

# THE WITTENBERG WAY



Dear Grace Family,

Toward the end of the Apostles' Creed, we confess that we believe "in the Communion of Saints." This same idea is also expressed in our liturgy right before we sing the *Sanctus* in preparation for Holy Communion. We join together with the "angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven." There are three truths that we express in these snippets from our liturgy: (1) that there is life beyond this life for those who belong to Christ; (2) that we are in communion with them here and now; and (3) we express our desire to join those saints both now in worship and later when we depart from this life.

February 2023 Volume 10, Issue 2

## WHAT'S INSIDE

ST. VALENTINE	PG. 2
STEWARDSHIP	PG. 3
PASTOR RECOMMENDS	PG. 4
PRO-LIFE ADVOCATE	PG. 5
FACES OF GRACE	PG. 6 - 7
PRAYERS, BIRTHDAYS AND EVENTS	PG. 8

I've been thinking a lot about this in the process of grieving over several recent deaths, including our former organist, Michael Burke, and of course, much closer to home, the death of my mother-in-law, Vicki Sebastian, who was a dear and faithful woman of God.

In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, St. John was caught up to heaven to see a series of visions. He writes: "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (Rev. 7:9-10). Note the fact that this is not an exclusive group—there are people there from all walks of life. The Church is a diverse multitude of sinners saved by God's grace, and they are all gathered together around God's throne.

Secondly, we are told in this passage how this multitude came to be around the throne of God. An angel tells John, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Some commentators think that this is a reference to certain martyrs who made it through an intense period of persecution in the first century. But it is more likely a picture of all the saints who have persevered through life in this fallen world. After all, our Lord told us, "In this world, you will have tribulation" (John 14:27). No one passes through this world without experiencing some scars. Some may have more than others; but we all will face many "dangers, toils, and snares" before our lives are complete.

Furthermore, we are told that this multitude is clad in white robes. White is symbolic of purity. These garments represent the righteousness of Christ which He has graciously given to all His people in Holy Baptism. These departed saints are in the very presence of God; they no longer suffer the weaknesses and pains associated with this world; and the Lamb Himself, who paradoxically is also their Shepherd, has led them to the "living fountains of waters." In short, they have entered eternal life in the presence of God.

As we consider this vision, it should bring us a great deal of comfort because we learn that our loved ones, who have departed this life in faith, whom we miss dearly, are safe with their Savior. We may miss them here in this life, but we can live in the hope of a grand reunion one day. Their battle is over; their rest is won. They are absent from the body but present with the Lord. All that remains for them is to return with our Lord to receive their resurrected and glorified bodies, and to enter the renewed heavens and earth.

When we gather to worship, we are as close as we can get to our departed loved ones in this life: for when we "lift up our hearts," we join them around the throne in our worship. This vision should also give us hope. All of us are going to face death (unless our Lord returns first). But if we belong to the Lord Jesus, if we have been cleansed by His Blood, and if we hold fast to our confession until our life's end, we shall join this great multitude around God's throne. If that is true, then there is nothing in this life that we should fear. For we are promised "that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38-39).

Gratefully Yours,

Pr. Thomas

## St. Valentine February 14

**Time Period** 3rd century AD

### Who was he?

A priest, physician, and martyr.

### Did you know?

- Valentine was martyred during the reign of Emperor Claudius II.
- Tradition suggests that on the day of his execution for his Christian faith, he left a note of encouragement for a child of his jailer written on an irregularly-shaped piece of paper.
- His steadfast faith in the midst of adversity is a reminder to all Christians that trust in God's promises is not in vain.



## DON'T REPLACE "AND" WITH "OR"

We've all heard that stewardship means giving to the church of our time, talents and treasure. This alliterative trinity helps us see that giving is not just about money, but about our whole lives. As we confess in the Small Catechism's explanation of the First Article of the Apostle's Creed, God gives us everything we have and enjoy. First we confess that God gives us "our body and soul, our eyes, ears, and all our members, our reason and all our senses" (SC II). Then we confess that He gives us material things. The time, talents, and treasure trinity places before our eyes the fact that we are to give something of all three of these things toward the mission of the church in thanksgiving for what God has provided. For everything we have, and indeed, everything we are, comes from God's fatherly, divine goodness and mercy.

The problem with this alliterative trinity comes when we replace one little word with another little word — when we replace the word *and* with the word *or*. It is always written with the *and*, but when we read it, we read it with the *or*. Thus this quite helpful trinity, which extolls that everything that we have and are is a gift from God, to be given back in service of His church, turns into a trinity that we can pick and choose from when we serve God. The giving of our time, talents *and* treasure turns into the giving of our time, talents *or* treasure.

*Out of His fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, He gives us each time, talents AND treasure as a means to bless those around us.*

Then the question arises: Can we give of our time and talents instead of our treasure? Or perhaps it is the other way round: Can we give of our treasure and not of our time and talents? But these are the wrong questions. The right question is, can we give of our time and talents in addition to our treasure? Yes, indeed, we are called to give of all three. The things that God gives us are not to be pitted against one another. Rather, they are given to us, and we are to press them all into God's service for benefit of His church and our neighbors in need.

Thus, we give all three. We give our treasure in the form of a generous, first-fruits proportion of our income. We give of our time in generosity for the benefit of Christ's holy church. We give of our talents in the same manner. Since God gave us all these things, we are called to give generously of all these things in faith toward Him and in fervent love to our neighbors.

For God has provided all these things for us. Out of His fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, He gives us each time, talents *AND* treasure as a means to bless those around us. We serve our neighbors with these things, blessing them with the blessings with which God has blessed us. We give of our time, talents and treasure to our families, our society, our church and our local congregations. And we do this because we know that we are not our own. Rather, we belong to God. We have been bought with a price: the holy, precious blood and innocent suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. He gave everything — His time, His talents and His treasure — to have us as His own and to live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness. We have these things as gifts and blessings from God. Let us then press them all into service for the sake of His love — time, talents and treasure together.

— LCMS Stewardship Ministry: [lcms.org/stewardship](https://lcms.org/stewardship)

## GRACE GIVING FOR JANUARY



- Your envelopes or those in the pews
- Online from your bank website
- Scan the QR code
- Text the amount to 84321
- The Giving Page at [grace.sandiego.com](https://grace.sandiego.com)
- Time and Talent s

January 2023 Actual Offerings	\$ 17,243
January Budget	\$ 24,700
<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>\$ 7,457</b>
2023 Annual Budget	\$269,450



## PASTOR RECOMMENDS: FAMILY LECTIONARY

A few families have started using Concordia Collective's Family Lectionary for their devotions and I wanted to bring it to your attention. The Family Lectionary is your day-by-day guide through the Sunday readings (lectionary). It also includes many of the major feasts and commemorations found in the Lutheran Service Book. There is a weekly hymn, memory verse, and catechism reading.

The layout, artwork, and family activities are top-notch. The price is quite high at \$60 but well worth the cost if your family will make use of it. Purchasing the Family Lectionary will also give you access to printable pages like coloring pages, weekly bookmarks, and memory cards.

We have one copy in the welcome center for you to peruse. If you should decide it's worth the investment, make sure you choose the one-year lectionary option that we follow at Grace Lutheran. You can purchase one at: <https://concordiacollective.shop/>



### LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS

A GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH TRADITION

As we journey with Jesus to the cross, let us come together for fellowship and worship on Wednesday evenings in Lent.

A Light Supper featuring homemade soups prepared by our members at 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

The Lenten Evening Service at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary.



### BACON, BIBLE & BROS

MEN'S BREAKFAST



Saturday, Feb. 25th at 8:00 a.m.

Topic: God's Preferred Pronouns

FILL YOUR BELLIES WITH GOOD FOOD AND YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS WITH GOD'S WORD.

## NEW SLOGAN. SAME OLD LIE.

Abortion has a new slogan for a more aggressive post-Roe movement. According to their website, “Shout Your Abortion is normalizing abortion and elevating safe paths to access, regardless of legality. SYA makes resources, campaigns and media intended to arm existing activists, create new ones, and foster collective participation in abortion access all over the country.” They even have “wearable info/propaganda” merchandise that will help get their “pro-abortion message out in the world.” In addition to t-shirts, they sell books, a box cutter and a laminated Thank God for Abortion prayer card.

Abhorrent, yes, but it’s also very crafty. SYA knows that women often feel shame and emotional pain after an abortion. SYA wants to convince women an abortion is something they can speak openly about, a kind of post-modern rite of passage rather than a source of guilt. At its core, SYA is another self-help therapy cult/logo-wear peddler.

### The Big Lie

The abortion industry is a big, lucrative business. It is in their financial interest to promote the notion that abortion is about as traumatic as a paper cut. The industry’s PR machine assists by refuting claims of lasting damage. This paragraph from What’s the Deal with Post-Abortion Syndrome? (Healthline.com) typifies the “abortion’s-no-big-deal” talking points.

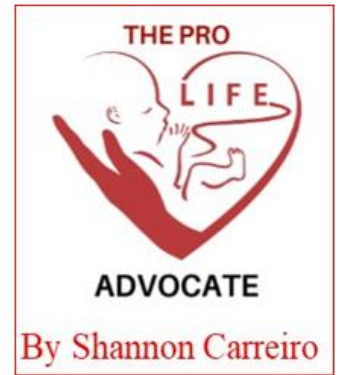
People often do experience intense emotions just before and immediately after having an abortion. But experts haven’t found any evidence to suggest these emotions linger or have a lasting impact on mental health...there’s no official diagnosis of post-abortion syndrome (PASS) in either the International Classification of Diseases or the recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. On the contrary, research overwhelmingly suggests abortion does not, in most cases, cause a trauma response or contribute to any lingering distress. A few of the many medical organizations that have spoken out in support of this conclusion include American Psychological Association, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and Center for Reproductive Rights.

This is hogwash. There are many reputable studies showing that the aftershocks from an abortion can be devastating, manifesting in debilitating guilt, destructive behavior, a sense of worthlessness, physical symptoms, psychological numbness, even suicide. You can read some of the most current studies at StandApart.org.

### Healing the Hurt with God’s Truth

If you or someone you know had an abortion and still suffer from that decision, faith-based help is available. CAPS now offers PACE (Past Abortion Care and Education), a new one-on-one counseling program. Contact Laurie, the coordinator, to arrange a confidential meeting and start the healing process. Email [pace@capsonline.org](mailto:pace@capsonline.org) or text her at 619-314-6063.

*All of us can help by sharing the good news that our God is merciful and forgiving. That’s something worth shouting about.*



We are a pregnancy care clinic for women and men providing early pregnancy medical help, a variety of pregnancy options education and resources (abortion options, parenting options, adoption options), peer consultations for those facing unexpected pregnancies, sexual health education, and post abortion support.

**All pregnancy services are FREE** and we provide low to no cost STI/STD testing. **All our services to you are private – your privacy is important to us.**

Making an appointment helps us insure there will be someone available to serve you and that you will not have to wait for care. We have convenient locations in the SDSU College Area, Pacific Beach, Downtown San Diego, and Kearny Mesa.

To contact Us Call: 619-337-8080 or Email: [options@capspregnancyclinics.org](mailto:options@capspregnancyclinics.org)

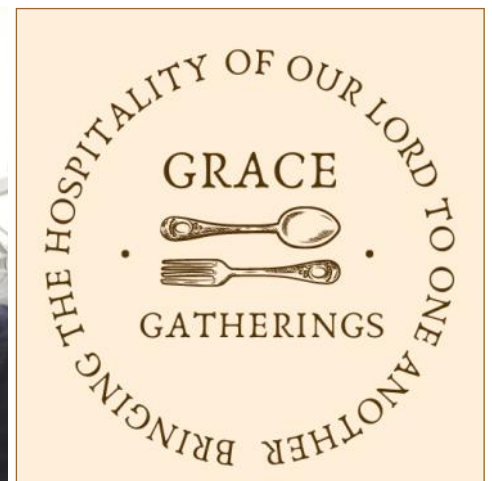




Pastor Brian installs two of our Council members for 2023. Heath Russert is our new Trustee whose duties include taking care of our physical buildings and property. Shannon Carreiro has been the Council secretary and will be serving a second term. Additional new members are Carl Lehman, Education Chair; Phillip Hawthorne and John Barber, ad hoc members.



Were you wondering? Yes, Scott Dorris and Mark Jordan do have long pants and wore them for a special event in January.



Two Grace Gatherings groups met for an evening of fun and fellowship. A delicious dinner and birthday cake was on the menu to celebrate everyone's birthday in the group.

If you and your family would like to be a part of a Grace Gatherings group, contact Pr. Brian or Gretchen in the church office.

## FACES OF GRACE



Devin Houts will be joining her older sister, Rachel, at Hillsdale College in the fall as an English major.



Claire Latham was relieved to learn that she will be moving to England in the fall to attend Oriel College at Oxford University as a history major.



Jackson Huntley recently transferred to Colorado Christian University, where he is playing baseball for the Cougars and studying for a marketing major.

Seven new members of Grace were installed in January. Mark Jordan, Autumn Laning, Josh & Laura Anderson, Daniel & Eileen Fohey and Dale Sorenson.

If you wish to deepen your commitment by becoming a member of Grace, please complete an information form at the Welcome Desk. Additionally, If you have moved or are not receiving our weekly emails, be sure we have your current contact information.



### CONCORDIA IRVINE HANDBELL TOUR IN SAN DIEGO.

Join us for an exciting concert of virtuosic handbell music! Led by award-winning composer Alex Guebert, Concordia University Irvine's handbell ensembles will perform a variety of music – sacred, classical, modern, and popular – using over 127 handbells and hand chimes, as well as other instruments. All performances are free.

- Thurs. March 2nd @ 7pm Grace Lutheran Church, Escondido
- Fri. March 3rd @ 6 pm Spreckels Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park
- Sat. March 4th @ 1 pm Our Redeemer Lutheran Church of San Diego
- Sat. March 4th @ 7 pm St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Chula Vista
- Sun. March 5th @ 9 am | 10:30 am concert First United Methodist of SD





3967 Park Blvd.  
San Diego, CA 92103  
619.299.2890  
gracesandiego.com

The Reverend  
Brian W. Thomas  
brianwilliamthomas@gmail.com

Director of Parish Music  
Dale Sorenson  
dalesorenson2@gmail.com

Church Secretary  
Gretchen Jordan  
gjordan@gracesandiego.com

Sunday Divine Service  
8:00 am & 10:30 am

Sunday School  
9:30 to 10:15 am

Nursery available

JOHN HANSEN  
Council President

RICHARD SEGARRA  
Treasurer

SHANNON CARREIRO  
Secretary

HEATH RUSSERT  
Trustee

KELLEY SCHMIDT  
Fellowship/Activities

JOHN BARBER  
PHILIP HAWTHORNE  
Members-at-Large

CARL LEHMAN  
Education

TED NILSEN  
Head Elder

JEREMY FULLAM  
STEVE HOLLMAN  
JASON HUNTLEY  
DARYL NEWTON  
TRAVIS WHEELER  
Elders

## PRAYERS

### PRAYERS FOR STRENGTH AND HEALING

Joyce, Dave, Bill, Phil, Edward, Colter, Daniel, Mary, and Larry

### PRAYERS FOR OUR MISSIONARIES

Rev. Tyler McMiller, Joshua Salas, Lorenzo Murrone, Luiz Lange,  
Michael & Nance Morizio (Lutheran Church planters & seminarians in Italy)

### PRAYERS FOR OUR MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS

Tajy George, Jack George, Jr., Jeff and Jordan Gruetzmacher, Philip Hawthorne,  
Josh Martin, Matthew Morgan, and Nathan Farish

### PRAYERS FOR THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND SERVICES

Joyce Rochester

## BIRTHDAYS

### FEBRUARY

7- Elle Hansen  
12- Nathan Russert  
15- Gloria Berge  
17- Gretchen Jordan  
27- Laura Latham  
27- Randy Houts  
27- Georgia Thompson

### MARCH

4 - Ted Nilsen  
19- Kirschten Huntley  
30- Mrs. Bong Lee

If we missed your birthday,  
contact the office:  
gjordan  
@gracesandiego.com

## FEBRUARY POTLUCK

