

# THE WITTENBERG WAY



Dear Grace Family,

St. Paul begins most of his letters with a prayerful thanksgiving: "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil 1:3-5). I want to echo the same to you. I am grateful for your "partnership in the gospel."

This fall season of worship, study, and fellowship have been for me like a drink of cold water on a hot day. Invigorating. Thank you to all who have been participating in Sunday School and the Wednesday morning Bible study. We are blessed to have opportunities to "grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ" together. I am also grateful for Travis Wheeler and his commitment to teaching our children not only *what* is true, but *why* it's true this year.

I am thankful for all of our volunteers who give so much of their time to prepare, clean up, and lead in a variety of ways. St. Paul often speaks of the Church as Christ's body, and like a body, it has a variety of functions that do its part to serve the greater whole. If you are new to Grace Lutheran and want to jump into service, please let me know. Many hands make light work.

I am grateful for our staff, council, and elders who faithfully lead and support the ongoing proclamation of Christ crucified and risen. Such support is often tedious as it includes things like meetings, insurance, budgets, contracts, and ongoing building preservation. I can tell you that none of these things is taught in seminary, so a church must rely upon the wisdom and experience of those you have elected to serve in such ways, and I can confidently say, you chose the right men and women for the job!

Lastly, I am grateful for my wife. She is a true "partner in the gospel." In fact, when God made Eve for Adam in the garden, He called her an *ezer kenegdo* in Hebrew (Gen 2:18). This phrase is notoriously difficult to translate into English, but it often is translated as "suitable helper." A suitable helper bothers some because it sounds like she is a lowly servant. But this is quite the opposite. *Kenegdo* is straightforward and means a counterpart, someone alongside. *Ezer* means "strength" or "rescue," and is often used to describe military operations. Thus when *ezer* is used to describe women it's not a term of inferiority or weakness, but of someone in the trenches of life that builds you up. It's a position of strength, not of servitude. And this is what Rachel is for me. She is a partner in the trenches of ministry with me and for me, always encouraging and strengthening me, which enables me to be a better pastor to you all.

In summary, thank you for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Gratefully Yours,

Pastor Thomas

October 2022 Volume 9, Issue 7

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GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Oktoberfest

FOOD • BEER • LIVE MUSIC • LOTS OF FUN!

**Saturday Oct. 29th, 2022**

**2:00 – 5:00 PM**

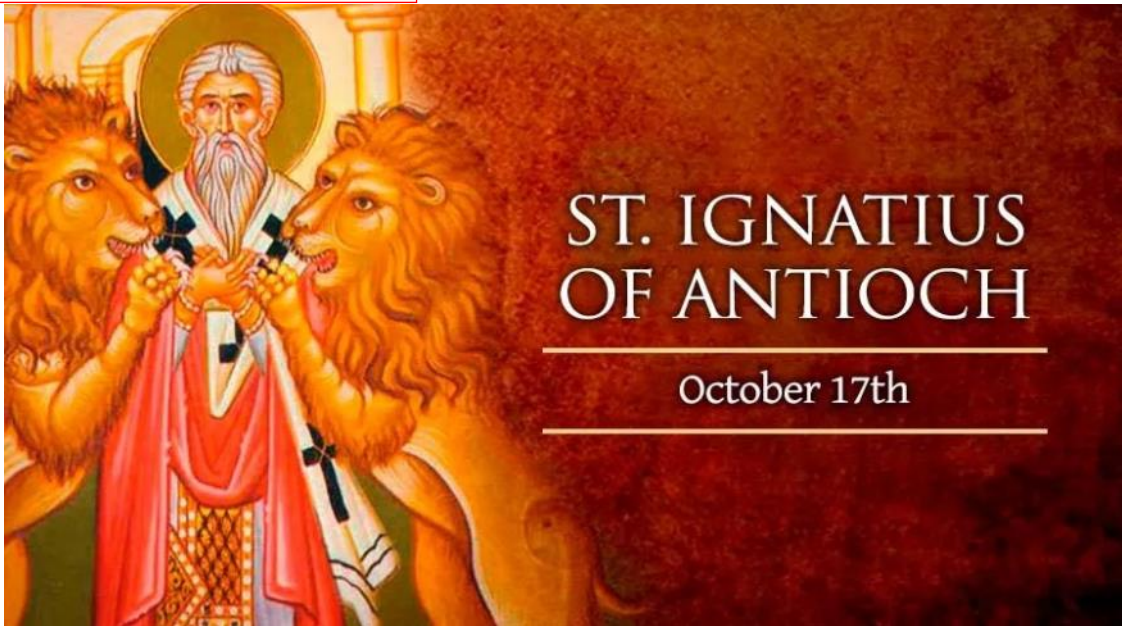
Bratwurst, sauerkraut, German potato salad, pretzels, and dessert

• PLEASE RSVP AT WELCOME DESK •

A free will offering to offset the cost is welcome but not required.

Grace Lutheran Church Courtyard at 3467 Park Blvd. SD





*The Lutheran tradition does not believe in praying to or invoking the saints, for we have no promise in Scripture that they hear us or can aid us. Instead, the Lutheran Confessions affirm three ways that we are to honor the saints of God that have come before us: (1) Thanksgiving to God as they provide examples of His mercy; (2) They strengthen our faith in God. Just as we see God's grace and forgiveness poured out upon them, so too we are to believe that God will be gracious and forgive us our sins; and (3) They serve as models of faith and virtue to be imitated according to our vocations in life. This year we will "salute the saints" in each issue of our newsletter as I provide a little background on a particular saint that is remembered for the month at hand.*

The Church celebrates the life and ministry of Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop and Martyr on October 17.

Ignatius was once a student of the Apostle John, and therefore, he is known as an Apostolic Father, that generation of pastors that followed in the footsteps of the original twelve. He was born around AD 35 in the province of Syria. According to Eusebius's history of the early church, he eventually was ordained Bishop of Antioch by St. Peter, which was the third largest city in the Roman Empire at the time. He was close friends with another prominent church father, Polycarp of Smyrna, who also trained for the ministry under St. John. Both men join as links to those who personally knew and ministered with Jesus and served as authenticating witnesses of the New Testament.

While the church was largely a regional movement around the turn of the second century, its influence was enough to be of concern to Roman authorities. The historian, Pliny the Younger, wrote the emperor Trajan about his fear of this new religion:

"The matter seems to me worthy of your consultation, especially on account of the number of defendants. Many of every age, of every social class, and even of both sexes, are being called to trial and will be called. Nor cities alone, but villages and even rural areas have been invaded by the infection of this superstition."

The Emperor responded with the following guidelines :

"You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been denounced to you as Christians... They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it--that is, by worshiping our gods--even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance. But anonymously posted accusations ought to have no place in any prosecution. For this is both a dangerous kind of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of our age."

## SALUTE THE SAINTS

During this time of increased persecution, Bishop Ignatius was eventually arrested and brought in chains to Rome to be fed to the wild animals in AD 108 since he would not denounce Christ and worship the false gods of Rome. On the long journey to his death, he wrote several letters to various congregations and pastors that have been preserved and are among the greatest treasures of the early church. In these letters, he spoke of ecclesiology, the importance of the Lord's Supper and partaking frequently together, and the role that faithful bishops and priests play in the church. In addition, Ignatius argued against disunity, and encouraged faithfulness to Christ and prayer for all the saints, while warning against false teachers entering the flock.

As Christian encouragement arrived during his death march, Ignatius told well-wishers not to attempt to free him because he embraced dying for the Lord. He writes:

“Nearness to the sword is nearness to God; to be among the wild beasts is to be in the arms of God; only let it be in the name of Jesus Christ. I endure all things that I may suffer with Him since He who became perfect man strengthens me.”

After his martyrdom in the arena, fellow Christians gathered what little was left of his bodily remains and brought him back to be interred at Antioch. His remains were later moved, finally ending up in Rome's Basilica San Clemente. He was faithful unto death. In one of his last letters to the Roman Church, he said:

"All the ends of the earth and all the kingdoms of this world would profit me nothing. As far as I am concerned, to die in Christ Jesus is better than to be kind of earth's widest bounds. I seek only Him who for our sake died; my whole desire is for Him who rose again for us."

***Collect for the Feast of Ignatius of Antioch***

Almighty God, we praise Your name for Ignatius of Antioch, pastor and martyr. He offered himself as grain to be found by the teeth of the wild beasts so that he might present to You the pure bread of sacrifice. Accept the willing tribute of all that we are and all that we have, and give us a portion in the pure and unspotted offering of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## STEWARDSHIP

At Grace Lutheran, we believe that the only way to understand any aspect of life is to view it through the lens of the gospel. In 2 Corinthians 8:9, Paul discusses the effect the gospel should have on the way Christians understand wealth: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes, he became poor so that you through his poverty might become rich.” Seeing Christ's sacrificial love for us, that He gave up everything so that we could inherit the riches of heaven, helps us develop a healthy attitude toward our material possessions and become people who are both generous and joyful. Understanding the riches we have already received in Christ not only liberates us from excessive concern over our wealth, talents, and time, but also motivates us to invest them in the eternal kingdom of God.

Please prayerfully evaluate your financial support and invest in your home church, so that we can continue to invest in you and others in our community with the gifts of Christ Jesus.

September 2022 Actual Offerings	\$ 13,746
September Budget	\$ 20,004
<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>\$ -6,358</b>

YTD 2022 Actual Offerings	\$ 175,897
Annual Budget	\$ 273,000
<b>Still needed</b>	<b>\$ -97,103</b>

## NINETY-FIVE WHAT?

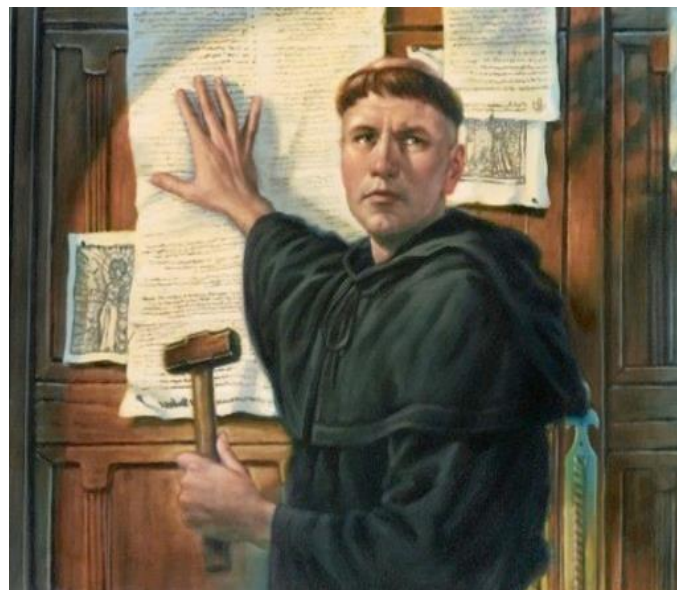
On the last Sunday of October, the Lutheran Church remembers and celebrates the Protestant Reformation. Technically speaking, the official day is on October 31, because it was on this day in 1517 that Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg thus setting off the events that would become known as the Reformation.

The Reformation was a complex, world-changing event, but truth be told, the 95 theses in and of themselves don't make for an exciting read. They were less earth-shattering than you may have been led to believe. As historian, Dan van Voorhis, notes on the podcast, *Christian History Almanac*: "Watch any of the Luther movies or look at any picture of the event and Luther invariably has a large hammer, a furrowed brow, a crowd is bustling, Luther gestures to the crowd, music swells, etc....etc..." In other words, we tend to over-dramatize the event into something more than it actually was at the time.

The posting of the theses was normal practice for scholarly debate. Academics would publicly post theses (not declarations, but ideas they were working on and wanted to debate). In fact, just a month earlier, Luther posted 97 Theses on the topic of scholasticism. But very few people cared about that subject so no one ever talks about it. The point of the 95 Theses was repentance. The common reading of Jesus telling His hearers to repent in the Vulgate (Jerome's Latin Bible) was "do penance" and this became the foundation for the idea of penance as a specific thing *you* could do. This is what undergirded the penitential system of indulgences. And indulgences can, were, and still are often abused!

One of the main problems Luther had was the selling of indulgences for the dead (the idea was that you could get them out of purgatory faster). Indulgences from the Pope for yourself were a common practice and remain to this day, though no one talks about the practice. The other problem was the publicity of the sale of indulgences at the time. Many made note that it was less than scrupulous. The benefactors of this indulgence were, in particular, Albert of Mainz who needed the money to pay back some bankers, and Pope Leo X who wanted a bigger and more splendid St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. So when news of an unknown German Augustinian monk's little academic debate got to them, they wanted to put the fire out quickly before such ideas spread. Why? Luther was going after their pocketbook. And his published ideas were "trending" long before Twitter!

Luther's chief point then was that to "do penance" or "repent" as taught in the Scriptures is a lifelong activity and not something that can be bought and sold. Luther wanted a little academic debate, but what God in His providence delivered was the wholesale recovery of the Gospel. And for that, we are grateful.



## REFORMATION SUNDAY OCTOBER 30TH



### JOIN THE 2022 HERE WE STILL STAND LIVESTREAM

Interested in Here We Still Stand but can't make it in-person this year? No worries! Join our three-day celebration online and enjoy talks focused on the radical message of God's grace toward sinners. Here is the link to livestream. <https://learn.1517.org/en/livestream>

## THE ASSAULT ON CHILDHOOD

We can celebrate the end of Roe v. Wade. We can support prolife causes. We can thank God for every abortion prevented. But the prolife fight doesn't end because a baby makes it out of the womb alive. Children in post-modern America are under attack by the very people and institutions they should be able to trust.

### Whose Child Is It?

We believe that every child belongs to God and is entrusted to its parents' care. Our culture has been working for decades to convince us otherwise. Usurpation of parental rights has become so pervasive that by February 2022, 37 states had bills pending to restrict teachers K-12 from teaching about Critical Race Theory and LGBTQ issues.

### Indoctrination Starts Early

Karen England, Executive Director of profamily Capitol Research Institute, believes the public school system is complicit in what she calls, "a grooming process to desensitize children to sexual acts, erode their innocence, and break down traditional societal boundaries that have protected children." As evidence England points to California's support for Comprehensive Sexual Education policies. CSE programs promote gender fluidity, the LGBT+ agenda, promiscuity, abortion and the trans lifestyle.

### Such policies are not unique to California:

Recently an Ohio branch of the National Education Association (the nation's largest teachers' union) was found to be giving public school employees QR codes to access a how-to guide to help them explain various sex acts to students.

Parents in Idaho caught the state government offering "porn literacy" to students.

An Illinois school district released a curriculum that teaches kindergarteners about the pride flag and LGBTQ+ terminology.

### How Low Can We Go?

Our culture is now aggressively hostile toward traditional family values. How else to explain drag queen story hours at our public libraries? How else to explain an 80-year old woman being publicly ridiculed when she objected to an adult man sitting in the women's locker room at the YMCA watching little girls change?

Last November a transgender assistant professor at Old Dominion University argued that it wasn't necessarily immoral for adults to be sexually attracted to children. Allyn Walker advocated using the term "minor-attracted person" instead of "pedophile" because "it's less stigmatizing." Public outrage forced Walker's resignation but he has since landed a new job at the Johns Hopkins University Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse. Let that sink in.

I'm left with an unsettling sense that Walker is more bellwether than outlier. After all, it only took me 30 seconds on a Google search to find three academic papers positing that A) childhood innocence is just a social/cultural construct and B) it's high time we rethought our position on childhood sexuality. In plain speak that translates to 'let's lower the age of sexual consent.' Tell me, who benefits from that?

### As Bad as It Gets

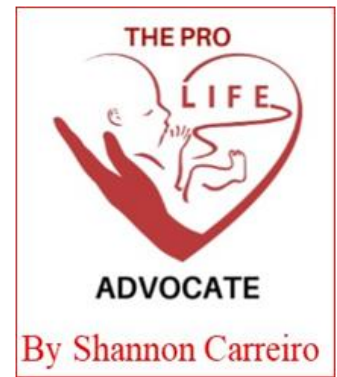
Author/podcaster Matt Walsh recently released a report about irreversible gender transition surgeries on minor children at the esteemed Vanderbilt University Medical Center. These include puberty blockers, chemical castration and double mastectomies. The same sort of thing is going on at hospitals around the country. Is it possible there are that many genuinely gender-dysphoric children in America? Or is it more likely, as Dr. Shayne Taylor, a VUMC assistant professor of medicine, explains on video that transgender surgeries are a "big moneymaker" since those patients require many follow-ups?

### The End of Comfortable Christianity\*

I know this is not a comfortable topic to read in our church newsletter. But as President Matthew Harrison wrote in an *LCMS.org* article, "Christianity has never been comfortable. When the church gets comfortable in the culture, her confession gets watered down." Harrison calls us to be bold and courageous.

So I pray none of us will ever be comfortable in a culture that uses children as pawns to advance an agenda and destroys their lives to make a buck. I pray for the restoration of sanity to this land. I pray that God will indeed grant us wisdom and courage for the living of these days. And I pray you will join me.

\*<https://reporter.lcms.org/2022/the-end-of-comfortable-Christianity/>





On September 19th, "Team Grace" (Jack George, Pastor Brian, Mark Jordan, and Sheldon Lee) played in a charity golf tournament in support of CAPS, our local pro-life ministry partner. Though the guys did not win (not even close), they had a fun afternoon in the sun, raising money for a good cause.



The first Grace Play Date was Saturday Oct. 1st at Villa Monserate Park in Tierrasanta. Three kids and their families came to play and so did Bandit Russert, the dog. He looks like he is too tired to play, but Victoria Fullam is determined to get down the slide. August Lehman and Leo Fullam joined in the fun too. Watch the bulletin for the next playdate or contact Ely Lehman.

## SEPTEMBER PROJECTS



It's been a busy month filled with the completion of projects around campus.

### **Bible Study and Sunday School Rooms**

We have repurposed a few rooms from the preschool to better serve our adults and children as they study the faith together.

### **Parking Lot Resurfacing**

Every five years our parking lot must be resurfaced and painted in order to preserve it.

### **Security Fencing**

Unfortunately, we live in a time when churches are ripe for theft and vandalism. During the summer, a local transient was hopping our south-facing wall to gain entrance to the courtyard. Thankfully, we caught him in the act and no damage or injury was done. However, it revealed a weakness in our security, so we added additional fencing to prevent it from happening again. We are grateful to one of our members who covered the cost.

### **Sunshade in the Courtyard**

As you enter the courtyard, you may not have noticed, but we replaced our sunshade as the old one had deteriorated after 7 years.



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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

PAUL HIMMELBERGER  
Trustee

KELLEY SCHMIDT  
Fellowship/Activities

HEATH RUSSERT  
Member-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, Michael, Bernie, Pat, Phil, Barbara, Mary, and Edward

### 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

## OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

7- Patty Morgan

8- William Bradley Mann

9- Victoria Fullam

13- Rebecca Kiperts

14- Cindy Behling-Hansen

17- Wesley Newton

17- Mike Thompson

20- Zaro Razak

28- Jeremy Fullam

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

## GIVING TO GRACE

- Your weekly envelopes or those provided in the pews
- Online from your bank website
- Scan the QR code at right
- Text the amount to 84321
- On the Grace Giving Page at [grace sandiego.com](http://grace sandiego.com)
- AmazonSmile is a simple way every time you shop



## WHAT'S COMING UP?

Saturday	October 29	Oktoberfest	2 - 5 pm
Sunday	October 30	Reformation Sunday	8 & 10:30 am
Sunday	November 13	Monthly Potluck	11:30 am
Thursday	November 24	Thanksgiving Service	9:00 am
Saturday	November 26	Advent Decorating	9:00 am
Sunday	November 27	First Sunday of Advent	8 & 10:30 am
Wednesday	November 30	Advent Soup Supper	5:30 pm
		Advent Midweek Service	6:30 pm

**DID YOU KNOW?** Grace Lutheran has two social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram. Follow either of them to stay up to date with your church family.

Facebook search: [GraceLutheranChurchSanDiegoCa](https://www.facebook.com/GraceLutheranChurchSanDiegoCa)

Instagram: [@gracelutheransandiego](https://www.instagram.com/gracelutheransandiego)

