



The King's

Business

Grace Lutheran

179 Holiday Island Drive
Holiday Island, AR 72631

479-253-9040

www.gracelutheranhi.org



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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.

Find the Treasure:

SDG!

In 1934 a pastor went to visit his cousin, a farmer in Frankenmuth, Michigan. Shown a German Bible that looked centuries old, the pastor opened the book and saw, in the lower right-hand corner, the date 1733 and the signature of its owner, J.S. Bach—the great composer Johann Sebastian Bach! Searching the attic, the cousins discovered two companion volumes, with Bach's notations written throughout.

Bach was a great student of the Bible. When he was 48, he acquired a copy of Luther's three-volume translation of the Bible and pored over this treasure, underlining passages, correcting errors in the text and commentary, inserting missing words, and making marginal notes about the Scripture.

For instance, Bach read about the musicians in 1 Chronicles 25 and wrote, "This chapter is the true foundation of all God-pleasing music." When he read of temple musicians praising God (2 Chronicles 5:13) he noted, "At a reverent performance of music, God is al-

ways at hand with his gracious presence."

The Bible tailored Bach's life and his music. As a church musician, he was often criticized but did agree that his great talent should not be self-serving but serve the worship of God. At the start of his work, Bach would scrawl the initials JJ, which meant either "Jesu Juva" (Jesus, help!) or "Jehovah-jireh" (God provides). Often Bach ended many of his compositions with the initials **SDG**. These initials, **SDG**, stands for "**solī deo gloria**," meaning "**Glory to God alone**."

[continued next page]

Ah, Bach! We can also discover again the glory of God that is found in His holy Word and apply it to our daily lives. It is the gift of God's Holy Spirit; it is there to instruct and correct and rebuke and train us in the ways of God, that we may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16). It truly does set us apart from others, as Bach discovered. Bach the musician was indeed "a Christian

who lived with the Bible." Even the radical skeptic Friedrich Nietzsche found Bach's music an inspiration of faith: "One who has completely forgotten Christianity truly hears it here as gospel!"

Not surprisingly, upon his death much of Bach's work almost ended up in the dumpster (some of it was used to wrap garbage!) and would

have been forgotten, except that others revived his works.

The Word is a treasure that is often buried in plain sight. Still, it is a treasure! Look to God for help. Let your work be for God's glory, as it is destined to do, flowing from your faith and life.

Pastor Herring

Stewardship Moment Giving Is an Obligation

Does the title of this article cause you to pause? Isn't giving supposed to be the free and joyous response of God's people who express their gratitude and praise of God through their giving? Certainly, our primary reason for giving is a response to the Good News of the Gospel. Knowing what God has done for us in Jesus prompts us to give and keep on giving. God never stops giving to us, and we imitate His nature through our giving.

God's people in the Old Testament were under an obligation to give. God commanded them to give a tenth (tithe) of their incomes for the support of God's work. In fact, there was a second and third tithe so the people were commanded to give much more than one-tenth of their incomes. However, as New Testament Christians who live under God's grace in Jesus, we are no longer obligated to tithe. As new covenant Christians, the motive for giving has changed from a command to give to giving cheerfully.

Are the Old Testament laws no longer relevant? Jesus said, "**Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them**" (Matthew 5:17). Jesus came to keep all of God's commandments perfectly. He paid the price for our forgiveness by taking the curse of the Law upon Himself, freeing us from the demands of the Law. In Jesus, we are free to serve God with pure hearts. Although we are free from the Law, we know that God wants the best for us and His laws give us order and purpose.

As New Testament Christians, we live in God's grace. Secure in Christ's presence and love, we express our thanksgiving for Who God is and what He has done for us through our giving. We also know that giving is God's will. Therefore, we have an obligation to give. The Apostle Paul wrote, "**So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith**" (Galatians 6:10). We willingly and freely embrace the Law to give knowing it is God's will for us that we serve Him by serving others and extend His kingdom through our generosity. We can conclude by saying that giving is a wonderful opportunity and also an obligation.

Pastor Herring

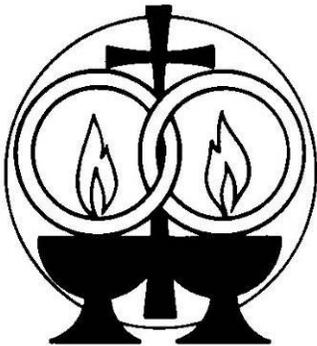
CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes.

St. Francis of Assisi said:
"Preach the Gospel [witness] at all times and when necessary use words."



*February
Birthdays*

LaVerne Herman	16
William Achord	20



*February
Anniversaries*

None Listed



Valentine Dinner

Our Valentine dinner will be Thursday, February 13, at 5:00 p.m. at the Holiday Island Club House. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex and we need all who are coming to indicate not only attendance but their menu choice. This is needed for planning both by our people and the Club House. Thank you!

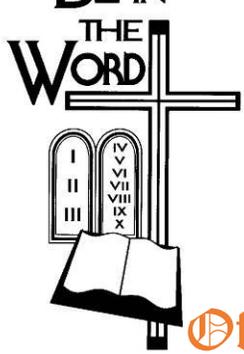


BANK PARKING LOT

It seems too early, but Grace will have use of the Cornerstone Bank Parking Lot on Saturday, March 7. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for volunteers. Please consider helping that day. Although it won't be Spring yet and the weather may be iffy, there should be some folks in town, so we should have a good fundraiser. If you have questions, contact Dianna Mancuso.

Thoughts

BE IN
THE
WORD



From
The
Board
Of Elders

This month's Sola is Solus Christus or "**Christ alone**" - by Rev. Dr. Mark Birkholz of Faith Lutheran Church, Oak Lawn, IL.

The Reformation was all about Jesus. Specifically, it was about Jesus Christ's death on the cross as our only source of forgiveness, life and salvation. Luther said, "The cross alone is our theology". Another way to say this is "Christ

alone" saves us. In many cases, people were told that they have to do something in addition to what Jesus has done for them. Whether it is an outward action (indulgences, fasting, pilgrimages), or an inward disposition (repentance, love, devotion), they are told that the works of Jesus are not enough, that they have to cooperate with Jesus and do their part in order to be saved. Sometimes these actions and dispositions were good in themselves, but the problem was requiring them as something needed to be added to what Jesus had already done.

In other cases, the Lutheran Reformers fought to keep others from taking away from what Jesus does through His Word and Sacraments. Some radical reformers taught that Jesus' body and blood weren't given or received in the Lord's Supper. They taught that the Sacraments were about obeying Jesus' commands rather than receiving

Jesus' gifts. Luther insisted that these Sacraments were also Christ's work alone in giving forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Understanding our salvation as the work of Christ alone helps us to get the other "solas" right. We are saved by Grace alone, but this grace that we receive from the Father comes to us through Jesus Christ. We are saved by Faith alone, but our faith is merely receiving the saving works of Jesus as a gift. We are saved by Christ alone, for there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Our theology flows from Scripture alone, but Scripture is trustworthy because it is about Jesus from beginning to end. And it's God's Glory in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Thomas Mancuso, Elder

C. S. Lewis

I remember once when I had been giving a talk to the R.A.F., an old, hard-bitten officer got up and said, 'I've no use for all that stuff. But, mind you, I'm a religious man too. I know there's a God. I've felt Him: out alone in the desert at night: the tremendous mystery. And that's just why I don't believe all your neat little dogmas and formulas about Him. To anyone who's met the real thing they all seem so petty and pedantic and unreal!'

Now in a sense I quite agreed with that man. I think he had probably

had a real experience of God in the desert. And when he turned from that experience to the Christian creeds, I think he really was turning from something real to something less real. In the same way, if a man has once looked at the Atlantic from the beach, and then goes and looks at a map of the Atlantic, he also will be turning from something real to something less real: turning from real waves to a bit of coloured paper. But here comes the point. The map is admittedly only coloured paper, but there are two things you have to remember about it. In the first place, it is based on what hundreds and thousands of people have

found out by sailing the real Atlantic. In that way it has behind it masses of experience just as real as the one you could have from the beach; only, while yours would be a single glimpse, the map fits all those different experiences together. In the second place, if you want to go anywhere, the map is absolutely necessary. As long as you are content with walks on the beach, your own glimpses are far more fun than looking at a map. But the map is going to be more use than walks on the beach if you want to get to America.

From: Mere Christianity