



GRACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Grace for Today

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THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS WE REMEMBER AND THOSE WHO BROUGHT THESE INTO OUR CONSCIOUSNESS.....by Pastor Ken Gibson

Many of us, I believe, have read or have heard sayings from the book, All I Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten by Robert Fulghum, which notes how we learned some very valuable behaviors in our formative years. For example: “Play fair, don’t hit people, put things back where you found them, wash your hands before you eat,” and one of my favorites, “warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.” All of these behaviors are good and still amazingly appropriate for us today it seems.

Lately, I have remembered others in my life who have brought to my consciousness thoughts and insights that still guide me to this day. One of these individuals was my vocational-ag instructor Mr. Floyd Worley, a man we affectionately called “Doc.” Doc took a personal interest in me and instilled in me many life lessons that I still remember. He was a gem in my life, and I cherish my memories of him.

Once when instructing a classroom of us young, “wannabe livestock judges,” Doc stated, “Now back up gang. You can’t judge cattle or anything else when you are standing right on top of them. If you are too close to something you can’t see things clearly.” That was good advice then and it is good advice for me now. After class that day, Doc took me aside in private and said: “Now Ken, don’t ever think, because you live in town, that you can’t be as good or an even better livestock judge. You see, the thing is, those who have cattle at home hold their own livestock up in their head as what an animal should be. You don’t have any livestock at home and that is good. You keep in mind what an IDEAL animal should be and you will do just fine.”

More and more these days, I am very reflective and thankful for all things. I am trying hard to remember to step back from things that I may be too close to and have believed to be the best. After all, my idea of what is best may not be the ideal.

For example, the ideal worship experience that I have always held close is not really possible these days. I so long to find my way to the church early on a Sunday morning and go into the kitchen beyond the parlor and start some coffee for those who arrive early each week before worship. I want to hear the church building start to come to life as more and more people begin to arrive. I want to scurry looking for confirmation students who are called to acolyte. I want to be in the midst of the office space as a prayer is offered prior to us lining up and processing into the beautiful sanctuary. I want to sing loud, in one voice as a congregation, the opening hymns. And, I want to taste the body of Christ in and amongst the gathered. Yes, I want to experience what “IDEAL” worship looks like to me.

But what I have come to realize is that my idea of “IDEAL” worship is not needed for good and effective worship to happen. I have also been thinking of how such worship has not been possible for our shut ins for many years. Yes, these days I am realizing that the words that my seminary professor of Liturgics often shared truly have meaning. I struggled a bit with this saying by Ralph Smith but now I get it. Ralph shared with us, “There is no one way to worship God, but at any given time some things are more appropriate than others.” Indeed Ralph, today our worshiping in the gathered community and putting many at risk would not be appropriate. But worshiping God is always appropriate.

So, for now I am going to “back up” and view things from a different perspective and not try to compare my ideal worship with that which we now offer. Thanks Doc and thanks Ralph for bringing these thoughts into my consciousness. AMEN

2020 NOMINATIONS- The Nominating Committee invites you to prayerfully consider serving as an elected committee member for open positions with terms beginning in fall 2020. This year, in place of paper nomination forms, we ask you to send nominations either by mail to the church office or email nominations to cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org . Please submit nominations by **June 21** for consideration.

2020 Nominations should include the following information:

- Your Name** (submitting the nomination)
- Name of Person you are nominating** (if you are nominating someone other than yourself, please verify that it is OK to submit their name)
- Position** you are nominating them for
- Reasons** why they would serve well in this position at Grace Lutheran Church

Elected committee/board member openings include the following: 3 openings for Church Council (3-year term), 3 openings for Nominating Committee (1-year term), 1 opening for Endowment Board (5-year Term), 3 openings for Preschool Board (3-year term), and 2 male, 2 female, 1 male alternate and 1 female alternate as voting members to represent Grace at the 2021 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly.

PRAYERS-*Please lift up these petitions in your prayers—To become a praying member of the Friends in Prayer, please submit name and e-mail address to dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org*

World: Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, churchwide staff & their families, Bishop Jeff Clements, synod staff & their families, those serving in military conflicts, Arusha Town Lutheran Parish in Tanzania (our companion parish), Scott Bunch serving in the military.

Woodstock: Pastor Ken Gibson & his family; Pastor Amanda Bergstrom & her family; Grace Staff; Grace Council

Health Concerns: Charlie Bell (friend of Jamielynn Wedoff), Shirley Berna, Mary Sue Boerner (friend of Paul Lockwood & Diane Baker-Lockwood), Myron Callihan (brother of Susan Payton), Jim Davis, Nancy Davis, Lori Dechant, Patrice Dunn, Robert Giron (brother of Patty Kozlow), Tom Goggin, Hal Goodman (friend of Bob & Janice Laird), Becca Guenther (niece of Gretchen & Claude Hutchens), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Sue Hanson-Smith (friend of Barb Aavang), Liz Henniges (wife of Al Henniges), Steve Kosmen (loved one of the Koehn family), Elayna Kuipers (friend of the Wedoff Family), Anna Larsen (sister of Al Henniges), William Lagerhausen, Elizabeth Lynd Loser, Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Karen Millman, Tammy Millman (daughter of Karen Millman), Kem Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Collene Nelsen (cousin of Debbi Lynd), Gloria Ogle, Andrea Paetsch (aunt of Debbi Lynd), Linda Page (friend of Joe Evanoff), Georgia Petersdorf (sister-in-law of Gladys Renner), Pat Peterson, June Peterson, Carol Raffel, Bruce Randolph (husband of Ila Randolph), Carol Rank, Shawn Rank (son of Carol Rank), Barbara Readel, Sheila Readel, Jayne Reicher (great niece of Barb & Wayne Japp), Herb & Bev Renner (brother & sister in law of Ken & Gladys Renner), Jessie & Sue Robertson (friends of Ron, Mary & Kimberly Koehn), Maria Rossini (family friend of Heidi Olsen and Tammy Goggin), Nicholas Ruffino (brother of Nathan Ruffino), Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), John Rust (Aavang family friend), Michael Schnepf (nephew of Sue & Terry Aavang), Colton Sciluffo (infant son of a friend of Joy Oberman), Nathaniel Shipp (family friend of Brian Meyers), Ann Sinnett (friend of Shirley Berna), Elsie Stoddard, Andrea Strayer (mother of Lisa Wahkowiak), Ginny Stroh (mother of Fay Wilson), Dave Sundby (brother-in-law of Deborah Evanoff), Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahan), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Bev Visconti, Gino Visconti, Addie Jo Wedoff, Nick Wedoff, Esther Wienke, Ruth Zirves

Sorrows: Lois Gerloff (wife of Bruce Gerloff), Clyde “Bud” Winter, Jim Ferguson, Alice Erber

If you wish to add a prayer request for the newsletter, please call the church office at 815-338-0554. Your prayer concern will run for one week and may be renewed. Submissions to the *Friends in Prayer* e-mail and phone teams may also be submitted by telephone to the church office or by e-mail to Gracewoodstock.org. Due to confidentiality laws, hospitals no longer notify churches or pastors when a member is hospitalized. If you or a member of your family have a medical procedure planned or is admitted to the hospital, please call the church office.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE—Please send articles to Lauren Kleinjan at lkleinjan@gracewoodstock.org by July 6 for the next newsletter or the church office. Questions: Call the office at 815-338-0554.

HOW CAN WE KEEP FROM SINGING?.....by Pastor Amanda

I remember a particular Friday morning in mid-March, one day before Grace's council would meet and then arrive at the difficult decision to not meet in-person for worship for a couple weekends. It was just before schools would launch into eLearning and before we had any idea what sheltering-in-place would look like. On that day I remember seeing a video online of people in Italy singing from their balconies out into the streets.

I was so moved by their singing even as their staying at home, the growing and unfathomable death toll, the pain and despair and loss still seemed so far away right then. I opened a hymnal and started singing out loud, "My Life Flows On in Endless Song," (ELW 763): "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?"

Today, nearly three long months later, we have seen and felt the inconvenience and loss and effects of COVID-19 quite a bit closer to home. As a faith community we have shifted to worshipping in our homes, praying with perhaps increased frequency or urgency, and caring, from a distance, for people who are hungry or in need. We are not a building, we are the body of Christ united in Christ wherever we are, so how can we keep from being church?

And now, we are learning that it will likely not be safe to sing in public for a long time. Even when we do start to gather in-person for worship and as a faith community, our gatherings will look and feel and sound different. And yet, even if it is, for a time, only within in the spaces of our homes or within our hearts, how can we keep from singing songs of praise to God?

These are trying times as we navigate individually and communally how to be church, how to worship and sing praise to God, and how to be in life-giving and faithful relationship with one another. In addition to the coronavirus pandemic, our eyes and hearts are being called and pried open to see destructive realities of racism and white supremacy. As people of faith, since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, how can we keep from speaking out against racism and injustice, how can we keep from learning about systems that infect us with inequality, how can we keep from acting in love for the sake of one another?

In the letter to the Romans we are reminded that 'nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord,' and even now—as a world in a pandemic, as a nation in distress, and as a people who feel so distant from one another—we are reassured that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, we keep clinging to God as each storm threatens to shake our inmost calm. Since God creates and redeems and makes all things new. we keep trying to speak out and challenge racism, we repent and commit to learning and acting as people called to follow Jesus. Since God is God, we keep singing praise and giving thanks even if it looks and feels and sounds different right now.

The Holy Spirit is at work, dear church. May this Spirit of our living God give voice to our songs of praise and our cries of lament. May the Spirit keep translating between peoples as we listen to voices that we have been unwilling to hear before. May God bless you and keep you, dear beloved children of God.

PRESCHOOL HIATUS— Following prayerful consideration and emotional discussion, the preschool board has recommended, and the church council has approved, that Grace Lutheran Preschool be placed on hiatus for the 2020-2021 school year.

We celebrate the many years of our Grace preschool, and we recognize the wonderful work of the teaching staff and the impact that they have had on many families over the life of this school. We also want to thank the families for the privilege of teaching and ministering to their children. As a church, we love the children we serve and want to do what is best for them. However, in view of our current circumstances, that include replacing a director and the uncertainty of conditions for preschool in the fall due to the COVID-19 virus, we believed that this option made the most sense for the well-being of our students.

COUNCIL WEIGHS REOPENING OPTION (5/26/2020)- Since mid-March the Council has been meeting weekly by Zoom, monthly as usual plus informal check-ins on the other weeks. A topic often discussed has been what a reopening would look like and how we might do it safely. With the release of the state's Restore Illinois plan and more recent announcement that we will soon move to Phase 3, it was time to make some initial decisions.

Above all else, the guiding principle for the Pastors and Council has been keeping our congregation safe. Despite the push in some quarters nationally to fully open churches for worship, it is still up to each individual congregation to carefully consider the demographics of their membership and the state of the pandemic in their region. With that in mind, the Council took the decision to allow use of the building for three specific events.

Weddings and funerals are two of the events that may be held in the building provided we remain in Phase 3. A maximum of 10 people will be permitted, wearing masks, and without live singing.

The third activity will be a blood drive. Blood is badly needed and the mobile collection vehicle comes with its own safeguards and procedures. Access to the building will be limited to the lower level bathroom for anyone who needs to use it. We will have our own procedures for managing entry. This is a critically needed mission and we hope you will consider giving blood if you are able.

We all look forward to the time when we can again worship together but also believe deeply that Grace is not a building. It is our community united in Christ, by bonds of mutual love and support, even if not in the same room. With God's blessing we will see each other through to the other side.

Offering you God's peace,
Pastors Ken, Amanda, and the Council

WE ARE CHURCH TOGETHER (even when the building is closed):

Grace's Building & Connections: Grace's building is currently closed; however, staff are working remotely and regularly checking mail, voicemail, and email. Grace's church council members also made phone calls to all in our phonebook. If you did not receive a phone call, please call the church office with an updated phone number where you can be reached.

Worship Videos. For each weekend that our building is closed- please find new worship videos at our website: <https://www.gracewoodstock.us/sermon-category/video/> . We invite you gather in worship in this new temporary way, still worshipping God around scripture & reflection, in prayer, and in song.

Offering. We give thanks for the variety of gifts, united by Christ- and invite you to mail your financial offerings to the church office or consider one of Grace's eGiving options. The mission and ministry of our faith community continues and depends on our shared commitments; thank you for your faithful and generous stewardship.

Find us on Facebook. If you are on Facebook, please join us at the public group "Grace Lutheran Church, Woodstock, IL" for community news and Facebook Live opportunities including weekday daily devotional time with Pastor Ken at 8 A.M.

Connect to Grace emails: please help connect others to Grace's Constant Contact emails- you can send an email to cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org to have an email address added to Grace's update emails.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL UPDATE- This message is to inform everyone that the in-person Vacation Bible School is cancelled for July 13th-17th. We will be developing an online offering called Compassion Camp. More information about this virtual VBS will be coming soon. If you have any questions, please contact Jen Freeman jfreeman@gracewoodstock.org

NIS 2020 FORUM DAY- In order to keep spreading the word about the good work being done by the committees, sub-committees, and ministry groups of the synod, we are thrilled to announce that the Northern Illinois Synod is offering a “Forum Day” when our ministries will lead forums for all interested members of our congregations and the wider community to inform you about the work going on in your name!

This Forum Day, **Saturday, June 20**, will be held via the Zoom meeting platform. It will offer three sessions of forums featuring twelve of our ministries. The first forum will begin at **9:30 a.m.** and the last one finishes at **1:15 p.m.** Forums will be limited to the first 100 registrants. **Registrations must be received by 11:59 p.m. Thursday, June 18.**

Please register online for this great opportunity. The forums will also be recorded and available on the synod website after the event, so even though you are only able to attend three that day, you will be able to view the others soon thereafter. If you have any questions, please contact Deacon Cheryl Erdmann at CErdmann@nisynod.org. Register online and find out more at <https://nisynod.org/nis-2020-forum-day/>

EMANUEL NINE, MARTYRS, 2015- On June 17, 2015, Clementa C. Pinckney, Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lee Lance, DePayne Middleton-Doctor, Tywanza Sanders, Daniel Lee Simmons, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, and Myra Thompson were murdered by a self-professed white supremacist while they were gathered for Bible study and prayer at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church (often referred to as Mother Emanuel) in Charleston, South Carolina. Pastors Pinckney and Simmons were both graduates of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. A resolution to commemorate June 17 as a day of repentance for the martyrdom of the Emanuel Nine was adopted by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on August 8, 2019. Congregations of the ELCA are encouraged reaffirm their commitment to repenting of the sins of racism and white supremacy which continue to plague this church, to venerate the martyrdom of the Emanuel Nine, and to mark this day of penitence with study and prayer.

An **online ELCA Prayer Service for the Commemoration of the Emanuel Nine**, including Bishop Eaton and leaders from around the church, is being prepared for viewing beginning on **June 17, 2020**, the fifth anniversary of the martyrdom of the Emanuel Nine. This worship service will be available on the ELCA website (www.elca.org). Additional resources are available at <https://www.elca.org/emanuelnine>

NOTES TO HEALTHCARE WORKERS- Have you been wondering how you can be of help to hospital staff during this pandemic? Cathy Meyer has contacted a friend whose husband is an ER nurse and also spoke with the coordinator for donations at Northwestern Medicine McHenry and Huntley. They suggest that we write notes, have children draw pictures, posters etc. to share the love, gratitude and encouragement we feel for all hospital workers who are caring for the sick during this pandemic. They will be displayed in the hallways so that when staff come to work they will see and be uplifted by all of the well wishes from people in the communities they serve.

There is a plastic bin with a mail slot is outside Grace’s main entrance. Drop your notes there and Cathy will pick them up weekly, bag them, and deliver them to the two hospitals. We will keep this going as long as this pandemic is with us. Please write as many notes as you’d like over time and encourage your friends and family to join us in Sharing God’s Grace!

GRACE SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS. The Endowment Committee at Grace Lutheran Church is responsible for administering the Readell Memorial Scholarship Fund and Allen Memorial Scholarship Fund. Both of these scholarships are for post high school education. The Readell Memorial Scholarship Fund is available to students pursuing a full-time Christian vocation or related areas. The Allen Memorial Scholarship is for students attending an accredited Lutheran institution. These funds are for active members of Grace Lutheran Church who are in good standing. The money awarded each year depends on the amount available. Monies are to be paid directly to the institution and not to the student or parents. Applications are available through the Church Office or on the Grace website. On the navigation bar at the top go to education, then scholarships. Scholarship applications for both the Readell and Allen funds are due into the Grace Lutheran Church Office by **July 1, 2020**. All scholarship applications are reviewed by the Endowment Committee and voted on during the quarterly meeting in July; payments are made in August.

Presence Light Sponsors:

June 7

In Memory of Jim Reinhard, given by Karen Reinhard

June 14

To the glory of God for good health, given by Coleen & Scott Kunzie

June 21

In celebration of our 19th wedding anniversary on June 23, given by Larry & Laura Lagerhausen

June 28

In honor of our 34th wedding anniversary & to the glory of God, given by Darby & Dee Brown

Bulletin Sponsors:

June 6 & 7

To the glory of God, Given by Karen Reinhard

June 13 & 14

In memory of Shelley Tucker, given by Marylee Steinwehe

June 20 & 21

In honor of both of our birthdays this month, given by Joe & June Pienschke

June 27 & 28

In memory of my husband, Irvin E. Aavang Jr., given by Joy Aavang

eGIVING OPTIONS- In addition to weekly offering envelopes, Grace has additional electronic giving options available. Please give in the way that is most convenient for you and let us know if you have any questions.

Give through automatic withdrawal program. To participate, please complete an enrollment form and return to the church office to schedule pre-authorized electronic funds transfer (EFT) from your bank account. You can change, stop, or temporarily hold your giving by contacting Grace's church office 4 business days in advance of a scheduled contribution.

Give Online at our website: www.gracewoodstock.org

Give by Text by texting **877-698-3604**

1. **Get Started:** Enter the 10-digit GivePlus Text number (877-698-3604) and the amount you wish donate, then press send.
2. **Register:** You will receive a registration link. Click the link and enter your contact and payment information. Tap "Process."
3. **Give:** After registration is complete, you will receive a verification text as well as a receipt via email.
4. **Repeat:** For future giving, simply send a text with the amount you wish to give, and it will process automatically.

Give through Give+ Mobile App by downloading the app

- Download the FREE app on your Apple or Android phone by searching for "GivePlus Church" in your app store
- Make one-time or recurring donations using your debit/credit card or checking/savings account
- Securely and conveniently manage donations using Touch ID/Fingerprint, PIN or password
- Log in or donate as a guest

Visit the Grace website for the most up-to-date information for all that is happening at Grace! gracewoodstock.org

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