

THE GLEANINGS

of Grace Lutheran Church



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REV. BENJAMIN G. BAHR, PASTOR

Fall 2020



OUR VISION

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

Members, friends, and family of Grace,

In his inaugural address in 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt said these famous words: "Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."

Agree or disagree with FDR's policies, one thing is clear: this speech motivated tens of millions of Americans.

It's not that there was nothing worthy of fear: just two months earlier, Adolf Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany, the American unemployment rate was an astronomical 25%, and for the first time, someone believes they saw the Loch Ness Monster (no kidding: May 2, 1933). Yet in the face of all that and more, Americans found a renewed optimism in these words, and less than 10 years later would come together as one to fight the second World War.

We, too, have fear. Covid-19 is a deadly foe. It's invisible and difficult to track, predict, or prevent, and it has raised the worst in humanity. Never in my lifetime have I seen such animosity, polarization, and above all, fear. Meanwhile, both political parties seek to fan the flames to their advantage, riling up their supporters through meme warfare.

How shall we respond as God's church? I say we step boldly and fearlessly into this world, knowing that even if today is our last day, the Lord has us securely in His hands, and that nothing – not even death – can separate us from His love.

That doesn't mean that reasonable precautions shouldn't be taken; but it does mean we won't let those precautions define who we are. Above all else, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. This enables us to stand strong, even in the midst of fear which paralyzes others, and declare: The Lord is my shepherd; I will fear no evil, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

Jesus has freed us from our bondage to fear. Today, allow God to throw open those shackles, and take a deep breath as a free man/woman. Covid-19 isn't the first disease ever to assault our world, and it won't be the last. Let us display such hope that, as 1 Peter 3 says, we might cause others to ask us the reason we have this hope within us.

God's blessings now and always be with you!

Pastor Bahr

Dear reader:

Every attempt was made to bring you the most up-to-date information and planning in this issue of the Gleanings. However, due to the continually evolving nature of this pandemic and the laws & guidance around it, it's possible that some things may change after this newsletter is printed. For the most current information, please be sure you're signed up for our church e-mail list. If you're not on that list yet, send a note with your name and email address to office@gracenf.org.

While regular publication of the Gleanings is difficult right now, we do intend to go back to a bi-monthly issue as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the latest information can be found at www.gracenf.org.

Grace

Current News and Announcements

**** THE FAMILY** of Warren Luick wants to express their heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to his Memorial Fund. With the money Grace was able to purchase an adapter for the organ so the music will sound crystal clear! If you knew Warren, you know that he loved organ music. Thank you as well for all the prayers and well-wishes. We feel deeply loved by God's people!

**** ATTENTION CHOIR MEMBERS:** As much as we miss getting together, choir rehearsals are on hold for now. We are monitoring the COVID situation and we look forward to being back together as soon as we are able to do so. In the meantime, if you are interested in singing a solo or duet, please let Maye know. She is willing to arrange practice times as needed. There may be some restrictions on song selections related to copyright restrictions associated with posting our services on YouTube. However, Pastor Bahr will be able to help us figure out what is allowed through public domain rules and licenses that Grace currently holds. So step up to the microphone if you are so inclined!

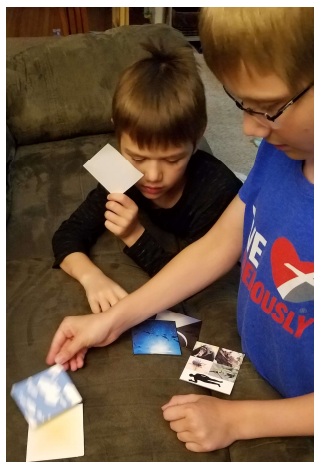
**** FLU SHOT CLINIC:** Rite Aid will be at Grace on Sunday, September 27 at 11:30 am to administer flu shots after our worship service. If you are live-streaming from home, you are welcome to come after the service to receive your vaccine. Please arrive by noon at the latest. To keep everyone safe, masks are required and social distancing will be observed.

**** ALTAR FLOWERS** are still able to be ordered for the remaining weeks of the year at this time. The available dates are listed on the chart hanging in the narthex or you can call the church to request a date or see what is available. The cost for a single centerpiece is \$45 or you may choose two vases for \$56.

**** PLEASE UPDATE YOUR EMAIL:** If you are not currently receiving email messages from Grace and would like to, please contact the office with your current email and you will be added to the list. Also, be sure to keep your email up to date with the office if you make a change.

NO EMAIL? If you do not have or do not use email regularly, please let the office know. We are in the process of compiling a list of members that do not have or use email access so that we can keep you up to date when time-sensitive or urgent notices are sent out electronically.

**** CHURCH DIRECTORY** will be coming but was delayed due to COVID closures.



“In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The light shines in the Darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” -John 1:4-5

Family Outpost VBS 2020

July 27th, 29th, and 31st five Outpost Locations were engaged in Grace’s Family Outpost Vacation Bible School (VBS). Through online stories and songs, and with kits of supplies distributed by the church, 7 adults and 21 youth and children learned about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They were then challenged to make a difference for the Gospel in their communities, to their neighbors and friends.

Due to CoVid-19, our annual on-site VBS was transformed into an at-home mission to the community. Though the location was different, families were still able to engage in true Bible stories, fun crafts and games, and tasty snacks that all served to dive into the theme that “Jesus is the Light of the World”. Each outpost daily worked to develop their own mission to let God’s light shine to those around them.

Families chose to engage their neighbors by praying for them; making soap and talking about how God washes sins away; and collecting school supplies, socks and underwear for Harry-Abate elementary kids. Families found themselves engaging in Godly activity with their communities. Although strangely different, this year’s VBS was a wonderful blessing to our church, to the families that participated, and to the neighborhoods in which our families live! Our regular volunteers and coordinators are praying for a chance to see families face to face for next year’s Vacation Bible School.



Grace



CONGRATULATIONS to the following 3 students who graduated from High School this past June!

Joseph (Joey) Fournier – graduated from Niagara Falls High School. He was a faithful member of our Sunday School for many years. He will be attending SUNY Fredonia, majoring in music.

Mckenzie (Kenzie) Gilmore – graduated from Niagara Falls High School. She was a faithful member of Sunday School and Youth Group for many years. She also was a VBS youth leader, sang many solos in church, and took a lead role in several Sunday School Christmas programs. She will be attending SUNY Fredonia's College of Visual and Performing Arts, majoring in acting.

Abigail (Abi) Krull – graduated from Grand Island High School. She was an active member of Sunday School, Youth Group, and a VBS helper, as well as being active in Young Life. She will be attending Medaille College with a major in Secondary Education.

God continue to bless you as you work toward your future endeavors.



NEWS FLASH!!! News Flash!! We will not be starting Sunday School right after Labor Day as in the past. We decided to let schools get started in September with their new plans, and then start Sunday School on the first Sunday of October. We will be sending a letter to all Sunday School families the first part of September, to let you know all the details for getting started once they are finalized at our staff meeting. However, we still hope to celebrate Easter at our first class, including the Easter story, Easter craft, and Easter egg hunt. More details to follow.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS cont.

SUNDAY SCHOOL STAFF MEETING – We have scheduled a Sunday School staff meeting for Sunday, August 30, following worship. We hope to meet outdoors, just off the parking lot, near the side entrance way. Either bring a camp chair, or we will bring chairs from indoors. If bad weather, we will spread out and meet in the chapel. We need to discuss curriculum, we still have seven Bible stories/lessons left from last year to get us started, and then a couple of new options to consider. We also, just like schools, need to figure out what we can do within the church class, whether it be hybrid or distance. We certainly have room in our basement to social distance with our 15 to 25 in usual attendance; however, we need to consider all options.

AND LASTLY BUT DEFINITELY NOT LEAST - -

JUST ANOTHER THANK YOU – Again, a BIG thank you to all staff, students, and families who participated in our drive-thru Sunday School event this past June 14th, to finish the 2019-2020 school year. Our last mailing shared all the details with the cars/themes, and names of participants. We felt it was such a success that we hope to do something similar again during this coming school year. Way to Go, Grace Sunday School!!





SUMMER MISSION PROJECT

For the past several years, our summer mission project has involved both the congregation and our VBS kids in the donation of school supplies, socks, and underwear. This year our VBS was held online because of COVID restrictions. But it is with chuckles that we remember the reaction of our students in previous years as we talked about the purpose a mission project. Each evening when we asked them what we were collecting, they would answer in unison **“School supplies....socks....and UNDERWEAR”**, using their best outdoor voices to scream out the word “underwear”. And then they’d laugh and giggle. There is just something so very funny about underwear when you’re in grade school (and actually it’s kind of funny for some of us adults, too).

But on a serious note, **DID YOU KNOW** that nationally, socks and underwear are the items most often requested by individuals and families living in poverty? And, unfortunately, they are also the items least often gifted to donation centers. They are pieces of clothing most of us take for granted. But to families that are struggling to pay their rent and put food on the table, they are considered luxuries that can be moved from their “need” column to their “want” column. Their reality is that shirts, pants, and shoes are required to send their children to school--underwear and socks are not.

Each year we partner with the administrators, teachers, and nurses at one of our inner city schools (Harry Abate Elementary) to help meet the needs of their children. **OVER 75% OF THE FAMILIES** at this school are living at or below the poverty level. Partnering with the school allows us to ensure that your gifts are placed directly into the hands of the children that are most in need. Your donations of socks and underwear are one of our most appreciated mission projects, and will help provide both dignity and warmth during the upcoming school year.

AND DID YOU KNOW that the average public school elementary teacher spends over \$500 annually purchasing supplies for his/her students? Gone are the days when schools were able to provide basic supplies such as paper, pencils, folders, and crayons. Many families struggle to afford the page-long lists of items they are requested to purchase for their children’s education.

Harry Abate's staff anticipates that there will be an even greater than usual need for help with providing **BASIC SCHOOL SUPPLIES** this year because of the effects of the pandemic. No matter what the school year ends up looking like, one thing is certain...our inner city children continue to need our caring and assistance.

We will continue to accept your donations throughout August. When you are out shopping, please remember our project. If you would like to help but can't get to the store, monetary donations clearly marked "School Supply Mission Project" can be sent to the church office before the end of August and we will do the shopping for you! Online monetary donations can also be designated for this mission.

THANK YOU to Social Ministries committee member Marla Crawford, who is a teacher herself at Holy Ghost Lutheran School, for applying for a grant from Thrivent that will be used to supplement our donations. **THANK YOU** also to Jane Brese for faithfully delivering our gifts to Harry Abate School each year, and for developing an ongoing relationship with the staff that keeps us informed of their needs.



EMBRACING WOMEN IN CRISIS

Teenagers faced with an unplanned pregnancy. Pregnant women living on the street, or in unstable housing situations. Women expecting a baby, but living with physical abusers, substance abusers, or alcoholics. New moms-to-be who are living below the poverty level and can't imagine having one more mouth to feed.

SUMMIT LIFE OUTREACH CENTER is a Christian organization located on Pine Avenue in Niagara Falls near the City Market that is committed to helping women in these types of crisis pregnancy situations. Most of their clients have limited or no support systems available to them.

Summit embraces these women as they work through their fears and consider their options. Their staff provides free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, counseling, and emotional support as well as childbirth, parenting, and child care education. Clients are assisted in connecting to agencies that can offer long term support for their individual situations. Summit's "Earn While You Learn" program earns them "credits" for attendance at educational parenting sessions. Their credits can then be used to "purchase" baby items from the Parenting Shoppe.

For the month of September, we will accept donations of baby items needed to **HELP STOCK THEIR PARENTING SHOPPE**. Especially needed are baby clothes, blankets, diapers, diaper creams, infant toiletries, and baby wipes. Donation tables will be available in the chapel and narthex. If you would like to help but can't get to the store, monetary donations clearly marked "Summit Life Mission Project" can be sent to the church office, and we will do the shopping for you!

THANK YOU to Social Ministries committee members Wendy Coleman for setting up our donation tables and applying for a Thrivent grant that will supplement this project, and to Alice Moll (who has volunteered at Summit) for delivering our donations each year and keeping us informed of their needs.

GREETING CARD MINISTRY

Do you know someone who could benefit from receiving a greeting card from Grace? Social Ministries sends cards to members and friends of Grace whenever we become aware of a need, such as a hospital stay, illness or accident, loss of a family member, or those struggling with other challenges in their lives. We want them to know that they are not forgotten by the members of our church. **OVER 25 CARDS** have been sent since the beginning of May. If you know of someone who could benefit from receiving a card, please let Trish Andrews or Amy Folmsbee know of the need. And **THANK YOU** to Trish for her faithful service in sending out cards in a timely manner.

CAMP PIONEER UPDATE

THANK YOU for your generous donations to our Special Mission for May & June. With matching budget funds, we were able to send a check in the amount of \$1000 to help our camp weather the effects of the COVID pandemic.

Currently the "Friends of Pioneer" are attempting to purchase the camp and continue a Lutheran camp and retreat center on the site. Michael Bridges (a former member of Grace) is playing a key role in this endeavor. If you are a Facebook user, you can read a weekly update on their Friends of Pioneer page. If you are interested in joining this effort, please message Rachel Petrick on the Friends of Pioneer Facebook page with your email address, or you may email them directly at friendsofpioneer@gmail.com



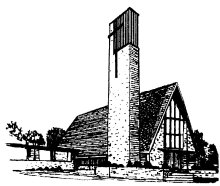
SPECIAL MISSION ENVELOPES

JULY & AUGUST special mission envelopes have been designated to support our **LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES**, which have seen tremendous increases in requests for help since the onset of the pandemic. Your donations through the end of August will be split evenly between Community Mission, Salvation Army, Niagara Gospel Rescue Mission, and Heart, Love, & Soul. Donations can also be made online, or sent to the office in a clearly marked envelope. It's not too late to donate.

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER special mission envelopes will benefit **HOLY GHOST AND ST. JOHN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS**. These schools are consistently ranked among the top schools in WNY, both public and private. Your support is needed to help maintain their current high standards. Lutheran schools make a difference in the life of a child, especially in today's world where Christian values are rapidly losing acceptance, and life choices that are clearly contrary to God's Word are now celebrated and encouraged. Marla Crawford, Jane Schulz, and Katelyn Pantano are teachers at these schools and would be happy to answer your questions or discuss the benefits of education in a Christian setting. Please keep our families and schools in your prayers, especially as we approach the turmoil of this upcoming school year, 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 or donating online.

NEXT SOCIAL MINISTRIES MEETING: We are scheduled to have our next meeting on September 20. It is unclear at this time if we will meet in person (at a distance) or by email & mail as we did in May. Please watch for further information. New members to the committee are always welcome. If you wish to join, please let the office know and we will put you on the Social Ministries mailing list.

GRACE will continue to offer Sundays weekly service online through our YouTube channel. You may view the service live on Sundays starting at 10:20 AM or you may watch and participate in the service anytime after following the same below link. All previous services are also available at the same link.
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCG2QrtXHQGArfdr6KTOOrQvg>



Grace Lutheran Church

September 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Head Ushers: Gary Krull Brian Miller	Altar Care: Erika Tuscher Linda Matiasz	1	2	3	4	5
6 10:30A Worship (HC)	7 Labor Day 6:30P Survivors' Group	8	9 10:00A Zoom ABS	10	11	12
13 10:30A Worship	14 6:30P Survivors' Group	15	16 10:00A Zoom ABS	17	18	19
20 10:30A Worship (HC) Social Ministries Meeting	21 6:30P Survivors' Group	22	23 10:00A Zoom ABS	24	25	26
27 10:30A Worship 11:30A Flu Shot Clinic (After Service)	28 6:30P Survivors' Group	29	30 10:00A Zoom ABS			



Grace Lutheran Church

October 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Head Ushers: Mark Andrews Neil Stenzel	Altar Care: **Open**			1	2	3
4 9:00A YSS 10:30A Worship 11:30 Social Ministries Mtg	5 6:30P Survivors' Group	6	7 10:00A Zoom ABS	8	9	10
11 9:00A YSS 10:30A Worship (HC)	12 6:30P Survivors' Group	13	14 10:00A Zoom ABS	15	16	17
18 9:00A YSS 10:30A Worship	19 6:30P Survivors' Group	20	21 10:00A Zoom ABS	22	23	24 9:00A Red Cross Blood Drive (until 1pm)
25 9:00A YSS 10:30A Worship (HC)	26 6:30P Survivors' Group	27	28 10:00A Zoom ABS	29	30	31

YSS: *Sunday School*
ABS: *Adult Bible Study*
HC: *Holy Communion*

Office Phone: 716-283-1843
Office Administrator: Erin Anthony – office@gracenf.org
Church Office Hours: Sunday 9:30 AM-12:30 PM; T/TH 10 AM-2 PM

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

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WORSHIP SERVICES

Divine Service:
Sundays @ 10:30A

*Holy Communion on the
first and third Sundays

EDUCATION

Sunday School:
Sundays @ 9:00A

Adult Bible Study:
Wednesdays @ 10:00A

GRACE LADIES

Next Meeting:
TBD

SOCIAL MINISTRIES

Next Meeting:
September 20

*New members are always
welcome. We meet five
times each year for about
an hour.

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Fall 2020