

The King's

Business



Grace Lutheran

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We at Grace Lutheran Church are called to reach, teach and be the people of God, as stewards of the Word and gifts of God.

A Sign from God?

I was just about to stop writing more concerning COVID-19, but then I came across an interesting poll. A poll has found that nearly two-thirds of religious Americans (not Americans in general, but those who are religious) believe the pandemic is a sign from God.

The study, by the Associated Press/National Opinion Research Center, reported that 63% of Americans “who say they believe in God” agree either “strongly” (31+%) or “somewhat strongly” (33+%) that the COVID-19 pandemic is a sign from God.

What do you say? Is our current situation a sign from God? I say, of course the epidemic is a sign from

God! To a religious person, everything is a sign from God. That is, it has “*significance*.” The question is, what does it signify?

Most of us have seen that people used to blame God for natural catastrophes or at least question why He would have allowed this. But do you notice people don’t seem to be doing that so much for this pandemic. This is because we have come so far in our secularism that the religious issues don’t even come up. But instead, we blame *people*: the Chinese, the government, travelers, partygoers, Donald Trump.

And I have also read Christian writers who say that God did not cause the coronavirus epidemic or other bad things that happen to us. He is good and kind. He wants to

help us through these hard times, but we shouldn’t think of Him as in any way causing or being responsible for them.

Wanting to think so well of God is a pious statement, but such a deity is hard to believe in. Nowhere in the Bible does it suggest that God only wants us to be happy, that His will for us is that we should always have a good time, with no trials or tribulations or difficulties or suffering or death. On the contrary, the picture of God we get from His self-revelation is that life and death are in His hands, that He hates sin, that He sends hard times—not just against His chosen people but against Gentile kingdoms as well—and times of testing.

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So if God is not above inflicting hardships on His creation as *signs*, what do they mean? A sign is an object that has a meaning. So if COVID-19 is a sign, what does it communicate?

To say an affliction like COVID-19 is a sign, does not mean that it's necessarily a punishment. God is not punishing a person who get the disease or dies from it for some transgression he or she has done.

What does the Bible say? **“There were some present at that very time who told [Jesus] about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, ‘Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all**

likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” (Luke 13:1-5)

Here is a moral evil (Pilate's cruelty) and a natural evil (a tower collapsing). Those who died were not greater sinners than anyone else. But the meaning of both signs, what we need to take away from them, is that **“unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”**

And that is the meaning of the coronavirus sign.

Those of us who had become so complacent are so no longer. We might catch the disease from an

asymptomatic carrier and in two weeks be dead. And even if we don't, our prosperity, our recreation, our social ties, our sense of well-being, are all threatened. We have taken so much for granted, but the epidemic shows just how contingent it all is, how fragile and transient these things are, and how we need to build our lives on something—and Someone—eternal. Becoming less secure in ourselves can drive us to Christ, who bore the evils and the suffering of the world, to bring us to an eternal happiness that is not of this world.

All of this is horrible for us to go through. But I suspect God believes that we need to go through it.

Pastor Herring

Discover the Joy in Sharing the Gospel

Joy is both a gift of God as well as a response to the gifts of God. Joy is a deep-seated sense of happiness in what God has done and what He is doing in our lives. Filled with God's love, grace, and mercy, we eagerly want to share those blessings with others. We want others to experience our joy in the Lord. Through our sharing with others, we receive even more joy knowing that we are being faithful in telling others about Jesus' amazing love.

God's plan for His people has always been that we take responsibility for sharing the Good News of the Gospel. Peter wrote, **“Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for that the hope that is in you”** (1 Peter 3:15).

God blesses us with minds to learn and mouths to speak. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God will give us the words and the courage to use them. Along with most people, we are eager to talk about the weather, sports, economy, or politics, but, as Christians, we have been given the treasure of the Gospel message—something vastly more important to talk about. Our attitude should be like that of Peter and John, who, when commanded to stop speaking of Christ, said, **“We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard”** (Acts 4:20).

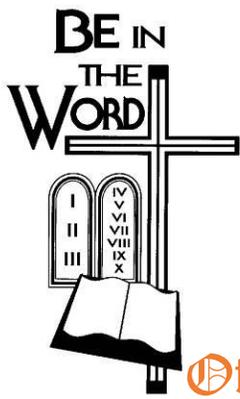
In sharing the Gospel, we want people to know there is a God Who cares for us and is almighty and powerful, yet loving and compassionate. Like kids bragging about their dads, we can talk about our wonderful, almighty loving Father, Who, while we were still sinners,

sent us a Savior to redeem us from our slavery to sin (Romans 5:8). This is the God, Who, at just the right time, **“sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those who were under law, so that we might receive adoption as sons”** (Galatians 4:4-5).

Through Christ, we know the Father, and, through Christ, the Father has come to us. Through Christ, we have life everlasting in Heaven. This is the Good News that we as joy-filled Christians want to share. May God give us courage to use the opportunities He gives us, and may we experience true joy knowing that our hearts are right with God and that He is working through us as we tell others about Jesus.

Pastor Herring

Thoughts



From The Board Of Elders

The Book of Concord Luther's Small Catechism Section 2

Luther wanted to publish a book to serve laypeople, which was a clear departure from the tradition of medieval catechisms. From 1517

to 1529 Luther preached a series of thirty sermons beginning with the Lord's Prayer and continuing to the Lord's Supper. He then condensed these sermons into a book to serve us laity. He gathered the sermons, had them published under the title "A Short Form of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer". This "Small Catechism" was designed for instruction for the everyday person, every household. He wanted all to know the "4" parts – Section 1- The Ten Commandments, The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Confession, and the Sacrament of the Altar; Section 2 - Daily Prayers; and Section 3 - Table of Duties, and Section 4 - Christian Questions with their Answers.

To date, we have reviewed Section

1 of the "Small Catechism". We will now address the subject of Daily Prayers.

1. How does Luther recommend the head of the family should teach the household to pray morning and evening? What prayer does Luther suggest.
2. What is the next step after Morning Prayer?
3. Is there an Evening Prayer?
4. How are we to ask a Blessings for the food the Lord has provided? What are "Returning Thanks".
5. What is Luther's suggestion for how to end the day?

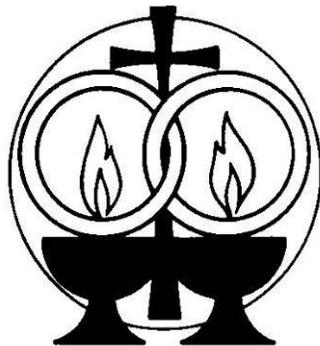
Blessings,

Tom Mancuso, Elder



August Birthdays

Earl Weiss	2
Glenna Cates	9
Charlotte Bonner	18
Ruth Wegener	19
Ken Wegener	22
Preston Achord	26



August Anniversaries

Steve & Paula Sell	10
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Sunday Bible Study

As of August 2nd we will resume an after Service Bible Study. We will not have a social hour before the study but we will dig into God's Word.

We welcome all who wish to come, but we will maintain virus cautions.

We will be studying The Sermon on the Mount which begins with Matthew chapter 4. Many parts of this sermon are well known to many, but equally as misunderstood by many. We will look into our Lord's words and how they apply to us today. We will continue our custom of discussion and seeking to answer any and all questions.

Thoughts from C. S. Lewis

The more we get what we now call 'ourselves' out of the way and let Him take us over, the more truly ourselves we become. There is so much of Him that millions and millions of 'little Christs', all different, will still be too few to express Him fully. He made them all. He invented—as an author invents characters in a novel—all the different men that you and I were intended to be. In that sense our real selves are all waiting for us in Him. It is no good trying to 'be

myself' without Him. The more I resist Him and try to live on my own, the more I become dominated by my own heredity and upbringing and surroundings and natural desires. In fact what I so proudly call 'Myself' becomes merely the meeting place for trains of events which I never started and which I cannot stop. What I call 'My wishes' become merely the desires thrown up by my physical organism or pumped into me by other men's thoughts or even suggested to me by devils. Eggs and alcohol and a good night's sleep will be the real origins of what I flatter myself

by regarding as my own highly personal and discriminating decision to make love to the girl opposite to me in the railway carriage. Propaganda will be the real origin of what I regard as my own personal political ideas. I am not, in my natural state, nearly so much of a person as I like to believe: most of what I call 'me' can be very easily explained. It is when I turn to Christ, when I give myself up to His Personality, that I first begin to have a real personality of my own.

From: Mere Christianity
[you may need to read this several times – I did! Editor]



Worship Covid-19 Style

