Conference (Okabena, MN)

Sun., Oct. 9: Mission Festival (w/Pastor Paul Tiefel)
Potluck and Blood Drive

Mon., Oct. 10: No School – Parent/Teacher Conferences

Oct. 11-14: No School – CLC Teachers Conference (Valentine, NE)

Sun., Oct. 16: Voters & Dorcas Guild Meetings

Sat., Oct. 29: 9:00 am – Work Day at Grace

Sun., Oct. 30: 4:00 pm – MN Reformation Service (Inver Grove Hts.)

Mon., Oct. 31: Reformation Day (499th Anniversary – Oct. 31, 1517)

How rich our God is! He gives enough, but we don't notice it. He gave the whole world to Adam, but this was nothing in Adam's eyes; he was concerned about one tree and had to ask why God had forbidden him to eat of it. – Martin Luther

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

School Phone: 763-784-6340

Grades: Kindergarten-8th

Church Year: Pentecost 19

Date: September 25, 2016

✠ WORSHIP INFORMATION ✠

Hymns:

TLH 41: Wondrous King All-Glorious
TLH 425: All Depends on Our Possessing
TLH 447: Fight the Good Fight with All Thy Might
WS 792: Let All Things Now Living

Listening assistance is available. Please ask an usher.

Worship Prep:

Psalm 146, TLH p. 156

Liturgy:

TLH, p. 5 (Projected)
Gloria: TLH 36:3

Scripture Reading:

Amos 6:1-7
Luke 16:19-31

Sermon: 1 Timothy 6:6-16

⁶Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. ¹¹But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *before* Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, ¹⁵which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen. (NKJVTM)

Having Nothing Means Having Everything

“WHEN GOD DELAYS”

Read John 11:17-27, 38-45

Written by Pastor Mark Weis (CLC Pastor at Grace Lutheran Church in North Port and Cape Coral/Ft. Myers, Florida)

At times, we all go through desperate circumstances in which our hopes—like Lazarus—grow ill, die, and are laid to rest.

When Lazarus became ill, his sisters, Mary and Martha, sent an urgent note to Jesus, saying, **“Lord, the one You love is sick,”** John 11:3. Yet, instead of going immediately to Lazarus, Jesus delayed for two days. During this delay, Lazarus died.

At the funeral, both sisters spoke identical words to Jesus: **“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died,”** John 11:21,32. Their lament contained grief, disappointment, and perhaps even a hint of reproach. To paraphrase, ‘Lord, if You had been here on time; if You had acted instead of delayed, this tragedy would not have occurred.’

Have we not all spoken similar words to God when our prayers go unanswered and our problems go unsolved? Of course. Yet, before we accuse God of capriciousness or tardiness, let’s consider His reasons for delaying.

He Loves Us

When God delays, He does so out of love. This may be difficult to understand and even more difficult to accept, especially in times of trouble; but it is nevertheless true. A very literal translation of John 11:5-6 is: **“Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. THEREFORE, when He heard that Lazarus was sick, He stayed where He was for two days.”** Clearly, Jesus delayed going to Lazarus out of love, not out of indifference.

The love spoken of in these verses is the Greek AGAPE, the love of deep understanding and unswerving commitment—the same word used in the familiar verse, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son,”** John 3:16. We may not always understand the circumstances. We may not see the beautiful picture until the entire puzzle is pieced together. However, we can always be certain that God’s delays are the result of His great love for us. And this is what enables us to hold on and press forward. As the hymnist wrote: “One day I shall see clearly, that He hath loved me dearly.”

God is Preparing a Glorious Solution

Jesus told Martha, **“Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”** John 11:40. I suggest that God says the same to us every day, amid any problem: ‘Trust Me. Wait for Me to act. And you will see My glory.’

As much as I have wrestled with problems in my life, I can truthfully say that Almighty God has never failed to force even the worst circumstances to serve my best interests. Mary and Martha wanted Lazarus to be healed. The Lord gave them a resurrection. Which solution was more glorious?

God may be delaying in your life, but remember His promise: **“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will glorify Me,”** Psalm 50:15. Notice: No ifs, ands, or maybes; only the certainty of deliverance and the inevitability of glory.

God is Strengthening Faith

I can imagine Mary and Martha standing at the bedside of dying Lazarus; dabbing his feverish brows with cool, wet cloths; whispering encouragement: “Don’t worry, brother. Jesus is on the way. When He arrives, everything will be fine.” Yet, away from Lazarus’ deathbed, perhaps the sisters were constantly peering out the window; scanning the horizon for any sign of Christ’s coming; and asking each other in hushed tones, “Where is He? What is taking Jesus so long?”

We understand Mary and Martha because we are like them. Yet, too often we forget that when God delays, He is allowing something mighty, wondrous, and holy to happen. He is allowing time for the wrong type of hope to die and be buried—like Lazarus; and for His Spirit to strengthen our faith and focus our hope on Jesus Christ.

God is Directing Us to His Life-Giving Word

“Why is God’s word so important?” I’ve heard many people ask that question. In answering it, I won’t direct you today to the Third Commandment, as important as it is: **“Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.”** Instead, I will direct you to a cemetery outside of Bethany, where Jesus Christ stood before the sepulcher of dead, decaying Lazarus, and with a loud voice cried out: **“Lazarus, come forth!”** And at the power of God’s word, Lazarus came forth, bound by grave clothes but no longer by the grave. Friends, if you and I need more incentive than this to hear God’s word, I can’t imagine what it would be.

Knowing why God at times delays enables us to proclaim with the Psalmist: **“I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I hope,”** Psalm 130:5.

✠ THE ANNOUNCEMENTS ✠

- ◆ **Mission Festival:** Mission Festival will be Oct. 9, along with our annual blood drive. A person can only donate once every 56 days, so Rick Nelson asks that you reserve your next donation for that Sunday. Pastor Paul Tiefel from Eau Claire, WI, will be our guest speaker. Dorcas Guild Committee #3 will host. Please bring a dish to share as there will be a potluck meal.
- ◆ **Reformation:** The Minnesota Area CLC Reformation Festival will be held at 4:00 pm on October 30 at Berea Lutheran Church in Inver Grove Heights, MN. The theme will be "The Lutheran Confessions: A Great Reformation Blessing." A fellowship luncheon will be served following the service. Everyone from the area is invited to join us.
- ◆ **From the Trustees:** There are seven open weeks for church cleaning before the end of the year. This can be a rather simple way to serve. Please consider this opportunity. If you are unsure how to do this ask a trustee and he can assist you. Also joining up with another family could be a good way to spread out the work AND have fellowship with fellow believers at the same time. Will you please help?
- ◆ **Christian Women's Retreat:** The Southeast Women's Retreat for women of the CLC will be held November 11-13, 2016, in Savannah, Georgia. The estimated cost for the retreat is between \$152 - \$360 for the weekend (depending on how many you share your room with) and includes food and lodging. Registration forms are available by the guestbook. If you have any questions please contact: Amy Osborne (651-329-3662/ newyorker13@hotmail.com) or Pastor Matthew Hanel (972-733-4535/hanel95@hotmail.com).
- ◆ **CLC News:** Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer of Trinity Lutheran in Spokane, WA, has returned the call to Faith Lutheran in Markesan, WI. ✠ Pastor Michael Gurath of Holy Cross Lutheran in Phoenix, AZ, has received the call to Mt. Zion Lutheran in Madison Heights, MI (Detroit area). ✠ Pastor Todd Ohlmann of Faith Lutheran in Manchester, MO (St. Louis area), has received the call to be the Full-Time Visiting Missionary from the CLC Board of Missions.
- ◆ **Sunday School Memory Work:** #3 – First Commandment

Last Week's Stats: Sept. 18, 2016		Sun.: 126	S.S.: 19	B.Cl.: 48	Wed.: 17
Sun. Offering:	Grace:	\$2,773.77	CLC:	\$555.00	
Weekly Need:	Grace:	3,300.00	CLC:	1,000.00	
-Under / +Over:	Grace:	-526.23	CLC:	-445.00	
Year-to-Date Offering:	Grace:	\$108,102.95	CLC:	\$32,471.35	
Year-to-Date Need:	Grace:	125,400.00	CLC:	38,000.00	
Year-to-Date (+/-)	Grace:	-17,297.05	CLC:	-5,528.65	
GLC Other: 313.00	Living Faith:	2.00	Tuition Aid:	103.00	
SAF Endowment: 0.00	MDF:	2.00	Kinship:	0.00	
ILC Student Aid: 120.00	ILC Bldg.	145.00	IIF: 0.00	CEF: 0.00	
Current Balances:	Parking Lot:	17,950.25	Tuition Aid:	4,496.12	

HOW DOES YOUR CHURCH GROW?

So what is it that attracts people to your church? Or what are you doing to attract people to your church?

These questions will spawn many and varied responses. A minister in a burgeoning church in the Twin Cities expects in 18 months his attendance will swell to 10,000. Would it not be wonderful and a blessing if 10,000 people were inculcated with the law and the gospel, and if the means of grace were the vehicle to bring comfort and hope to people desperate for a relationship with the Lord God? A faithful pastor dreams of bringing the blessed message of redemption from sin and death through the Lord Jesus Christ to that many people. Or via video technology to 22,000 people (the reported attendance each week at different "campuses" of one Twin City church).

These churches have mastered new technology which permits them to reach many people. Our churches, though not on this scale, are more and more adapting themselves to the new technologies which permit them to communicate the gospel, and assist the worshiper in the service. Surely with the use of such technology there is no quarrel.

The aforementioned minister said that to keep growing, the church needs to impress newcomers. One woman was impressed as "she dashed to a counter to pick up free coffee and cookies." Others no doubt were impressed as the "countdown" clock signaled the beginning of the service "with a 10-piece rock band, swirling stage, and razzle-dazzle stage lights." One in attendance said "It's hip, for a church." ⁽¹⁾ The church declares itself "seeker friendly," "spirit filled" and says it is a "healing church." As this writer listened to a couple of sermons on line, Jesus was spoken of as the Son of God. There was no mention of sin. While there was talk of Jesus as the Savior, as well as redemption, there was no explanation of from what one was saved, or what constituted redemption. It was clearly a "decision theology" church.

Then we discovered a Lutheran Church that said in its on-line website "who are we" invitation: "Dress casually—it's not a fashion show, its church. Just put some clothes on. If they match even better." *Cute and hip.* The website went on to say, "Every church has its own style. Ours is modern. We have a casual atmosphere while being serious about faith. Our Sunday service is about 60 minutes long and includes three songs and a message from a pastor. You choose if you want to participate or if you want to sit back and soak it all in. We believe that the most important thing you will experience is God's presence. That's the reason why we gather and what we want you to experience as well." We don't doubt they preach Christ. But as far as we are concerned the information and invitation is part and parcel of the mega-church mentality or the Church Growth Method (CGM). One of the ploys of these movements is to hide the synod or affiliation of which they are members; if they don't hide it, they downplay it so as not to frighten people away.

One active Lutheran pastor, not of our fellowship, reacted to a previous article⁽²⁾ on this subject. He respectfully begged to differ with the comment, “It (CGM) is a movement within evangelical Christianity that is making serious inroads into the Lutheran Church.” His comment was that it is not making serious inroads into the Lutheran Church, but it is already in. Then came the telling statement: Once it is in the church, you can’t get rid of it. In that comment lies the warning, “Resist the beginning.”

The days when church steeples were prominent in the villages and cities are long gone. Long past are the days when family life dominated the rural scene, and the white-painted church in the township was a gathering place on Sunday morning where families and neighbors gathered in fellowship around the Word of God. Cultures change over time. Our society has become more entertainment oriented. People are on the go, so that an hour-long church service is too long for some. The church over time has to a certain extent adapted itself of necessity to the new conditions. The new technology is both bane and blessing, the bane being the religious shows with the charismatic, “you can be successful,” TV-preachers.

Some among us might remember when questions about a particular church revolved around what it taught. Nowadays questions frequently revolve around what the church offers to the community. Is it politically active? Does it have a day care? In our own pastoral ministry, the question was heard frequently about what programs we had for children. Is there a senior club? Do you have a food distribution program? Do you worship the old way liturgically, or do you have more contemporary services? Is your worship service still formal or is it more casual? Do you still sing the old hymns with an organ, or perhaps newer songs? How about a praise band? What do you do to attract new members, or visitors to your worship service? Our church in one city was described by a liberal church down the street as a church “where you have to wear a white shirt with a suit and tie.”

Some of these questions are legitimate, but not many, if any, are essential to what should draw the interest of people *seriously* concerned about their spiritual life, and the welfare of their eternally blood-bought soul.

Dr. Laurence White (LC-MS) wrote: “The problem with much of contemporary worship is not that it is contemporary but that it is superficial and selfish, deliberately designed to do nothing more than titillate an already over-entertained constituency. By uncritically adopting the methods and techniques of worldly marketing and entertainment, the modern church has unwittingly transformed the nature of her worship.”⁽³⁾ Before anyone gets upset and defensive, the comments should be viewed as another reason to “resist the beginnings.”

“How does your church grow?” is in fact a misleading question. The real question is “How does *The CHURCH* grow.” Emphasis on how our church grows, as well as methods to attain it, does not guarantee the growth of the CHURCH. Numbers in the pew—100, 10,000, 22,000—while impressive to the eye do not automatically translate into members of “the Holy

Christian Church, the communion of saints.” Upon the preaching of sin and grace, repentance and remission of sins by Peter on Pentecost, “Those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (Acts 2:41). “Them” is the Church, the Body of Christ. By the power of the gospel in Word and sacrament, the means of grace, “the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). That is the church growth which faithful pastors and congregations desire. That is the growth we are confident takes place when the means of grace are administered. Any commendation of Peter and the apostles did not lie in how many names were on the membership rolls. The only commendation was that they preached the Word of God faithfully.

Finally, whatever adaptations, however bizarre, the church makes to get people into the building may serve a purpose. If such adaptations are legitimate the purpose is still served only as the bounds of truth and honesty are not stretched, and the people hear God’s truth of sin and salvation, the message of eternal salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. We found a bit beyond the pale when in one city in which we served, a “fun and games” church enticed people to church on Easter Sunday with a give-away of more than a million dollars; the give-away included cash, free groceries, cars, and television sets. In our church with perhaps 30 people, coffee and rolls were served after service, but not as a come-on to hear about the blessings of the Savior’s resurrection.

Among all the changes in the world and in society, perhaps a Bible-teaching confessional church is not hip. But it is serving its call when it proclaims the Word of God—which does not change or adapt itself to whims and fancies of men. In one of his last admonitions to Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote, “Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:2-5).

Most certainly we want our churches to be warm, welcoming, inviting, vital, Spirit-filled, and accepting churches. But above all, we want the enticement to attend to be the Word of God, and it alone! Having heard the grace of God, and the way to heaven, people will, we pray, come back because they have been assured that “God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (2 Corinthians 5:19).

If such as hear that message never join our church, we pray that they will be numbered among those who are known to God as members of His Holy Christian Church for time and eternity.

1. Dr. Laurence White, Sept. 9, 2006.

2. Dr. Laurence White, Sept. 9, 2006.

3. Dr. Laurence White, “*Resist the Beginnings in the Church*” delivered at LC-MS Texas Confessional Lutheran Annual Free Conference, Brenham Texas, Sept., 2006.