



The Messenger of Grace

June 2020

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Words that Live in Infamy

One of the most infamous writings of Martin Luther's career was his "harsh book" against the "murdering hoards of peasants." It was a tense period in the German lands and Luther was looked up to for having stood his ground against both church and empire.

Part of Luther's fame and success lay in the background of long-standing grievances regularly raised in the Diet or National Assembly by local rulers. For the most part these were tangential to Luther's reforms but he stood out for being agents of resistance. In the stratified society that it was when the ruling nobles felt squeezed by their superiors, they in turn squeezed those below them.

As Luther called for reform in the church, groups in the lower strata of society began to call for reforms of their own regarding taxation, the strictures of feudalism and many prerogatives of the nobility that unfairly disadvantaged the ordinary people. Luther himself often complained of the sport hunting of the nobles that often destroyed fields and crops with no compensation to the poor farmers. It was hardly surprising that little consideration was given to the peasant's concerns. Eventually the leaders of this reform movement drafted a kind of "theses" document of their own calling for specific reforms; Luther himself was invited to review it. He did so reluctantly, because its nature was economic and political and he was a man of the church. His response was disappointing to those who had sought his support. His naturally conservative nature showed itself. While he admitted that many of the practices they complained of were unjust, he did not believe it was the place of subjects to dictate terms to their rulers, nor to take unilateral actions to enact reforms. Beyond requesting relief from the ruling nobles, hat in hand, Luther urged the maintenance of peace. Eventually, in several areas in the German lands, many began to take matters into their own hands, and inevitably violent confrontations broke out, often with the support of other would be reformers of church and society.

Though he himself was a condemned outlaw who was subject to arrest and/or execution should he leave the protection of his dukedom, Luther was a determined advocate for adherence to the law and a implacable opponent of civil disorder. When his "admonition for peace" was rebuffed, he took up his pen and called upon the nobles to restore order and to do so without mercy or pity. A harsh book indeed and the nobles took him at his word (though they hardly needed his permission). The nobles showed no mercy; tens of thousands were killed in battles and reprisals.



In the end Luther was regarded (by his contemporaries and history) as partly responsible for the carnage. Though he admitted that the nobility had done more than was necessary, he later defended in writing his position that the only recourse against mob action was swift and sure suppression.

On one hand, Luther was right to see the danger in widespread lawlessness as a threat to all everyone society. He reiterated the primary responsibility of those who govern is to maintain peace and security in society. On the other hand, even in that brutal age, he was wrong to advocate for unbridled wrath. As one whose concern was fear of out of control violence, surely he could have—indeed, should have—foreseen that even necessary violence could lead to excesses and itself gat out of control.

In his best moments, in his best frame of mind, Luther would say that violence had no place in the personal lives of Christians and it was primarily a function of the "kingdom of the left" or the governing

authorities. He also knew and would admit, that those who would govern must know not only how to wield the sword, but also know how to sheathe it. He knew that justice must sometimes yield to mercy.

**From:
Against the Robbing
and Murdering Hordes
of Peasants, 1525**

[T]hey are starting a rebellion, and are violently robbing and plundering monasteries and castles which are not theirs; by this they have doubly deserved death in body and soul as highwaymen and murderers. Furthermore, anyone who can be proved to be a seditious person is an outlaw before God and the emperor; and whoever is the first to put him to death does right and well. For if a man is in open rebellion, everyone is both his judge and his executioner; just as when a fire starts, the first man who can put it out is the best man to do the job. For rebellion is not just simple murder; it is like a great fire, which attacks and devastates a whole land. Thus, rebellion brings with it a land filled with murder and bloodshed; it makes widows and orphans, and turns everything upside down, like the worst disaster. Therefore, let everyone who can, smite, slay, and stab, secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful, or devilish than a rebel. It is just as when one must kill a mad dog; if you do not strike him, he will strike you, and a whole land with you.

Yet, in a time of emergency, especially in dealing with the merciless, mercy cannot be the first concern, but rather the safety of the general public must be the paramount concern. Still, just as when we speak on the moral limits of war, the response to any threat must be proportionate to the risk and be limited to that which is necessary to restore order and safety.

The lesson for everyone is that when violence is threatened, every good faith effort needs to be made to prevent that violence from breaking out or escalating. If violence becomes the only recourse for both agents of protest and the agents of order, it can only end in death for too many. In our country, where the right to “petition the government for a redress of grievances” is a constitutional right, we dare not circumscribe the exercise of this right to letter-writing campaigns whether to the local press or to elected leaders. Rather we must affirm the guarantee of the right of the people to “peaceful assembly.” Such gatherings are a basic means of getting others to sit up and take notice of legitimate concerns. Just as the government must not turn a blind eye to lawless acts by individuals, it must not turn a deaf ear to cries of injustice especially injustices experienced at the hands of state power.

In the 16th century, the folly of violence to seek justice was manifested on both sides. The nobles did not become more inclined toward reform, in fact, it caused many to harden their positions. Emboldened by the morally bankrupt notion that might makes right, oppressive practices continued or increased.

The passage to the left is perhaps the most often quoted section of this document. On its face, it seems to make sense; but what does it mean in reality? Is that really what we would like to see? What Luther called for was not what we know as due process, but what might be termed “street justice.” We may be tempted (with Luther) to call for the restoration of order by any means necessary, but we do so at great risk. At the root of the present protests (excluding whatever role certain anarchist forces might be playing) is righteous concern about excessive use of force, not in one instance or several but in a shocking and undeniable pattern. IF we see violent forceful response as the only arrow in our quiver, we validate the original complaint. First, we must work in good faith ways to give the outcries of the wounded a proper (and if necessary sustained) airing. Second, we must seek good faith partners among the aggrieved to provide safety and security for their protest marches, vigils, etc. The better path forward lies in engagement with, not against, the protestors.

For several years now, I have heard people scoff at the affirmation Black Lives Matter, and I don’t understand that. Some counter with

All Lives Matter, which is true but misses the point. No one is saying that *only* Black Lives Matter but

that Black Lives Don't Matter *enough*. This cannot be denied. They are not receive the respect and dignity to which they are entitled and which white Americans take for granted. The other frequently heard rallying cry—No Justice No Peace—is not to be understood or heard as a threat--that unless demands are met, disturbances will ensue. What I hear is a statement of truth, that where justice is lacking the peace of the community is already disturbed and broken. I've sometimes seen it take this form: Know Justice Know Peace, which is certainly aspirational, but this also misses the point; it sidesteps the idea that in important ways Justice and Peace are absent in aspects of our common life. In the 16th century the nobles succeeded in restoring order by overwhelming force and dominance; but it is undeniable that they failed in their duty to establish justice.

O God,
 it is your will to hold both heaven and earth in a single peace.
 Let the design of your great love shine on the waste of our wraths and sorrows, and give peace to your Church, peace among nations, peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Let us have justice. Let us have peace. If both are not the goals of our government and our society, shame on us all. Let us begin with taking heed to those crying out in pain and a willingness to constructively, and systemically, address their concerns at local, state and national levels.



The Rev. James G. Krauser, Pastor



GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Telephone/Fax: (516) 785-5029 Parsonage: (516) 804-8837
 Preschool: (516) 409-5188
 Webpage: www.gracelutheranbellmore.org
 e-mail: gelnb@aol.com

Church Staff

Pastor	The Rev. James G. Krauser	Preschool Director	Mrs. Karin Trabold
Admin. Assistant	Ms. Kathy Pellechia	PreSchool Teachers:	Mrs. Doris Ansalone
Organist	Mr. Den Collins		Mrs. Jean Blom, Mrs. Jennifer Callery
			Ms. Lisa Donleavy, Mrs. Shannon Holz
			Mrs. Ellyn Mantello

Congregation Council

Terry Freyvogel ('21)	Don Field ('22)	Jim Batcher (,23)
Scott Greifenberger ('21)	Diane McDermott ('22)	Laura Hackel ('23)
Karin Trabold ('21)	Craig Preattle ('22)	Kathy Pellechia ('23)
Paul Saueracker ('21)	Diane LaLena ('22)	Jim Schwarz ('23)
	Rev. James G. Krauser, Pastor	

Memorial Received

We are grateful for a gift received in memory of Eric Seger received from Jim & Trudy Batcher.

In Memoriam

You may remember previous articles about Mason Black, one of our preschoolers who had a rare brain tumor. We received word that he died this week. We offer his family our sympathy and prayers.

Charlie Kerns is a Centenarian!

On May 29th Charlie Kerns celebrated his 100th birthday. We had hoped we would be able to bring a group to visit him to mark the occasion, but outside visitors are not allowed where he lives at this time. A fruit basket was sent in the name of the congregation. While unable to receive visitors, a parade was arranged at their apartment building that included three fire departments, the Emerald Society, and more. Charlie also reported receiving over 150 cards, many from Grace members. Scott Greifenberger also arranged for a fruit basket from Grace. It goes without saying that he is Grace's most senior member.



June Birthdays & Anniversaries

June 2 nd	Kirsten Blom
June 4 th	Betsy MacLeod
June 5 th	Tyler Erik Deutermann
June 6 th	Gillian McDermott
June 8 th	Anthony Pacheco
June 9 th	Christl Brauchler, Jenna Mollura.
June 10 th	Helen Kofod
June 11 th	Thomas Bailey, Emily Mignone, Warren Vandewater
June 12 th	Kaitlin McManus
June 13 th	Kirin Elizabeth Lennon, Nancy Ruisi, Katherine Tymecki
June 14 th	Elizabeth Borger, Jon Genna, Caroline Gunder
June 16 th	Rachel Ninesling, Shayla Hanley
June 17 th	Erik Gutheil
June 18 th	Angelina Williams-Steinmetz, Jack Arthur Deutermann
June 21 st	Shay Marie Genna
June 23 rd	Dianna Molenko
June 24 th	Dean Blom, Amanda Fucci
June 25 th	<i>Jean & Dean Blom, Marilyn & Art Brunelle</i>
June 26 th	<i>Nancy & Paul Saueracker</i>
June 28 th	Jessica Harris, Jamie Lynn McEnaney
June 30 th	Michael Pasquarelli, Olivia Meahger, <i>Adele & Ray Hofmann</i>



Father's Day June 21st

We wish all fathers a blessed day and give thanks to God for the gift of family.

Happy Father's Day

Graduates

We wish congratulations and all the best to those graduating and making other transitions as the official closing of the school year approaches. We invite those graduating to share their news and any future plans.

Gavin Mehlhaff is graduating from Grand Avenue Middle school on June 12 with honors and starting Mepham HS in September,

Karin Trabold, our preschool director, is arranging a drive through graduation for our preschoolers in lieu of our usual practice.

Videos on Facebook

You can watch a video from Grace each week. Currently we are recording a Morning Prayer liturgy with a sermon so that the Word of God does not fall silent and our mission of presenting the Good News continues. The complete service can be found on Grace's Facebook [Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church] and an abridged video of just the gospel reading and sermon is posted on pastor's personal Facebook page [James Krauser].

A *Grace Note* email is sent out each week with hyperlinks to assist you in finding them, and Jon Genna includes the links on our webpage as well. We appreciate knowing how many viewers we have, so we ask that you send us an email saying so, or perhaps simply "like" the post on the Facebook page. The weekly bulletin with the sermon text can be downloaded from the email as well.

If emailed the link does not work, you can type it directly in your search bar:

<https://www.facebook.com/GraceNBellmore/>

It should take you to our page and you can see the video that way.



On this coming Sunday, June 7, we will have a guest preacher. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton!

What's Cookin'

Fall-off-the-Bone Chicken

INGREDIENTS

8 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs

1½ tsp. brown sugar

1 tsp. paprika

½ tsp. garlic powder

2 Tbsp. chopped chives

Salt and pepper

1. Combine brown sugar, paprika, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Toss chicken in mixture. Arrange chicken in baking dish, skin side up. Cover with foil and refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight.
2. Heat oven to 300°F.
3. Bake about 2 hours (20 minutes or so longer if thighs are large) until cooked through. Remove foil; remove liquid and reserve.
4. Turn oven to broil and broil a few minutes until golden brown. Serve with juices and sprinkle with chives.

From Joan Keville

CORONA Update

At the present time all activities at Grace Church and Preschool remain suspended. If you have any pastoral needs, call the parsonage at 516-804-8837.

It would seem that the easing of restrictions should begin this month in our community and we will be assessing what is necessary for us to resume public worship in a safe and prudent way.

We would remind you of the counsel of Bishop Egensteiner shared in last week's Grace Notes email:

OUR PRIORITY IS YOU and your well-being. Protecting the health and safety of ALL members of our community is both our truth and our precedence as the Office of the Bishop.

Being at the epicenter of this pandemic and in order to protect our flock, we advise that

congregations remain closed until more accurate and uniform information is provided.

The first Phase of new protocols provide for only gatherings of up to 10, so while we might be able to conduct public worship under those circumstances, we would not be able to accommodate even half of our usual worshipping community, so waiting for a later phase will probably make more sense. That being said, for the present we would caution those who have higher than normal risk factors to continue their vigilance outside of their homes and to take these factors into account when deciding if and when to return to public gatherings such as congregational worship.

It is certain that masks will need to be worn throughout services and at all times in the building. Social distancing will also need to be observed and there will undoubtedly need to be adjustments to our worship, especially the distribution of communion. We hope to begin celebrating communion once again with great care for safety but members will need to make their own decisions about whether to receive the sacrament at services. It is unknown when home visits will be deemed safe once again. We may consider no contact/minimal contact delivery of communion for our homebound or others who desire it.

Our coffee social will not resume for some while. We may look for alternatives. Some congregations are having coffee hour via Zoom. Since our narthex space is limited and our hallways are relatively narrow we will ask you not to linger in these areas.

We will continue offering videos for viewing at home, though once we have resumed worship, they will be recorded at the Sunday service and will not be available for viewing until later in the day.

It is not anticipated that Sunday School or our Preschool will resume before September at the earliest.

If you've given any thought at all to when you think you would be ready to return to worship yourself, please drop us an email note. Thank you.

Sunday School Registration for Fall 2020

Sunday School Information Card

Student Last Name: _____

Student First Name: _____ Birthday: ___/___/___
(mm/dd/yyyy):

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Mothers Name: _____
(Or Guardians Name)

Fathers Name: _____
(Or Guardians Name)

Contact e-mail: _____

Grade for Fall 2020: _____

Baptized: ___ Yes ___ No If Yes, Where: _____

Food Allergies: ___ Yes ___ No *(If yes, please ask for an allergy form)*

Please return to Kristin Schwarz e-mail to: kmschwarz@earthlink.net

Sunday School & Confirmation

We thank all of those who have participated in our religious education programs this year: to **Susan** Horacek who stepped down after many years as our superintendent and to **Kristin** and **Jim** Schwarz who shared in the coordinating the program and teaching until the pandemic brought the year to a halt.

Confirmation classes have also been suspended and we plan to hold confirmation as usual on All Saint's Sunday November 1, 2020, but this is subject to change. We will make up classes as we are able.

Financial Report

Year To Date [May 15, 2020]

Summary:

The financial summary has good news and bad news on the income side. The bad news is we've had to cancel or postpone some events (Easter Brunch, Yard Sale and Congregational Dinner) that normally generate some income for the church. AA has also stopped meeting at the church during the pandemic, so their monthly contribution has stopped, and we are uncertain about future events at the church like the Harvest Fair and Oktoberfest, which also generate income for the church.

Since the Preschool had to shut down, we've also temporarily stopped their monthly contribution to the church as we reassess how the 2020-21 school year enrollment develops.

So, what is the good news? Our giving from the congregation is up year to date. Our Current (regular white envelopes) is up, and Seasonal (Good Friday, Easter, etc...) is also up. When you add it up, our Income is up just over \$3k from last year - \$72,053 vs \$68,899, which is a positive sign as this is due to members still contributing and in some cases contributing more while we saw a drop in other income. This just reminds me how once again our members respond in times of need.

What about expenses? Our expenses are currently in line with last year, which is surprising as we expect some to come down (utilities) and look to get some reductions to our comprehensive insurance premiums. Our expenses are \$62,208 in 2020 vs \$62,037 in 2019. Pretty much flat. We will monitor our expenses closely as we continue during these uncertain times.

The Church also applied and was approved for a Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) Loan. The loan will cover payroll and some benefits for approximately 2 months for both the Church and School employees. The loan is forgivable as long as we follow the rules set forth by the federal government. If we do, we won't have to re-pay the loan. This will help make up for lost income for the Preschool, cancelled events, etc... by covering our payroll for approx. 2 months. This will be a big help for the church.

Outlook:

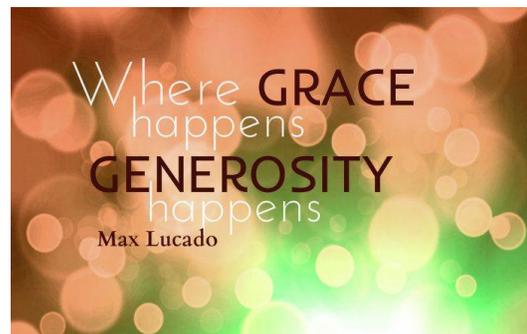
While we have some positive news, we still can't rest. We rely on the Preschool for approx. \$30k of our total income of \$200k yearly, and the uncertainty of the 20-21 school year and the likelihood that our income from some church events and AA may not materialize this year, means we need to maintain our giving levels. Based on how the church has responded already, I'm confident we'll respond during these unpredictable times.

Thank you to all who have contributed to the church, as every bit helps. We recognize that church members' financial situations may have been negatively impacted by this pandemic, and yet we have others who have increased. We are extremely thankful for every contribution we receive.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me,

Sincerely,

*Michael Trabold,
Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee*



to

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