

# **THE GRACE VINE**

## **GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**16 Ridgecrest Road  
Wheeling, WV 26003  
Church Telephone: (304) 242-5830  
Sunday Morning Worship - 10:00 AM**

*"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit" John 15:5*

**JUNE 2021**

**Rev. Timothy Spence, Pastor**  
**Home Telephone: 304-905-6188 - [gracelutheranwheeling@comcast.net](mailto:gracelutheranwheeling@comcast.net)**

Called by God's grace, we commit to a life of worship, discipleship, and service in the name of Jesus Christ

This will be my final column for the "Vine", and maybe my final church newsletter column ever.

As you know by now, I will be retiring effective May 31, and Laurie resigned effective May 15. Laurie and I will be returning to our home in Punxsutawney. Our house here in Wheeling has already been placed on the market and we are nearly finished with the long process of moving books, clothes, and household items back north.

There is a tradition in the academic world of the "Last Lecture". A retiring professor gives a final lecture which summarizes his or her work and learning over the lifetime of education. So for this, my final church newsletter column, I have decided to take a page from the academic world and deliver my "last column".

### **Put things away.**

I know that the transition to Grace made it difficult for everyone to know where things were. But that was five years ago, and by now folks should be getting on board and recognizing that new places to corral storage have been deliberately created. Those of you who have seen my desk will probably have a reaction to my saying this, but there is a difference between what I am working on in my private study and the public areas of the church.

Nothing looks worse than a cluttered church with stuff in piles in corners, and nothing says nobody cares more loudly than outdated information and material scattered around. The adage "a place for everything and everything in its place" is especially true when you have a large number of people using a space. Property, Missions, Worship and Music, and Fellowship Committees should take the lead in encouraging people to put things away by seeing that cabinets and cupboards get labeled.

EVERY GROUP OR COMMITTEE, especially Fellowship and Witness, should be tasked with putting things away after social or community events like the Thanksgiving Dinner, Easter Egg Hunt, or Halloween Party. Worship and Music Committee should be encouraged to make sure that decorations and items used from Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter are put back in storage after the appropriate liturgical season. Don't let the Christmas tree sit out for 16 months (yes, this really happened last year)!

And stop using the Youth Room as a storage room. If you want kids, don't clutter up their room! They are teenagers. They can do that without your help. Just give them the space in which to do it.

### **Change it up!**

Change the banners. Clean the bulletin boards. Rearrange the furniture from time to time. Call attention to the changing liturgical seasons' themes by changing what people see when they enter the building. What are they greeted by and how does that engage them in the gospel message of grace, our ministries, and the church year?

If we change paraments and liturgical colors, why can't other changes be made to reflect our liturgical attention in other parts of the building?

The danger in not changing things is that eventually people get the idea that this is the way things "have to be". When we become locked into a particular way of doing things without any reflection on what else could be, we limit how we see both the world and the possibilities for ministry.

That's not to say that everything needs to be changed all the time. Things should be constantly evaluated. If you like what is happening, and it is doing what it is supposed to do (be effective in what its purpose is) then leave it alone. Some things may need to be completely changed while others may simply need to be "tweaked" with minor occasional changes just to demonstrate or explore other possibilities.

You will not attract your grandchildren if you keep doing things the way your grandmother did them. Look no further than your flat screen TV, microwave, tablet, automatic transmission, and cell phone to understand this principle.

Look at "best practices": What is it that we want to do and what is the absolute best way to do that given the resources we have?

### **Make the property look inviting**

The property is essentially well maintained but bland. Cut down dead trees and vines on the north side of the parking lot. Plant some flowers. Mulch the flower beds. Plant some low-growing, flowering shade trees along the west side of the property to shade the parking lot and attract attention from people driving by in the spring.

Make it look like a place you want to drive into because it is attractive.

### **Continue to upgrade the property to make it more energy efficient and flexible in its use**

Energy costs will continue to rise. That's a given. What if Grace had solar panels on the Education Wing and Fellowship Hall roofs? Keep upgrading to LED fixtures. Monitor clock thermostats closely. Look for little ways to be good Environmental Stewards, and over time it will help with Financial Stewardship.

### **Take discipleship seriously**

A Country and Western song says, "You've got to stand for something, or you'll fall for anything." If discipleship isn't constantly informing, challenging, and guiding us, how will we know that we are on the right, unique path as Lutheran Christians? Study, conversation, mutual prayer, and a growing and deepening understanding of what it means to have an identity as both Lutheran and Christian will lead Grace to the evolving consensus of how to be the kind of place and the kind of people God needs and expects. If you know who you are and why, people may or may not agree with you, but they will respect you. And that's how you build a reputation in the community.

Learn to keep it simple. We often make grace, forgiveness, mercy, and hospitality harder work than it needs to be. Learn to live in grace, and let God worry about the details. Learn what it means to make the main thing the main thing so that the details will become simpler and clearer.

### **Develop a plan for engaging new members as volunteers and with other stewardship opportunities**

Someone once said, "Now that I'm a member, so what?" If we take Luther's explanation of the Third Article of the Apostle's Creed seriously, then everyone who is here has been called here by the Holy Spirit, bringing with them specific gifts, talents, and abilities. What is being ACTIVELY done to identify, recognize, celebrate, and USE those gifts?

Forget about, "We've never done it that way before!" If we are not doing something with the giftedness of people that God is calling into the congregation, maybe this is God's way of pointing to an opportunity where we need to turn some people loose for new ministry? And if there is already something going on, why let the people who are already doing the work have all the fun? As Tony Campolo says, "The Kingdom of God is a party!" Let's invite more people to participate in the celebration!

## **Look for opportunities to begin new programs**

Sometimes things just age out. The church of 21<sup>st</sup> century America looks vastly different from the church of 50 AD Jerusalem. So what opportunities are out there to serve in Jesus' name that those original twelve disciples could never have imagined? And what worked great for grandma but is really no longer important because it is no longer a need or because someone else is doing that? Keep the ministry fresh, and it will attract new people!

At the same time, recognize when something has outlived its time and ability to accomplish its purpose through constant evaluation of programs and activities and long-range planning to meet new challenges and opportunities.

So that's what I've learned in thirty-five years. Talk (don't yell or argue!). Share. Listen to each other. Look presentable. Love each other. Know who you are. Know when to take chances. Trust God. If a church does all that, it will be a strong and growing reflection of the Risen Christ in whom we live and move and have our being.

Peace be with you.

Pastor Spence

## ***THANK YOU***

Laurie and I would like to thank Grace for the wonderful retirement celebration in our honor. To Bonnie and Marty and all those who helped with serving and with the food, Kim and her marvelous cakes, Vicki and the special book of memories, Shirley and her nimble fingers with mailings and collecting reminiscences, and Nancy and the Council for planning and coordinating the whole thing, and all the other people who worked behind the scenes to bring it together, many, many thanks!

Thanks especially for the extremely generous retirement gift. We will put it towards a gazebo we plan to build in the backyard as a place for relaxing and entertaining. Whenever we sit there, we will think of Grace.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your pastor and choir director/director of music. It has been our joy to be with you for these nearly seven years. Know that Grace will be in our prayers for what we know will be a bright and hopeful future!

Pastor and Laurie

## ***NEWSLETTER CHANGES***

Most of the readers of the "*Vine*" know that Pastor has been heavily involved in the writing and production. With his departure, a team of volunteers will be stepping up to continue the work.

However, because they will be volunteers giving of their time and talent, and not regularly in the office, a deadline will be imposed to help get the articles written and edited before production.

Beginning with the July "*Vine*", all material for articles must be in the office by the tenth of the month before so it can be collected, reviewed, and forwarded to the Newsletter Team. So information for the July newsletter would need to be in by June 10, material for the August edition by July 10, and so on. Publication and distribution will still aim to be Thursday of the last full week of the month.

Thanks for understanding and being supportive of this change. With your cooperation, the "*Vine*" will continue to offer timely information to Grace's members and friends.

# ***ASK THE PASTOR***

Question: Over the years you kept trying to teach us a different way of working with committees. Can you go over that one more time, I think it's important.

Answer: SO GLAD YOU ASKED!

There are a couple ways to do things in churches. One way to run church committees is for a small group of people to be in charge of everything. Sometimes this turns out to be the congregation council. They end up micromanaging everything at long council (or committee) meetings and getting frustrated because nobody else will help and finally get burned out in a kind of martyr complex of "poor me, nobody will help so I have to do it all".

The reality is that either a) other folks are not asked to help because it is easier just to do it ourselves or b) consciously or unconsciously we don't trust other people to do it the "right" way (which really means "the way we've always done it"), or c) it's too much trouble to recruit and train other people, which means they lose interest and become less active.

Leaders in small, stagnant (or declining) churches think that the committee has to do everything itself and that everyone involved in everything is on the committee. Committees either become large and unwieldy or risk burning out a small group of people who micromanage and don't share responsibility with short-term (one event) volunteers from OUTSIDE the committee.

In either case, the result is that the committee doesn't develop new leadership or invite new people in because, "Well, we've always just done that, so we don't need anybody else. We'll just do that". Believe me when I tell you that the "we don't need anybody else" message gets picked up LOUD AND CLEAR! Folks who don't think they are wanted or needed eventually either drop out or go somewhere else.

## **A DIFFERENT, BETTER WAY**

The way growing churches do it is to recognize that everyone who walks in the door has God-given gifts which are to be used to build up the church and its ministries and to serve others in Jesus' name. **The job of leaders is to 1) identify those gifts in each person and 2) empower more people to do the work of the church.** In the short term that means more work for leaders, but as more people are trained and turned loose to do things and the leadership circle grows and expands, there are more people working to identify giftedness and to train and empower more new people.

So the model is simply this:

### **COMMITTEES PLAN, TASK GROUPS DO.**

**Committees should be small, lean, quick to respond to opportunities, and the place where the primary planning takes place.** Committees are about strategy and identifying giftedness in volunteers and then recruiting and supporting those volunteers and turning them loose.

**Task groups are where the action happens** either for a single event or a long-term program. Ideally the committee would be made up of a collection of task group leaders who support each other in identifying opportunities and problems and collaborating on how to solve them.

Under this model, the real work happens in the task groups. Think of it as a football team (Good grief – 35 years and I finally get to use a sports analogy!). The coaching team (committee) recruits the best players and identifies and plans the plays. On the field they turn it over to the quarterback (task group chair), giving direction and guidance as needed. The offensive and defensive teams (task groups) each have their own role to play in getting the ball into the end zone, but they never attend the coach's meetings and function in different ways.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. . . All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." (1 Corinthians 12: 4-7. 11-12, NRSV).

So in an education committee, for example, not every Sunday School teacher, youth group leader, Bible study teacher, and vacation Bible school worker would be on the committee. ***Instead a task group leader for each of those programs would be part of the committee.*** The committee meeting might go something like this:

Chair: Next Sunday School. Anything to report?

Sunday School Task Group Chair: Yes. Ms. Jones is expecting and want to take next year off. So we'll need another preschool teacher. Also, the curriculum we've been using is being discontinued so we'll need to pick a new curriculum.

Chair: Any suggestions for a new teacher?

Youth Task Group Leader: Ms. Smith raised four kids and is now a grandmother, but she still loves young kids. She has a real gift with small children. How about asking her?

Chair: Fine. Sunday School Chair, start with Ms. Smith. As for the curriculum since it's Sunday School why don't you get two of your teachers together and set up a subgroup to look at different curriculums? Any input on that?

Vacation Bible School Leader: I think it should be Bible based and be able to be used across as many age groups as possible.

Sunday School Leader: It should reflect our denominational understandings.

Chair: Anything else? Ok Sunday School, get you task group together and bring us back a recommendation.

Or a Fellowship Committee meeting.

Chair: I thought the reception last week for the new members went really well. Anything to report?

Receptions Task Group Chair: I thought it was good. But next time I'd like to try putting the pastries on one table and the finger foods on another. That way people can spread out more as they self-serve. Plus we have a new member. He's working in computer technology but also trained as a pastry chef. I'd like to bring him onto my task group.

Chair: Very good. Any other comments? (silence) OK, Dinners.

Dinner Task Group Chair: We have our semi-annual dinner coming up. I don't need any help from any of you because my task group has everything under control. But we're wondering about serving ham instead of chicken. Any thoughts?

Picnic Chair: We've always done ham. Let's price fried chicken and see if it's competitive. A change would be nice.

Chair: Anyone else? (Silence) Ok Dinner Task Group. Sounds like that's for you to make the call. Let us know what else you need. Next topic.

Do you see the difference?

The committee is providing direction and structure while turning the Task Group loose to recruit volunteers and implement the policies and programs. The Task Group is given greater latitude to focus on ONE THING and charged with doing that one thing well.

In the second example, notice that not everyone who will serve, clean up, do dishes, or cook is at the meeting. In fact, organizing the details is task group business. The committee is looking at the big picture and coordinating the overall schedule. The task group leader will recruit the folks needed to make the dinner a success. So don't assume that every committee member does everything. The picnic person may have nothing to do with the dinner or a reception after a concert, and the receptions person may have nothing to do with dinners.

By using task groups, more people are involved and become more invested in the work of the church and have more ownership and pride in what goes on. So not every Fellowship Committee member serves at every dinner or funeral. Not every Worship Committee member sings in the choir or is a lector or assisting minister or usher. Not every Education Committee member is a Sunday School teacher. Not every Property Committee member fixes plumbing or weeds flower beds but there might be a "grounds" task group. Not every Outreach Committee member produces handouts or works the door on Sunday morning.

**Good leaders in growing churches recognize the need and have gained the ability to GIVE UP CONTROL by identifying and turning loose the giftedness of the people of God.** Instead of doing, good leaders give direction (Committee) and get out of the way to allow the work to get done (Task Group).

So just remember: **The role of the COMMITTEE is to PLAN, IDENTIFY, AND EMPOWER.**  
**The role of the TASK GROUP is to RECRUIT, IMPLEMENT, AND ACCOMPLISH.**

Hope that helps, and as always, THANKS FOR ASKING over the years!

## ***RUMMAGE SALE PLANS***

Just a reminder that the Rummage Sale has been set for TWO Saturdays--August 7 & 14. This decision was made due to the sheer volume of items already donated, and the anticipated items still to come. We will need TWICE the volunteers to help!

If you have spent your time in Covid confinement cleaning out your closets, garage, or attic and have CLEAN items to bring in for the sale (please don't make the volunteers who are giving their time to set up take additional time to wash your stuff!), please put them behind the lattice barrier in front of the stage in the Fellowship Hall. If you have furniture, please wait until mid-July to start bringing it in because space is limited.

Starting on Tuesday, August 3 and until the stage and Community Room 2 are empty, volunteers will be needed to get the items (already sorted & labeled) onto the assigned tables. Larger items will have to be priced, but most items will cost the prices on the signboards. Unlike previous years, except for antiques and collectibles, there will be no individual pricing this year!

On the days of the sale, volunteers will be needed to check out patrons and strong volunteers will be needed to help carry items to vehicles in the parking lot. Plan to sign up to help with this important fund-raiser that provides much-needed funds to Bethlehem Volunteer Fire Dept., Community Lutheran Partners, HealthRight, and Helping Heroes.

Since there will be no Strawberry Festival this year, the Rummage Sale needs to make as much money as possible for these worthwhile causes. When the sign-up sheets are posted in July, please give of your time to make this event a success. Thanks in advance from the Missions Committee for your continued support for this important effort!

## ***VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL***

Due to continued Covid restrictions, planning for Vacation Bible School was delayed this year because the Committee did not know how to plan so far in advance. With changes in place, restrictions loosening, and everything moving in a positive direction, conversation has begun about how to have some kind of VBS program this year.

One thought is that there would be a one-day event instead of five-night event. The supplemental material would be limited but the time would be designed to include all the important pieces of the lesson and as much of the support programming as possible.

Pastor John Harris from Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, who is quickly becoming a good friend to Grace, will be giving some leadership to this planning process, and Learning Committee chairperson Vicki Gilmore is working with the program to see how it can be adapted to a shorter timeframe.

Please speak to Vicki if you are willing to help with this year's effort. A full planning meeting will be called soon.

## ***MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED***

Beginning in July, we will return to assigning greeters every week. Also, having a staffed Welcome Desk to answer questions, welcome visitors, and provide information is a vital part of our hospitality ministry and our Witness Committee efforts. Due to illness and death, we are down to three remaining Welcome Desk staff and about six greeter teams. We have also seen several changes in our usher teams due to illness, death, and relocation and need to rebuild or re-establish two teams.

Ideally, we would have four or five Welcome Desk volunteers so that people only need to staff the Welcome Desk once a month. We would like to have six to eight Greeter teams, and four usher teams which cycle three times each year.

If you love to meet new people and help people out while welcoming visitors and are committed to helping Grace grow and carry out its ministries, then perhaps you should be a Hospitality Ministry volunteer serving at the Welcome Desk, as a greeter, or usher. For more information or to volunteer, see Dennie Niess (Welcome Desk), Brian Crawford or Ellen Kitts (Greeters), or Joe Kochy (Ushers). A training session will be held either individually or for the group as needed.

## ***BLOSSOM***

Last month's issue of the "*Vine*" included information about the "Blossom" program for homeless women and Grace's plan to take up a special offering to help with necessities. We had hoped that Grace could raise \$200 to purchase undergarments for the women.

We didn't.

Instead, as is typical of Grace, the goal was exceeded by more than three times, with \$672 being raised in support of these women to help provided clean clothes and dignity for these needy women. The Council and the Missions Committee thank the congregation for their continued generous support for the mission work carried out by Grace!

## ***GARDENING ANGELS***

The Gardening Angels have been busy at Grace. With the expansion of the flower bed at the entry the members of the group have been adding some perennials and annuals. After Pentecost those who wished will contribute their geraniums to the mix. Thanks to all those who are brightening our entrance!

If you would like to be an Angel, please speak to Marty McNabb.

## ***NEW HIGHCHAIRS***

The Gallaher family has gifted some new, restaurant quality highchairs to Grace. These sturdy, wooden chairs can be stacked and pulled up to the table. They have no trays and so are easier to clean and sanitize. Plus, they can be used with baby carriers as well as toddlers.

The new chairs reflect Grace's continuing commitment to serve our families with small children and should serve Grace for many years to come.



Ryan Deegan  
Henri Fontaine  
George Myers  
Stephanie Moore-Vetanze  
Andrew Lemasters  
Keith McMannis  
Susan Falbo  
Dona'e Albert  
Nick Riggle

Hines Rotriga  
Amelia DaGrava  
Thelma Moore  
Addison Lucas  
Bill Scholley  
Jerry Findel  
Jodi Catalina  
Dossie Roy  
Coy Davenport

Betty Swartz  
David Ausdenmoore  
Brian Lester  
Sean Datson  
Art Henry  
Bob McDonald  
Kristin McGavitt  
Richard Chrisfield  
Carolyn Polverini

## ***ON MILITARY DUTY***

Brian Coughlan

Casey Young

Parker Euri

## ***HOMEBOUND***

**Dorothy Cox**  
Good Shepherd Nursing Home  
Room 214  
159 Edginton Lane  
Wheeling, WV. 26003

**Bertha Loth**  
c/o Grace Lutheran Church  
16 Ridgecrest Road  
Wheeling, WV. 26003

**Debbie Hawkins**  
Peterson Rehabilitation Hospital  
20 Homestead Ave.  
Wheeling, WV 26003

**Kitty Hagedorn**  
18 Willow Avenue  
Wheeling, WV 26003

**Chris Roshak**  
River Park Hospital  
1230 6th Avenue  
Huntington, WV. 25701



# **BIRTHDAYS** THIS MONTH

## **GRACE COUNCIL 2021**

<i>Sean Young</i>	<i>June 4</i>
<i>Mary Stees</i>	<i>June 5</i>
<i>John Roshak</i>	<i>June 6</i>
<i>Vicki Crawford</i>	<i>June 7</i>
<i>Caitlin Skiba</i>	<i>June 7</i>
<i>Gregory Sqroi</i>	<i>June 9</i>
<i>Jessica Sedilko</i>	<i>June 15</i>
<i>Chris Schenkel</i>	<i>June 16</i>
<i>Bob McClure Jr.</i>	<i>June 18</i>
<i>Cadence Maquire</i>	<i>June 21</i>
<i>Michael Wakim</i>	<i>June 21</i>
<i>Mike Carl</i>	<i>June 22</i>
<i>Cassandra Blaschak</i>	<i>June 23</i>
<i>Caiden Shondrick</i>	<i>June 23</i>
<i>Thomas McGaughy</i>	<i>June 27</i>
<i>Cheryl McClure</i>	<i>June 29</i>
<i>Andrew Nelson</i>	<i>June 30</i>

- Nancy Weeks, President*
- Dennis Niess, Vice-President*
- Lutz Albrecht*
- Diane "Dee" Coughlan*
- Brian Crawford*
- Linda Dunnell*
- Pat Franklin*
- Vicki Gilmore*
- Tami Tysk*
- Shawn Gilmore, Treasurer*
- Amanda Keller, Secretary*



# happy Birthday

<i>Jay &amp; Kathy Wallace</i>	<i>June 3</i>
<i>Steve &amp; Elaine Sedilko</i>	<i>June 11</i>
<i>Dennis &amp; Donna Niess</i>	<i>June 16</i>
<i>Lutz &amp; Doris Albrecht</i>	<i>June 24</i>
<i>Bradley &amp; Nancy Weeks</i>	<i>June 29</i>

# June 2021

<b>Sun</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thu</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>
		1 Strands of Comfort 4:30 PM	2	3 Heritage Dance 6 PM	4	5
6 Worship 10:00 AM	7 Dance 5:00 PM	8	9	10 Heritage Dance 6 PM	11	12
13 Worship 10:00 AM	14 Dance 5:00 PM	15 Strands of Comfort 4:30 PM	16	17 Heritage Dance 6 PM	18	19
20 Worship 10:00 AM	21 Dance 5:00 PM Council Meeting 6:30 PM	22	23	24 Heritage Dance 6 PM	25	26
27 Worship 10:00 AM	28 Dance 5:00 PM Secretary on vaca- tion this week and will return on 7.12.21	29	30			



**GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
16 RIDGECREST ROAD  
BETHLEHEM  
WHEELING WV 26003**

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

***SAVE THE DATE!***

***THINGS TO REMEMBER/ONGOING ACTIVITIES***

***Cans for Watch***

Grace members are collecting aluminum cans for WATCH. They will crush, recycle, and use the proceeds for client events. Please bring them at any time, and place them in the large box behind the kitchen door.

***Riesbeck Gift Cards***

Riesbeck Gift Cards to benefit Thrivent are available from either Judith Myers or Tami Tysk.

***Drive in Church***

Sunday mornings beginning at 10:00 AM., in our parking lot, FM 102.3

***Rummage Sale***

Two dates this year! August 7th and August 14th, 2021.

