

August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022

*“Grace to you and Peace from God our Father  
and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”*

I'm sure the above words, a statement really, are very familiar to you. I begin each sermon with these, or similar words. Have you ever wondered where it comes from? Well, the quick answer is Apostle Paul. All of Paul's letters contain two elements, which he avows to the benefit of the letter's recipients. One is “grace,” and the other “peace”. To the recipients of three of his letters, Paul adds “mercy”. But in all his letters, “grace” appears to be the foundational element.

**We hear this word “grace” often.  
How would you describe “grace”?**

For Martin Luther, to have a God of grace means to believe and trust that through Jesus Christ, God has already met all prerequisites and fulfilled all reciprocations.

In Christian theology, grace is described as: the spontaneous, unmerited gift of the divine favor in the salvation of sinners, and the divine influence operating in individuals for their regeneration and sanctification.

For me, Grace means forgiveness, and without this gift of grace we would be lost forever.

As it relates to Scripture, “grace” is defined in multiple ways:

2 Peter 1 ~ describes how grace is God's unmerited favor toward man

*“Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness”*

Ephesians 2: 8-9 ~ describes how God's grace saves us.

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

Romans 3:24 ~ describes how God's grace justifies us:

*“Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”*

2 Thessalonians 2:13 ~ describes how God's grace sanctifies us:

*“because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.”*

1 Corinthians 15:10 ~ God's grace also empowers us to service. God wants us to be so full of His grace in our lives that we can say with Paul:

*“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me”*

It is through grace that God works effective change in our hearts and lives. Through God's grace we are forgiven, and our thinking is transformed resulting in the renewal of our mind and heart. Through grace we live the kind of life that God would like every one of His children to experience. The grace of God is more than salvation but also everything we need for life and godliness. The good definition of grace could be “God's life, power and righteousness given to us by unmerited favor.”

Please join me in prayer ~

Lord, thank you for your abundant, abounding grace. Thank you that we don't have to earn a drop of the mighty river of grace that flows freely for us today. Thank you for the unexpected, unmerited favor you've showered on my life. Help me put myself in the path of your love and grace. Help me not neglect the disciplines I need to meet with you regularly and to drink from the water of life. Thank you for your rich love. Amen.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Debbie

## News from the Pews

### Confirmation ~ from Karen Gritmacker

Once again, it's time to begin confirmation class. Our first class will be on Rally Day, September 11. We will meet following the worship service until about noon, after that we will meet on the first Sunday of each month. I would like the parents to attend the first class for about a half an hour, so we can discuss a Luther dale retreat weekend.

Confirmation class is open to everyone 6th grade and older and is a two-year study. The confirmands are expected to attend class and church, take sermon notes twice a month, acolyte when scheduled, and participate in the life of our church and community.

If you know of anyone who would be interested in confirmation, please have them attend the first class or call me.

### Crafty People ~ from Sandy Drevalas

We're currently working on Trivets and planning our Fall Family Project, which is making a quilt-looking Christmas Tree Ornament. More information will be coming soon.

### Book Club ~ from Sandy Drevalas

Book Club is doing well. Our meetings at the library usually have an average of 6 to 8 people. We're trying new authors, exchanging books between ourselves or checking some books out at the library. We'd love to have more people attend because this group of gals have varied tastes in authors and just fun to be with.

### Bible Study ~ from Pastor Debbie

We meet on Wednesdays from 3:00 - 4:00 pm beginning on September 7<sup>th</sup> at church and on Zoom. We have a few new studies planned for this year. I found a book "Instant Bible Studies for Small Groups" where we will answer questions such as "Does God Exist?", "Responding to Jesus", and "Our Purpose". We are also planning to do a study on the Book of Romans, and "Walking the Labyrinth".

All are welcome and encouraged to attend. We have a lot of fun, and questions are welcomed. We love questions and we end up having some great conversations through our questions. As a group, if we find a particular study not what we hoped for, we move on to another. Please consider joining us this year as we explore God's Word and God's Love and apply it to our lives.

## Amen Adventures ~ Rally Day

Hello friends and family of St. John's. It is that time once more, summer fades and school begins. We are excited here for the start Amen Adventures on Rally Day, September 11<sup>th</sup>.

We will celebrate with a **FUN DAY ON A BUN DAY** this year with a meet and greet beginning at 9am downstairs. We will have teacher installation during service followed by games and a hotdog buffet and treats. We hope to see all of you there to play along!!

Amen Adventures classes begin the following week with class running from 9:00 until the children's sermon. Youth involved with worship will be released at the appropriate times. We love to share God and his stories with our youth, and all are welcome. Do you want to help or play along, give me a call at 815-575-3103. Thanks everyone. Yours in Christ, Toby.

## Blessing of Backpacks / Teachers Installation and more

Everyone is invited to participate in our backpack blessing.

Are you going to school? Starting a new job? Going to an old job? Working from home/office? Are you a teacher? (FYI ~we are all teachers). Bring your backpacks/briefcase, whatever you use daily, to church on Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup> for a blessing.

## Celebrating Seniors

This fun group continues to meet every Friday at 9am for gentle exercise followed by BINGO at 9:30am. Join them for lunch on the 1<sup>st</sup> (bring your own sack lunch) and 3<sup>rd</sup> (a wonderful, prepared lunch). If you have any questions, please talk to Joann or Gayle.

## Men's Club

These gents meet once a month on the LAST Thursday. They meet at 6:00pm at different local restaurants in the area. Please talk to Jim for more information.

## Looking "WAY" Ahead to December

Did you know Christmas, and New Year's Day fall on a Sunday? The worship team started discussing some options for worship, and after discussing this with council, we have come up with a solution.

We will **not** have worship on Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup> or Sunday, January 1<sup>st</sup>. However, we will offer our normal Christmas Eve worship at 5 pm, and this year we will add a special New Year's Eve service, also at 5 pm which I think you'll love. This special service has been created and will be a mixture of blessings for all God has given us, and prayers and praise for the new year. Join us as we welcome and celebrate this new year through prayer, praise, and song!

## St. John's Prayer List\*

Each week we begin Worship with the sharing of Joys & Concerns. Please lift the following names in your prayers.

**Darcy, Mark, Faith, Keith, Lorraine, Janet, Susan & Matt, Cashton, Mason, Felicia, Joy, Sandy, Lori, Terri, Robert, Steve, Mike & all those in our hearts.**

If there is any name that should be removed or added to this list, please let Pastor Debbie or Jess know.

*\*Unless requested otherwise, names will be removed after two weeks on the list.*

Sept	9/4	9/11: <u>RALLY</u>	9/18	9/25	
Greeter	Ken W	Ken W	Ken W	Ken W	
Lay Lit	Joann L	Karen G	Pat P	Deanna V	
Reader	Karen G	Joann L	Diane B	Pat P	
Comm.	Diane B	The Petersons	Gayle M	The Gardners	
A/V	John K	Caleb L	Will G	Lily L	
Usher	Ken W	Ken W	Ken W	Ken W	
Altar	Jan W	Jan W	Jan W	Jan W	

Oct	10/2	10/9	10/16 <u>Garden #1</u>	10/23 <u>Dan Holmes</u>	10/30 <u>Reformation</u>
Greeter	John K	John K	John K	John K	John K
Lay Lit	Karen G	Joann L	Pat P	Deanna V	Joann L
Reader	Gayle M	Karen G	Julie M	Jean L	Pat P
Comm.	The Langes	The Leedles	The Gritmackers	Sandy D	Sharon P
A/V	Joe H	Caleb L	Will G	Lily L	Joe H
Usher	John K	John K	John K	John K	John K
Altar	Sandy D	Sandy D	Sandy D	Sandy D	Sandy D

Nov	11/6 <u>All Saints/ Garden #2</u>	11/13 <u>Pr. Otto</u>	11/20 <u>Garden #23</u>	11/22: <u>Thanks.</u>	11/27: <u>Advent 1 O Come #1</u>
Greeter	Dan K	Dan K	Dan K	Dan K	Dan K
Lay Lit	Joann L	Karen G	Pat P		Deanna V
Reader	Pat P	Julie M	Diane B		Gayle M
Comm.	The Strands	The Kastnings	The Winkelmans		The Higgins
A/V	John K	Caleb L	Will G	Lily L	Joe H
Usher	Dan K	Dan K	Dan K	Dan K	Dan K
Altar	Pat P	Pat P	Pat P	Pat P	Pat P

Dec	12/4: <u>Advent 2 O Come #2</u>	12/11: <u>Advent 3 O Come #3</u>	12/18: <u>Pageant O Come #4</u>	12/24: <u>EVE O Come #5</u>	12/31: <u>Lessons &amp; Carols??</u>
Greeter	Jim L	Jim L	Jim L	Jim L	Jim L
Lay Lit	Karen G	Joann L	Pat P	Deanna V	John K
Reader	Julie M	Jean L	Karen G	Pat P	Joann L
Comm.	Diane B	Gayle M	Deb S	The Gardners	The Gritmackers
A/V	John K	Caleb L	Will G	Lily L	OPEN
Usher	Jim L	Jim L	Jim L	Jim L	Jim L
Altar	Joann L	Joann L	Joann L	Joann L	Joann L

**Please Note:** If you are unable to fulfill your obligation, please find a substitute and let the church office know

## Running Schedule To The End Of The Year (events are subject to change)

Fri Aug 19<sup>th</sup>            Celebrating Seniors @ 9:00am: **Hot Lunch \$3.00**

Thurs Aug 25<sup>th</sup>        Men's Club at Oliver's Bar & Grill in Woodstock @ 6:00pm

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Fri Sept 2<sup>nd</sup>            Celebrating Seniors @ 9:00am: **BYO Lunch**

Sat Sept 10<sup>th</sup>         The Book Club, Hebron Library @ 10:00am

Sun Sept 11<sup>th</sup>         **Rally Day & Backpack Blessing**

Mon Sept 12<sup>th</sup>        **Council Meeting @ 6:30pm**

Fri Sept 16<sup>th</sup>         Celebrating Seniors @ 9:00am: **Hot Lunch \$3.00**

Thurs Sept 29<sup>th</sup>      Men's Club at Upper Crust Pizzeria in Pell Lake @ 6:00pm

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Fri Oct 7<sup>th</sup>            Celebrating Seniors @ 9:00am: **BYO Lunch**

Sat Oct 8<sup>th</sup>            The Book Club, Hebron Library @ 10:00am

Mon Oct 10<sup>th</sup>         Council Meeting @ 6:30pm

Sun Oct 16<sup>th</sup>         **Worship Series: Garden Path #1**

Fri Oct 21<sup>st</sup>          Celebrating Seniors @ 9:00am: **Hot Lunch \$3.00**

Sun Oct 23<sup>rd</sup>         **Dan Holmes**

Thurs Oct 27<sup>th</sup>       Men's Club at 3 Brother's in Woodstock @ 6:00pm

Sun Oct 30<sup>th</sup>         **Reformation ~ Worship Series: Garden Path #2**

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Fri Nov 4<sup>th</sup>            Celebrating Seniors @ 9:00am: **BYO Lunch**

Sun Nov 6<sup>th</sup>            **All Saints & Worship Series: Garden Path #3**

Sat Nov 12<sup>th</sup>         The Book Club, Hebron Library @ 10:00am

Mon Nov 14<sup>th</sup>        **Council Meeting @ 6:30pm**

Fri Nov 18<sup>th</sup>         Celebrating Seniors @ 9:00am: **Hot Lunch \$3.00**

Sun Nov 20<sup>st</sup>         **Worship Series: Garden Path #4**

Tues Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>        **Community Thanksgiving Eve Service @ TBD**

Thurs Nov 24<sup>th</sup>       **Happy Thanksgiving (there will be NO Men's Club)**

Sun Nov 27<sup>th</sup>         **Advent: O Come Worship Series #1**

