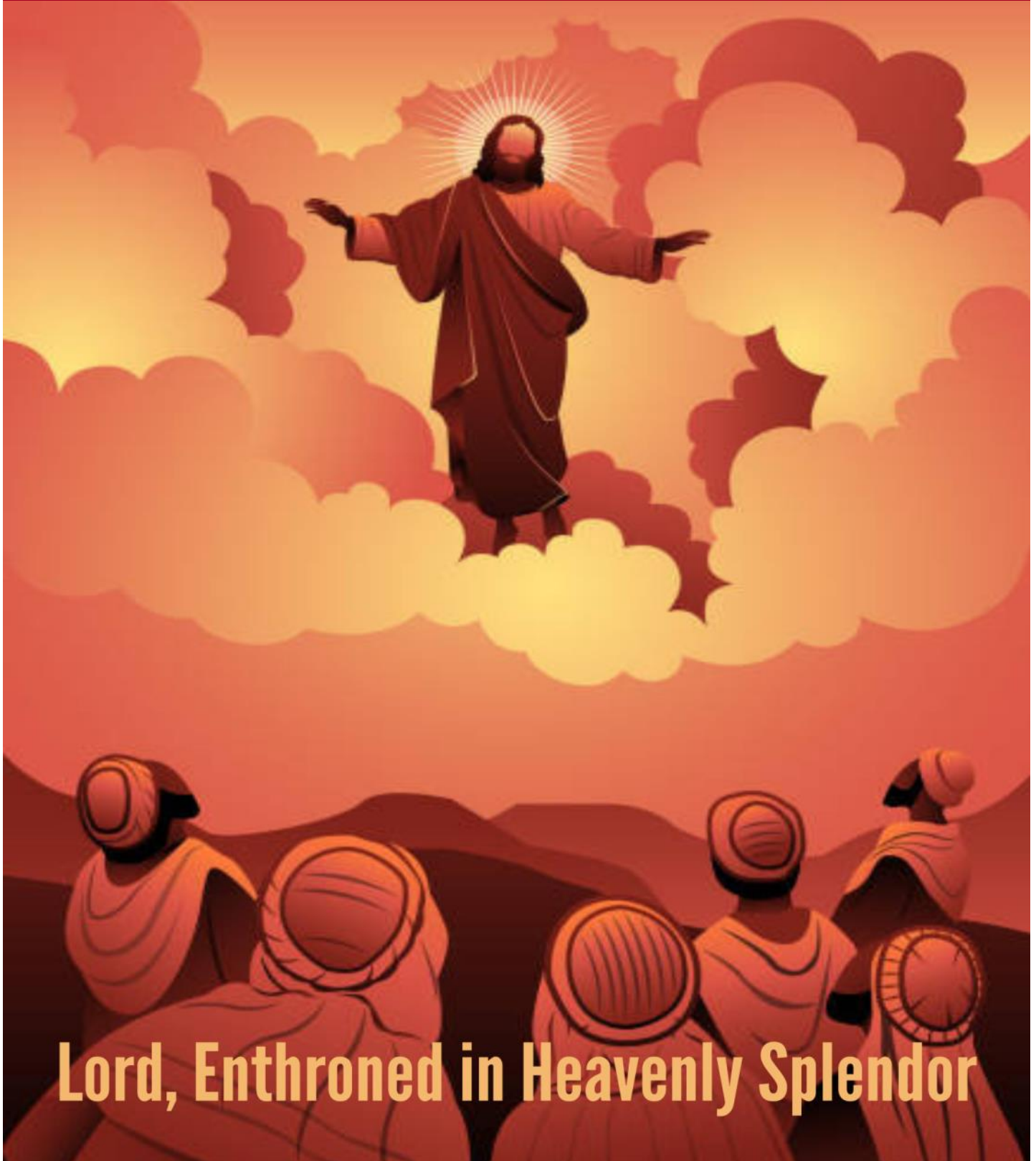




# WITTENBERG WAY

April 2024



## Lord, Enthroned in Heavenly Splendor

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Dear Grace Family,

On May 9th, we celebrated the Feast of our Lord's Ascension. It is one of my favorite days on the church calendar because we remember and celebrate one of the most significant historical events of all time. Sadly, our Lord's ascension does not receive as much attention as it deserves. Nevertheless, I'd like to take some time to show you its theological significance that provides so much practical comfort. The epistle reading for the Ascension is always from the first chapter of Acts. Here I want to highlight verses 9-11:

*And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, <sup>11</sup> and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."*

What we learn from this summary is that the ascension matters because Jesus is alive, exalted, and returning.

First, the ascension matters because it means that Jesus is ALIVE. That might sound like the most obvious thing in the world, but it changes everything. The disciples and hundreds of others witnessed the risen Lord Jesus. Luke wants us to be left without a doubt that Jesus had been raised. He spent forty days with the disciples, where he presented many convincing proofs that he was alive. The disciples went from being disillusioned, fearful, and scattered, to being passionate, courageous, and focused, being willing to proclaim the Good News of Jesus, even in the face of imprisonment, beatings, persecution, and martyrdom. All the evidence points to the fact that Jesus did indeed rise, physically from the dead.

But that wouldn't mean much if Jesus didn't ascend! Jesus isn't still around (at least physically), and if He didn't ascend it could only mean one of two things: either He never actually rose from the dead, or that after he had risen from the dead, he died again at some point. The consequence of this would mean that we do not worship a living Lord. But that's certainly not what Luke believed, nor the disciples, nor in fact, any of the authors of the New Testament.

This is eyewitness language not metaphorical flourish. Luke is not merely describing some spiritual ascension, but that Jesus' whole body ascended. It's why the messengers could say, that THIS SAME Jesus will return. And the consequences of Jesus being alive are mind-blowing. For it means that:

- We don't worship a dead King, but a living Lord;

- Jesus is not merely a distant memory, but a living reality;
- Jesus is not just someone we can know of, but we can know and depend on...now and forevermore.

Mohammed died. Buddha died. But Jesus is alive. He always lives. Which therefore means that he is the only one who can save completely.

Second, the ascension matters, because it means that Jesus is EXALTED. Despite all of the disciple's confusion, this was a vindicating moment. Christ had been exalted on the cross to pay for the price for sin, now He was exalted and enthroned at the right hand of God. Because He was the only one who could be! There is no dominion over which Jesus' Lordship does not extend. He took our resurrected and glorified humanity with Him into the heavenly realms where He now reigns as a benevolent King over us all. This too is Good News.

Finally, the ascension matters, because it means that Jesus is RETURNING. We have no idea when, but Jesus has told us many times and in various ways to be ready, to be watchful, to be prepared. The disciples had to await the outpouring of the Spirit before they began to preach and plant churches. Unlike the disciples, we don't have to wait for the Spirit to be outpoured, because if you have been baptized and believe in Christ as Lord, you've already received that gift. And as we await the day of our ascended King's return, He has empowered us with His Spirit to be witnesses of Him. May God bless us in our mission together.

Your brother in Christ,

Pr. Thomas



*Almighty God,  
your only Son was taken up into heaven  
and in power intercedes for us.  
May we also come into your presence  
and live forever in your glory;  
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit, one God,  
now and forever. Amen.*

The Ascension of Our Lord  
*Lutheran Book of Worship*

## MORE THAN A NEGATIVE

Even if you've never had to testify in court, a thousand TV shows have made you familiar with the question, "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?" Why not just make people swear to tell the truth? Or make them promise not to lie?

Any parent who has ever had to interrogate a child about a broken cookie jar or a scuffle over a toy knows the answer. There are plenty of ways to try to get out of trouble without technically lying. You tell just enough of the truth to skate on by.

We often play the game of seeing how close we can get to sinning without technically going over the line.

But in our heart of hearts we know that this is not what God intended when He gave us the commandments. He's not giving us a merely negative rule and challenging us to just barely stay away from this or that. There is much more to each commandment than a prohibition. We shouldn't just avoid murdering people — we should be of service to our neighbors.



For each negative prohibition in the commandments, there is a positive good that we are to cherish and protect. In the Eighth Commandment, that gift is the reputation of our neighbor and our relationship with him:

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything most kindly.

Your relationship with your family members (who are your nearest neighbors), the other members of your congregation, your coworkers, and your friends is one of the most precious gifts you have been given. You need to exercise good stewardship with this gift just as much as you need to exercise good stewardship with your life, resources, time, and income. This is an especially fragile gift because it's easy to ruin a relationship with slander and talking behind someone's back.

But speaking well of your neighbor in Christian love is absolutely free; it costs you nothing, yet it pays you great dividends. If you find this challenging at times, if you are tempted to speak ill of others, just remember that this other person is also a beloved child of God for whom your Lord Jesus suffered and died. Your Lord Jesus loves you both.

- LCMS Stewardship Ministry

If you are interested in giving of your time and talents, please contact Pastor Brian or Gretchen Jordan in the office. (gjordan@gracesandiego.com) We have opportunities available.

## APRIL 2024 GIVING

April Offerings	\$ 16,631
April Budget	<u>\$ 19,652</u>
Shortage	<b>\$ - 3,021</b>
YTD Actual	\$ 70,612
YTD Budget	<u>\$ 83,521</u>
Shortage	<b>\$ -12,909</b>

### HOW TO GIVE

- Your offering envelopes or those in the pews
- Online from your bank website
- Scan the QR code here
- Text the amount to 84321
- The Giving Page at [grace.sandiego.com](http://grace.sandiego.com)
- Time and Talents—see Pr. Brian





# This Old Church

by Shannon Carreiro, Council President

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I was a huge fan of the PBS show *This Old House*, partly because I had a crush on Norm Abrams, the plaid-clad master craftsman who invariably solved seemingly insurmountable carpentry problems. Grace Lutheran is blessed to have our own skilled craftsmen, handymen and jacks-of-all-trades. Like Norm, they do a masterful job, often jury-rigging solutions using materials on hand or salvaged. But sometimes, repairs are too big, too complicated or the damage is too advanced for our homegrown miracle-workers. That's where we find ourselves now. This Old Church is over 100 years old and she needs a lot of TLC.

A short-list from Trustee Heath Russert's most recent report includes: repair/restore our stained glass windows; ongoing repairs to our plumbing; reglaze/replace all the windows in the outbuildings; repair various roof leaks; repair and repaint plaster damaged by roof leaks, some of which are threatening wiring. Those are some of the big items. Like our homes, our church also has an endless loop of maintenance tasks.

There is good news in this story. We are solvent. We have money in the bank. Our membership has a track record of stepping up with generous donations to underwrite major projects and contributing volunteer hours to help with routine campus clean-up. We thank God for all those blessings.

A couple of years ago, a few of you were asked to identify what you thought were Grace Lutheran's strengths. Every single response included some variation of "a beautiful place to worship." It is indeed one of San Diego's most beautiful churches, and one of the city's oldest. Attending to these much-needed repairs will help our beloved church continue to welcome worshippers for another century. Join us for the special mid-year voters' assembly Saturday, June 1 at 5 p.m. to learn more about our buildings, their upkeep and future campus projects.

## OUR DOORS ARE OPEN!

Join Us on  
Sat. June 1 @ 5 PM

There will be a special voters' assembly at 5 p.m. prior to our worship service at 6:30. \*

In addition to voting for a new elder this is an opportunity for you to learn more about our church buildings, upkeep and future campus projects.

Refreshments will be served.

\* There is no Sunday service on June 2.



# A Patient's a Person, No Matter How Small

Dr. Bill Lile, D.O. has a simple message that sums up the entire pro-life movement: *"A patient's a person, no matter how small."*

Lile proved his point in an engaging, wow-inducing presentation at the 24<sup>th</sup> annual CAPS fundraising dinner last month.

A board certified obstetrician and gynecologist, Lile has served as a hospital OB/GYN Department Chair and instructor with the University of Florida and Florida State Medical School OB/GYN residency programs. He turned what was Florida's largest abortion provider into a major crisis pregnancy center. He is part of a nationwide network of 500 physicians who voluntarily perform abortion pill reversals. (This, by the way, is vital work since abortion by pill now represents 63% of all terminations in the US.) His credentials are impressive, but it's his passion that makes him such a persuasive advocate.



Over the course of an hour, Lile presented animated videos demonstrating amazing surgical procedures. Aided by ultrasound, surgeons are successfully treating in utero:

Rh disease – transfusions replace fetal red blood cells that are being destroyed by an Rh-sensitized mother's immune system.

Spina bifida – this defect, in which the spine and spinal cord don't form properly, is a leading medical reason for abortion. *See the animated surgery here.* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLnYzCcTEEA>

Brain tumors – growths that can cause stroke or heart failure after birth.

Congenital heart defects - the most common type of birth defect, occurring in about one percent of live births in the United States.

Unequal placenta sharing between twins – using a laser, the surgeon divides the single placenta, allowing each half to become an independent food source, assuring both babies thrive.

After each video, Lile showed a photo a child who is benefiting from that particular in utero procedure, punctuating the point by repeating his mantra: *a patient's a person, no matter how small.*

## The Main Point

When the FDA, an agency of our federal government, approved in utero spina bifida surgery it also acknowledged that each surgery involved two patients. Lile took that to mean both are persons equally entitled to all the rights guaranteed by our Constitution. He believes that the personhood of the preborn child can be understood through love and empowered education. And that is how we will end abortion.

- Shannon Carreiro



## CAPS ANNUAL DINNER

Several Grace Lutheran members joined Pr. Brian and Rachel to support CAPS pregnancy and medical clinics' annual fundraiser dinner. It was a truly inspiring and informative night as obstetrician, Dr. Bill Lile from ProLife Doc, spoke about the advances in fetal surgery and the treatment of the pre-born as patients with rights. If you'd like to learn more, we highly recommend you check out Dr. Lile at [www.prolifedoc.org](http://www.prolifedoc.org).





## AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS AWARD

Pr. Brian was recently honored with a super-hero clergy award from the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists (AGO) for support of the organ, church musicians, and traditional worship. The San Diego chapter of the AGO meets regularly throughout the year in our Fellowship Hall where our Music Director and organist, Dale Sorenson, serves as their hospitality chair.



## THURSDAY NIGHT THING (TNT)

We had 30 people join us at Khan's Cave for our last Thursday Night Thing. These relaxed events held throughout the city allow our members to enjoy fellowship and food while building lasting friendships. Stayed tuned for our next one.



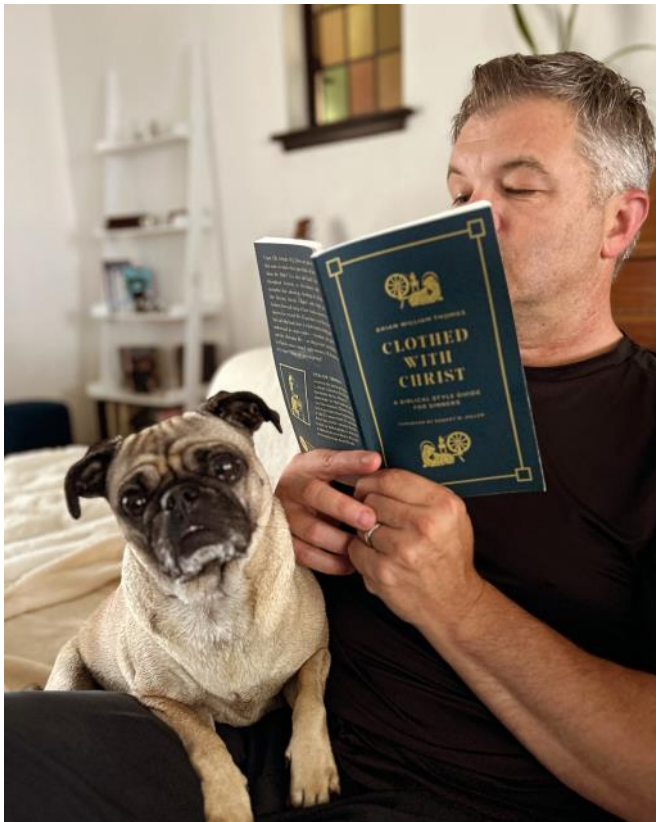
## GRACE'S NEW MINISTRY PARTNER

Grace Lutheran is partnering with the Lutheran Mission Society of San Diego in support of local Gospel work. Most importantly, Pr. Brian will be forming a friendship and supporting relationship with Pr. Job Jiménez, who serves as the church planter and pastor of Iglesia Luterana Cristo Redenter in Tijuana. The harvest is ripe and Pr. Job is doing an excellent job in faithfully serving this community and we hope to come alongside as a sister congregation to support in whatever way we can.



**COMING SOON***Clothed with Christ: A Biblical Style Guide for Sinners*

Pr. Brian and Grace recently received a preview copy of his next book that will be available this fall by 1517 Publishing.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO KELLEY CLARK**

Kelly Clark received her Master of Arts in Theology from Concordia University, Irvine. Her thesis focused on the liturgical calendar integrating temporal and spiritual elements of the Christian faith in its cyclical structure of seasons, feasts, and observations.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO SPENCER HUNTLEY**

Our sole and ever-faithful 8:00 a.m. Crucifer, Spencer Huntley, was recently chosen to play for Team U.S.A U20 Rugby. The majority of players are in college, making Spencer the first high schooler to be invited to such an honor. Spencer was called up to the USA Men's U20 rugby team for their upcoming training camp in Bellingham, WA, and test matches in Canada on June 1 and June 6. At age 17, Spencer was the youngest player selected for the U20's. The Men's U20 team is made up primarily of the top collegiate and foreign players that are USA-qualified. If they win their series against Canada in early June, the USA U20's will play in Scotland at the U20 World Trophy tournament in July.

Spencer plays Scrum-Half, and was the U18 Player of the Tournament in Amsterdam last summer as a 16-year old for Team USA, and was also one of 13 players that represented the U18 USA Sevens team this past December in the Global Schools tournament in New Zealand.







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Gretchen Jordan  
gjordan@gracesandiego.com

SUNDAY DIVINE SERVICE  
8:00 am & 10:30 am

SUNDAY SCHOOL  
9:30 to 10:15 am  
Nursery available

SHANNON CARREIRO  
Council President

RICHARD SEGARRA  
Treasurer

PAUL HIMMELBERGER  
Treasurer Emeritus

DANIEL PAYLOR  
Secretary

HEATH RUSSERT  
Trustee

KELLEY SCHMIDT  
Fellowship/Activities

JOSH MELLOR  
Member-at-Large

CARL LEHMAN  
Education

TED NILSEN  
Head Elder

JEREMY FULLAM  
STEVE HOLLMAN  
JASON HUNTLEY  
DARYL NEWTON  
Elders

## BIRTHDAYS

### MAY

4- Valda Houts  
9- Janice Tseng  
12- Sheldon Lee  
17- Amy Russert  
19- Paul Himmelberger  
24- Kimberly Newton  
24- Heath Russert

28- Michelle Thompson  
28- Fran Willis  
29- Jeremy Belgau

### JUNE

3- Bennett Lee  
10- Elvie Nichols  
12- Jack George

## PRAYERS

### PRAYERS FOR STRENGTH AND HEALING

Dave, Phil, Mike, John, Heidi, Edward, Daniel, Joe, Nancy, Jan, Chris,  
Joe, Madison, Mary Jo, Marcia, Alicia, John and Marianne

### PRAYERS AWAITING A CHILD OF GOD

Jordan Gruetzmacher, Rachel Hawthorne, Teagan LeYanna

### PRAYERS FOR OUR MISSIONARIES & SEMINARIANS

Rev. Dr. Tardelli Voss and Vicar Rowan Turner

### PRAYERS FOR OUR MILITARY MEMBERS

Rev. Mario Ancira, Micah Burge, Tajy George, Daniel Fohey,  
Nathan Farish, Matthew Morgan, Jeff & Jordan Gruetzmacher

### PRAYERS FOR THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND

Joyce Rochester

## VOTERS' ASSEMBLY

### OUR DOORS ARE OPEN!

Join Us on  
Sat. June 1 @ 5 PM

There will be a special voters'  
assembly at 5 p.m. prior to our  
worship service at 6:30. \*

In addition to voting for a  
new elder this is an  
opportunity for you to learn  
more about our church  
buildings, upkeep and future  
campus projects.

Refreshments will be served.



\* There is no Sunday service on June 2.



## CONNECT WITH US