

March, 2020



GRACE MESSENGER

WORSHIP:

Sunday— 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Monday —7:00 p.m.

Sunday School & Bible Study—9:15 a.m.

PASTOR WITTES' MESSAGE

“Living among the Bible’s Trees”

How often do we overlook the trees around us? You may have several in your own yard. You probably think about them come autumn when they fill your yard with leaves. You may give a moment of thanks for some shade provided on a hot summer day. But do we consider the wonderful part they play in our lives?

My favorite author J.R.R. Tolkien had a wonderful affinity for trees and all things green. He grew up loving the English countryside and this love found its way into nearly all of his writings. Trees and a green countryside became images of good and life. The destruction of nature and the loss of trees became symbols of evil. Those of you familiar with Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* book will quickly realize how these themes show up in the story.

Trees also play a big part in the history of Holy Scripture, our history. From the very beginning in the Garden of Eden two trees are named, each playing a pivotal part in the story. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil becomes the lightning rod of worship for man before God. Will Adam and Eve obey God’s command regarding the tree or will they be tempted into sin. The Tree of Life is the heavenly image of



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Midweek Worship ~ 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.

“Living among the Bible’s Trees”

Wednesdays, February 26-April 1

Luncheon following the 11 a.m. Services

Maundy Thursday-April 9

7 p.m. with Communion

Good Friday-April 10

1:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. (Tenabrae)

Easter-April 12

7:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Communion at both services

NO Monday Worship

(Continued "The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" from page 1)

eternal life in God's presence. It didn't get to play a lengthy role in Eden but it is something we look forward to and long for in the days ahead of us.

Throughout the Bible other trees come and go in the story and Jesus also teaches about the place of a few trees in His ministry. During this coming Lenten season we're going to reflect upon the beauty and green of trees, particularly those in Holy Scripture. As the world outside of us is still a little dark and grey from the cold of winter, let us be filled with new life here in the house of the Lord. We'll also be reminded of the ultimate image of a tree in history, and that is the tree of the cross. That image will sit before us all throughout Lent as a reminder of the cost of sin, but also the amazing love and grace of God which hung upon that shameful tree.

Our Wednesday worship will be at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. each week in Lent and we will invite you to join us for lunch after the 11am services if you are able. Below you'll see the themes of each week to come.

Feb. 26 (Ash Wednesday)	<i>The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil</i>
Mar. 4 (Midweek)	<i>The Great Trees of Mamre (Abraham)</i>
Mar. 11 (Midweek)	<i>Jesse's Tree</i>
Mar. 18 (Midweek)	<i>The Oak at Ophrah (Gideon)</i>
Mar. 25 (Midweek)	<i>Trees of the Lord's Planting</i>
Apr. 1 (Midweek)	<i>Good Trees and Bad Trees</i>
Apr. 9 (Maundy Thursday)	<i>The Fig Tree</i>
Apr. 10 (Good Friday)	<i>The Tree of the Cross</i>
Apr. 12 (Easter)	<i>The Tree of Life</i>



Small Group Study on Stronger Families

Everyone is invited to sign-up for one of these groups:

Group A meets on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. at Jeth & Heather Ott's home, **Group B meets on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.** at Larry & Ileene Smith's home and **Group C meets on Sundays in 7:00 p.m.** in Pastor & Sarah Witte's home.

We are hoping the groups will prove to be fruitful and provide meaningful growth and fellowship for individuals and we hope to keep them going with other studies and activities in the future.

Sign-up sheets are available in the office. Please consider signing up for the group that might best fit your schedule. Please inquire with a Board of Ed member, one of the Pastors or the Church Office for more information.



PASTOR BOB AUXTER, SMP

“Come and See”

This past Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons of the Church, in the assigned Scripture passages, did you happen to notice the questions and answers posed? They have been presented in the context of 1st century Palestine, and yet they are so very apropos for us to receive, examine, and then, consider our response.

The parents of a newborn child that had been conceived in a once-in-an-eternity manner, delivered in an ambiance no one could have *ever* imagined, even if one had eternity to imagine it, asking the question, “What do we name Him?” Quietly came the answer, “God with us.....come and see.”

From the shepherds keeping their flocks by night with the sudden appearance of the heavenly Host informing them of Who had just been born, the questions arise- What’s happening? What for? Why? Where is He? The simple answer revealed for one’s consideration- “Come and see.”



The Gentile Magi, coming from where only God knows, asking, “Where is He who has been born king of the Jews?” No one seems to have a credible, acceptable answer, except, an unusual star beckoning them with other-worldly brilliance and direction, “Come and see.”

Decades later, the Baptist, John, asking those who have ventured to the banks of the River Jordan, “Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” John also supplies the answer, as Jesus comes to him there, so that John too, may see, and exclaim, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

And again John, now imprisoned, sending disciples to Jesus with that question reverberated down through the spiraling corridors of time itself, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” The simple answer again is heard, “Come and see.”

This One who has come, Immanuel, King of the Jews, chosen of God, as His obedient servant, and sacrificial Lamb, upon the commencement of an earthly ministry, asks another question that is not limited by time nor geographical space, “What are you looking for?”

And for once, the puzzled, the blindly seeking, the wandering in confusion, the lost in darkness, the pleading for light and direction, even for the least of a restoration, ask the most pertinent question ever of Him, of *that* One, “Where are You staying?” Immediately comes the answer, repeated lovingly countless times since time itself began, encouraging with a gentle touch, beckoning with that other-worldly smile, “Come and see.”

My prayer for us as we journey together in this new year, is that we have ears to hear, eyes that see, by the 20-20 clarity of God’s grace and the Spirit’s empowerment, to come and see for yourself, the One who is come to take away your sin, and claim you as His very own possession, with authority and loving kindness, having named you before the first Word of creation was uttered.

Ah, another question you ask, “What name?” Come and see.....Mine. Amen?

March Baptism Birthdays

1	Rosanne Pritchett Wayne Waldecker	19	Matthew Berry
2	Noah Harmon	20	Dawn Witmer Denise Witmer
5	Zachary Clark Alice Schmidt	22	Tammy Castiglione Arnette Gahlau Bev Gessner Jennifer Lambert Sue Sisk
6	Conrad Mutter		
8	Opal Kohler		
9	Diane Kuehnlein	24	Anya Witte
10	Abbigayle Cunningham	25	Abigail Ott
11	Lorri Wehner	26	Dale Haman
12	Jane Kruger	26	Jan Patterson
15	Derek Roberts	27	Nina Collum Deb Schmidt
17	Julie Waldecker	28	Helen Dowler
18	Joanna MacKinnon Marvin McKibben	30	Anne Schwab-Gensler

OUTREACH TEAM Grace is looking to form an outreach team to go out and visit members or non-members and witness to them about Christ. The members of the team will be going out in two's, to those in need, or would like to talk to someone. If you feel that this is a gift that the Lord has blessed you with and would like to be a part of the team, please sign-up in the office. If you have any questions, please talk to Ryan Cunningham.

OUTREACH BOX The outreach team has placed a box on the office counter. If you, a family member, or anyone that you know would like to have a member of the Outreach Team visit you please fill out one of the forms next to the call box and put it in the box.



March Anniversaries

Congratulations and prayers for Gods' continued blessings on those celebrating anniversaries this month:

“What God has joined together, let not man separate”

- 5 Wayne and Donna Libstorff
- 8 Fred and Deborah Bastianelli
- 12 Bob and Donita Auxter
- 13 Gene and Bonnie Swatek



News about Our Members

January 18-February 15, 2020

Releases from Membership

Kathryne L. Simmons Jan. 9

Transfer In:

Kim Collum Feb. 13

Confirmation

Clayton Libstorff, Jr. Feb. 3



YOUTH LEADER SARAH WITTE

Fellowship

Fellowship: 1. friendly association, especially with people who share one's interests, 2. a group of people meeting to pursue a shared interest or aim

Fellowship is a great privilege—it is how God meets our needs. We are a social species, dependent on others for mental, and sometimes physical, well-being. In January, at the high school lock-in, we discussed the meaning and importance of fellowship.



True fellowship requires the following: repentance, discernment, protection, good stewardship, the fruits of the Spirit, and real love. This is especially true within the church. Colossians 3:12-15 states, *“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”* Paul wrote this with a mind toward fellowship.

Christians, people, and especially youth, need fellowship. Youth are often not comfortable in a situation interacting with someone from another generation. But just like any other skill, this gets easier with practice. Go say hi to that teenager. Let that middle schooler know that you are praying for them. It might be awkward at first but the more interaction they have with others, the more relationships are developed. We can see this first-hand on a Sunday morning. How many young adults do you see in Bible Study? It’s a difficult transition to go from the high school class to the adult class. It’s a daunting task to an otherwise shy (or even outgoing) teenager. Most choose to just not do it. In almost all cases, skipping worship is the next step, and before we know it the youth is gone.

A true relationship is the number one reason youth list for remaining with the church. This could be relationships with each other, or the youth leader, but more often it is a relationship with someone older and not associated with the youth program—someone who said hi to them on a Sunday morning and sincerely asked about their day or week, someone who showed up to their school events...just someone who took the time to care about them. They often crave that little bit of love that we can show them. It doesn’t take much at all. Heaven knows our society is not going to show that love to them.

So, what can you do? Take a moment and pray for our youth. Stop that teen in the narthex and say hi. Ask them how school is going or what they are involved in at that time. Let them know that you are happy that they are there to fellowship with you. Recognize their attendance at worship and bible study Attend a basketball game (you might enjoy watching it!) or a school concert. This will go such a long way in letting them know that there are members of the congregation that care about them and want that fellowship with them. Be that chaperone for a youth event. I promise they don’t bite!

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One of my favorite things about working with teenagers is that I learn from them. While I can bring wisdom and knowledge to our time together, they bring youthfulness and fun. They will always have something to offer in any situation—whether it’s knowledge of their own, or a thinking-outside-of-the-box idea. And they know so much more than most people give them credit for! I know it’s a strange concept to think that the youth sitting next to you might know how to solve that problem. Remember, Paul mentions humility in the verse from Colossians.

Fellowship takes effort. It’s hard work. It’s involved. But it’s so beneficial in the end. If you would like more ideas on how to relate and fellowship with our youth, or if you would like to get an idea of what you can attend, please come find me. I’d be happy to get you connected in fellowship.

March Birthdays

Friends of Grace celebrating birthdays this month.

*If yours isn’t listed, we may not have it in our records.
Contact the Church Office and we will gladly include it.
God’s blessings and happy birthday!*

Grace Prayer Partners

Welcome to the new **Grace Prayer Partners!** We are in the midst of reorganizing the Grace Prayer Chain.

We have talked with the current members of the former Grace Prayer Chain and have found that many would prefer a text message. We will now be able to offer two options: a text or a phone call. The difference will be if you prefer to receive a telephone call, you would be willing to call the next Prayer Partner on the telephone call list.” If you prefer a text message, you will not need to text anyone on the text list.” We will be sending a “group text” to those Prayer Partners interested in receiving a text.

All members of Grace are more than welcome to join. If you are interested in becoming a Prayer Partner, we would be thrilled to include you. Please sign up on the sheet provided in the office and indicate whether you prefer a telephone call or a text message.

Any questions please call either **Marzie Randall** (734-243-9439) or **Dorothy Downton** (734-654-2757).

1	Anne Schwab-Gensler Larry Simmons	13	Larry Smith	
2	Sue Sisk Julie Waldecker	16	Susan Miller Andy Wigman	
3	Zachary Clark Lloyd Sorter	17	Nina Collum	
4	Marvin McKibben	18	Millie Daniels Deb Ellison	
7	Gaylord Bayer David Cunningham Robin Schmidt	19	Bill Sisk	
8	Robert Roocroft	20	Kate Grow Anya Witte	
10	Steven Stoy	21	Marlyn Smith	
11	Kellie Moore	24	Denise Witmer	
12	Melissa Clark	27	Mark Libstorff	
		28	Dawn Witmer	

Grace Lutheran Church
630 N. Monroe St. ~ Monroe, MI 48162
(734) 242-1401
E-mail: church@gracelutheranmonroe.org
www.gracelutheranmonroe.org

March 2020

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

APRIL						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:00 a Worship/Comm 9 a-1 p Pancake Breakfast 9:15 a S.School/Bible Study 10:30 a Worship	2 1:00 p Bible Study 5:00 p Men's BBall 7:00 p Worship 8:00 p IMPACT	3 5:30 p Weekday Schl 7:00 p Trustees	4 Lent II 11:00 a Worship 12:00 p Luncheon 7:00 p Worship	5 NOON Ladies Society 5-7 p Men's BBall 5:45 p Handbells 7:30 p Choir	6 6:00 p Bunco	7
8 8:00 a Worship 9:15 a S.School/Bible Study 10:30 a Worship/Communion	9 1:00 p Bible Study 5:00 p Men's BBall 7:00 p Worship 8:00 p IMPACT	10 5:30 p Weekday Schl 6:00 p Men's Club	11 Lent III 11:00 a Worship 12:00 p Luncheon 7:00 p Worship	12 5-7 p Men's BBall 5:45 p Handbells 7:30 p Choir	13	14 9:00 a One Sheep Ministries Cook
15 8:00 a Worship/Comm 9:15 a S.School/Bible Study 10:30 a Worship 3:00 p Super Youth Bowling	16 1:00 p Bible Study 5:00 p Men's BBall 7:00 p Worship 8:00 p IMPACT	17 5:30 p Weekday Schl 7:00 p Church Council	18 Lent IV 11:00 a Worship 12:00 p Luncheon 7:00 p Worship	19 5-7 p Men's BBall 5:45 p Handbells 7:30 p Choir	20	21
22 8:00 a Worship 9:15 a S.School/Bible Study 10:30 a Worship/Comm	23 1:00 p Bible Study 5:00 p Men's BBall 7:00 p Worship 8:00 p IMPACT	24 5:30 p Weekday Schl	25 Lent V 11:00 a Worship 12:00 p Luncheon 7:00 p Worship	26 5-7 p Men's BBall 5:45 p Handbells 7:30 p Choir	27	28
29 8:00 a Worship 9:15 a S.School/Bible Study 10:30 a Worship	30 1:00 p Bible Study 5:00 p Men's BBall 7:00 p Worship 8:00 p IMPACT	31 5:30 p Weekday Schl	Dates are subjected to change, please check online calendar at www.gracelutheranmonroe.org.	*If you would like to attend a Board meeting, please contact a board member for date and time.		

Grace Lutheran Church
630 N. Monroe Street
Monroe, MI 48162-2935

*Please help us by
notifying us of
address changes.*

MARCH, 2020

THE MESSENGER



Proclaiming God's
Grace through faith
and love.

GRACE'S UPCOMING EVENTS:

*Feb. 26 Ash Wednesday Services w/
Comm. (11 a.m. & 7 p.m.)*

Feb. 28 Movie Night "All Saints"

*March 4, 11, 18, 25 & April 1
Lenten Services (11 a.m. & 7 p.m.)*

*April 9 Maundy Thursday w/Comm
(7 p.m.)*

*April 10 Good Friday Worship
(1 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.)*

*April 12 Easter Sunday Worship w/Comm
(7 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.)*