



MAY 2021

# THE GOOD NEWS

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

## Pastor's Corner

As I write this column toward the end of April, plans are in the works to begin to open up the church building for worship on Sunday mornings in a limited way, as a first step toward transitioning to a post-pandemic way of doing things. I can't say anything definitive yet because both the Worship & Music Committee and the Council still need to weigh in. But this is what the ad hoc committee on returning to in-person worship is thinking. Beginning sometime in May, perhaps as early as May 16, we will begin to hold in-person services at 8:00 every Sunday, but also continue our 9:30 live-streamed services with no one in the worship space aside from the worship leaders and tech people (sound and streaming.) We realize that 8:00 does not fit everyone's schedule optimally, but here is the thinking on this temporary schedule, which we anticipate continuing through the summer. The in-person service would be held with the windows open in order to maximize the circulation of air, which is important to do since the pandemic has not yet gone away and it is an air-borne virus. Worshipping with windows open will be much more tolerable at 8:00 in the summer than at a later time. That time will also allow us to continue our current schedule of the 9:30 live-stream and 10:45 Adult Class.

I'm sure this is a welcome development for most of the Grace community, but we need to be clear that this is not yet a return to normal, whatever "normal" will eventually look like after the pandemic finally is over. Those attending in-person will be required to wear masks, and to maintain physical distance from other family units in the worship space. We'll mark off the pews to let you know where you can sit. There will be no singing by the congregation or worship leaders, but we do plan to have instrumental music. There will be no physical sharing of the peace outside of family units, and no gathering in the narthex before or after the service. We will, however, have Holy Communion every Sunday at the in-person service, though we will continue to distribute the elements in the form used in our drive-thru distributions, that is, in paper cups and plastic lidded containers. We're still discussing the details of how exactly the distribution will work, so I won't go into any more detail about that now.

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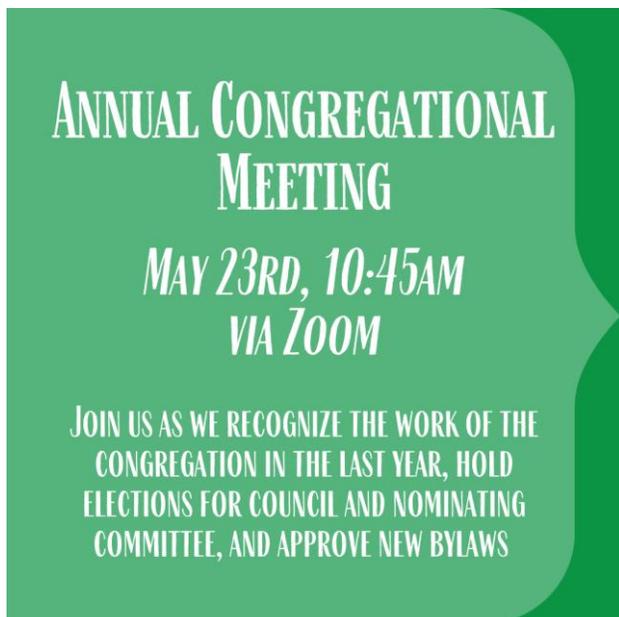
**Evangelical  
Lutheran**  
Church in America

Of course, not everyone is comfortable returning to in-person worship yet, while others will be disappointed that we cannot take off our masks and sing (or leave them on and sing!) As with any community, there is bound to be a spectrum of attitudes and opinions on any given topic. Now more than ever we need to bear with one another and do our very best to follow Martin Luther's advice in his explanation to the eighth commandment: "...we are to come to [our neighbors'] defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light." Please pray for me and for your lay leaders on the Church Council as we strive to be faithful to our mission as the church in the current circumstances, and my God continue to bless our life together at Grace.

## From the Director of Music

Dear Friends,

As you probably know by now, *why* we do things is something that's important to me. I wrote last month that the purpose of church music is to proclaim the gospel. And *why* do we proclaim the gospel? For the glory of God and the good of the neighbor. I've found in life in general, it's easy for me (and I assume most of us) to get distracted by things that are not essential. For me, knowing *why* often helps to keep me grounded and focused on what truly matters. Even through this difficult time we can sing and ring the salvation story for God's glory and the good of our neighbor.



## Food Pantry Updates

Spring has burst forth in a rainbow of colors, a phenomenon that signals a renewal of both nature and our spirits! Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!

The GLC Pantry team is relieved that, despite a recent day of snow flurries, the cold winter is has ended; the warmer spring weather and colorful blossoms are providing a welcome surge of encouragement and hope. We are encouraged that we will all be physically more comfortable during Thursday drive-through distributions, and we are hopeful that, as more Champaign County residents become fully vaccinated, our community will continue to make progress toward the defeat of this pandemic. In conversation with our client families, when we ask about vaccines, more and more people are telling us that they are fully vaccinated. Praise be to God!

We have learned that the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, distributed through EIF, will continue through May. These supplemental boxes of protein, dairy, and fresh produce have provided timely assistance to those in need. It has not been uncommon to hear our clients say, "Wow! Is all this for me?" We receive many heartfelt "Thank yous" and "God bless yous" every Thursday morning. We are especially thankful for the boundless energy of Dale Herrstrom, who picks up 35 of these food boxes at 7:00AM EVERY Thursday morning at EIF, thus enabling our efficient distribution. Thanks, Dale!

We are also very hopeful that, even when the CFAP program ends, because of YOUR commitment to the ministry we provide, and because we have EIF right here in C-U, we will be able continue to provide quality food items to those in need. We have the resources to provide frozen meat, eggs, canned soups, veggies, fruits, other staples, and dairy and other fresh produce as they become AVAILABLE. We are blessed to be a blessing to others because of your financial support.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING PLASTIC BAGS OR EGG CARTONS TO THE PANTRY AT THIS TIME. WE HAVE A SURPLUS OF THESE PRODUCTS. WE WILL ASK FOR THESE ITEMS WHEN WE NEED THEM. THANK YOU. Thank you for your continued generosity and for your prayers.

The GLC Pantry Board,  
*Kathy Bowersox, Jim Fleming, Dale Herrstrom, Karen Krusa, and Royce Wilken*

## Spread Mulch/Outdoor Work Morning

On May 8<sup>th</sup>, please plan to assist helping to spread a truckload of Premium Bark Mulch donated from the Landscape Recycling Center. We intend to spread the mulch onto the north yard Contemplative Garden surface, both above and below the retaining wall.

I watched a landscape crew spread a truckload of mulch last year—Definitely (and of course!), the more people that help out, the easier and quicker it is.

Bring a shovel or a rake or both, and attend for one, or more, hours. We will target the timeframe 8am-11am to complete mulch spreading and other outdoor spring-type tasks.

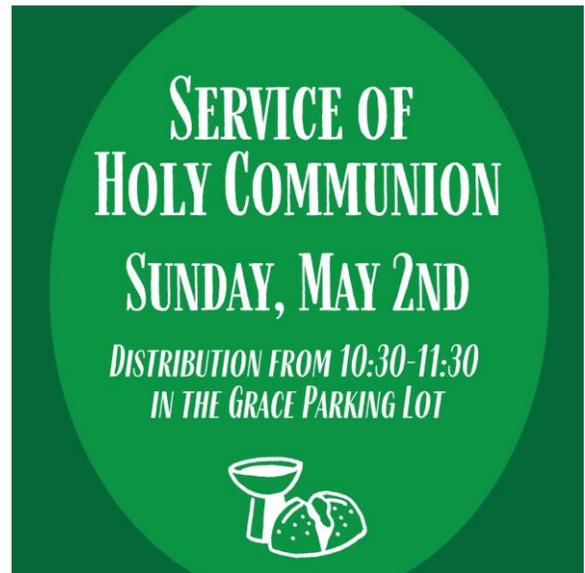
Check out this article from “This Old House” and we hope to see you on Saturday, May 8 morning...  
<https://www.thisoldhouse.com/gardening/21019371/may-is-for-mulching>

## Strategic Planning Survey Begins Today

The Strategic Planning Team has prepared a congregational survey that will help us do understand both what you value in a faith community and how you currently participate at Grace. It is important to have as many people as possible take part in the survey. **Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey.** It will be available through Sunday, May 9. The survey is available [online at this link](#), but has also been sent out via email, and in paper form to those who are on our paper newsletter list. If you would prefer to receive a paper copy and are not already on that newsletter list, please let Lyla know at [office@glccu.org](mailto:office@glccu.org).

## Birthday/Anniversary Card Stamping

A Birthday/Anniversary Card Stamping Session will be held in the church narthex on Wednesday, May 19, from 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM. All participants will be asked to wear masks and socially distance as we work together to create beautiful greeting cards with the help of Meg Loven, who generously contributes her expertise and materials. It would be great to have 5-7 people participating. Anyone with questions or concerns, please contact Kathy Bowersox.



## Help Receiving Communion

If you are attending our communion services online but have trouble getting to church to receive communion, we can arrange for someone to bring the communion elements to you. Contact Kathy Bowersox.

## Worship Notes

The W&M Committee is actively seeking new members (and even a new chair). We meet once a month to talk and plan the services. Both pastor and Andy are on our committee and provide expertise and leadership. If you are interested in participating, please let me know. I would be happy to email you copies of our recent minutes so you see the kinds of things for which we are responsible. **Text or email Ruth Anderson if you are interested.**

We are still looking for favorite hymns for the summer. **Please email your favorite hymns to Carolyn Pater.**

We are also looking for people interested in providing special music this summer. **If that is you, please let Ruth Anderson know.** (Some of these may be prerecorded and others may be in person.)



## Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Did You Know??

- Our congregation has a long history of supporting Lutheran Social Services of Illinois.
- LSSI used to have offices in our church building.
- Our congregation has generously supported LSSI's Christmas gifts for Foster Children for over 20 years.
- Lutheran Social Services of Illinois receives an annual donation from our congregation; the largest single donation in the Social Ministry budget. This year's donation for LSSI is 17% of the Social Ministry budget for 2021.
- Good Shepherd Sunday is April 25, 2021, a special day set aside to explore and celebrate the many ministries of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. including; Foster Care and Family Support Services, Alcohol/Drug Treatment and Mental Health Services, Services for Seniors, and Prisoner and Family Ministries.
- Now through May is the best time to make a donation to LSSI, because there are matching funds available.

If you would also like to make an individual donation, you can donate online at: [Donate | Lutheran Social Services of Illinois \(lssi.org\)](#) OR a check by mail to:

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois  
 1001 E. Touhy Avenue, Suite 50  
 Des Plaines, Illinois 60018  
 And Now You Know!

## Extra Print Photo Directories Available

There are still a few extra copies of our Lifetouch photo directory available. If you had taken a photo for the Lifetouch directory but did not receive your copy, please contact Caitlyn to get your copy. If you did not participate in the photography sessions but would still like a copy, contact Caitlyn to get one, but those directories will be distributed at a first come, first serve basis. If you would rather like a print version of our online photo directory, those arrangements can be made as well.

## New Members + Current Members



**ON THE WAY**

On The Way is a regular faith-formation opportunity at Grace devoted to exploring and deepening our understanding and practice of the Christian faith. We meet on, April 26 at 7:00 and will then continue in May with a few more sessions. Join us for discussion, reflection on a biblical text, and prayer. We use the Grace Meeting Zoom link

