

# Grace Notes

July 2024

"Come Home to Grace"

## Bible Study: Paul's Letter to the Romans



Pastor Cramer will offer a Bible Study on Tuesday mornings at 11 a.m. beginning July if there is enough interest. There is a sign-up sheet in the Dining Room. Romans is the most complete presentation of the theology of St. Paul. It is the most comprehensive and universal of all his letters. Martin Luther said if one could only have one book of the Bible, Paul's Letter to the Romans would be his choice.

Luther wrote in his introduction to his commentary on Romans:

"This letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel. It is well worth a Christian's while... to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well. The more one deals with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes."

In the first session we will deal with the passage that was of primary importance in creating the Protestant Reformation. One commentator said: "The German reformer Martin Luther was converted by reading Romans 1:17, which, in turn, ignited the Protestant Reformation. As Luther pondered this verse, divine light flooded his heart. He suddenly saw that the righteousness God provides through faith in Christ."

## Pastoral Reflections

It is traditional to think of summer as having some elements of Sabbath time. Church schedules tend to slow down, and time is spent relaxing, soaking in God's blessings. One of the greatest theologians to reflect on the meaning of Sabbath time was Abraham Heschel. Heschel wrote: "All week we may ponder and worry whether we are rich or poor, whether we succeed or fail in our occupations; whether we accomplish or fall short of reaching our goals... The Sabbath is not time for personal anxiety or care, for any activity that might dampen the spirit of joy... It is a day for praise, not a day of petition... For the Sabbath is a day of harmony and peace, peace between people; peace within ourselves, and peace with all things. On the seventh day we have no right to tamper with God's world."



## News from Around Grace Church:

### Nursery sign up

We have a wonderful new opportunity for ministry. There is a sign-up sheet in the dining room for those who want to spend a delightful morning with the children of the church. If you are interested in this exciting new ministry, please sign up.



## Grace Church Flowers

Grace Church begonias have been planted again this year to help beautify our church. Thanks to the Women's Guild for paying for them and to Diane Greenawalt, Jolane Day, and Cathy Hoover for planting them.

We have a sign-up sheet in the dining hall for help in watering them this summer. If you would sign up for a week to water, it would be appreciated. A sprinkling can is under the kitchen sink in the church kitchen, and you can get the water from the kitchen. Any questions, please call Cathy Hoover. Thanks for your help.

## Lisa Bircher attends NACCC meeting

The Consistory elected Lisa Bircher to be the person designated by our church to attend the NACCC meeting in Spokane, Washington. Next month we look forward to hearing her report.

## Street Fair News

We are delighted to report that Mike and Kaitlin McMaster have agreed to be in charge of this year's Chicken Barbecue. This is a challenging job to take on. PLEASE SUPPORT THEM IN ANY WAY YOU CAN!!!



Christmas in July? Yes! This is when I use up all the past holiday left over bulletin covers. Not everyone will have the same one, and that's ok. So enjoy the pretty holiday bulletin covers!

Delegate's Report from the NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference  
June 22-26, 2024  
Lisa Bircher

This year, the Annual Meeting and Conference was held in Spokane, Washington. The venue for the event was the Centennial Hotel in the heart of Spokane. The Pacific Northwest Association of the NACCC made great efforts to ensure everyone was comfortable, well fed, and ready for the challenge of being church. The theme for the meeting was "There is a time..." from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and everyone found that our churches struggle with similar problems of finding pastors and equipping leadership to most effectively lead our churches into the future.

When I arrived in Spokane, I found many friends I have had the opportunity to make in the past from the different events I have attended. It was exciting to not only break bread with old friends but also to make connections with new friends as we are all together in Christ. It is important to develop connections from across the NACCC because sometimes these folks can help us the most when we need it, especially Laura Wright.

One of the keynote speakers was Stephy Nobles-Beans who is an educator, professor, pastor, and chaplain at Whitworth University in Spokane. Her words "It's a New Season, it's a New Day" gave us all motivation as we operate in this post-Covid, new normal world. One of her messages for us was to work for cultural change within the church as we reach out to our community in a way that will be attractive to the next generation. It is no easy task to do this work, but she was emphatic that if we make an effort to reach out to the community, they will respond and come to us with inquiring hearts and minds. It made me think how important events like the Chicken BBQ we host during the Street Fair, as well as the Rigatoni dinners we serve are for our community.

One of the first sessions I attended while at the conference was titled "The Mission Adventure Kit." In this session, we were encouraged to reach out to the community to work with them as we empower each other and those who need a hand up, not a handout. In this session, individuals shared some of the exciting ways they work in mission. Of course, I shared the partnership Grace Church enjoys with the Mission School of Hope and the many good projects we have completed. Several of these projects highlighted during this session indicated that asking local high school students for assistance with projects can allow a connection to be made to the young person and can be one way to grow the church. Indeed, as we walk side by side with young people, they will learn much about volunteering, but we will also learn about their needs. I think inviting young people to walk with us, especially during the Chicken BBQ will be one way to help make this possible. I will reach out to the local high schools (Columbiana, Heartland, and Crestview) to locate young people who may need community service hours for graduation. Who knows, maybe some of them will start attending church?

Perhaps the most interesting session I attended was the "Plentiful Gifts" program session. This is an exciting opportunity to "strengthen small congregations to carry on being church in new models." In this way, we can move from being a pastor-centric organization to becoming more congregational-centric. In that we are a congregational church, this sounds very appropriate to me. The program is fully funded through a grant from the Lilly Foundation's *Thriving Congregations* Initiative, in partnership with the NACCC and Dubuque Seminary. The idea is that many congregations do not have a full-time minister or even any minister. Therefore, this program is one way to explore "being church" in the future.



J·U·L·Y

The Plentiful Gifts Programs seems like a perfect opportunity for Grace Church. The program begins in fall 2024 and will run through summer 2026. This long-term process includes the following supported efforts: mentoring and planning for our church, identifying the spiritual gifts of those in our congregation, and training individuals to develop these skills. In this way, we can engage in workshops or other training in the following areas: preaching, worship, care, community engagement and service, faith formation, leadership and governance, as well as communication, including technology. Not all members will develop all these skills, but for those who do, their work will be utilized for the betterment of our congregation. I love that the process seems intentional to work towards increasing efficiency, especially in this time of interim between pastors. I think this project is perfect for Grace Church and I invite you to join me in this effort. I think it will be exciting and purposeful as we work towards the future. I will present this program to Consistory this month and see if there is interest. It seems to me; this opportunity is just too good to pass up.

Some of you have already asked me about the Quiet Day Retreat I hosted on Wednesday, June 26. It was a fabulous success! The eight participants that joined me at the Immaculate Heart Retreat Center in Spokane were eager to focus on the Lord in the serenity of the day, complete with stunning views and points of focus on God. I hope you enjoyed the pictures I shared on Facebook. It was a pleasure to do the work of creating time and space for all who attended, and I believe those who were in attendance gained much from the time in silence. Apparently, I did a good job because I was elected as the President of the Congregational Retreat Society and will be working to plan future retreats for the Society. It is a pleasure to be in service to the Lord. This is what happens when you pray "Here I am Lord...send me."

In 2025, the conference will be held in St. Louis, Missouri. I would encourage others to attend the conference in the future. It is a wonderful time to explore the congregational tradition and to see and hear what others are doing in their churches and communities as they work in mission to spread the good news of Jesus Christ locally. It is an experience that can change your life and also create a space for your own spiritual renewal. I thank you for your support both this year as well as last year in Milwaukee. It is also a great honor and privilege to be sent forth and do the work of the church! THANK YOU!!



## Consistory Meeting of June 2024

Members Present: Matt Bell, Gary Scullion, Ann Gustafson, Bill Greenawalt, Diane Greenawalt, Mark Frost, Jim Brinker, Cheryl Bell, Diane Barnes, Sharon Frost, Debbie Rohm. and Steve Cramer. Excused:

**I. Devotions** – June: Diane Greenawalt

July: Cheryl Bell

**II. Duties** – June

Usher: Debbie Rohm

Elevator: Diane Greenawalt

July

Usher: Sharon Frost

Elevator: Cheryl Bell

### III. Informal Discussion/Goal Setting:

-Ann Gustafson brought up that the church doors were unlocked Monday morning. Elders will reach out to the Custodian.

-Bill Greenawalt handed out the pulpit supply list for 2024.

### IV. Communications:

A letter was passed around from Rev John Bradley explaining that he can not fill in as pulpit supply.

### V. Approval of Minutes:

Debbie Rohm made a motion to approve the minutes with the suggested changes, Seconded by Sharon Frost. Motion carried.

### VI. Financial Secretary Report (M. Bell):

May Current Fund income: \$12,098.05. Budget monthly income \$7,525.00, \$4,573.05 over budget. Annual 58% received, \$14,896.43 over budget. The Current Fund is in the black \$27,610.29.

May Current Fund expense: \$7,424.70. Budget monthly expense \$7,525.00, \$100.30 over budget. Annual 45% expensed, \$2,827.73 over budget.

Motion to accept the report. 1<sup>st</sup> Diane Barnes, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ann Gustafson, motion carries.

### VII. Financial Committee Report (M. Bell):

nothing to report.

### VIII. Pastors Report – Steve Cramer

A report was submitted and presented to Consistory.

### IX. Unfinished Business:

-Jim Brinker spoke on a Fire/EMS/Police dinner. The committee met after church on Sunday.

-Mark mentioned the email that Pastor Steve sent out about the article in The Congregationalist.

-Diane Greenawalt asked about announcing that Lisa Bircher is our delegate for the upcoming NACCC Conference. Debbie Rohm will announce this Sunday at the pulpit.

### X. New Business:

Nothing presented

### XI. Committee Reports:

**-Search Committee (Sharon):** The committee has reformed with members and continues to meet.

**-Street Fair (Diane B)** – Diane said that she had a meeting with a family about the 2024 Street Fair.

**-Worship Design and Music (Diane B)** – Diane is working on Special Music. Discussion on exploring an outside service.

**-GRO (Diane B)** – Finished the last dinner in May. The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday will be going to support *Sleep in Heavenly Peace*. In May we gave a donation to MKC diaper drive.

**-Property (Gary)** – Mark presented an update on the Sanctuary A/C. Jerry Hughes has an estimate on repairs/replacing the HVAC unit.

The Property Committee is painting the railings at the church.

-The ceiling in the hallway is to the sanctuary is complete.

**-Elders (Diane Barnes)** – Elders met prior to the Consistory meeting. Discussed the responsibilities of the Elders. Discussion on employee topics.

### XII. Adjournment & The Lord's Prayer

Next Meeting July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 6:30pm.



- 1: Rich Berryman  
Ginny Snyder  
Cindy Perorazio  
Emily Barnes
- 2: Chris Neiheisel
- 4: Steve Neiheisel
- 9: Pat Keylor
- 13: Jim Nulf
- 16: Hannah Reeser  
Ryan Barnett
- 21: Amanda Frost
- 22: Jack Sitler
- 23: Bruce Wise  
Tyler Wessling
- 25: Amanda Butler

### Happy Anniversary to:

Wayne & Pat Sitler  
July 3, 1955

Hube & Pat Keylor  
July 5, 1972

Wayne & Christal Bonsall  
July 14, 1979

Marsha & Terrence Wolf  
July 23, 1997

# Thank You!

## THANK YOU!

Thank You!

Thank you to Diane Barnes and Cathy Hoover for being in the office while I was on vacation.

—Marcy LaVogue

Once again I find myself writing to all my friends at Grace Church for all the cards, meals, visits, etc. during my knee replacement surgery. As I've said before, your kindness is better than any medicine and I THANK YOU all for everything.

—Connie

## Those Ministering This Month:

### Liturgists:

- 7/7: Debbie Rohm  
7/14: Ruth Zarnosky  
7/21:  
7/28:

### Greeters:

- 7/7: The Hoskinson's  
7/14: Joe & Ruth Zarnosky  
7/21: Wayne & Christal Bonsall  
7/28: Jack & Dinah Sitler

**Usher:** Sharon Frost

**Elevator Attendant:** Cheryl Bell

**Candles:** Alison Hoskinson

Have a safe and happy 4th of July!





Grace Notes

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