



GRACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Grace for Today

OCTOBER 2020 • VOLUME 19, NO. 9

FIST TO FIVE; HOW DO YOU FEEL?.....by Pastor Ken Gibson

While at Sky Ranch, we learned a “check-in” technique that was very effective. We would gather in a circle during our Grace check-in time as a congregation and would instruct the group that on the count of three, they should hold up as many fingers as they could with regard to how they were doing. A fist meant something on the order of “I am not good.” And five fingers up meant “I am as good as I can get!” It was quick and effective. We would then go around and ask for the highs of the day. I would not ask for the lows, as those were for me to discover and discuss with the youth away from the whole group. I, of course, would make note of anyone who had a fist up or very few fingers after our check-in. Most times, all of our youth had four to five fingers up while at Sky Ranch.

For this article I simply want to focus, like I did with our youth, on the highs of the last many years we have been together. Let us focus on the good and the love we have shared. As such, I submit the following.

HIGH #1 - CONFIRMATION YOUTH!!

Over these many years, I have come to love each and every student who I have come to know through our confirmation program. In truth, I have loved them like a father would love his own child. I don't say that without truly meaning it. I have loved them as my own. In fact, it is the youth who helped make my ministry at Grace so special. Our trips to camp at Lutherdale and our journey to the mountains and Sky Ranch were so very special, and I thank God for these young people and for the time we shared together.

HIGH #2 - BIBLE STUDIES!!

Over these years there have been many times when we would gather in small groups and share in the wonder of the word together. Most notable were the regularly scheduled men's bible study group and the afternoon ladies bible study group. Both of these will be remembered forever with love. The men's group gathered every Tuesday, with some exceptions, for breakfast and Bible study. I know we loved our time together and the mutual support we were for one another. And our ladies Tuesday afternoon study was, to say the least, the most enjoyable time of my week. These ladies were honest, full of life experiences and full of joy, sadness at times and most assuredly laughter. I loved these ladies and the time we spent learning and sharing. I learned from them each week.

HIGH #3 - Sharing in life's joys and sorrows

Over the better part of 11 years now, we have shared in many events that were full of life's happiest moments. These events included baptisms, weddings, first communions, confirmation, Primetime, Sunday school, Pie Fest! and, of course, the opportunity to share in our weekly worship together. These times have been true joys for me, and it has been an honor to share in them with so many of you. It has also been an honor to be there and support many of you in your life struggles. In particular, being there for families during the loss of a loved one and presiding at a celebration of life service is an honor and a privilege, and as your pastor, I have approached each one with solemnity. In fact, it has been during those times, that I have most often felt Christ's presence.

So then, I offer my personal “FIST to FIVE” check-in. I am holding up both hands with all five fingers extended and then folding them together in prayer to give thanks to all of you for the love we have shared and our time together. It has been a privilege to be your Pastor, and with all sincerity, please remember that God does love you and so do I.

PARKING LOT & VIDEO WORSHIP SERVICES— At this time we plan to continue gathering for worship in the parking lot on Sundays at 9 A.M. through November 1, All Saints Sunday. You are invited to tune in to 89.3 FM on your radio as you gather for worship. You are welcome to sit or stand next to your vehicle while wearing a face mask or remain inside your vehicle. When you arrive and stop by to say hello to the greeters, you can receive pre-filled communion elements (a plastic cup with grape juice and a wafer on top; or a Gluten Free package). Worship videos will continue to be posted on Grace's website later that day for you to worship at home. Blessings on your time shared to worship God.

GRACE EMAILS—CONSTANT CONTACT—Do you receive emails from Grace Lutheran Church? In addition to this monthly newsletter, we often have other news to share via email and hope to connect with you in this way. Currently the order of worship is also emailed each week, typically each Thursday for the upcoming Sunday. Please call the church office or email Carrie (cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org) to add your email address(es) to Grace's email list.

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), 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), Steve Kosmen (loved one of the Koehn family), Elayna Kuipers (friend of the Wedoff Family), Colleen Laird, Anna Larsen (sister of Al Henniges), Elizabeth Lynd Loser, Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), 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, Carol Raffel, 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, Addie Jo Wedoff, Nick Wedoff, Esther Wienke, Ruth Zirves

Sorrows: June Peterson, Bruce Randolph, Renee Merklin (friend of Rachel & Brian Bratanick)

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—The deadline for the October newsletter is **October 15**. Please send articles to Lauren Kleinjan at lkleinjan@gracewoodstock.org, or the church office. Questions: Call the office at 815-338-0554.

“Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**”

- From sundaysandseasons.com.

These words have been tugging on my heart for months. These words were a part of our seasonal liturgy for the first half of this long church season (a season that continues from the 1st Sunday after Pentecost on June 7 until we make our way to the 25th Sunday after Pentecost-Christ the King Sunday on November 22).

Blessed be God whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. As we continue to find ourselves in the unexpected events and changes and wonders of this year; God remains steadfast. God's love is everlasting. God is faithful. God has been and will be faithful, from generation to generation.

In the 119th psalm, an acrostic poem that endures for 176 verses, we find these words of God's enduring faithfulness: “The Lord exists forever; your word is firmly fixed in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth and it stands fast” (Psalm 119:89-90). The word of God nurtures us with encouragement, perspective, and promise.

In the midst of so many changes, we hold on to the gift of faith in our God who endures. At Grace Lutheran Church, we have now said goodbye to Pastor Ken and Yvonne at the conclusion of Pastor Ken's call to Grace, and we have sent them forth with God's blessing. As a people of God gathered in this faith community, we are continually discerning how to faithfully stay connected to each another with care for the safety and well-being of one another. And even in the midst of change, we can give thanks for the ways in which God is good, God is faithful, God's love is steadfast.

This October, I ask you to commit to praying for Grace Lutheran Church: give thanks for the generations who have gathered here before us, rejoice in the generations of God's faithful people currently gathered in this time and place, and prepare for the future generations of this faith community. This is a time to recall God's church is always reforming (Reformation Sunday is October 25), soon we will celebrate the baptized people of God, living and dead, who are the body of Christ (All Saints Sunday is November 1), and all along the way we are strengthened by the love of Christ and the faithfulness of God that endures.

May God's steadfast love be with you, Grace Lutheran Church, now, and always.

Peace,
Pastor Amanda Bergstrom

NEW WEBSITE— Over the summer, Becca Nattress, Lisa Gerloff-Banker, and Lauren Kleinjan have worked alongside a web page designer to update Grace's website. This October, please look for a new Grace website (updated content at the same address: www.gracewoodstock.org).

ACTIONS THE COUNCIL IS TAKING REGARDING POTENTIAL REOPENING— A committee has been formed to consider how we might reopen safely. Pr. Amanda, Matt Meiners, Mike Liedtke, Bill Nattress and Nancy Kreznor have kindly agreed to serve.

Meanwhile, the Council has approved immediately that weddings, funerals, and baptisms may take place in the sanctuary with 25 people maximum. As before, there will be no live singing and masks must be worn.

Andy attended a meeting of Northern Illinois Synod Council presidents hosted by Bishop Clements. At that meeting (one of two sessions) about 24 congregations were represented. It was learned that about half were worshipping virtually. Of the other half, four had recently begun worshipping indoors and the remainder were worshipping in their parking lots.

The Council and Pr. Amanda

CHRIST IN OUR HOME DEVOTIONAL—The October-December Christ in Our Home devotional is now available in the box outside the front doors for those who would like to pick one up.

WORSHIP VIDEOS & TABLETS—If you do not have internet access at home and are interested in viewing worship videos on a tablet please let us know! We have a group of volunteers who download worship service videos onto a small tablet and then can drop off and pick up the tablet from your home. If you would like to learn more, or if you are interested in volunteering with this ministry (download the video to a Grace worship tablet at your home and then contactless drop off & pick up with someone without internet access)- please contact Pastor Amanda (leave a message at the church office (815-338-0554) or email abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org).

80 & OVER LUNCHEON—Due to Covid 19, we will be unable to hold this spectacular luncheon this year!! Instead, the Senior Ministry Committee has put together a grand surprise to honor all Grace's members who will be at least 80 years old by the end of this year. This surprise will be delivered to your home (Woodstock and surrounding towns only) during the month of October by Grace's Senior Ministry Volunteers. We hope this will let you know just how special you are to our congregation and put a smile on your face.

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS ENDURES FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION—In thanksgiving for God's grace and in a shared commitment to the ministry God calls us to through Grace Lutheran Church, we encourage you to prayerfully consider how you intend to give your financial offerings in 2021. We invite you to bring your **Estimate of Giving Card** to worship on **October 25**, Reformation Sunday, for worship in the parking lot at 9 A.M., or to mail your card to the church office by October 25. These estimates mark our intentions to give and can be changed as needed. Thank you for sharing in generous giving to God, thank you for sharing in the life of this faith community!

CONGRATULATIONS FIRST COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION STUDENTS

Congratulations to Annabelle Gibbs, Madelyn Emery and Emma Hinderlider for receiving their First Communion on Sunday, September 13, 2020.

On Sunday, September 20, 2020, the following confirmation students participated in their affirmation of baptism: Joseph Gerloff, Robert Gerloff, Colin Given, Benjamin Lagerhausen, Madeline Manke, Blake O'Leary, Keaton Parrish, Grace Ribbe, Logan Romano, Nathan Ruffino, Cohen Shutt, Jack Simonton, and Abigail Steele.

The Grace Congregation is very proud of all of you!

DIRECT FROM HONDURAS

Dear Pastor Ken,

Receiving correspondence from principals and students in Honduras is one of the benefits of being involved in an L4L School Sponsorship. Letters from graduating students, inviting you to travel to Honduras to celebrate graduation with them in-person, are a part of that correspondence each year. We typically begin sharing these letters around July each year as a way of encouraging School Sponsors to attend November graduation celebrations with us in Honduras.

This year we began asking students to write these letters much earlier in the school year – in March – as their Honduran school year was just beginning. We were able to acquire letters from nearly half of the schools in the L4L program in March...and then COVID-19 changed everything. The 2020 school year essentially ended at that point for the poorest kids living in rural southern Honduras.

Because we were able to receive correspondence from kids at your sponsored school prior to the COVID shutdown, we decided we wanted to share that with you. The attached letter was written at a time when these kids were attending school each day, and while they were receiving daily school lunches because of your generosity. They were happy ... and healthy ... and learning, and even in its relatively “formal” writing style, the correspondence reflects a feeling of optimism.

Even in desperate times – like the situation these kids have now found themselves in for the past several months – Hondurans are able to maintain a sense of optimism. They have been reassured that L4L remains poised to resume the school lunch program immediately once schools are allowed to re-open. At some point, these Honduran schools will be buzzing again with the energy of kids who truly love being in school. You are a major reason why school is such a happy place for them. Your continued generosity in 2020 will help us maintain our state of readiness to immediately resume the life-changing L4L school lunch program.

Please know how much we appreciate your support of L4L on behalf of these very deserving kids. It breaks our hearts that we are unable to provide them the nutrition in daily L4L school lunches right now, and we are eager for the day when we can resume our normal operations which you help to make possible.

We stand ready to answer any questions you may have. Again, thank you for the difference you can make in the lives of these grateful Honduran kids.

Best,
Phil & Mary Lou

To my dear sponsors from United States of North America.

Greeting from Willians Edilberto Yanez Velasquez. It is a pleasure to write to you to say hello and wish you with success in your daily duties. I am in sixth grade, ten years old and live with my mother. The teacher is so good with me, she teaches me a lot, and she is so patient. I write to invite you to my graduation in November to share enough time with you, my friends, and my classmates, I appreciate all you are doing for us because the lunch is very helpful to our nutrition and we feel so happy with you. I pray God to take care of you so you will keep supporting our school because we have many needs in our school.

God bless you.

Sincerely,

Willians
School: Francisco Morazan
Community: Santa Rita, Goascoran Valle



October 2020

Presence Light Sponsors:

October 11

In memory of our dear sister, Kathy Kessinger, given by Bill & Nancy Kreznor

October 18

Happy heavenly 37th birthday to our loved nephew, Andrew Kyle Torres. We miss you each and every day, given by Darby & Dee Brown

October 25

To the glory of God and trusting that He is always by our side., given by Darby & Dee Brown

Bulletin Sponsors:

October 24/25

For the blessings of family, given by Diane Schulz

In honor of our 50th wedding anniversary on October 24th, given by Stuart & Ann Given

We currently have openings available in November for bulletin sponsors

Even though we are not in the church building yet for our services, this ministry continues. It is a great way to celebrate occasion's, and honor or grieve loved ones with your church family.

Available dates are Oct. 31st/November 1st, Nov. 7/8, Nov. 15/16, Nov. 21/22 and Nov. 28/29 for bulletin sponsors. Please contact Carrie or Denise in the church office if you are interested in sponsoring.

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

GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

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Kleinjan, Mary Koehn, Mike Liedtke, Matt

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Office Hours: 8:30 am-3:30 pm, M-Th

8:30 am-12:00 pm, F