

Our Purpose?
Bless the World: be God's Grace!

Ministry Announcements for the week of November 22, 2020



COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD,
LET US SHOUT FOR JOY TO THE ROCK OF OUR SALVATION.
~Psalm 95:1

**Thanksgiving Eve Service at Memorial Church
HAS BEEN CANCELED.**



Eat your spinach and build up your iron! (Also mark your calendars)

Grace is joining forces with the American Red Cross to host blood drives in 2021. We successfully held the Interfaith Blood Drive this last June following Covid -19 precautions.

We will be hosting a Blood Drive on Wednesday January 19 from 11- 4 and again on April 19th (time to be determined). Again, the Red Cross is very diligent in following prescribed Covid-19 guidelines.

Donations are down and so it is very important. Please strongly consider donating. More information to follow in the Newsletter and it will be posted on the Community Bulletin Board across from Office.

Poinsettias

Christmas will soon be here and as in previous years Christian Education Ministry Team will be sponsoring a poinsettia sale as a Vacation Bible School fundraiser and for decorating the sanctuary at Christmas. The sale dates for this year will be November 22-December 6. Orders can be placed by phone to the Office, through email and regular mail. Thank you for your support to our Vacation Bible School Program.



Grace Office hours are 9:00am to Noon - Monday through Friday
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Kindness changes everything!

Notes from the November council meeting:

- ⇒ Results of Grace member survey on same gender marriage received. After discussion and prayers, council passed a resolution allowing our Pastor to perform marriages within Grace's sanctuary/chapel regardless of sexual orientation. Council to provide members with letter and compiled list of responses to survey via email or mail.
 - ⇒ Council continues studying and discussion of "A Field Guide for The Missional Congregation".
 - ⇒ The council minutes are available to any member in the notebook in the library.
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ZOOM Bible Study

Galatians, Romans, James

October 17 - December 19

Saturday 3:00

Galatians: October 17 & 24

Romans: October 31; November 7, 14 & 21; December 5

James: December 12 & 19

For information haaf.vgs@gmail.com

The Sunshine Community



Is looking for donations for their 2020 Holiday Wishlist.
For information, see the community bulletin board.

When Christians Disagree

Bob Haaf

Seems to me that Christians face many opportunities to disagree with one another. Here's a brief sampler:

- ➡ I believe that marriage between gay people is OK;
Not true—read the Bible.
- ➡ I believe that Biden won the election;
Yeah, but the election was rigged.
- ➡ I believe that Black lives matter;
They don't need to be treated special.
- ➡ I believe you should wear a mask;
You can't tell me what to do.

What's a Christian to do? Here are some things to ponder:

- ➡ "You cannot see God until you see God in the face of your enemy." N.D. Walsh in *Conversations with God*.
- ➡ "Our primary task is not to calculate how many verses of Scripture we read or how many minutes we spend in prayer. Our task is to use these activities to create opportunities for God to work." J. Ortberg in *The Life You've Always Wanted to Live*.
- ➡ "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

If you don't recognize this last quotation, read *The Bible*—the 13th chapter of John. It's a quotation that should define your priorities.

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What Got Left Out of the Sermon – an occasional piece

(Sounds preposterous, doesn't it? Sometimes it seems as if the preacher's aim is to drone on as long as he possibly can. Can he really be cutting things out, to keep the sermon from getting too long?)

He can. He does. And, since you can't hit "Fast Forward" during a sermon, something cut out of the sermon for the 24th Sunday after Pentecost is printed here, where you can scroll right past it if you choose.)

"Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed," said the third slave in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25. 24). Harvesting the crop from someone else's field, and bringing it into your own barn, of course, would be theft, a violation of the seventh commandment. However, if you're just walking through someone else's field, snacking on what's growing there is allowed:

"If you go into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes, as many as you wish, but you shall not put any in a container. If you go into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain," said Moses. (Deuteronomy 23.24-25)

Plucking a few ears with their hands and eating the grain was what Jesus' disciples were doing one day: "At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath.'" (Matthew 12.1-2) The pharisees had no objection to what the disciples were doing – they didn't accuse them of stealing – but they were upset that they were doing it on the sabbath. What they were doing was considered to be work, and, on the sabbath day, work was forbidden.

In 1980-something, I think, the United Methodist Bicycle Camp was in northern lower Michigan, and the small group I was riding with one day took a break beside the road. Looking at the scenery, I noticed that the trees beside the road looked a lot alike, and they all had little bits of color in them: dark red, and light red, and mottled red and yellow, and a rich gold. I got closer. Cherries! Different kinds of cherries! Hundreds of cherry trees! We had a quick Bible study beside the road, and I explained to the campers what Moses said in Deuteronomy 23. We decided that, even though Moses only mentioned grain and grapes, and didn't say anything about cherries, specifically, the difference was too minor to matter. Our break turned out to be longer than we'd intended. It was glorious!

Later that day, when Sarah and I met up, I told her about the cherry orchard. "So, did you bring me any?" she asked. "I couldn't. There was no way I could have carried them without putting them into a container." Sarah was not pleased with me. Or with Moses. "Moses *could* have said that a *small* container would be alright."

I think God thinks that those of us who have way more than we need of something should be happy to share with those who have less than they need. We should be so happy to share, in fact, that those who benefit from our generosity shouldn't even have to ask permission. They should feel free just to help themselves. Jesus, after all, did not say to the disciples, "Ask the owner of the field first." And the Pharisees, eager as they were to find fault, did not say, "Whoa, your disciples are eating someone else's grain without even checking to see if it's okay!" They recognized that God had said it was okay.

Is God going too far here?

What do you think?

~Submitted by Pastor Howard

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Behind the Scenes at Grace

1. Thanks to whoever dropped off the hand sanitizer bottles on the Parish Nurse office door! It is greatly appreciated.
2. Our frost this last week brought the Ficus tree inside Brenner Hallway -it will help us think of green trees this winter!
3. In view of the upswing on Covid cases please remember to physical distance by 6 feet in the Sanctuary.
4. To help the ushers and Joe please recycle bulletins in the baskets at back of Sanctuary. There is a garbage can for Kleenex and wafer envelopes and baskets for Communion Cups (On Communion Sundays) located in the back of the church. This is not only to help keep our church beautiful but also for health safety. Please do not leave "stuff "on the pews.
5. Thanks to all who were the first to experience Communion with wine and to Peter Kramp and Bob Haaf who distributed the wine.
6. Thanks to Miss Connie for Sunday School - there were 4 children this last Sunday. Their lesson was quite interesting as we had a group of children with beautiful pink construction paper noses making "oink oink" noises walking down the hall - will need to check with Miss Connie as to the lesson?
7. Don't forget the food donation on Wednesday! Gretchen took some extra squash from her garden to Sylvania Family Services last week. When talking with the staff they provided food to 315 families (not just individuals) BUT families last week! The staff said this is a significant increase from last year so there is a definite need. If you are in need of food or know of someone the church office has the contact number or check website for Sylvania Family Services. The only information they need is that you show them a driver's license or proof you are resident of Lucas County.
8. The wind was wild this last Sunday - we had a few balloons (garbage bags) come over the roof from Kroger and luckily only a very few branches down. What was interesting was what looked like a giant pile of snow next to classroom #3. Depending on whether you like snow or not - it turned out to be at least a 20-foot piece of bubble wrap that had flown up and over the roof from the furniture store! Darn - no snow
9. Our group of squirrels must be putting on weight as we are hearing running back and forth on the roof and it sounds like squirrels with army boots. Hmm, they are putting on winter security blankets!
10. Remember: Grace is not the building (bubble wrap and all) BUT the people of Grace doing God's work and mission.

Thoughts.

An essential part of a happy healthy life is being of service to others. (*Sue Patton Thuelle*)

Kindness does not cost money, is not a loan but something that God has asked that we be to all no matter what.



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Do you hear what I hear?

Thanksgiving is coming and our celebrating is looking pretty different this year. Many of us will be getting together with our family and friends by Zoom, looking at each other through a window and talking by phone and/or a phone call.

Everyone thinks they are great listeners, but are we?

Now more than ever we really need to listen to others to share their thoughts, memories, funny jokes and what is going on their lives.

The Art of Listening is truly an art that we all need to work on.

Some of the things we need to do to listen better are:

1. Make eye contact. If you don't look at the person while they are speaking, you can give them the impression you don't care. This does not mean you have a "stare down" but looking at them and looking away occasionally. Yes, this is hard if no picture but remember it when you see people.
2. Don't interrupt !!! Shine the spotlight on them not you!
3. Practice "Active Listening" You don't have to stay quiet 100% of the time. If you are not sure what someone says ask "Are you saying _____" or "What I heard, you say was _____". These kinds of questions can help to make sure you really heard what the other person was saying.
4. Show you understand what the other person was saying. And how do you do that? - nod your head, say "yes", "okay" etc. It helps so the other person does not think you fell asleep (especially if on the phone) or you totally zoned out of the conversation.
5. Listen without judgement - this means trying to be as open minded as possible - listening without making negative judgements or evaluations. This is a tough one - try to be openminded as possible and see both sides. This is one of those where in the end you may not be in agreement, but you listen to the other person and at the end may agree to disagree but yet are **kind to each other.**
6. Listen without thinking. Listen to them - don't work on forming a response. Don't let your mind wander.
7. Listen to non-verbal communication. Did you know that about 60-70% of our communication is non - verbal! When we can see people, it is usually easy to see if what the person's body is saying. Does their body language say the same thing as what they are talking about? When on the phone it is a little more challenging but listen to the tone of their voice - up, down, talking faster or slower.
8. Create a good listening environment. TURN OFF THE TV. Try and find a quiet place to talk. Fixing dinner and banging pots around does not lend to a good environment.
9. Observe other people. One of the best ways to become a better listener is to watch other people interact with each other and the irritating and rude things they do. Create an annoying habit list and see if you do any. Big one - talking on phone and ignoring your kids, grandchildren or spouse. Others???

(Source of some information: Loner Wolfe)

Think about these as you communicate - listening goes hand in hand with love and understanding!

~Submitted by the Parish Nurse

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Two services on Sunday morning here at Grace!

Come join us!
9:30 In the sanctuary
11:30 In the chapel

Observing Covid precautions
Masks required - physical distancing
Music and song and praise!

We will continue to meet during the level red alert, following the safety guidelines.



GRACE CHURCH COUNCIL

David Charvat	Council President
Elise Lohmann	Treasurer
Cindy Wood	Secretary
Dan Holzscheiter	VP of Admin
David O'Brien	VP of Ministries
Kim Kondalski	
Fritz Gooch	
Mary Schneider	
Katie Sattler	
Greg Schafer	
Rick Sharp	

Please check out our Grace Website for the latest information and updates.
<http://www.gracelutherantoledo.org/>

If you would like something in the newsletter, please email to the office no later than Monday. It fills up fast and we have a limit to how many pages can be mailed (mailing is Tuesday morning). Thank you!

FOLKS TO CONTACT HERE AT GRACE

Council President	David Charvat
Grace Office	Cathy Holewinski
Custodial	Joe Zawierucha
Parish Nurse	Gretchen Hiatt
Worship	
Children's Choir Director	Nancy Stepleton
Choir	Peter Kramp
Organist	Debby Reeb
Praise Team Leader	Dale Walberg
Youth Ministry Advisors	Debbie Fallon, Wendy McCall
Pastor:	Pr. Howard Abts

THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD HAS MADE
LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT!
PSALM 118:24

