

GraceFull Visions

APRIL 2020

Staying Connected

Grace and peace to you!

I'd like to share with you a number of ways we can stay connected through our website:

GraceCLW.com

I've added a lot to the website these last few weeks. First of all, you can find a link to our YouTube Channel "Grace Lutheran Church - ClearwaterFL". (You can also search for it on YouTube.com using those exact words.)

Our channel includes our live-streaming and pre-recorded worship services, as well as other videos that I've created for you. Thanks to Wayne Hauschild's encouragement that I look into using YouTube for our church, I had already done some of the preparations for being able to do this.

The bulletins can either be used alongside the videos of the ser-

vices, or can be used at home by themselves. On March 22nd Duke Tieman used our bulletins to lead worship for about 25 people from his retirement community, since the people that usually lead it aren't allowed in at this time.

You'll also find a link to our Vanco online giving page, which allows you to use a credit card or your bank account to make your offerings. These payments go directly into our congregation's checking account. For now, you can still mail in your checks as well.

There's a page on our website that's a online version of our Attendance/Communion record sheet. Just fill out the form online, hit send, and the info is emailed to the church office. For anyone who participated in worship on the 15th

and 22nd and took Communion, please fill out a separate form for each Sunday. If you can't access the website, please call the Church Office and Cindy will take your information for you.

Our website will also have links to our Zoom video conferencing meetings. Right now we're only using the free version so meetings involving 3 or more people can only last 40 minutes. Zoom could also be used for meetings and gatherings like Prayer Chapel and Council Meetings. For instance, we will begin offering a Zoom meeting that will serve as a virtual gathering 15 minutes before each service for people to check in with each other. We can also use Zoom to talk individually for an unlimited amount of time.

From the Deacons' Desk

Quiet our anxious spirits, Lord, and help us enjoy the peace you give which this crazy

world cannot take away. Amen.

Yep, we have certainly been anxious these

last few weeks. Who knows, as this Deacons' Desk is being written what tomorrow will bring. Sick-

ness, stress, anxiety, media frenzy, warnings, danger. Do you
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The Church Calendar can also be found on the website. We are trying to keep it up to date as much as possible.

Let me know if there's anything else you'd like to see on our website.

Property-wise, our cleaning crew continues to clean inside. The Gophers may continue to work outside since it fits in the definition of "outdoor recreation."

Peace,
Pastor Jeff

remember the TV show, *Lost in Space*? “Danger, Will Robinson!”, shouted the robot, especially when Dr. Smith, the accidental stowaway spy, and because his extra weight threw the whole ship off course, got himself into trouble which affected the rest of the Robinson clan.

But, really, isn't there always something that throws us off course? Something that worries us and messes up the plan, our life, our faith our hope?

We should be on the lookout for danger, because we are all facing challenging times, for sure.

Doesn't it seem like our world is coming to a place like the world into which Our Lord, Jesus, was born? Strange killer viruses, corrupt politicians, economic downturn,

religious persecution, job security, personal security, sexual abuse, racism, misogyny, poverty, hunger, no control, sickness, frenzy, losses of many kinds, killing of the innocent, mob mentality, hoarding, and perhaps the greatest crime; indifference towards others.

Sounds like Jesus's world, doesn't it? It was a world like ours that Jesus was born. A world with all its sin, fears, and awful horrors, that Jesus took on himself, on his shoulders so it could be nailed to the cross.

To say that Jesus taught us a lot is an understatement. What comes to mind now are two of His sayings, “Do not be afraid, believe,” and “Do not doubt but believe.” We all have our doubts at times. We all experience

fear. Some people let that fear turn their doubts into unbelief. Remember these two sayings when fear enters into you. Believe in Jesus. He believes in us.

Soon, in this world of ours, we will wake up Easter morning, and listen to scripture. We hear the angel speak to the women who come to the tomb to put spices on Jesus' dead body, say, “He's not here, he has been raised, as He said, ... Go and tell his disciples.” (Matthew 27:66). Finding Jesus gone and resurrected gives us HOPE and says all of this horror in our world has no permanent power at all.

Hope allows us to connect to God and our life now and after.

Teresa of Avila, a sixteenth-century Span-

ish mystic, said, “Let nothing disturb you, nothing dismay you. All things are passing, God never changes. Patient endurance attains all things. God alone suffers.”

When our course in life changes, try hard to hear these words. “Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:4-7)

Alleluia, He is risen!
Happy Easter!

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Stewardship

As God's children we know what is expected of us as His stewards. We know it is our duty (and our joy) to care for what God has entrusted to us; to tend to the well-being of our planet and local environment. We are to support and appreciate our families, our church and our community.

These are all positive responses to the typical and normal activities of life.

But something has happened. A dreadful circumstance has been thrust upon us: not from God, not from our fellow humans, but from the natural occurring of disease in our world, and in this instance, a catastrophic interruption. This is the COVID 19 or corona

virus. As stewards of all that crosses our paths, how are we to respond to this enormous negative. It would be peculiar stewardship language to say that we are "to care" for this virus.

Instead, we can apply all we know of stewardship principles to those we love, those who are vulnerable and those who are fearful about what is to come. Our own calmness and stability can be a comfort to anxious people, as they see us following those simple (though tedious) rules to be safe and healthy.

Even as we are directed to social distancing, we have not forgotten our provision to those who rely on us each

month for breakfast, and even as the virus progresses, we pray we might be able to continue our second Saturday ministry in some fashion. Also, our financial care for Grace Lutheran Church has not been postponed or cancelled, so that door to good stewardship remains open. Pastor Jeff's letter and our web site showed several ways to continue this support.

With prayer and humility, the Holy Spirit within us gives us the hope and strength to stand up to this present crisis, and the unforeseen challenges it brings. And know that social distancing does not mean spiritual distancing.

Your Stewardship Team

Faith Community Nursing

What do you need to Know? Most common questions about Coronavirus

* What is coronavirus? It is a class of viruses named for the crownlike spikes that protrude from its surface. They are found in people and animals, and some of them are responsible for the Common Cold. But the virus that causes COVID-19 is new to humans and so we don't have defenses for it once it infects us for the first time.

*How do I keep myself and others safe? WASHING YOUR HANDS frequently is the most important thing you can do, along with practicing social distancing, especially by staying at home when you're sick.

*What are some of the symptoms? **Fever, Cough, Shortness of Breath, and a Loss of Taste and/or Smell.**

*What can I do to manage being isolated from others?

Keep a 30-day supply of essential medicines. **GET a FLU SHOT.** Have essential household items on hand but limit visits to stores. Stay connected with family and friends through phone calls, video calls (Skype, Facetime, Duo, Facebook, etc.), and stay connected with Grace through Zoom meetings and our YouTube Channel: (Grace Lutheran Church - ClearwaterFL)

Regular Event Updates

Groups on Hiatus Until Further Notice Include:

Young @ Heart
Elizabeth Circle
Book Club
Grace Choir
Handbell Choir
Men of Grace
12 Steps Tranquil Mind
Movie Time
Confirmation
Adult Sunday School
Sones de Mexico
Ballet Folklorico
Suncoast Symphony Orchestra
Confirmation
Prayer Chapel
Piano Lab
AA

HOWEVER: Any group that would like to explore using Zoom video conferencing to continue, please contact Pastor Jeff.

Groups Still Meeting:

The next **Congregation Council** meeting will be held on **Tuesday, April 14th** at 6:30 pm. It may be a video conference call, or a standard conference call.

Gophers can still meet as they can qualify as “outdoor recreation” as long as participants practice physical distancing of at least 6’ from each other at all time and stay outside.

Community Breakfast & Lydia’s Closet

... sends out a big “Thank You” to the Retired Ministers, who meet here 3 times a year for lunch. As a thank you for having their luncheon here, they donated \$100 to the Closet. That money went far as we bought 2 pairs of men’s sandals, 4 pairs of men’s sneakers and one lady’s pair of sandals. We also bought 4 gently-used backpacks (from the Salvation Army). These items will go quickly.

We thank all who have been donating new underwear for men and women. We are always in need of those items.

We will explore the possibility of still holding the Community Breakfast in the same way we did in March. But access to food and maintaining social distancing will be the biggest challenges and may create the need to cancel for this month.

Please check Grace’s website for further updates.

April Birthdays

4/03 Betty Daege
John Hallgren
4/05 Henry Adams
4/09 Phyllis Clark
4/14 Julie McCutcheon
4/16 Barbara Wong
4/17 Sandy Hunter

4/21 Israel Granados
Eric Falco
4/25 Ute Robins
In memoriam..
4/01 Kathleen Wacker
4/07 Tollie Holtzclaw
4/26 Lou Haseley

April Anniversaries

4/10 Cliff & Anne Bittner
4/15 Tom & Suzanne Norman
4/26 Richard & Ellen Duncan
Eric & Sunday Falco

Prayer Corner

Tuesday Prayer Chapel

The Prayer Group usually meets at 11am on Tuesdays in the Prayer Chapel. Submit prayer requests through the Communion Record Sheets.

Prayer List

Prayers are requested for: Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Kathleen Wacker, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George & Phyllis Clark, Jill Grote, Pastor Bruce Edwards, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia and family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Eliezar Granados, Deacon Connie Puls, , Joan Keeton, Alex Stevenson, Steve Davis, the Bell-Brown family and the family and friends of Kathleen Wacker, and those suffering from natural disasters, violence, and terror (especially the victims of the Nashville tornadoes including St. John Lutheran Church, those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, those in harm's way while serving in the military, and those unjustly or unnecessarily separated from their parents or children).

Please Pray for Military Personnel w/Grace connections...

-Marine Lance Corporal Heather Burson, granddaughter of Anne and Ralph Burson, is stationed in San Diego. She is a mechanic in charge of maintaining aircraft.

-Marc Calhoun, nephew of Wayne and Yvonne Hauschild is in the Air Force. And has been deployed to one of the difficult locations. He is married with four children, and would appreciate your prayer.

-Aldo Granados, son of Pastor Lydia and member of Grace, is in the US Army Reserves locally. He works at Bayfront Health Hospital and attending college. No longer living at home.

-Maj. Christopher Conklin, a chaplain with the USAF, is Lorraine Rheinhart's grandson. He is back in the States.

-Gabrielle Falco, Pat and Tony's granddaughter, was com-

missioned as a lieutenant. in the U.S. Army and accepted at the exceptional Walter Reed Hospital as a medical student.

-USCG Seaman Brennan Wells, Houston TX, nephew of Sunday Falco.

-USCG Seaman Samuel Steward, Grand Isle, LA, nephew of Sunday Falco

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Rev. Jefferson Cox, Pastor

Holy Week and Easter Sunday

The Pinellas County “Safer At Home” directive will be in effect throughout Holy Week and Easter. That means that we will not be able to gather together for worship during those times.

We will live-stream the 9:45 am Palm Sunday service from the Sanctuary, as well as modified Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services (both at 7pm). The 11:15 Palm Sunday service will be live-streamed from the Fellowship Hall.

As for Easter, the current plan is to offer a brief “drive-in” worship experience on Grace’s property at both 9:45 am and 11:15 am, in which the service would be both live-streamed, and broadcast on FM radio for those listening in their cars. If everyone remains in their vehicles, this appears to comply with the Safer At Home directive.