

# THE GLEANINGS

## of Grace Lutheran Church



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OFFICE@GRACENF.ORG

REV. BENJAMIN G. BAHR, PASTOR

### August/September 2019



#### OUR VISION

**WELCOMING PEOPLE TO GROW IN HOPE, LOVE, AND CERTAINTY THROUGH GOD'S WORD OF GRACE.**

Members, friends, and family of Grace, as I catch my breath from the whirlwind past few months, I'd like to share updates with you from the two national events I attended in July.

#### **THE LCMS YOUTH GATHERING - [www.lcmsgathering.com](http://www.lcmsgathering.com) - July 11-15, Minneapolis, MN**

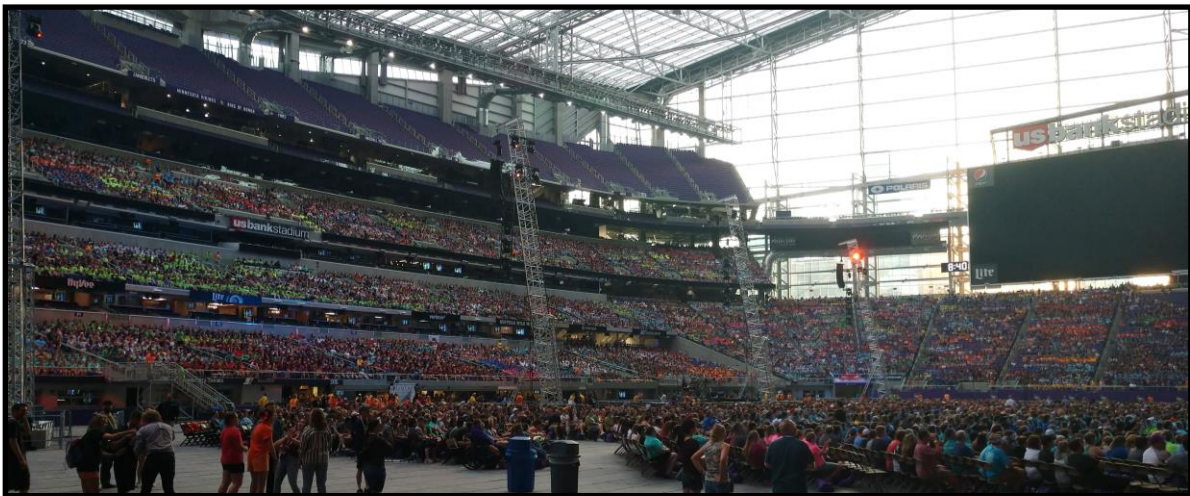
Our Real. Present. God. provided a memorable youth gathering experience. Final attendance totals included 22,000 youth and 5,610 adult leaders representing 1,537 congregations, plus over 1,000 adult volunteers. As attendance at the gathering is not limited to LCMS youth, there were several youth there who are not yet Christian, coming as friends of youth groups. God uses this gathering every year to bring people into relationship with Him. In fact, there were four youth baptisms over the course of the weekend. Alleluia!

Youth began the day with Bible study, then chose from dozens of smaller Gathering sessions including such topics as: "Who Actually Cares about Jesus? My Friends Don't." "Why is It SO Hard to Read and Understand the Bible?" and "From Gay Bars to Jesus: A clear voice in a gender confused generation." There were also sessions intended for leaders, like "Ministering to Youth in Crisis... without a counseling degree."

Youth and leaders participated in service projects as well. Among the highlights: 463 units of blood and 926 inches of hair donated, 1,013 kits built for the homeless, 574 encouraging letters written to veterans, and - get ready for this - 1,003,014 meals packed to be used by *Feed My Starving Children*!

Each evening, everyone gathered together under one roof - the giant US Bank Stadium roof - for the Mass Event. My primary responsibility was security/safety for this event, along with a team of about 10 other military, law enforcement, and medical personnel. At the Mass Event, youth were shown, through personal testimony, drama, and song, the love of Jesus and the restoration and forgiveness that He brings, no matter how messed up our lives become. Mass Events did not shy away from difficult topics but spoke to youth where they are, through the eyes of Jesus. Hope shines into hopelessness and God gives His peace beyond understanding.

*(continued on pg 2)*



**THE 67<sup>th</sup> LCMS CONVENTION - [www.lcms.org/convention](http://www.lcms.org/convention) - July 20-25, Tampa, FL**

I move that I now write about the LCMS Convention. Is there any discussion? (Microphone queue immediately fills up with 100 people.) I call the question.

That's a decent summary of the LCMS Convention. While you can find out much more about the hundreds of resolutions and elections which took place by following the link above, I'd like to share some insights as well as some of the resolutions which may be deemed more important.

The first and foremost insight I have is in comparing our convention to that of other church bodies. You may have heard in the news about other recent church body conventions descending into shouting matches, or where delegates were split by whether or not to follow Scripture – or even where they voted to reject the word of God in favor of the philosophy of man. Such is NOT the case in the LCMS! Delegates were highly unified on the central place of Scripture, and votes to affirm Biblical positions on issues such as life and marriage were nearly unanimous, with >95% of the vote. Praise God!



Regarding synodical elections, again this year it seemed that a rubber stamp was placed on the "United List" – a list of "preferred" candidates produced by an ultraconservative pastor and distributed in advance of the election. Virtually all elected candidates are from this list across the entire Synod. I attribute this to apathy – those who are not enthralled with Synod politics tend to stay away from it. This has the side effect of leaving only one point of view elected to Synod. I would prefer to see others involved, even if they have better things to do than worry about Synod business. (Including our congregation, which has been distant from all Synod affairs!)

Among many resolutions passed, please note the following:

- R 5-09A reaffirms the Biblical teaching that God created the world in six regular days.
- R 4-11A encourages our congregations and workers to study the doctrine and practice of Closed Communion, which we have all agreed to follow. There are concerns that some congregations are too loose in their practice.
- R 5-10 commends for study a Lutheran Church-Canada paper on Cremation.
- R 2-07 sets Synod as the only-sending mission agency. Our Eastern District passed a resolution against this last year.
- Note that R 10-03A dealing with Ecclesiastical Supervision was not passed. This continues to allow the Synod President to step in, over the District President, when the Synod President believes the District President has not acted in a particular situation. The Eastern District also spoke against this practice in our convention.

The National Offering was received for ministry work in the LCMS and totaled \$331,737.22.

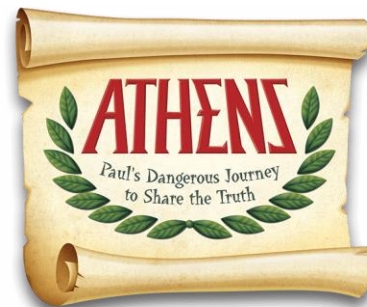
**God's blessings now and always to you & your families!**





## Imagine . . . going back in time

and across the ocean to meet St. Paul. At this year's **Athens Vacation Bible School (VBS)**, that's what we did!



Nearly 40 children not only heard of Paul's adventures elsewhere (like an earthquake that freed him from prison!), they got to experience an adventure when escaping a crowd who came to find Paul and bring him before the city's council! Paul stayed true to his central message: God loves everyone and wants them to know His Son, Jesus.

Our VBS guests got to meet Dionysius (a respected member of the Council of Athens), a friend of Paul who thought Paul was foolish at the beginning of the week, and by the end saw the Truth and became a believer!

At VBS, children travelled in Oikos (the Greek word for "household") to visit Paul, play Olympic-inspired games, and visit the marketplace. Each night, we sent them home excited, tired, and inspired with the message that **God loves us all!** (to which they would respond, "It's true!").

The marketplace was a unique feature this year. The children got to visit shopkeepers who set up their stores to sell their wares. The children visited the Food Market each night for refreshments. Throughout the week, their other choices included a Music Shop, a Pottery Studio, an Olympic Shop, a Scribe Shop and an Animal Courtyard (with live animals!). You can imagine the fun they had!

Each evening, the children were engaged when they were given a mission in the marketplace. They had missions like "Introduce yourself to the Shopkeeper", "Invite the Shopkeeper to closing", and "Thank the Shopkeeper for letting you visit". The shopkeepers (who pretended to be genuine, polytheistic Athenians) challenged the kids, too, with questions about Paul and "this Jesus person". The kids did a great job insisting that there is *one true* God who loves us all through Jesus!

God blessed us with an adventure-filled, love-inspiring, Gospel-declaring week! *Thank you* to the many people who made it all possible!

It takes about **400** volunteer hours to put on Vacation Bible School for our community. That's a lot of dedication from our precious team!

VBS guests brought over **200** school supplies, socks and underwear for Harry Abate Elementary School students. They love making a difference!

Over 3/5 of the **39** kids we had at VBS do not attend church regularly – anywhere. This is a wonderful opportunity for them – and their families – to hear about how much God loves them, and what He did about it through Jesus. Praise God for bringing them through our doors!

We had **25** *known* people who supported VBS without being at the event itself! Through prayer, monetary support, decoration and costume making, clean up before and after, and in many other ways, our congregation brought the Gospel to our community.

In addition, **27** VBS staff were in attendance at the event throughout the week. From our registration to our own St. Paul and his Greek friend Dionysius, people filled vital roles to make the program impactful to the kids!





### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Social Ministries committee will be held after worship on September 15<sup>th</sup>.

**New members are always welcome.** No need to make a reservation – just join us after church. We even provide a light lunch during the meeting!

### **DONATION OPPORTUNITIES . . .**

**SCHOOL SUPPLY MISSION PROJECT:** It's not too late to contribute to our summer mission project. Continuing through Rally Day on September 8, there are tables available in the chapel and narthex to accept donations of all types of school supplies. All gifts donated will be distributed to inner city school children at Niagara Falls Harry Abate Elementary School by the teachers. Partnering directly with the school allows us to ensure that your gifts are placed directly into the hands of the children that are most in need. Jane Brese delivers our donations each year, and would be happy to discuss their needs with you if you have questions. Thank you for your generosity toward our children. And thank you to Marla Crawford for obtaining Thrivent Action Team funds for our project.

**ADOPT A "VIRTUAL STUDENT":** Would you like to adopt a "virtual student" and purchase all the school supplies needed for an individual student's school year? This year we have provided school supply lists, available in folders on the donation tables. Feel free to take a list from the grade of your choice. You can then purchase ALL the supplies on the list to support your "virtual student", place the items in a paper bag (or bookbag), attach the list to the outside of the bag, and leave the bag on or under the table. It will be given to a child in need as determined by the teachers at Harry Abate.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Several of the school supply lists request ear buds or ear phones. Hint--there are nice models available for \$5 or less at Five Below, located in the strip plaza of the Walmart shopping complex. You may be able to find them even cheaper than \$5 if you watch the sales.

**SOCKS & UNDERWEAR:** Our inner city children are also in need of socks and underwear for the coming school year. While these items are taken for granted by most of us, they are considered a luxury by families that are struggling to provide the basics needed for everyday life. And statistics show that almost half the children in Niagara Falls live in families with incomes close to or below the poverty level. Grace members have given generously to this annual mission project for several years, and our school nurses have come to depend on us as partners as they try to provide for the dignity of the children in their care. Boxes are available in the chapel and narthex to accept your gifts. Thank you for your help.

*"If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." James 2:15-17.*

### **UPDATE . . .**

**SUMMIT BABY BOTTLE UPDATE:** Thank you for your generous donations to Summit Life Resources annual fundraiser, totaling \$431.42! Thank you to Alice Moll for delivering your gifts of diapers and baby items to Summit. Also, thank you to Wendy Coleman for obtaining Thrivent Action Team funds and organizing the donation table.

# Social Ministries (continued)

## **SPECIAL MISSION ENVELOPES . . .**

**JUNE SPECIAL MISSION ENVELOPE** donations with matching funds from the Social Ministries budget enabled us to donate \$700 to Camp Pioneer as they entered the peak of their camping season. Thank you for helping our church's camp as they continue to spread the good news of Jesus' love and saving grace to all that they serve.

**JULY SPECIAL MISSION ENVELOPE** donations totaled \$184. With added funds from Social Ministries' budget, we were able to send a gift of \$500 to LCMS Disaster Response to help support the work they continue to do at various disaster sites throughout the United States. Your support of our disaster response teams is appreciated.

**AUGUST SPECIAL MISSION ENVELOPES** are designated to support the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty. Nearly two centuries ago, those who would eventually form the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod came to the U.S. seeking religious freedom. Today, the religious freedom they sought is eroding. That's why LCMS has recently established the "Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty" in Washington, D.C., that will work to protect our religious freedoms. Dr. Gregory Seltz (well known Lutheran Hour speaker) has accepted a call to be the Executive Director. If you would like to know more about this initiative, please visit [www.lcrlfreedom.org](http://www.lcrlfreedom.org).

**SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER SPECIAL MISSION ENVELOPES** are designated to support St. John and Holy Ghost Lutheran Schools. Not only do both of these schools teach Christian beliefs and values to their students on a daily basis, but they have also both been ranked as top schools among public and private schools. The cost of educating our children continues to rise each year, and your support is needed to help maintain their current high standards. We at Grace are blessed to have the option of quality Christian education available to us without having to actually run the schools ourselves. **LUTHERAN SCHOOLS** make a difference in the life of a child, especially in today's world where Christian values are rapidly losing acceptance, and behaviors that are clearly contrary to God's Word are now celebrated and encouraged. Many of our congregational families have taken advantage of the quality education provided by Holy Ghost and St. John Lutheran Schools, and we have members who teach at both schools. Please keep our families and schools in your prayers, and consider the opportunity to step up and support Christian education by placing your special mission envelope in the offering plate during September and October.

**Saturday  
October  
26<sup>th</sup>**

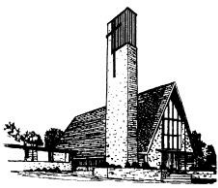
**3:00-4:30  
PM**



**Rain  
or  
Shine**

All members of Grace are welcome to bring their cars, decorate their trunks (optional), dress up in costumes (optional), and give treats out to our member and neighborhood children.

**We also need volunteers** to serve snacks and monitor games and prizes. If you've never been part of this fun activity, consider joining us this year. In the event of inclement weather, activities are held indoors.



# Grace Lutheran Church

## August 2019

| SUNDAY   | MONDAY   | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY                  | FRIDAY         | SATURDAY  |
|--|--|--|-----------|---------------------------|----------------|---|
| <b>Head Ushers:</b><br>Mark Binkley<br>Jim Wolf  | <b>Altar Care:</b><br>Erika Tuscher<br>Lin Matiasz |  |           | 1<br>6:00P VBS            | 2<br>6:00P VBS | 3   |
| 4<br>10:30A Worship (HC)<br>Church Office Closed | 5<br>6:30P Survivors' Group                        | 6  | 7         | 8                         | 9              | 10  |
| 11<br>10:30A Worship/Baptism                     | 12<br>6:30P Survivors' Group                       | 13<br>11:00A Funeral   | 14        | 15<br>6:00P Elders Picnic | 16             | 17  |
| 18<br>10:30A Worship (HC)                        | 19<br>6:30P Survivors' Group                       | 20   | 21        | 22                        | 23             | 24<br>9:00A American<br>Red Cross Blood<br>Drive (till 1:00P) |
| 25<br>10:30A Worship/Baptism                     | 26<br>6:30P Survivors' Group                       | 27   | 28        | 29                        | 30             | 31  |



SS: Sunday School  
ABS: Adult Bible Study  
HC: Holy Communion

Office Phone: 716-283-1843  
Office Administrator: Denise Konopka – office@gracenf.org  
Church Office Hours: Sunday 8:30 AM-12:30 PM; TH 4:30 PM-8:30 PM



# Grace Lutheran Church

## September 2019

| SUNDAY   | MONDAY   | TUESDAY                      | WEDNESDAY                                | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY   |
|--|--|------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| 1<br>10:30A Worship (HC)   | 2 LABOR DAY<br>6:30P Survivors' Group                                | 3                            | 4  | 5<br>6:30P Church Council Mtg   | 6   | 7  |
| 8<br>9:00A SS Rally Day<br>9:00A ABS<br>10:30A Worship<br>11:30A Church Picnic | 9<br>6:30P Survivors' Group  | 10                           | 11<br>10:00A ABS<br>7:00P Choir Practice | 12  | 13  | 14   |
| 15<br>9:00A SS/ABS<br>10:30A Worship (HC)<br>11:30A Social Ministries Mtg      | 16<br>6:30P Survivors' Group<br>Submission for Oct/Nov Gleanings Due | 17                           | 18<br>10:00A ABS<br>7:00P Choir Practice | 19  | 20  | 21   |
| 22<br>9:00A SS/ABS<br>10:30A Worship<br>11:30A Rite Aid Flu Clinic             | 23<br>6:30P Survivors' Group   | 24<br>6:30P Grace Ladies Mtg | 25<br>NO ABS<br>7:00 P Choir Practice    | 26  | 27  | 28   |
| 29<br>9:00A SS/ABS<br>10:30A Worship (HC)                                      | 30<br>6:30P Survivors' Group   |                              |  |  | <b>Head Ushers:</b><br><br>Gary Krull<br>Brian Miller | <b>Altar Care:</b><br><br>Erika Tuscher<br>Lin Matiasz |

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS – SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>**

**RALLY DAY – STARTING AT 9:00 AM**

**PICNIC – AFTER 10:30 AM WORSHIP**

It is time to start this year's Sunday School classes. We have 3 different classes:

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b><u>Toddlin to Jesus</u></b><br>(1 yr. old to 4 yrs. old)<br>hallway classroom across from downstairs<br>bathrooms | <b><u>The Diggers</u></b><br>(Kindergarten thru 5 <sup>th</sup> grade)<br>in the main downstairs area | <b><u>Youth for Truth</u></b><br>(6 <sup>th</sup> thru 12 <sup>th</sup> grade)<br>in youth room and their classroom in the<br>main area |
|--|---|---|

Our staff this year includes:

|   |   |                       |                |
|---|---|-----------------------|----------------|
| <b>SUPERINTENDENTS:</b>                                 | Wendy Coleman & Jane Schulz<br>(with assistance from Michele Stenzel & Tracy Gilmore) |                       |                |
| <b>TODDLIN TO JESUS:</b>                                | teacher – Marla Crawford (parents invited to stay)                                    |                       |                |
| <b>DIGGERS:</b>   | teachers – Wendy Coleman, Kathy Majka, Kristy Schaal, Jane Schulz                     |                       |                |
| <b>YOUTH for TRUTH:</b>                                 | teachers – Sherry Cassatt, Jennifer Maines, Virginia Markel                           |                       |                |
| <b>MUSIC &amp; MISSIONS:</b>                            | Amy Folmsbee  | <b>PIANO:</b>         | Maye Smith     |
| <b>OPENINGS:</b><br><i>(first Sunday of each month)</i> | Pastor Bahr   | <b>CHURCH OFFICE:</b> | Denise Konopka |
| <b>BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS:</b>                               | Erika Tuscher   | <b>CRADLE ROLL:</b>   | Beverly Mills  |

Our Curriculum is from GROUP Publishing and is called

## **DIGGING INTO EPIC** **TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE**

Our first quarter lessons are based on Galatians 5:22-23:

“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!”

*\*Classes begin at 9:00 AM  
and end at 10:15 AM\**

**Come join us for Bible lessons, crafts, games, experiments, music and snacks!**



## **WE HAVE A CRITICAL NEED FOR NEW MEMBERS!**

PLEASE CONSIDER IF YOU CAN HELP

### **CHOIR PRACTICE RESUMES ON SEPTEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup> – 7:00 PM**

THE CHOIR SINGS TWICE A MONTH IN CHURCH

ON THE FIRST AND THIRD SUNDAYS

#### **PLEASE “NOTE”:**

- YOU DO NOT NEED TO MAKE ALL OF THE REHEARSALS.
- COME AS OFTEN AS YOU CAN.
- YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE ABLE TO READ MUSIC.
- IF YOU LIKE TO SING, YOU ARE WELCOME!



**WE'RE SAVING A SEAT FOR YOU—COME AND JOIN THE FUN!**

PLEASE SEE MAYE SMITH OR ROSS FOLMSBEE IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

### **RITE AID FLU SHOT CLINIC**

Get the  
**FLU**  **SHOT**  
not the flu!

**MOST INSURANCES ARE ACCEPTED**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup>**

**Rite Aid will be offering a flu shot clinic at Grace after worship.**

**Plan to get your flu shots early and stay healthy this winter!**

# GRACE DONATION CENTER

A Donation Center has been set up in the coat room near the parking lot door to accept donations of items that are being used in various ways by members of the Social Ministries committee and the agencies that we work with.

**PLEASE NOTE** that while we appreciate your kind intentions, the donation of items that we have not requested often create a hardship for our volunteers due to space and time limitations. Your generous donations of the articles listed below are greatly appreciated.

**USED EYEGLASSES & HEARING AIDS:** These are refurbished by the Lion's Club and given to people throughout the world who cannot afford to provide these items for themselves. Those old glasses and hearing aids in your dresser drawer could help someone see or hear. Contact person for questions is Ross Folmsbee.

**GENTLY USED PURSES:** These are being filled with toiletry and feminine hygiene products and gifted to homeless and destitute women in Niagara Falls with the help of the Magdalene Project. Contact person for questions is Robin Stephenson.

**TRAVEL OR SAMPLE SIZED TOILETRIES:** These are needed for the purses described above. Extras are distributed to those in need through the Magdalene Project. Contact people for questions are Robin Stephenson and John Loss.



**USED PRINTER CARTRIDGES:** These will be sent for recycling. Funds received for these items will go directly to Social Ministries projects. Contact person for questions is Virginia Markel.

**5 X 7 PICTURE FRAMES:** Inspirational pictures, including our extra Sunday bulletins, are being placed in these frames and distributed through several local agencies that provide hope and help to those seeking to improve their lives. Contact person for questions is Alice Moll.

**CELL PHONES:** All styles of phones, working and broken, are acceptable. These will find their way to deployed servicemen and women and will also help to provide free minutes for them to call home. Contact person for questions is Virginia Markel.

**CANCELLED POSTAGE STAMPS:** These are forwarded to the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML). They are able to earn cash through this project. PLEASE NOTE that to be usable they should be cut from the envelope leaving a half inch border around the stamp. Contact person for questions is Erika Tuscher.



[www.lcmsfoundation.org](http://www.lcmsfoundation.org) 800-325-7912 Ext 1684

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## **September 2019: Charitable Gift Planning Newsletter Article**

For Gift Planning Counselors, Associate Counselors and Associated Ministries

### **Balancing Priorities**

In economic thought, the 'opportunity cost' of making decisions connects to planned benefits received. This is different than giving up something for preferences we choose. God tells us through the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows that will he also reap."

When people make determinations related to use of time, allocation of money or development of ability, they typically match choices with the driving motivations of behavior. Balancing priorities is not only driven by personal characteristics, but by the importance placed on desired outcomes.

It's true that hardwired personality traits that make up psychological and social tendencies, paired with parental influence, along with Spiritual guidance, determine most of the inclinations that motivate us on how we approach life's decisions. Today, options are available for unprecedented selection.

Beyond mere psychology, we understand our battle with our sinful flesh, recognizing our need to repent of inappropriate allocations. Only God's grace in Christ can sort through the chaos of our poor decisions. We replace harmony with our Father for temptations to be like God, which brings disharmony. This reality is most obvious in how we often fail to keep God as first among earthly priorities and how life's priorities blur our vision of our Father's. We fail to balance decisions in faithfulness to the Giver of all good things.

Grace has forgiven our failures through the cross, and Christ's Spirit comforts and empowers us to realign priorities to reflect the primary purpose of life; to honor God first and share His kingdom on earth.

You can reflect this balance in your last will and testament, estate trusts or beneficiary designations. Including a witness to faith and support for the Lord's work in these plans, we validate our priority's balance to honor God, who Created, Redeemed and Sustains our lives, even as we desire to bless our children and our children's children.

Contact Robert Wirth, LCMS Foundation Gift Planner @ [robert.wirth@lfnd.org](mailto:robert.wirth@lfnd.org) or 716-863-4427 to learn how a trusted charitable guide can encourage you to plan and direct your passion to give to loved ones and cherished ministries so others might know that the rejuvenation is your hope.

Grace Lutheran Church  
736 Cayuga Drive  
Niagara Falls, NY 14304-3498

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## Upcoming Events

### WORSHIP SERVICES

**Divine Service:**  
Sundays @ 10:30A

\*Holy Communion on the  
first, third and fifth Sundays

### EDUCATION

**Sunday School:**  
Sundays @ 9:00A

**Adult Bible Study:**  
Sundays @ 9:00A  
Wednesdays @ 10:00A

**NOTE:** Off for Summer  
**Rally Day**  
Sunday, September 8

### GRACE LADIES

**Next Meeting:**  
September 24 @ 6:30P

### SOCIAL MINISTRIES

**Next Meeting:**  
September 15 @ 11:30A  
\*New members are always  
welcome. We meet five  
times each year for about  
an hour, and a light lunch is  
included.

**Issue  
12**

**Aug/Sep  
2019**

**Rev. Benjamin G. Bahr**  
Office Phone: 716-283-1843  
PM

Office Administrator: Denise Konopka – office@gracenf.org  
Church Office Hours (Sept): Sunday 8:30 AM-12:30 PM; W-TH 8:30 AM-2:30 PM