

THE SPIRIT

August 2023

Ephesians 4:1-6, 14-16

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: ⁴ there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

¹⁴ *We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.*

Recently, a dental assistant, on learning that I would soon be retiring, asked me, "Do you feel a lot of pressure to make that last sermon really profound?" I laughed. Pastors would like to make EVERY sermon profound. We're trying to convey that ultimate mystery of God's love, after all, so we give it our best, week after week. And of course, despite our best efforts, we fail more often than not. So, I told her, "No, my congregation has been hearing me speak for 10 years. There is not much more I can add to that."

But her comment got me thinking about what I want to convey in these last few days of my time as your pastor. What it comes down for me is this: we are ALL called to be faithful to that profound, ultimate mystery that proclaims that God's love has already claimed us and all creation and that it is there, IN CHRIST, that we live this one, beautiful life **together**. That love, God's love, changes everything for everyone.

For those of us who seek to follow Jesus that love puts a **calling on our lives** to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling." And that 'manner' is to live our whole lives "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." When we do that,



imperfectly, of course, but to the best of our abilities, leaning on one another and through the power of the Holy Spirit, gathering regularly to share in that bond, our world is changed! This congregation is changed. Our families and our friends are changed. **God, through us, changes everything.** God uses us to shine light in the growing darkness. God uses us to bring hope to places of despair. God makes a way out of no way through us into a future that is good for us and for all of creation. This calling is important! God works in the world through people – through US!

As I leave Amazing Grace, I am profoundly thankful for the Spirit's call on me to serve here for the last 10 years. I am profoundly thankful for having been invited into your holy lives. I am thankful for all that I have learned and all the ways I have grown here. We go into God's good future separately now, at least in some outward sense. But in the body of Christ, we are always one and will remain so. I will continue to hold you in prayer with joy and thanksgiving, eager to see how God's call is lived among you and how God uses your faithfulness to work through you in this new chapter of life in God's Amazing Grace.

In Christ,

Pastor Val



Southwestern Washington Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Dear Friends, “You shall have a song as in the night when a holy festival is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one sets out to the sound of the flute to go to the mountain of the Lord, to the Rock of Israel.” (Isaiah 30:29)

Recently, two scientific reports caught my attention regarding the discovery of the earliest known musical instruments. In a cave in Slovenia, scientists discovered a flute-like instrument made from the thighbone of a young bear. It is fairly certain that it was made by Neanderthal humans and, according to carbon testing, dates back 60,000 years

In a cave near the Danube River in southern Germany, numerous flutes were found that were made from hollowed-out bird bones and mammoth ivory that are 42,000 to 43,000 years old. Found in caves of the Homo sapiens “branch” of humans, from whom we contemporary humans have evolved, these flutes were discovered together with figurative art and spiritual imagery painted on rocks, which strongly suggests that instrumental music was being played both for community gatherings and religious practices.

It moves me to know that, from very early times, the human family has been stirred by music. With music streaming from our hearts, we humans also created instruments to play that music. The Psalmist sang, “It is good to give thanks to the Lord,... to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.” (Psalm 92)

WE ARE ENTRUSTED WITH THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER

God, Lord of all creation, lover of life and of everything, please help us to love in our very small way what You love infinitely and everywhere. We thank You that we can offer just this one prayer and that will be more than enough, because in reality everything and every one is connected, and nothing stands alone. To pray for one part is really to pray for the whole, and so we do. Help us each day to stand for love, for healing, for the good, for the diverse unity of the Body of Christ and all creation, because we know this is what You desire: as Jesus prayed, that all may be one. We offer our prayer to-

LET THE MUSIC MOVE YOU

Music often allows us to experience and express the deepest truths, hopes, and longings in life, which words by themselves struggle to fully communicate.

Martin Luther, who restored music and congregational singing to a central place in worship, said, “Feel the song; let the music move you. God comes in different ways. In the gentle sounds of music, God brings healing. In strong sounds ...power. In voices united, God reveals the family that [God] puts us into.”

As we enter the summer months, let yourself enjoy the music that God plays around you and places within you. Let yourself sing as you drive your car, walk around the house, and gather for worship.

Walk up to the musicians who play at church and thank them for their gifts. Give them a gift certificate to a good restaurant or record store. Lobby for them to get a raise!

God sings the song that gives us life and calls the universe into being. From that essential song, all of our music sounds forth. Soli Deo gloria! To God alone be glory!

Yours in Christ, Bishop Rick Jaech



gether with all the holy names of God, we offer our prayer together with Christ, our Lord. Amen.
God's people join in prayer for Cheri, Raquel, Dana, Susan Bylund, Dacey, Dean Christianson, Emmersyn, Josiah, Yvette Koerner, Mert Turner, Audra Wieler, Tim Garney, Michael Silver, Helen Velling, Mike Barkstrom, Cher, Linda, Tom Plumlee and we pray for family and friends mourning the death of Jeff Sivonen. May he rest in peace and rise in glory. We pray for family and friends mourning the death of Sister Gerry Marie. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.



August BIRTHDAYS and ANNIVERSARIES

BIRTHDAYS:

Annette Biornstad, August 2
 Arvid Iverson, August 4
 Nathan Gundersen, August 10
 Jeff Gundersen, August 13
 Erin Burns, August 17
 Emily Penttila, August 18
 Gary Morean, August 23
 Lynette Lile, August 29
 Robyn Hidalgo, August 31
 Charles Scamman, August 31

ANNIVERSARIES:

Gary & Annette Biornstad, August 3
 Hank & Gloria Bilderback, August 5
 Val Metropoulos & Steve Swanson, August 11
 Darrell & Elaine Lokken, August 12
 Mike & Moonbeam Kupka, August 14
 Rob & Kristine Burns, August 16
 Ken & Vicki Mitchell, August 18
 Gene & Eileen Schermer, August 23
 Arlene & Mike O'Connor, August 24



Naomi, Carmon, & Ruth Ann for helping Vicky assemble materials.

Helpers who take food down to the Food Bank.

Kathy Wehage for volunteering to help out Brenda with the prayers.

Carmon Shaw for organizing the remembrance celebration for Ardith Savoy.

Guy Harper and Kris Gienger for volunteering to being added to the May/November Union Gospel Team.

Those who are continuing to donate to either the Food Bank or Salvation Army

THANKS WE'VE RECEIVED

- **Habitat for Humanity** thanks Amazing Grace for a donation of \$75.40
- **Union Gospel Mission** thanks Amazing Grace for donations of \$75.40 & \$49.23
- **PLU** thanks Amazing Grace for a donation of \$50.67
- **Family Promise** thanks Amazing Grace for a donation of \$50.67
- The Salvation Army

Hello Friends,

Thank you for your continued support year after year. We greatly appreciate the kindness and generosity you continue to show. We wouldn't be able to continue our mission of helping those in need in our community without people like you.

Curtis and Shayna Steinhauer are gifted with an original painting by artist Vicki Mitchell.

Photo taken and submitted by Diane Hanson.



SERVING AT AMAZING GRACE

UNION GOSPEL MISSION

August 1

Carmon Shaw, Leader

Theresa Kaufman, Eileen Schermer, Arlene O'Conner, Cynthia Johnstone, Tara Main

Substitutes: Hiedi Seelke, Carmon Shaw: 360-532-2940



Doug from UGM says to plan on 35-45 dinner guests and to have food there between 3-4:00.

If food needs to be heated up or cooked drop off earlier.

You may deliver food to the door in the alley. Ring the bell by the door and they will come and get the food.

GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS

DATE TBD

This is an opportunity to spend a few hours making our community a better place.

We will do two projects, one in the fellowship hall and the other out in the community.

Please consider what you would like our projects to be this year.

We need a coordinator for the in-house project and another coordinator for the community project.

Please consider taking on one of these roles, or find a co-organizer or even a team to share the duties.

Contact Suzan Stegemoeller (360) 249-6986 with questions and ideas. SHALOM

SCHOOL KITS

Eileen Schermer shared the latest Lutheran World Relief Newsletter with me and by the time I was done reading the article about the value of a school kit, I was in tears. Here is just part of that story: *in a pre-school classroom in Tanzania, 4 & 5 years old boys and girls walked forward to receive a school kit. To mark the occasion, parents of the children lined the walls of the classroom joyously singing as each child came forward. They were singing a song that in Swahili means "the grace of Jesus".*

The school kits weren't just filled with supplies.

They were filled with the grace of Jesus, made real to these families and pre-schoolers by the love of Lutherans like you! With each kit we pack with supplies and love, it is felt in the lives of children and strengthened relationships between students and

teachers.

Your participation in helping send school kits to Lutheran World Relief matters. You are making a difference. Please consider, once again, sharing generously to provide children the opportunity to learn!!

Oh, and when the final student came forward in that preschool classroom to receive their new school kit, the parents began to sing a new song: "Let love persist." Do I hear an amen?!

There are lists of needed supplies available in the parish hall. If you do not wish to shop and would like to give us funds to do it for you, just let us know. Please talk to Arlene Torgerson or Eileen Schermer if you have any questions. Thank you!

PRAYER CHAIN CO-LEADERS

Beginning in August Kathy and Brenda will be co-leaders.

Contact Brenda or Kathy for any prayers or updates you may have. Brenda Grant: brenda_k_grant@hotmail.com & Kathy Wehage: kwehage55@yahoo.com.

GROWING AT AMAZING GRACE

PATH FOR STRENGTHENING ACTIVE LAY MINISTRY (PSALM)

Application Process-Open

Rooted in Lutheran theological tradition and in the

context of the Pacific Northwest, PSALM is a community of learners and leaders engaged in a process of conversation, reading, prayer and practice with the intention of growing in faith, clarity of mission, and skills for ministry.

PSALM cohorts meet for four terms over two years. Each term begins with an overnight retreat at Seabeck Conference Center in Seabeck, WA. We worship together, share meals and hear from presenters on a variety of subjects. Students receive their books and syllabus for the upcoming term. Retreats take place the first Fri./Sat. in October and March. The fee for each term is \$400, which covers the cost of retreats, books and presenters. Generous donors have made it possible to offer scholarships for PSALM, so fees ought not be a barrier for anyone.

To apply for the cohort that will begin in September 2023, please complete application materials at <https://swwasynod.org/leadership/growing-leaders/psalm/> (application, Pastor's recommendation, Council covenant and Learning Community agreement). Application materials are due August 15th, 2023.

If you have questions, please contact Pastor Rebecca Shjerven at shjervrl@plu.edu or 253-961-2412.

IS IT TIME TO CHANGE THE QUESTIONS YOU ARE ASKING ABOUT YOUR CHURCH?

I was recently asked by my pastor, Melanie Vaughn-Colwell of Oakhurst Baptist Church, to be part of a conversation sermon. This is where two or more people sit in front of the congregation to discuss the scripture and themes together, instead of a more traditional pulpit sermon by one individual.

I was honored to be asked and was especially excited because of the topic she suggested: What questions should the Body of Christ be asking ourselves in 2023?

As a researcher, this is the kind of conversation that I have with churches all the time. These questions are ones that have been asked for decades:

- Why is our church shrinking?
- How can we get more people to come to church?
- How can we survive financially?
- How can we make hard decisions without people getting mad?
- How can we get back to the way things were when the pews and coffers were full?

The curiosities and frameworks that lie beneath the surface of these questions are more accurately represented as:

- A church's growth or decline is based mostly on internal factors, so if we shrink we must be doing something wrong, and if we "fix" things we will grow.
- A "good" church has more people participating

year over year, and certainly not less.

- A church's survival depends on traditional financial models (i.e. giving budget).
- A church is better off when things stay non-controversial and keep the peace.
- A church's survival in a form that looks like a glorified past is the ultimate goal.

I have to admit that when I started working with churches, I saw most of those frameworks as accurate and helpful for church health and vitality. I'm almost embarrassed to look back on that now. Melanie's brilliant question reminded me that new times call for new questions, and finding new ways forward means we must often leave old frameworks behind. Asking new questions generates alternate curiosities and evolves our understanding of what it means to be Christians together, whether or not we call it "church."

As Melanie and I explored these questions together, and as I reflected afterward, I came away with a few new questions and new frameworks to accompany them.

1. How is God calling a particular group of people to fellowship, break bread, learn, and serve together this month/quarter/year?
2. Together as a congregation, are we enough to truly build community and honestly know and be known (a favorite Oakhurst Baptist Church phrase)?
3. Is our church a learning lab for navigating life's changes and conflicts in healthy and transformative ways?



4. What kind of church does God need to heal the world in 2023, in 2053, and in 2123?

Having now asked these new questions, an updated framework goes something like this:

- Groups of people are called together by God to do Christian life together.
- The forms this will take are unique and local and will vary as much as the flora and fauna that surrounds us.
- Truly “doing life together” requires more than 1 hour per week in order to share practice, build community, and truly know and be known.
- Christian life together should teach and model healthy communication, and transformational change skills, and must focus on the well-being of others more than ourselves.

Sasha Gienger and Sasha Gienger were baptized by Pastor Val. Hank Bilderback is assisting minister.

Photo taken and submitted by Diane Hanson.



It is plausible that this new framework will continue to evolve, if not fully change, over the course of the next decade. But I continue to feel it has great potential to change the way we model how people called by God are to do life together. Whether or not those groups look, sound, or act like old models of “church” is irrelevant.

We must ask new questions, lean into new curiosities, and build new frameworks to lean into the new things God is doing in and with us. It’s okay if they are not perfect – now or never. We have room to get things wrong and try again. Because no matter what, God is with us in all of it, loving and holding us as we question, explore, and build.

In CPR Connects by anna@convergenceus.org
June 8, 2023 ©2020 CONVERGENCE. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

SAVE THE DATE: CELEBRATON 2023

Saturday, Sept 23rd-- "Celebration 2023" . Celebrate our restored stained glass and our 20th Anniversary as a unified Amazing Grace Lutheran Church.

Celebration Service at 2:00 pm. In the sanctuary and displays, stained glass demonstration, Swedish and Norwegian food, video, etc. from noon until two o'clock, and after service until 4:00 or longer.

CELEBRATION COMMITTEE REQUESTS

The Celebration Committee is seeking the following: 1. ADDRESSES of people you want to receive an invitation (to Dee Erickson), 2. Written RECOLLECTIONS of Church Memories, typed or

by hand, of Trinity, Our Savior's or Amazing Grace, (to Vicki Mitchell) and 3. PHOTOS of church events from the past (to Vicki Mitchell).

Calling all our fabulous cooks and bakers to share their family's heritage recipes. We are hoping to present traditional treats to our guests at the Celebration. There is a sign up sheet in the Fellowship hall. THANK YOU.



CELEBRATION 2023-CHOIR

For Your Consideration and Forward Thought!! Would like you to think about joining the celebration choir for the Sept. 23rd Celebration. All

voices, all levels, and all ages (friends, too), are welcome to participate. We will be gathering after Labor Day to begin rehearsals.

HANDBELLS & CHOIR

Handbells and Choir to Begin Rehearsals. In addition to preparing for the Sept. 23rd celebration and beyond, music rehearsals are starting up. Handbells

will begin on Wed, August 30, @ 6:00 and choir will begin on Sunday, August 27, @ 9:00. Both will meet in the parish hall. Questions/concerns? Talk to Hank or Kris.

NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY COMING SOON!

Do we have your latest address & contact info? Do we have a recent photo of you? All members and friends are encouraged to be a part of our new directory. We are getting close to going to print on this. If you have updates please contact: Amy Ostwald at aaostwald@gmail.com or Arlene Torgerson at danishdame@comcast.net. Thanks!

Thank you, Stephanie in Montana, for donating so all of us kids can have Amazing Grace t-shirts!

Maks and Sasha Gienger enjoying fellowship with their new t-shirts.

Photo taken and submitted by Diane Hanson.



OFFICE HOURS

Church office is open: **Tuesday & Thursday 8-2, Wednesday 8-1 & Friday 8-11.** AGLC Office
360.532.8250 amazing111@comcast.net

If you have a pastoral emergency, please contact Mark Smalley 360.249.1955



President	Mark Smalley	(360) 249-1955	marktrish86@gmail.com
Vice President	Diane Hanson	(360) 581-4806	djh431@hotmail.com
Treasurer	Tara Main	(360) 580-1577	taramain@comcast.net
Youth & Family	Michelle Weiberg	(360) 532-6512	weibergs@comcast.net
Outreach	Suzan Stegemoeller	(360)580-3407	suzansteg@hotmail.com
		LANDLINE:	
		(360) 249-6986	
Worship	Sarah Channel	(360) 888-9538	channel924@gmail.com
Fellowship	Lynette Lile	(360) 589-3117	carcounseling@gmail.com
Property	Mike Barkstrom	(360) 589-1393	mkbarks1@gmail.com
Pastor			

Financial Secretary-This position unfilled. To be managed on a non-council basis and report to President..

BUILDING REPAIRS/MAINTANCE

Please notify Mike Barkstrom or send a message to the church office if there are any repairs needed at the church. Sometimes members or visitors notice things that need to be fixed that the committee is not aware of. Your input is helpful in these matters.

Mike Barkstrom: mkbarks1@gmail.com- (360) 589-1393



Ministers: The People of
Amazing Grace

Office Administrator: Vicky Kolb

Church office: 111 E. 4th Street
360) 532-8250
amazing111@comcast.net
amazinggraceaberdeen.org

Pianist: Kristine Burns

AUGUST WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE

August 6

Preach: Hank Bilderback; **Preside:** Diane Hanson; **Liturgist:** Keith Lile; **Reader:** Marti Debandt; **Ushers/Greeters:** Dee Erickson & Naomi Kraiger; **Depositors:** Carmon Shaw & Kathy Wehage; **Fellowship:** Ostwald, Gundersen, Stegemoeller; **Communion setup:** Cynthia Johnstone; **Stream Team:** Xander Johnstone

August 13


Preach: Diane Hanson; **Preside:** Joelle Buckman; **Liturgist:** Hank Bilderback; **Reader:** Carmon Shaw; **Communion Assistants:** Joan & William Rabung; **Ushers/Greeters:** Jim & Michelle Weiberg; **Depositors:** Kristine Finazzo & Anneliese Kraiger; **Fellowship Hosts:** Lile, D. Erickson, Bilderback, Burns; **Communion setup:** Laura Carle; **Stream Team:** Amy Ostwald

August 20

Preach: Joelle Buckman; **Preside:** Hank Bilderback; **Liturgist:** Laura Carle; **Reader:** Mark Smalley; **Communion Assistants:** joni Hildreth & Carmon Shaw; **Ushers/Greeters:** Phil & Susan Stegemoeller; **Depositors:** Mark Ostwald & Greg Johnstone; **Fellowship Hosts:** Carle, Torgerson, Smalley/Safstrom; **Communion setup:** Carmon Shaw; **Stream Team:** Keith Lile

August 27

Preach: Joe Fernandez; **Preside:** Hank Bilderback; **Liturgist:** Greg Johnstone; **Reader:** Diane Hanson; **Communion Assistants:** Sarah Channel & Arlene Torgerson; **Ushers/Greeters:** Mark & Amy Ostwald; **Depositors:** Joelle Buckman & Ruth Ann Carlson; **Fellowship Hosts:** Shaw, Green, O'Connor, Lokken, Fernandez; **Communion setup:** Tara Main; **Stream Team:** Xander Johnstone

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 SENIOR ART GROUP 10-3	2 AA 5:30-6:30	3 MASTER QUILTERS 9-3	4	5
6 10 WORSHIP 11 FELLOWSHIP	7 OFFICE CLOSED	8 HANDSEWERS 9-3 SENIOR ART GROUP 10-3	9 AA 5:30-6:30	10 MASTER QUILTERS 9-3	11	12
13 10 WORSHIP 11 FELLOWSHIP	14 OFFICE CLOSED	15 SENIOR ART GROUP 10-3 COUNCIL MEETING 6:15	16 AA POTLUCK & MEETING 4:30-7:30	17 MASTER QUILTERS 9-3	18	19
20 10 WORSHIP 11 FELLOWSHIP	21 OFFICE CLOSED	22 HANDSEWERS 9-3 SENIOR ART GROUP 10-3	23 AA 5:30-6:30	24 MASTER QUILTERS 9-3	25	
27 9 CHOIR 10 WORSHIP 11 FELLOWSHIP	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29 SENIOR ART GROUP 10-3	30 AA 5:30-6:30 HANDBELLS 6PM	31 MASTER QUILTERS 9-3		

AUGUST

UPCOMING EVENT
 Celebration 2023- September 23 11-4
 Gods Work our Hands TBD



Please join us for worship
Sundays at 10am in person or on our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/Amazing-Grace-Lutheran-Church-114570725233786/>

Or anytime at: amazinggraceaberdeen.org
AMAZING GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
of Grays Harbor



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

VISION

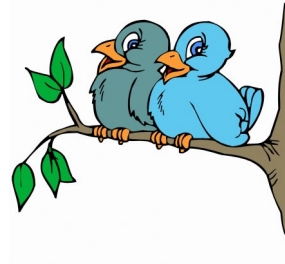
A welcoming place where grace happens!

MISSION

To experience and share God's love through worship, education and community

VALUES

- Radical Hospitality
- Passionate worship
- Intentional faith development
- Risk-taking mission and service
- Extravagant generosity



Amazing Grace Lutheran Church of
Grays Harbor

111 E. 4th Street

Aberdeen, WA 98520

360.532.8250

amazing111@comcast.net

www.amazinggraceaberdeen.org



PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE