

✠ TODAY AT GRACE ✠

Organist: Jan Davis

Elder: Benno Sydow

Ushers: Michael Ude; James Bomber; David Hein; Ryan Oman; Eli Wales

Counting Team 4: James Bomber; Brad Kitzman; Paul Lentz; Roger Ochsner; Al Rosendahl; Dave Rust

Church Cleaners: Ochsner

✠ NEXT WEEK AT GRACE ✠

Ushers: Michael Ude; James Bomber; David Hein; Ryan Oman; Eli Wales

Counting Team 1: Dan Degnan; Dale Enns; Larry Nelson; Ryan Oman; Pat Paplow; Phil Radichel

Church Cleaners: Hein

✠ OUR SCHEDULE ✠

Sun., July 16: 9:00 am – Worship Service
10:15 am – Voters and Dorcas Guild Meetings

Sun., July 23: 9:00 am – Worship Service
10:15 am – VBS Staff Meeting

July 24-28: 9:00-11:30 am – Vacation Bible School

Sun., July 30: 9:00 am – Worship Service w/VBS Children

Sat., Aug. 12: 9:00 am – Grace School Work Day

Mon., Aug. 14: 7:00 pm – Grace School Meeting w/Ice Cream Social

Sun., Aug. 20: 3:00 pm – Opening Service at Immanuel (Eau Claire, WI)

Mon., Aug. 28: 8:00 am – Opening Service for Grace Lutheran School

Wed., Aug. 30: 4:30-6:15 – Catechism Begins for Public School Students

Sun. Sept. 10: 8:30 am – Choir Practice Begins
9:00 am – Bible Class & Sunday School Begin
10:00 am – Worship Service (Regular Schedule Resumes)
11:00 am – Hospitality Begins

Sun., Sept. 17: Annual Church Picnic

Last Week's Stats: July 9, 2017 Sun.: 79

Sun. Offering:	Grace:	\$2,095.00	CLC:	\$995.00
Weekly Need:	Grace:	3,300.00	CLC:	950.00
-Under / +Over:	Grace:	-1,205.00	CLC:	+45.00
Year-to-Date Offering::	Grace:	\$88,004.67	CLC:	\$25,556.00
Year-to-Date Need:	Grace:	92,400.00	CLC:	26,600.00
Year-to-Date (+/-)	Grace:	-4,395.33	CLC:	-1,044.00
GLC Other: 15,725.58	Living Faith:	0.00	Tuition Aid:	175.00
SAF Endowment: 0.00	MDF:	150.00	Kinship:	60.00
ILC Student Aid: 20.00	ILC Bldg.	20.00	IIF: 0.00	CEF: 0.00
Current Balances:	Parking Lot:	26,832.75	Tuition Aid:	3,369.62

GRACE

Grace Lutheran Church & School



460 75th Ave. NE
Fridley, MN 55432

Email: john.p.hein@gmail.com

Home Page: www.FridleyLutheran.org

Member: CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION



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

Phone: 763-784-8784

School Phone: 763-784-6340

Grades: 1st-8th

Church Year: Pentecost 6

Date: July 16, 2017

✠ WORSHIP INFORMATION ✠

Hymns:

TLH 227: Come, Holy Ghost, in Love
TLH 398: Renew Me, O Eternal Light
TLH 411, st. 1-5: From Eternity, O God
TLH 412: May We Thy Precepts, Lord, Fulfill

Listening assistance is available. Please ask an usher.

Worship Prep:

Psalms 145, TLH p. 155 f.

Liturgy:

TLH, p. 5 (Projected)
Gloria: TLH 246:1,4

Scripture Reading:

Exodus 33:12-23
Matthew 11:25-30

Sermon: Romans 7:15-25

¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. ¹⁶ If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good. ¹⁷ But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find. ¹⁹ For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice. ²⁰ Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ²¹ I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²² For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. (NKJVTM)

Why Do I Do What I Do?

1. My life doesn't reflect my godly intentions
2. My struggle is with the lust of my sinful flesh
3. My deliverance is through Jesus Christ my Lord

✠ THE ANNOUNCEMENTS ✠

- ◆ **Voters and Dorcas Guild:** Today these groups will be meeting shortly after worship service.
- ◆ **Vacation Bible School:** On July 24-28, 9:00-11:30 am, we will be having our VBS. This includes children age 4 years, to children going into 8th grade. Please register your children on the sheet by the guest book. Already there are 43 children registered with 23 non-members. We thank the Lord for leading a number of volunteers to help staff this. There are just a couple of spots left for VBS snacks on the signup list.
- ◆ **School Volunteers:** Grace Lutheran School is looking for volunteers to assist the teachers with the upcoming school year. If you can help with these or other school activities, please speak to Janelle Hein or a Board of Ed member (Chad Hestekin, James Bomber, or Michael Ude). Specific areas to help include:
 - Music teacher: once per week from 2:30-3:05
 - Art teacher: Friday from 2:20-3:10
 - Recess monitor: daily 11:35-11:55 and 1:50-2:05
 - Lunch monitor: daily 11:55-12:20
 - Study hall monitor: daily 9:30-11:15 or as otherwise arranged.
 - Field trip coordinator
- ◆ **Traveling VBS:** This past week Rick Nelson took Victoria Kitzman; Kathleen, Alexandra & Patrick Baker; and Daniel Hein to help distribute flyers to advertise the VBS for Our Redeemer's Lutheran in Red Wing, MN. We thank them for their help in the kingdom work.
- ◆ **Youth Group:** It has been suggested that a youth group be organized for our high-school-aged members, perhaps to meet six times a year on Sunday evenings. The months of Sept., Oct., Nov., Jan., Feb., and April were suggested. The Elders would like to see if a member might volunteer to coordinate this for Pastor who would still be involved in leading devotions/topical discussions. Also, those high school youth who are interested in this, please sign-up by the guest book.
- ◆ **Ark Encounter/Creation Museum Trip:** has been scheduled for July 25-27 (Tue.-Thu.). See what the Ark may have looked like and tour the Creation Museum in Kentucky. Full details, discounted blocked hotel rooms, and combo tickets may all be found and reserved by going to <https://goo.gl/forms/m7LI28VJJXwPnQEh2??>



- ◆ **Partners in Ministry Program:** The 2016 CLC Convention approved the Partners in Ministry Program which is designed to link active CLC called servants who have obligations to repay ILC Student Aid Fund loans with sponsors who agree to provide matching funds for payments on those loans. The donor and recipient would remain anonymous to each other. This program is now ready for implementation. There are about a dozen eligible account holders who will be contacted directly to see if they are interested in participating and would then need to fill out an application annually. While donors may get involved with this at any time, it would be helpful to have the initial slate of donors in place by August 15. Those interested in being donors or those who have questions may contact the ILC Business Manager, Jim Sandeen, 715-836-6622/jimsandeen@gmail.com.
- ◆ **North Hall Update and Cleaning:** The boys dormitory at the Immanuel campus, North Hall, is being updated this summer. Parts of the solar heating system had to be removed in order to install a more efficient natural gas boiler system. New windows are also being installed. The project is progressing as planned. Because of this project occurring over summer, there will be a small window of opportunity to clean it appropriately prior to the opening of the school year. Those willing to help with cleaning during the first two weeks of August are encouraged to contact the Facilities Manager, Paul Heinze (715-456-7194/ilcmaintenance@ilc.edu).
- ◆ **CLC Contractors:** Our ILC Facilities Manager is seeking contractors within the CLC willing to be on a list available to the Immanuel Maintenance Department. The list could include contractors for roofing/building, electrical, plumbing, concrete, etc., who could be called upon for expertise or to submit bids on large projects to save money for Immanuel. Some of the work would require the contractor to be licensed and bonded. But such a list would still obviously be helpful. Those interested can contact Paul Heinze (715-456-7194/ilcmaintenance@ilc.edu).
- ◆ **CLC News:** Teacher Ross Kok of St. John's Lutheran in Okabena, MN, has accepted the call to Holy Cross Lutheran in Phoenix, AZ. ✠ Mrs. Katie Naumann has been called to teach grades 3-4 at Messiah Lutheran in Eau Claire, WI.

Welcome to our guests and visitors. We appreciate the opportunity to share God's Word with you today. Please come again! Those interested in learning more about the Scriptures and our doctrinal position, please speak with Pastor Hein. He would be delighted to visit with you!

Council Meetings Notes – July 9, 2017

Meeting was called to order with prayer. The June Council meeting minutes were read and approved. The June treasurer's report was read and approved.

Pastor's Report

- Pastor expressed thanks for the congregation recognition of the 25th wedding anniversary for him and his wife.
- Bobby Vandever has asked the pastor to baptize his children and possibly his wife. Pastor will meet with Bobby and his wife to review the blessing of baptism.
- The CLC Pastoral Conference addressed the Joint Statement generated from the meetings held between CLC, WELS, and ELS representatives. The conference voted unanimously to not recommend approval of the Joint Statement to the 2018 CLC Convention. Pastor will review the Joint Statement and the Pastoral Conference response in Bible class this fall.
- Preparation for VBS continues. 43 students signed up – 23 are non-members.
- Pastor has accepted the part time call for visiting missionary to Liberia. There will be a trip this fall, probably from November 6 to November 24.

Board of Elders Report

- Mission Festival will be held November 26 because of the planned 5 congregation pulpit rotation for Reformation that will be in October.
- The Elders discussed the digital records needs, but no action was taken.
- The abuse prevention review requirement is being addressed.

Board of Education Report

- Working on a projector for the school classroom adjacent to the fellowship hall. The voters will be asked to approve funding from the video project.
- For the fall school term, volunteers will be sought for support activities such as recess monitoring to help the teachers.
- The school handbook is being updated and will be reviewed at the first meeting with parents.
- Looking for improved lighting in the classroom adjacent to the fellowship hall.
- The fall term ice cream social is scheduled.
- Looking for a new laptop for Janelle.
- Will recommend Michael Ude for Sunday School superintendent to voters.

Board of Trustees Report

- Roof repair on the fellowship and church will be completed this week.
- The parsonage roof will be shingled in August after VBS.
- The insurance company (Church Mutual) has not questioned the contractor's identification of repairs needed on the roof and has committed to a total of \$104,465.65. To date \$66,632.13 has been received.
- Parsonage bathroom repairs have been completed.

Other Business

- There were no old or new business items discussed.

Adapted from minutes by Phil Radichel, Secretary Pro tem

LUTHERANS NEED A NEW PATH? (TO WHERE?)

When the public press speaks of the Lutheran Church, with few exceptions, if any, the point of reference is the least Lutheran of those who claim their heritage from the Reformation. The Minneapolis *StarTribune* ⁽¹⁾ published a feature article on shrinking Lutheran congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is the largest Lutheran church body in the country, followed by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS). Both have lost a substantial number of members since 1988. Whether nationally or only in Minnesota is not clear from the article, but 37% of ELCA congregations have fewer than 50 Sunday worshippers.

Regarding church membership decline, the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) is not unlike the ELCA. CLC membership has diminished over the years, though, proportionately, not as severely as in the ELCA. Reasons for the decline in the ELCA are also similar in other Lutheran churches, including the CLC. The decline in membership is attributed to "Aging members. Fewer children. Competition for Sunday family time. And an increasingly secular world." To that we would add, we fear without contradiction, a discouraging indifference to personal soul health.

Similarity between the CLC and the ELCA ends when it comes to addressing the issue. One fourth generation ELCA member who attended a workshop on how to boost church attendance (right there is one difference) said churches need to bring in "some entertainment, something uplifting." Walk into one church, according to the *StarTribune*, and you will find the "Music shifts from traditional hymns to upbeat jazz during the greet-your neighbor portion of the service, which can last 10 minutes ... as members shake hands with friends and strangers." One ELCA bishop addressed the matter by introducing "two projects that pair church leaders with church management experts to help them build a clear mission and financial direction." Whether part of the membership initiative or not, within the ELCA "Women have been ordained pastors as far back as the 1970s, gays and lesbians since 2009."

The *StarTribune* commented that Lutherans "will continue to do what they have been doing for centuries— 'trying to help neighbors and share the news that God's grace saves them.'" From what they are saved is not said. An ELCA *communications director* gave a nod to Martin Luther as starting a movement. "We have to reclaim the movement ... Luther answered the existential ⁽²⁾ question of his time. We need to do that today." To ascribe a philosophical motive or answer to Luther as the catalyst for his response to his personal spiritual struggles or the theological and spiritual bankruptcy of Rome is nonsense.

Another ELCA member said, "A lot of people don't know what Lutherans stand for." We are sure that is true, not only among non-Lutherans, but sadly also among many who identify as Lutheran.

Unless new members join a congregation, membership as well as attendance declines every time a faithful member is called home to the Lord. This is a loss to the congregation, but not to the individual who is with the Lord. Finally, that is the purpose of our preaching, is it not to prepare people for their eternal home through the proclamation of the gospel?

So what is the answer to declining membership, as well as declining attendance? We need to recognize that the primary responsibility as pastors and lay-people is *not* to try to salvage the church on the corner. It is to be instruments in saving souls for whom Christ died, and who by His gracious atonement at the cross and empty tomb reconciled sinners unto the Father. We are privileged to be instruments of our Lord in this work as we *preach His Word*: the Law which exposes sin and our unworthiness, and the Gospel through which the Spirit of God creates faith, comforts penitent hearts and preserves in them faith unto eternal life.

More important than consultation with management experts is calling on the Lord Who has promised to hear the prayers of His children. Further, He has a vested interest in each soul for whom He died. Pray the Lord of salvation to touch hearts by His Spirit so that they will join us around Word and sacrament. Pray that indifferent members among us will respond to the Spirit's working so that they will "gladly hear and learn" the Word regularly and receive the sacrament with thanksgiving. To that end each of us will want to look after his or her own spiritual life, and pray for courage to approach the back-sliding.

We live in an increasingly technological age, which allows us more readily to communicate the precious Word of our God to our members and to a wider audience. Short of the glitz, the come-ons, the enticements, and letting the world into the church in an effort to activate members, and invite other people into the fold (it begins with preaching Christ), we can utilize means that are still respectful to God, to His Word, as well as faithful to and worthy of our calling. We cannot and should not try to compete with churches in the community. We cannot outspend them; we cannot out-hustle them with their innocuous message or their praise band. Our goal is not church growth, but soul growth. When it comes down to it, we serve the Lord and blood-bought souls when we follow the Lord's command: "Preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Pertinent to consideration of our subject is the word of God through the apostle: "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 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 4:1-5).

By watching, praying, and sharing the message of our salvation in Christ, the Lord will use us to find the lost sheep for whose salvation the Savior died and yearns. Keep in mind, mission work is not getting people into the pew (though we hope that is a result). Mission work, is sharing the gospel with people, the majority of whom probably, may never darken the church door. There was an old advertising slogan, "Take the bus, and leave the driving to us." Share the gospel, and leave the rest to the Lord. You may not know the excitement of seeing a new member in church; but won't it be exciting if on judgment day one to whom you spoke is standing beside you before the throne of God because you took the time to share the message of Jesus' love with him?

As the apostles did, speak with boldness, confident that the Lord will give you what to say:

"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:25-26).

"So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard'" (Act 4:18-20).

In some cases, membership and attendance may be declining because of what a church teaches. To many, the truth is not popular because it offends them. In other cases, it may be because the church has departed from the truth. The *StarTribune* said, "Lutherans seek new path." *For our part, we pray for courage and commitment to hold to the old paths, where the good way is, and to walk in it. In it we find rest for our souls* (Jeremiah 6:16). When it comes to the *substance* of what is preached there is no new path. All preaching of the old path is connected to Christ Who in every age remains "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

The historical reality is that individual congregations have dissolved, as have church bodies. It will happen again. When and if that happens among us, let it be because we stood for the truth, rather than that we compromised ourselves away in a deluded effort to save a shell of what used to be. God forbid that any demise should occur because of indifference to the truth.

Nevertheless, as we look at declining numbers we are buoyed by the Lord's promise that the Church, the Holy Christian Church which is His body, is growing day by day as the Lord through the Gospel adds to it all who believe (Acts 2:47).

The truth remains: We are sinners justified and saved alone by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, we are a new people with a future hope—in heaven. The nourishment of that hope is what the faithful Lutheran Church is all about. Among us, in addressing the expressed concerns of membership, whatever fruits are born through efforts that flow from a sanctified heart, we commit to the Lord. Whatever the contributing causes are for declining membership or attendance, the Lutheran Church will remain true to the Lord and its Reformation heritage only if it remains true to: By Scripture Alone; By Grace Alone; By Faith alone; By Christ alone. If it is not Scripture it is not Lutheran.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Written by Rev. Daniel Fleischer, 7/2017

(1) Sunday, July 2, 2017

(2) Existentialism, according to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* on-line: A chiefly 20th century philosophical movement embracing diverse doctrines but centering on analysis of individual existence in an unfathomable universe and the plight of the individual who must assume ultimate responsibility for acts of free will without any certain knowledge of what is right or wrong or good or bad.