



GRACE MESSENGER

WORSHIP:

Sunday— 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Monday —7:00 p.m.

Sunday School & Bible Study—9:15 a.m.

PASTOR WITTES' MESSAGE

Sacred Head, Now Wounded



One of the more beloved Lent and Holy Week hymns is that of “*O Sacred Head, Now Wounded.*” We sing it on every Good Friday as a traditional part of our remembrance of our Lord’s death on the cross. This Lent season we will use the hymn to open us up into the Passion of our Lord throughout all of the Wednesday’s of this season. This theme will also take us up into Holy Week and even on to Easter. Each week we will hear of another “wound” that our Savior bears on our part, because of our sin. This is a season of repentance and hearing each week of our Lord’s deeds on our behalf will indeed, by the grace of God, lead us into that fully repentance relationship we so dearly need.

We will also be working our way each Wednesday through the full Passion of our Lord reading, as drawn together from all four of the Gospels. It is a deep and engulfing look at the events Jesus endured during his last hours before the cross. We encourage you to join us for these various opportunities for worship. To hear of the different wounds each week will add to the pleasures of Easter morning when we can rejoice and celebrate that last wound, the wound of death, and how our Lord has vanquished it.

Our worship will be at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. each Wednesday, as usual, and we will invite you to join us for lunch after the 11 a.m. services, if you are able. In case you’re not hooked just yet, I want you to see for yourself just what wonderful themes we will be studying and hearing about in the weeks to come. Here is a brief look at the upcoming schedule:

Continued on page 2

Lent Worship Schedule

Midweek Worship ~ 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.

“Sacred Head, Now Wounded”

Wednesdays, February 14-March 21

Luncheon following the 11 a.m. Services

Maundy Thursday-March 29

7 p.m. with Communion

Good Friday-March 30

1:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. (Tenabrae)

Easter-April 1

7:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Communion at both services

NO Monday Worship

<p>February 14 Ash Wednesday</p> <p><i>A Wounded Savior for a Wounded People</i></p> <p>On Ash Wednesday we will hear the classic reading from Joel 2:12-19. We will see the ties we have with our Lord and why by "His wounds we are healed."</p>	<p>March 7 Midweek</p> <p><i>The Wound of Denial</i></p> <p>This week's topic explores the Palace of the High Priest portion of the full Passion reading. We will hear the question of Jesus while at the same time His apostle Peter deals with a different kind of questioning.</p>
<p>February 21 Midweek</p> <p><i>The Wound of Betrayal</i></p> <p>This week's topic explores the Lord's Supper portion of the full Passion reading. We will explore the deeds of Judas and what effect this betrayal has on our Lord's passion.</p>	<p>March 14 Midweek</p> <p><i>The Wound of Mockery</i></p> <p>This week's topic explores the Praetorium portion of the full Passion reading. In this we will hear, and in our mind's eye, see the horrible things done to our Lord in the</p>
<p>February 28 Midweek</p> <p><i>The Wound of Apathy</i></p> <p>This week's topic explores takes us through the Gethsemane portion of the full Passion reading. We will explore the relationship there between Jesus and His disciples.</p>	<p>March 21 Midweek</p> <p><i>The Wound of Abandonment</i></p> <p>This week's topic explores the Calvary portion of the full Passion reading. In this early look at the Good Friday events we will talk more on the full meaning of Jesus' words "my God, my God why have you forsaken me."</p>

February Anniversaries

Congratulations and prayers for Gods' continued blessings on those celebrating anniversaries this month:

- February 3 David & Rose Ruhlig**
- February 19 Jay & Diane Kuehnlein**
- February 22 Jerry & Donna Held**
- February 22 Frank & Renata Rabideau**
- February 24 Dale & Yvonne Haman**
- February 25 John & Donn Rafko**

"What God has joined together,
let not man separate"



News about Our Members

November 16-December 15, 2017

Baptisms

Carson M. Gensler	Dec. 17
McKenzie J. Carter	Dec. 24



DEACON BOB AUXTER

"What Child Is This?"

Stanza 2 *Why lies He in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary!*

This past Christmas Eve morning, the congregation sang this hymn as the Sermon Hymn. I was granted the wonderfully awesome opportunity to preach God's Word that day, both morning services, and I was chomping at the bit. But I had to get through this hymn first.....not once, but twice.

Ironically, I love this hymn, it is one of my most favored Christmas hymns, but God cuts me off at the knees every time I sing it, even if I just read the lyrics to myself. All three stanzas are most beautiful, but Stanza 2 just crushes my heart and breaks my spirit. Even to the point of choking up and fighting back tears, and managing but a whimper in voice. And this day I had to preach, deliver God's Word to a sleepy congregation, with force and power. Needless to say, the Holy Spirit saw me through my task, and tempered my emotions, channeling their heat and pain into my message.

You see, I live on a working farm. I know what a mean place a drafty barn is in the cusp of winter. It is excellent shelter for the creatures of God of which I am His steward. My all-knowing Creator provides the array of livestock we raise with adequate and proper dress in their arraignment of hair and fur and downy, thick feathers, but it is certainly no place for a human to dwell for any extended period of time. Much less a newborn baby of humanity, even if He is of Heaven's heights, *this* Jesus, God-in-the-flesh.

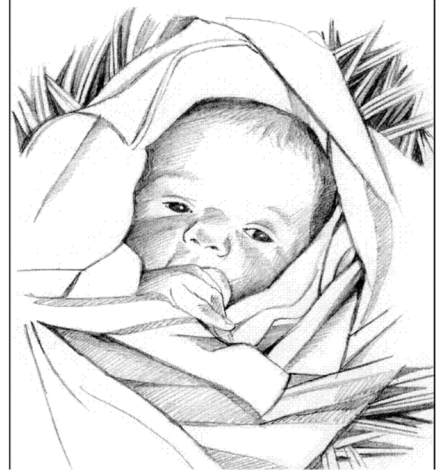
He lies in a manger, an animals feeding trough, of which we have several in the West Barn. His crib, in a feeding trough filled with a thick mound of hay, delicious, nourishing fodder for livestock, that smells of summer air and soft, warm rain, but it can be itchy, and full of sneeze-inducing pollens. But just the same,

it's far better than a bed of rough, stiff straw, which is bedding for livestock. However, neither of which is a posturepedic mattress you and I are accustomed to sleeping comfortably on, night after night.

But alas, here lies Him who called all things into existence with but a Word from His mouth, and whimpers not. Pleading, petitioning, silently, not for Himself, but for us. Patiently awaiting our arrival to pay Him our homage and troth, to give Him not our gold, frankincense, or myrrh, but simply ourselves, for that is all He truly desires. He wants our hearts, our souls, our spirits, and our strength, to do His Will, bringing Him praise, honor, and glory, Him alone. We come not to Him, more like refuse to come to Him, so He comes to us, vested in such mean estate.

The author of these lyrics, William Dix, gives us *fair warning* as we view this somber scene set before us, we of the tinsel and color illumined ornaments of ourselves, abiding in wealth and warmth and comfortableness. For his lyrics now bring us to the threshold of the Lenten season.

It is at about this section of the lyrics that I am brought low by my sin and unworthiness. William Dix words this hymn with crystal clear clarity- '*Good Christian fear...*' My plea is different than His, my Lord, for *my* plea is, "My God, my God, why have you *not forsaken* me?!?" It's bad enough to view Him, a child of humankind, those He created with His very hands, He lying in a cold, drafty barn, but knowing His exact and far more spine-chilling future- to be riven with nails and a spear through His holy flesh....for you, even for me.



DEACON BOB AUXTER

("What Child is This?" continued from page 3)

I gaze about the barn carefully. The creatures here are far more apropos here than even I, as even those that graced His presence on that holy night two millennia ago. For they are sinless, but not I, not you. They voice their groan as does all creation for His coming, to recreate a new Heaven and a new Earth. And our spirits, our souls join in this cacophony of petition and praise, for we are the ones created in this Sovereign Lord's Image, that which we have marred and disfigured beyond any semblance or recognition.

He comes *to* us, He comes *for* us. He has sought us, and He has found us. He claims us as His very own, from ancient days, even before He uttered the first Word of His creation. The least we can do is hail Him, pay Him due homage, whimper even this hymn, but in all respect and awe, worship Him, for there is no one nor anything else in all creation like Him, *this* Jesus, He who clearly loves you, even me.

And as He comes to you to claim you as His very own, with nail-scarred hands and riven side, release your grip, abandon your grasp, of all that gold, frankincense, and myrrh, all that junk and scubala that previously garnered all your focus and attention, value and worth. He does not want that stuff- for one thing, He's holy and pure, it is not. For another, He wants to only fill His open arms with you...you, even me, now made holy and pure by His precious blood, freely and willingly shed for us, for our redemption, even for our restoration and our re-creation. That, immediate and.....eternal.

Hail, hail Him, the babe of Mary, He who wants to fill your life, your soul, your mind, your eyes, with His Presence, Himself, only. And when you finally surrender to Him, you will *never* hear *that* question, "What child is this?" come from His lips. For He fully knows who *you* are.....and yet, you are His.....still! He comes to you, and He comes for you. This, His child. WHHAAAT?!? Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad!

In Christ Jesus, Deacon Bob Auxter

Inactives/Prodigals

On Saturday, January 27th, I spent the day at St. Matthew's LC-MS Church, in Grand Rapids, MI, attending the Faith Family Reunion's seminar on addressing the inactives problem that all churches, no matter the denomination, are dealing with in this current age.

I will be sharing information learned and gleaned from this fresh, new approach to this ministry, in the coming weeks. I would like at this time to move the ministry along further here at Grace by reaching out to three groups of people:

- Family members of inactives/prodigals
- Anyone who at one time was an inactive/prodigal but is regularly attending worship services and other events here at Grace
- Any congregation member who have a desire to work with me in confidential small group meetings, sharing experiences with, and gathering information on, inactives/prodigals, to offer encouragement, education, compassion, and support, as we scripturally and prayerfully, approach this growing problem.

I want to ensure you that confidentiality is the operative word in this ministry.

Please, prayerfully consider that if you are a person of one of these groups, talk to me, leave a note in my church mailbox or on my office table, with your contact information, or take one of my business cards that are in my church mailbox and contact me by phone or E-mail at your leisure.

Deacon Bob Auxter



ELDER-BRYAN WEBER

HELP

A succinct request from the Sunday School. Webster's defines help as "to give assistance or support to" or "to change for the better." It has been a true blessing joining the Sunday School as a teacher just a year-and-a-half ago, instructing the children of the congregation in God's word, doing art and crafts, experiencing new levels of patience, and learning more about the scriptures. I believe it was Albert Einstein that said, "If you can't explain it to a six-year-old, you don't understand it yourself." As such, I have learned more about the bible in this short time working with the kids than any time during my life. I remember distinctly being approached by a Sunday School teacher (who shall remain nameless), asking to help with Sunday School. I must admit I was hesitant at first. Me a teacher? Sunday School? What was I getting myself into? I had some experience assisting with Vacation Bible School for the last few years (which I truly enjoyed), but that pales in comparison with the blessing that I receive with weekly involvement with the Sunday School. This is not some Tom Sawyer tale about white-washing a fence, to glean your assistance, but rather a sincere accounting of my growth. The children of this congregation are the legacy that we give to future generations. They need to be brought up in God's word. "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). As a minister's son, brought up in the church, I can attest to this with certainty.

For this quarter, Sunday School is studying a New Testament series from Concordia Publishing House titled "God Sends His Son to Save Us". Concordia brings God's word in a simple, easy to understand format. We are also taking some time to work on crafts, for example valentine's day cards for veterans. As a group, we are also working on ways to utilize technology in our presentation to the kids to try and keep their interest. We are always looking for ideas.

In closing, I have two simple petitions. First and foremost, bring your children to Sunday School. You may have realized that most children in pre-school thru sixth grade (thankfully) do not drive, thus they need to be brought to Sunday School. If this is difficult, can't find the time, without transportation, or any other of the myriad of excuses that I have heard from countless employees at work - please let me know. You can also speak to Pastor, Deacon Bob or any of the elders. The church has been assisting with transportation to anyone with a need - I am certain that we will find a way to get your child (and you) here and returned home. Second, Sunday School can use your help. We have been blessed with volunteers offering their time and talents over the course of last year, for which we are truly thankful. Having different and exciting items for the kids to learn and do keeps them engaged and helps them grow. If you have a spiritual gift, an idea, a talent you can share, please let me know. The Sunday School looks forward to your help through this year.

February Birthdays

Friends of Grace celebrating birthdays this month.

If yours isn't listed, we may not have it in our records. Contact the Church Office and we will gladly include it.

God's blessings and happy birthday!

1	Diane Kuehnlein	19	Wayne Waldecker
2	Abram Cunningham		Vaughn Kregel
	Sue Wigman		Bradley Angelocci
	Noah Marsai		Mia Libstorff
	Olivia Marsai	21	C.J. Zarecki
3	Laura Sowatsky	22	Tim Hehl
5	Noah Harmon	23	Armond Schoof
	Chris Leidel		Cody Kraner
8	Randy Cousino	24	Bryan Weber
10	Barbara Hehl	25	Faye Blohm
12	Paul Yentz	26	Matthew Berry
	Debbie Bastianelli	27	Kayla Friederichs
14	Arnette Gahlau		Frank Rabideau
15	Herm Amolsch		Resa Waldecker
16	Don Wigman, Jr	28	Rosanne Pritchett

Youth Leader Sarah Witte

ESCAPE

What do your next vacation, your bed, and a good book have in common? How about a good TV show, a fun craft, or even a night out? Escape. Yep, we all want an escape. From work, from school, from responsibilities. Humans seem to be hard-wired to want a break. Ever wonder why?

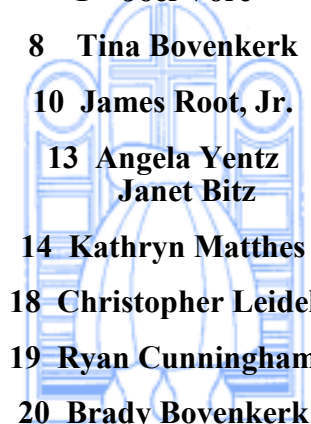
Of course, we were programmed to want a break. *“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”* (Exodus 20:11) Wait, wait, this talks about God resting, not us, right? God created the whole of the universe and definitely deserves the chance to rest. But what about us? We didn’t create the whole universe. We didn’t work near as much as God did or does. And yet, *“but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.”* (Exodus 20:10) God is very clear on who deserves a Sabbath rest.

Or maybe “deserves” is not the correct word here. Since when does God give us what we deserve? We *deserve* death. We *deserve* hell. Wow, what a difference. We deserve death and we are granted an escape instead. We are granted quite the opposite – life eternal in a heavenly paradise. Talk about a vacation. And why? For the pure and simple reason that God loves us. We are *his*, we are his *creation*. As parents we want the best for our children – as God is our designer, He wants the best for us.

Let’s look at this “escape” another way. How often are we tempted to do the wrong thing? How often do we fall short of our, of other’s, of God’s expectations? How do we escape these faults? The simple answer comes from the Bible. 1st Corinthians says, *“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”* (10:13) Let’s look at the absolutes in that verse. The very first word is one – “no”, as in “no temptation”. How many temptations can overtake you? None. Not a one. That’s powerful stuff. Moving on in the verse it says, “God is faithful”. It doesn’t say “some of the time” or “when he wants to be”. No, it says God **IS** faithful. All the time. Absolutely. 100%. And what does he provide? The way of escape.

We like escape because it takes us completely away from our lives. A vacation takes you away from your responsibilities at home. A good book takes you completely out of this reality, even just for a little while. God’s escape is complete as well. He takes us completely out of our sinful lives and gives us heavenly paradise. He gives us purity. How different is this from our life? To go from completely dirty and sinful to bleached white in 0 to 60 seconds? (Actually, less if you think of God’s power.) What an escape he has offered to us!

February Baptism Birthdays

- 
- 1 Joel Vore
 - 8 Tina Bovenkerk
 - 10 James Root, Jr.
 - 13 Angela Yentz
Janet Bitz
 - 14 Kathryn Matthes
 - 18 Christopher Leidel
 - 19 Ryan Cunningham
 - 20 Brady Bovenkerk
 - 26 Laura Sowatsky
Viviana Pletz

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February 2018

JANUARY							MARCH							
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
	1	2	3	4	5	6						1	2	3
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
4 8:00 a Worship/Comm 9:15 a S.School/Bible Study 10:30 a Worship 6:00 p Praise Band	5 1:00 p Ladies Study 5:00 p Men's BBall 6:00 p Evangelism Board 7:00 p Worship 7:00 p Advocates 8:00 p IMPACT	6 7:00 p SS teachers 7:00 p Trustees	7 5:30 p Weekday Schl 6:00 p Cub Scouts 7:00 p Boy Scouts	1 9:30 a Bible class 12:30 p Ladies Society 5-7 p Men's BBall 5:45 p Handbells 7:30 p Choir	2	3
11 8:00 a Worship 9:15 a S.School/Bible Study 10:30 a Worship/Comm	12 1:00 p Ladies Study 5:00 p Men's BBall 7:00 p Worship 8:00 p IMPACT	13 6:00 p Men's Club	14 Ash Wednesday 11:00 a Worship/Comm 12:00 p Luncheon 5:30 p Weekday Schl 7:00 p Worship/Comm	8 9:30 a Bible class 5-7 p Men's BBall 5:45 p Handbells 6:00 p Parish Life 6:30 p Elders 7:30 p Choir	9 7:00 p Super Youth	10
18 8:00 a Worship/Comm 9:15 a S.School/Bible Study 10:30 a Worship 6:00 p Praise Band	19 1:00 p Ladies Study 5:00 p Men's BBall 7:00 p Worship 8:00 p IMPACT	20 7:00 p Church Council	21 Lent II 11:00 a Worship 12:00 p Luncheon 5:30 p Weekday Schl 7:00 p Worship	15 5-7 p Men's BBall 5:45 p Handbells 7:30 p Choir	16	17 9:00 a One Sheep Ministries Cook
25 8:00 a Worship 9:15 a S.School/Bible Study 10:30 a Worship/Comm	26 1:00 p Ladies Study 5:00 p Men's BBall 8:00 p IMPACT	27 7:00 p Board of Ed	28 Lent III 11:00 a Worship 12:00 p Luncheon 5:30 p Weekday Schl 7:00 p Worship	22 1:30 p SafeChurch 5-7 p Men's BBall 5:45 p Handbells 7:30 p Choir	23	24 7:00 p Movie Night
Dates are subjected to change, please check online calendar at www.gracelutheranmonroe.org for updates.						

Mission Statement

Our purpose is to:

CALL people to faith in Jesus Christ

CELEBRATE God's presence among us through worship

CONNECT people together in caring relationships

COMMIT to growth in the knowledge and love o

COMMISSION every member to serve in ministry



THE MESSENGER

BIBLE STUDIES

IMPACT Prime Time For all 9th grade through young adult-aged youth and friends on **MONDAYS** at 8 p.m.

Ladies' Bible Study The ladies meet every **Monday** at **1:00 p.m.** at Grace in the classroom. They will be studying a Jesus calling bible study called "Living A Life of Worship" by Sarah Young.

Weekday School Christian Education classes for children in **Grades 3 – 8** from 5:30 to 6:45 p.m. on **Wednesdays**.

Thursday Morning Adult Bible Class Meets weekly at 9:30 a.m. in the Classroom. Held Sept—May.

Adult Information Class ~ Scheduled *as requested*. Basic classes in the Christian faith. Contact Pastor Witte or the Church Office for more information.

GRACE'S UPCOMING EVENTS:

February 14 Ash Wednesday Worship
(11 a.m. & 7 p.m.)
with Communion

February 24 Movie Night "*Miracles from Heaven*"

