

Gracegrams

Monthly Newsletter of
Grace in the Desert

October
2019

Mark Your Calendar

10/06

Message: "Jesus, Reset
My Hands: Soul at Peace,
Hands at Work"

10/13

Message: "Radical
Hospitality: God's Extreme
Love for Us"

10/20

Message: "Radical
Hospitality: The Perfect
Example for Us"
T-Shirt Sunday – your
favorite sports team

10/27

Reformation: "It is the Gift
of God"

Reformation – or Transformation?

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted the 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg, Germany. Each year, on the Sunday closes to October 31, we celebrate the Reformation and what it means to us as Protestants – more specifically as Lutherans – those who care the name of the one who posted these statements.

I am always impressed by the courage that Luther showed in taking on the entire Roman Catholic Church and its doctrine. I wonder how many of us would have stepped out as he did. Yet, we know that it was the Holy Spirit working through Luther that enabled him to bring light to the darkness of the heresy of the time.

Luther struggled with his idea of righteousness, as I think we all do at times. What happened to Luther as he read scripture, specifically, Romans 1:17,
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Article Continued ...

was an epiphany that brought transformation to him and his faith. The words of Ephesians 2:8-9:

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

These words rang clear and true in Luther's heart and mind. He could no longer bear the burden that the Church placed on its members. Freedom in Christ was the only way to heaven – nothing more or less. Thus, when asked to rescind what he had spoken – he refused, and his life was in danger. But he stood true to the Scriptures. I only hope that we can say with him – “Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me.”

The truth of the Reformation remains with us to this day: Scripture Alone, Faith Alone, Grace Alone ...

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”
– Romans 1:17

Pastor Ceri's Corner

WHY IS THE LUTHER IN LUTHERAN?

On October 31, 1514 – 500 years ago – a monk named Martin Luther posted 95 theses on the castle church in Wittenburg, Germany. These were reforms he felt were needed in the Catholic Church. He loved the Church but knew that it had moved away from Scripture as its foundation.

There were many reformers before Luther, but none of them “took.” They were bright lights for a moment, but then faded away. Luther was different, though. Today, we might describe him as being led by the Spirit. He searched the Scriptures. He found Grace in the Gospel – a Grace that was not taught by the Roman Catholic Church.

Luther only wanted to reform the Church – he never set out to form a new denomination. But when the powers that be in the Catholic Church would not listen to him, that is what happened.

Luther has left us a legacy of standing firm on the Word of God and using that as the only authority for what we do and do not do in the Church. For him, there was nothing, not even the threat of death, that would make him turn from the enlightenment that he had received through the revelation of Grace through the Holy Spirit.

When others try to talk us out of the Divine inspiration of the Word of God as it is revealed to us in the Bible, we need to be like Luther and say, “Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me. Amen.” We need to thank God for the Grace that he showed to Martin Luther – and for the Grace that he shows to us and covers us with every day of our lives.

We need, too, with Luther, to confess: “Scripture

Pastoral Thought Continued ...

Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone.” There is nothing more and nothing less that will get us into the Kingdom of Heaven - -Luther knew that and was willing to die to make it clear to everyone, even those who wanted to kill him. We need to do the same – and we need to celebrate this revolution and reformation that was born on that October evening some 500 years ago.

In His Abundant Grace and Love,
:o) Pastor Ceri

Meeting the Need at Nadaburg

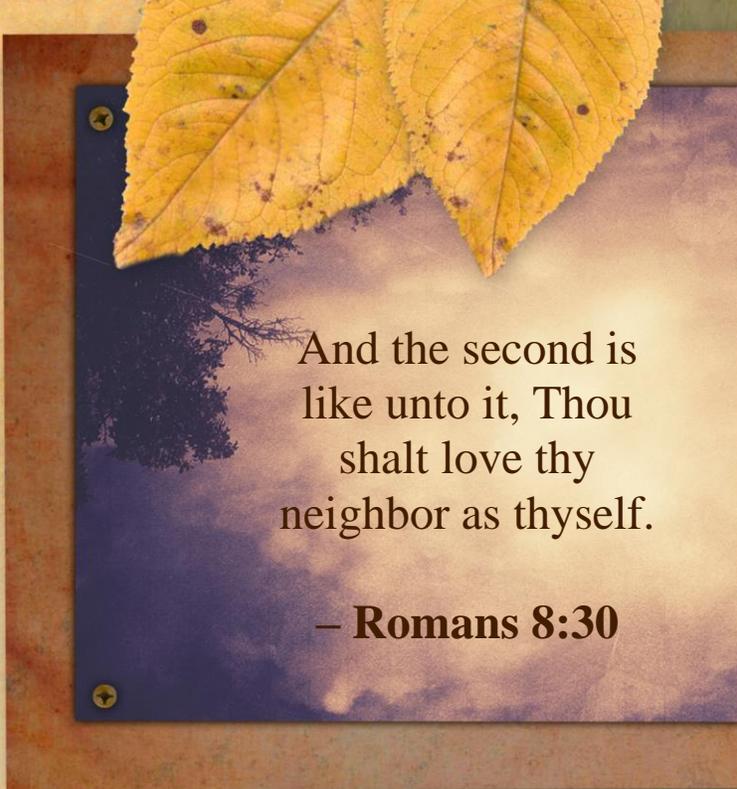
If you have been following along the last couple of months, you will remember that we have started to partner with Nadaburg Elementary School. While we were hoping to begin a Hungry Kids program, that need is being filled by other organizations. But, there are other needs that we can fill.

After talking with Principal McCandlish and Nurse Shari, we will be helping with their homeless kids program. If there is a need that they don't have resources to fill, then we will step in and help. For instance, if they need a pair of shoes in a size that isn't in their inventory, we will provide those shoes.

GTD will be adopting a family for the holidays. Nurse Shari will get the information to Pastor Ceri by November 20 so we can shop and provide a family with a Christmas they otherwise would not have.

In talking with Nurse Shar, there is also ongoing need in the nurse's offices of both schools (Nadaburg and Desert Oasis). This is the hub of the homeless kids program, so these needs also spill over. What is needed is as follows: Clorox wipes, large hand sanitizer bottles, undies (sizes 3T-6x for both boys and girls), colored copy paper, pedia-lyte packets, which out "strips," and zip-lock bags (gallon and snack size). She indicated that if we could provide two of each when we donate, that would be wonderful, so that both schools can reap the benefit.

Thanks for your anticipated donations. ☺



And the second is
like unto it, Thou
shalt love thy
neighbor as thyself.

– **Romans 8:30**

Purpose Driven Church Launch Team Update

The Launch Team for our Renewal/Relaunch met on September 23 and October 7. We delayed sending out this Newsletter so that we could update you with the latest information.

The Launch Team has narrowed our location down to two: El Mirage and Bell, where we are currently worshiping, and Desert Oasis Elementary School, which is in an area North of the 303 that is projected to experience great growth

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Bible Study and Worship

On October 6, we will complete our “Reset” sermon series, which focused on resetting our hearts, minds, voices, and hands for service to God.

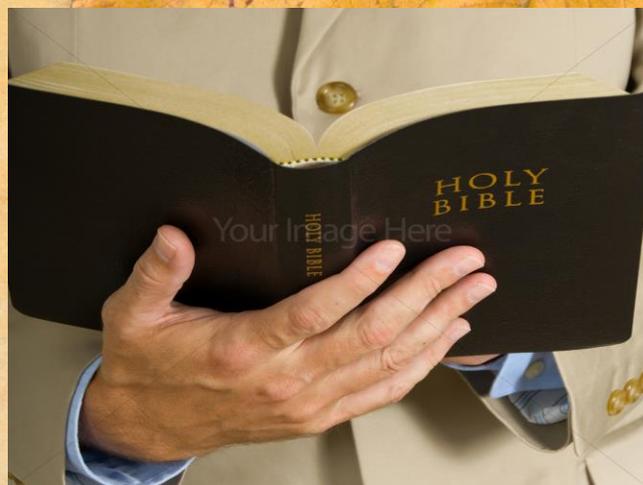
On October 13, we will begin a sermon series on Radical Hospitality – you know – the kind that God shows us all the time. 😊

Our messages for October will be:

October 6 “Jesus, Reset My hands: Soul at
Peace, Hands at Work

October 13 “Radical Hospitality: God’s
Extreme Love for Us

October 20 “Radical Hospitality: Christ
Gives Us the Perfect Example
of Radical Hospitality
T-Shirt Sunday



October 27 Special Reformation Service
“It Is the Gift of God”
Let’s wear red this day

Moving forward into November, we will have an All Saint’s Day worship on November 3 and a Thanksgiving Eve service with a pie pot luck on November 27. We will not be having Wednesday Advent services this year.

Purpose Driven Update Continued

in the next few years.

We have produced a Task List with all that needs to be done before our big day – which we have targeted as March 1, 2020. Your help would be greatly appreciated as we move forward with this adventure. For example, we will be

developing a survey regarding worship day, time, style, etc., that we will need help with in regard to gathering the information from the community.

We have developed slogans based on our purpose statement and mission/vision statement, but we can always use more – please let us know your thoughts.

We are next slated to meet on Monday, November 4.