



Lutheran Church

MAY 2011

LOG Newsletter

MAKING JESUS CHRIST KNOWN
TO SHARE OUR LORDS LOVE AND GRACE WITH ALL PEOPLE



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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

I was at Pima Community College this week teaching a session in my Religion and Popular Culture class on "religion and marketing". It's always a hard class to teach, because of the scope of the material, but part of the college's expectations for the course is that we discuss some of the tensions between religion and marketing. It's something we've all struggled with in Lutheranism, and mainline Christianity in general, as overall worship attendance and participation have declined since the hey-day of 1968 (we're up slightly at Lord of Grace, but 80% of Lutheran churches are not). We feel like we have this message that is fundamentally good – "Gospel" means "good news" after all - that is life-changing, that is full of mystery and wonder and truth and beauty. And yet, we have a hard time competing with the millions of other things out there. Why?

One reaction to the problem is to repackage the message. Keep the theology the same, but change how we present it. Update the style of music, add media formats and such to communicate better. I'm all for this (you know I love to use media in worship), and do it all the time. You need to speak the language of the day, and visual media is a large part of ours.

But, I have encountered more and more a phenomenon lately of not just conveying the same Biblical story in new formats, but selectively omitting any mention of the parts of the Bible and church history and doctrine that are not perceived as being marketable. For example, there are preachers out there who will never mention Job and his lamenting, or the endless blood-feuds of the book of Judges, or make any mention of the political complexities of the world Jesus lived in – even though those very political issues got him killed, which one would think is central to our faith. Instead, only those passages that present an "upbeat, inspiring, uplifting, positive, relevant" message are chosen, and the rest are left behind.

Some churches have taken all art from the sanctuary, and removed the cross itself, for fear that the image of a torture device will be bad for business.

Lord of Grace Lutheran Church

7250 N. Cortaro Rd.
Tucson, AZ
85743

Church Office Phone

520-744-7400

Website

www.lordofgrace.org

Sunday Worship

8:15 - Traditional
10:45 - Contemporary

LORD OF GRACE STAFF

Lord of Grace Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Grand Canyon Synod of the Evangelical Church of America.
(www.elca.org)

The newsletter is designed and edited by Len Mowinski. Submissions may be edited for space. Send contributions to lmowinski@comcast.net or the church office.

Staff

Lars Hammar: Senior Pastor
Dani Anich: Administrative Assistant
Dawn Calkins: Adult Choir
April McDaniel: Preschool Director
Erin Draper: Nursery Coordinator
Todd Martin: Organist/Piano
Jacob Acosta: Praise Team
Lisa Parks: Bookkeeper

Elected Council Members

Carolyn Bernheim: President
Bill Witt: Vice-President
Demar Sather: Interim Treasurer
Laurie O'Brien: Education
Lisa Rynda: Youth
Len Mowinski: Fellowship
Chris Kollen: Evangelism
Jim Dahnke: Property
Cindy Stein: Worship

Committee Chairs

Charlie Motzko: Technology
Lori Brown: Financial Secretary
Dino Revie: Website
Cheryl Fitch: Prayer Chain
Mike O'Brien: Preschool Committee
Mandy Nelson: MOPS Coordinator

All this has me very conflicted. On the one hand, St. Paul did say that he becomes all things to all people, that by all means he might reach some (1 Cor 9:22). And all good missionaries adapt how they share the Gospel to the audience they have. But, does that mean that everything that might be a difficult sell is omitted?

The nature of marketing is such that it must appeal to us quickly, immediately catch our attention, and promise to gratify some immediate need. It must also be uniformly positive and happy. If not, if the product you're marketing requires sacrifice, long-term investment, delayed gratification, and promises a quality of life that isn't measurable by standards of personal satisfaction of individual wants and desires, then what? You've got a hard sell.

I am becoming more and more convinced, now that I've been doing this preaching thing for almost 12 years now, that the beauty and awesome power of the Gospel is found not in the quickly appealing things, but by delving into the depths of the complexities, paradoxes, and mysteries of the Christian faith. In other words, the more time I spend studying the scriptures, the history of the church, the experiences of the great artists and mystics and activists of the 2000 year, the more appealing it becomes, not less.

But, on the surface, this becomes harder. It's maybe a little like learning to play an instrument, or becoming a great athlete. When you start out, you end up spending a lot of time on things that seem hard and boring, maybe even painful. I remember starting harp lessons in college, and doing scales and chords and finger-strengthening exercises until my fingers were throbbing. I then had to do a recital, in front of the whole music department, playing "The ABC Song". In college! Very humbling. But, it was the time spent that allowed me to finally start to appreciate the beauty and complexity of Mozart and Handel and Pachelbel.

The Gospel is like that. There are parts of it that require us to delve into the painful and uncomfortable realities of our world – things like the execution of innocents, the politics of power, the sin of humanity. There are also the mystical mysteries that confront us through the work of the Holy Spirit, which is never easy to explain or predict. There is also the amazing power to heal and change lives. All this contributes to an amazing faith, because we worship an amazing God, who we couldn't possibly expect to explain in a quick, little, marketable sound-bite and do justice.

PASTOR'S DESK CONTINUED

I came to all this when I read about a church that promised a Good Friday service that was "inspiring and heartwarming." I had to stop and ask, is this it has come to...that the greatest crime, injustice, tragedy of all – killing God – was being pitched as something that would give you warm-fuzzies and leave you feeling positive. Good Friday is one of my favorite days of the church year, but I've never felt inspired or heart-warmed. I've felt sadness, grief, anger, loss, conviction. I've felt a sense of catharsis at participating in such a mystery of suffering, and how Christ participates in that with me, and I with him. Sometimes, I can't even tell you what I feel – the whole package of it is so much, so overwhelming that it defies anything I could say.

So what do I say? I say that you should come and experience this awesome mystery with us. It may not always make "happy, upbeat, positive, encouraging" feelings, but it will change your life, and draw you into something that you will not be able to resist going deeper into. Coming off Good Friday and Easter, I invite you to join me in this journey that I call "Deep Christianity".

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Well, May is here and it is time for the Annual Meeting. Hard to believe another year has come and gone. The annual meeting is a time to look over what we have done as a church over the last year. I think the last year has been an exciting; spirit filled one for our church. We have welcomed Pastor Lars as our senior pastor, ministries have grown, attendance has grown, we are financially strong and we are looking to the future with the visioning process. Wow! What blessings we have been given.

To have a strong church, there must be strong leadership to guide it. I want to thank all the members of the church council for their continued service to the church forward. Our growth and good health as an organization would not be possible without their hard work. I want to particularly thank the council members who are stepping down. Len Mowinski has been a dynamo as the team leader for fellowship. We have had so many wonderful fellowship opportunities over the last two years that I can't even begin to list them all. And I must say Len, the kitchen has never looked cleaner. Chris Kollen has been the lead on outreach activities. We have done activities that span from local efforts like local food drives and participating with Habitat for Humanity to activities with much larger impact in the world like the Corner of Love mission trip to Nicaragua in

2009. What a way to help the church make Christ known Chris. I also want to thank Demar Sather who stepped in to serve as treasurer last summer. He hit the ground running, worked diligently to understand our accounting systems and reports and quickly got his arms around our finances so that council could stay on top of the church's financial matters. Good work Demar.

I also want to thank the many, many members of the congregation who lead by example by doing the activities that they do week in and week out. This includes the staff, teachers, services helpers, music team members, audio booth team members, folks that come to work days, committee members, office volunteers, offering counters, and on and on. I get tired just thinking about the contributions of time and talent that all of you give to the church. Without the gifts that you graciously give to Lord of Grace, we would not be the strong congregation that we are. I cannot thank all of you enough. You make the church a wonderful place to come to for worship and fellowship.

Please mark your calendars for the **Annual Meeting May 15th at 9:30am**. Let's celebrate our successes together.

Carolyn Bernheim

NEW BIBLE STUDY TO BEGIN

Join Pastor Lars this Spring for a 5 week class on interpretation of the Bible.

The issue of how we as Christians understand the Bible, and we interpret its many and various passages is of intense concern these days, as Christians debate stances on social and political issues citing the authority of scripture in defense of various positions.

Anyone can attend (member or not). There is no charge.

Two identical sessions will be offered, one at 9:30 am and one at 6:30 pm.

All sessions are on Wednesday.

Please note the new dates:

April 27,

May 4, 11, 18, 25

June 1

NEW MEMBER CLASS

A new member class is scheduled on Saturday May 7th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm in Fellowship Hall. A lunch will be provided. Call Pastor Lars or the church office to register.



HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH ACTIVITY-PRUNE EXCHANGE

Kim George is planning a series of events for the high school youth. The kick-off is May 1st right after the second service. Kim is hosting a prune exchange. Don't know what that is? Come and find out. It's a fun activity.

OFF | CENTER

Young Adult Group at Lord of Grace

Join Off Center for April, May and June as we explore: Being Like a Child of God

Dates: April 1, April 15, **May 6, May 20**, June 3, June 17

Facilitated by Dottie Poczulp

Time: 6:30-9pm

At 104 N. Tyndall Ave, 85719

On more than one occasion, Jesus tells his disciples to become like little children. Let's explore how to have a child-like faith and a relationship with Christ. An incident happens when the disciples return all excited from their first missionary journey, saying, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name" (Luke 10:17, NIV). Jesus responds with a joyous prayer, "I thank you,

Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children" (Luke 10:21). Jesus is thrilled his disciples are like little children.

There are several passages we will work with that inspires our child-like faith. It will be a time of fun and play. Please come at 6:30-9:00 (or whenever we get done) and enjoy our time together. We are so moved when we hear the laughter of young children...you know that deep belly laugh that is truly authentic...it make one just smile with joy. Our Father, our Holy Father loves us to do the same. We are his children.

Pastor Lars--You can reach me at 873-7698

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

- Council just finished a complete review of all church policies. The policy book is available in the church office.
- The annual meeting will be held May 15th at 9:30 am. We will be looking at the year in review, voting for new council members and voting for an edit on the church constitution.
- Council will be having a day long retreat on May 21st. We will be focusing on how best to use the information formulated by the visioning team.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Congregational meeting is scheduled for May 15th at 9:30. The nominating committee presents the following members for council positions.

Fellowship: Erin Martin
Evangelism: Dan Sherry
Vice President: Kevin Brown or
Janette Corollo

DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND IT?

Lord of Grace has lots of bulletin boards. Budget information and Council reports can be found on the board in the Narthex.

Committee announcements, signup sheets and general information is located in the hallway between the narthex and fellowship hall.

We have lots of news to share... please pause to take a look.

THANKS TO YOU

I want to recognize the following groups for providing Lenten suppers for the congregation. Attendance ranged from 60 to 80 people and the food was GREAT.

Cris Kollen and the Outreach Team, Lisa Rynda and the Youth Team, Tim Murphy and the Men's Group, the Fellowship Team, Carolyn Bernheim and the Worship Team.

A big shout out to Rose Motzko, Kim Maisto, Jeanette Johnson, Vicky Shearer, Darlene Paul for their support in coffee hour preparation and/or cleanup.

Kudos to the coffee hour attendees who continue to bring our favorite treats.

Best regards to all those who made fellowship events a success at church. You know who you are; there are too many to mention. My wish is that you provide the same level of support for the new Fellowship chair and that your spirit and energy is felt by others.

Len Mowinski

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

PandaMania

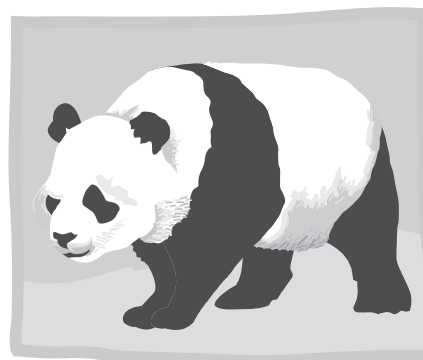
What a wonderful year we have had with your children in Sunday School! Things are wrapping up for the year with a celebration on May 8th. Then, we will start back up in the fall after school starts. Kids' Chat will end on May 1st and will also resume in the fall. Our wonderful teachers have had a Lenten curriculum that took the children through to Easter. As always, if you are interested in volunteering for Kids' Chat (held during the 2nd service) or Sunday School, please let me know.

We have begun planning for Vacation Bible School. It will be held here on June 6-10 from 9-12 am each day. We are following a curriculum called PandaMania! We are still taking registration forms (in the office) for ages 4 through 5th grade (grade just completed). Children older than this are welcome to volunteer. We were taking 3-year-olds but have reached our maximum number for that age group. I encourage you to register soon as our 75 spaces are filling up quickly! Registration will be closed once we reach 75 registered and paid students. It will be a lot of fun for the kids and the adults, too! I have always enjoyed volunteering for this big event in our church and find working with the children so rewarding. Please be on the lookout

for the donation tree in the narthex for items we need donated. Monetary donations are also welcome, just indicate it is for VBS. We will be decorating and getting all the final touches together on Tuesday, May 31st through Sunday, June 5th. If you are able to help us on those days, let me know. Our next planning meeting will be on May 16th at 7 pm in the fellowship hall – it is not too late to join us. We are in need of the following decorative items: toy panda bears, bamboo, green paper or cellophane, silk leaves, green materials, paper lanterns, and paper umbrellas. If you have any items, you can leave them in the office for me.

You can reach me at 572-8556.

God Bless!
Laurie O'Brien



NEW ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Preschool Advisory Board members are appointed by the Council to serve two year terms that coincide with the school year schedule. Please welcome Carol Buuck and Mary Murphy to the Board.

Outreach

This is my last newsletter article! I appreciate everyone's support for Outreach over the past 2 years. I pray that those staying on the Council and the new Council members are guided by God in implementing this past year's vision process.

Rummage Sale

Rummage Sale made \$435 and proceeds were donated to Habitat for Humanity Tucson and Habitat for Humanity Haiti Relief. Outreach appreciates everyone's support.

Habitat for Humanity

The wall-raising was on March 19th. We had 4 people volunteer. While we were there, there was a Habitat for Humanity home dedication.

There will be another Habitat home built in Marana that will start in June and any volunteer hours will go towards Thrivent Builds. We don't have a date yet for the wall-raising.

Tucson House

Corliss organized a birthday party at Tucson House on April 27th. Thanks to all who were able to help.

Donations

Outreach made donations to Corner of Love, Lutheran World Relief – Japan Earthquake Relief, InterFaith Community Services, and Emerge Center for Domestic Abuse.

Food Drive

Outreach will be having a food drive the month of May to benefit the Marana Community Food Bank. Youth handed out grocery bags the first Sunday in May. We have also asked Preschool, Sunday School and youth to bring food for the drive.

Questions? We're looking for a new coordinator for Outreach. Contact via email to outreach@lordofgrace.org.

INTERFAITH COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

The Founder's Award is named for Barbara Anderson, founder of ICS. This award recognizes an individual who contributes significant volunteer time and talent to ICS and who demonstrate an outstanding level of commitment to one or more ICS's programs and services.

John Reeves is one of sixteen volunteers nominated for the ICS's Founders Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service. John has been a Health Advocacy volunteer for 3 years as well as a handy helper in Caregiving Services. Congratulations John.



MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS - MOPS

DO YOU NEED...

A place to come just as you are and unwind, while your children are cared for?

Someone to talk to, confide in, who understands your daily struggles?

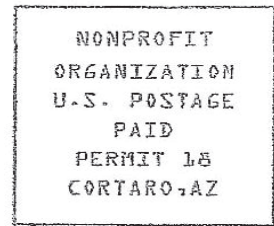
Encouragement, inspiration, and guidance during this crazy yet critical stage of mothering?

Information that is practical and relevant to the life of a mother?

Beginning September 2nd
Meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month
9:15 am to 11:15 am
Meet in Lord of Grace Church-Fellowship Hall
For more information: 520-744-7400



Lord of Grace
Lutheran Church
7250 North Cortaro Road
Tucson, AZ 85743
"Making Christ Known"



TABLES FOR SALE

The church is in the process of transitioning from the 8 foot wooden folding tables to the lighter plastic folding tables.

The rectangular wooden tables are for sale to the congregation for \$50.00 each.

Contact Jim Dahnke, Property Chair for more information.