

Gran-Park-Rollag Parish and Living Grace Lutheran Church
In ministry partnership since 2017

Gran-Park-Rollag Parish

*3 Churches – 1 Ministry: Energized by God
To celebrate, share & show God's love*
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Living Grace Lutheran Church

*A worshipping community of the ELCA focused on
making known God's love and grace by:
Welcoming Everyone, Sharing Jesus' story,
Growing in faith and Serving beyond ourselves.*
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Sunday, June 28, 2020 - Virtual Holy Communion Worship Service

Led by Pr. Hope Deutscher, Pr. Jim Greene, and Andrea Keene

Music Provided by: Pam Aakre, Piano; Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute; Sam Helgeson, Trumpet

Welcome/Announcements

- *We have a variety of ways we are connecting with people – continuing Bible Studies and Book Studies on Zoom. Check out our Facebook page and Newsletter for details.*
- *Be a subscriber to the YouTube channel – Rollag Lutheran Church – when you do, you become one of the first people to know when a worship service is available for you to watch and it also helps boost our visibility with others who may be looking for a service to watch!*
- *The July-August GPR Newsletter will be published late. Deadline for articles is July 6th. Newsletters will be mailed out in early a few days later.*
- *We're grateful to start the slow process of worshipping together as we celebrated an outdoor service on June 21. We have a "Smart Team" who will be gathering to help us transition appropriately into indoor worship when the time is right. Our next outdoor worship will be at Rollag on July 19th.*
- *A word about our service today:*
 - *You can follow along – bulletins are available on our websites!*
 - *Thanks to the children for being a part of the worship service. Andrea will have a children's sermon in a few minutes.*
 - *Today, we again invite you to participate in Virtual Communion.*
 - *A big thank-you to Pam Aakre, Sam Helgeson, and Pastor Hope for providing the music today.*

Receiving of Offering (SLIDE)

Thank you for remembering the importance of continuing to Tithes your financial gifts. You can mail your offering to your church or give through Tithely online (mobile and online option) or by mail. Visit livinggracehawley.org or gprparish.org for specific information.

**Hymn – "Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading" (Home of the Month) ELW 401 / WOV 687
Pam Aakre, Piano and Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute**

Verse 1: *Gra-cious Spir-it, heed our plead-ing, fash-ion us all a-new.
It's your lead-0ing that we're need-ing, help us to fol-low you.*

Refrain: *Come...Come...come, Ho-ly Spir-it, come.
Come...Come...come, Ho-ly Spir-it, come.*

Verse 3: *Guide our think-ing and our speak-ing done in your ho-ly name.
Mo-ti-vate all in their seek-ing, free-ing from guilt and shame.*

Refrain: *Come...Come...come, Ho-ly Spir-it, come.
Come...Come...come, Ho-ly Spir-it, come.*

Confession and Forgiveness

Gracious God:

you tell us to love as we have been loved, BUT, we choose to see the difference in others as an excuse to either hate or to ignore them.

you tell us to forgive as we have been forgiven BUT we excuse our sins and instead hold grudges against anyone who we feel has wronged us.

you tell us to let our sinful self die, BUT we say, "Not so quick - I kind of like my addictions and distractions!"

Gracious God:

help us to drop all our idols or distractions as we develop healthy relationships with ourselves, with you, and then with others.

May the foundation of our relationship with you begin with trusting that you love us, forgive us, and want to help us change out of our sinful ways as we look to the helpful guidance you give through your Holy Spirit.

Gracious God: forgive us all our sins and help us to live in wonder filled and thoughtful ways as we learn to see others and ourselves in the same loving and forgiving way you see us.

Children's Message Andrea Keene, GPR Youth Director

Scripture: Romans 6:12-23

¹²Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. ¹³No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, ¹⁸and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

²⁰When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. ²²But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Message

Pr. Jim Greene

A wise counselor named Don shared his approach to working with people when I started at the Treatment Center. I'm forever grateful!

Don said, "After I've listened to a person tell their story of alcohol/chemical abuse and the creative things they would do to get their drink/drug, and we decided treatment would benefit them, I'd then lay out what treatment involved. Classes 3 nights a week for 4 weeks; homework on the 12 steps of AA; go to AA meetings; get a sponsor; not drink/use; AND be honest. At this list most people would say, "That's too much". To which Don would say, "Let's play a game: it's Friday night- start of a long weekend; you have no money/car AND you're thirsty/craving - What will you do?" Within minutes they'd have 5 or 6 ideas of how they'd drink/use all weekend!

Don would stop them and ask, "What if you took that same 'can do' attitude and applied your creativity to your recovery?" **"I'd probably do just fine!"**

Don: **"and we're all here to help you live a better than fine life!"**

People who came into treatment do just fine when they stop being enslaved to an object which doesn't care one thing for them as they instead learn how to be invested in healthy relationships with themselves.

SOMETIMES they've burned bridges between themselves and family which is why support group connections are so important. A meaningful life is based on healthy relationships with self, God, and others- NEVER about being enslaved to objects which disrupt our lives and our relationships.

The Apostle Paul would say sin is an object which disrupts relationships just like any other addiction can. Not everyone is addicted to alcohol, drugs, gambling, or shopping but everyone is addicted to sin which Paul points out while offering a healthy option to sin which restores our relationships.

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to right, healthy, and life giving relationships? No one on their death bed says, "WOW, I'd wished I'd spent more time on accumulating stuff!" It's always about our relationships!

Paul concludes with verse 23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord - starting right now!"

To use another expression of Paul's, the free gift of God is we develop the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control - which are a lot healthier than the fruits of: fear, doubt, aggression, self-righteousness, self-pity, isolation, resentment, anger, and hatred.

People use addictions and sin to 1) feel better- and it works, for a while.
2) to not feel worse; & finally 3) to not feel. Not a way to have a fulfilling life.

Paul lifts us up and invites us to develop a life which not only fills us up- we live a life which encourages others to do the same.

Addictions and sin disrupt our relationships by enslaving us to an object which doesn't care about us. Obedience to God restores our relationships and rebuilds bridges we might have burnt and opens doors to a way of life which helps us appreciate the gift of today. May we learn to value healthy relationships with ourselves, God, and others over the emptiness of sin.

Hymn: All Are Welcome ELW 641 Pam Aakre, Piano and Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute

Verse 1: *Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe-ly live,
A place where saints and chil-dren tell how hearts learn to for-give.
Built of hopes and dreams and vi-sions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end di-vi-sions:
All are wel-come, all are wel-come, all are wel-come in this place. ...*

Verse 3: *Let us build a house where love is found in wa-ter, wine and wheat;
A ban-quet hall on ho-ly ground where peace and jus-tice meet.
Here the love of God, through Je-sus, is re-vealed in time and space;
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
All are wel-come, all are wel-come, all are wel-come in this place. ...*

Gospel: Matthew 10:40-42

[Jesus said to the twelve:] ⁴⁰“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴²and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

Message with Virtual Communion

Pr. Hope Deutscher

Gospel: Matthew 10:40-42

⁴⁰Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴²and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." - 1 Cor. 1:3

In September 1997 I was a reporter for Minnesota Public Radio living in Fargo. The year had been tough with severe winter storms leading into major flooding up and down the Red River. So it was no wonder when we all began celebrating the Fargo-Moorhead RedHawks having had its second successful year of being in the Northern League. On a beautiful late summer night, the Redhawks were playing Winnipeg. I thought it would be fun to cover something different than flood clean-up and rebuilding of people’s lives so I volunteered in the newsroom to go to the RedHawks’ stadium and talk to fans about having this team in Fargo and capture the excitement of baseball in our community. The team management and players were all great – I got the interviews I needed and then went up into the stands as the players were warming up and that’s when things turned. Suddenly I was the hated reporter. An older gentlemen that reminded me of a grandpa yelled at me “It was all your fault. You killed her.” I killed who, I asked? He yelled back: “Princess Diana.” The crowd near him turned on me...now I was suddenly a killer. A week earlier, Princess Diana of Wales, her boyfriend and the driver of a car died when they hit a wall in a road tunnel in Paris while they were trying to evade paparazzi. And now I was being accused of killing her...or well, being a paparazzi – an independent photographer who take pictures of high-profile people. I too had admired Princess Diana and all that she had been accomplishing in her life.

But I learned a lot that night. How something can go from fun to terrifying in just a few minutes; how someone can be blamed for something they had nothing to do with thousands of miles away; and how much people loved Princess Diana...and maybe some baseball too.

I most certainly did not feel welcomed by the crowd watching the RedHawks that night. Their words stung...and in fact, wasn't till last year that I returned to the stadium as a fan.

Welcome. It's a common word...floor mats outside doorways often say *Welcome*. As you enter a new state or city, road signs will say *Welcome to....* There are places where people offer "welcome" as well: restaurants, stores, like Walmart even has a greeter.

If we think about what welcome means in the biblical sense...after all the word *welcome* appears 64 times in the Bible, we hear how it can be an invitation to come and be well. To receive an invitation into the goodness of a new place.

While we use the word welcome casually and commercially, making one welcome is rooted in the ancient practices of hospitality. Preparing to welcome someone takes thought, intention, discipline.

For Jews, the call to welcome the stranger is anchored in the Torah and was a part of the measure of the Hebrew community's faithfulness to God. When a traveler came to town, they waited by the well, and it was required that the townspeople would invite them to their house and feed the visitor for the night. They showed a compassionate welcome as a form of service to Christ. That welcoming act is not just about doing heroic acts so you are eligible for sainthood. The simple, basic acts of kindness we perform in genuine welcome of one another is all that God asks of us.

When Abraham welcomed strangers, he put out the welcome with a banquet... when Jesus stops at Mary and Martha's house, they offer hospitality through meals and hearing his Words. And Jesus welcomed sinners and ate with them at the table. The Apostle Paul says the Gospel is for both Jews and Gentiles... *Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.* (Romans 15:7)

Earlier in this chapter of Matthew, Jesus says, to welcome someone – or to not welcome someone...is paired with *hearing one's word*. Our words follow our actions.

In Matthew's community, hospitality measured the faithfulness of the people. Welcoming prophets, righteous ones and disciples (those whom Matthew called "little ones") was a disciplined practice of the young churches.

While it may seem counter-intuitive, discipline is the key to faithful hospitality. We are called to love even when we are in the midst of places we might not be welcome...or places we are uncomfortable in. ⁴⁰*Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.* Did I love those mean baseball fans that night? Probably not. But in reflection years later – they taught me something valuable – actions across the world can impact us here at home. The act of Welcoming Another begins with me.

One of our favorite hymns at Living Grace is *All Are Welcome*. The words go like this:

*Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
hear the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.*

Beautiful words that remind us that Christ welcomes us...to build a house, a community of welcome. So that hands reach beyond the wood of familiarity, so that relationships are healed and strengthened, so that we can serve and learn from each other...

Here at Christ's Table where we celebrate Holy Communion, ALL ARE WELCOME. We lay down our anger against one another, we share peace with one another and then we hear these words and are reminded that Jesus laid down his life for us – the most generous act of love.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this in the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this in the remembrance of me.

Communion

The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Table Blessing

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. Amen.

Prayers

Let us pray...God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat: a banquet hall on holy ground where peace and justice meet...where the love of God through Jesus is revealed in time and space as we share in Christ the feast that frees us. Where All are welcome...all are welcome... Amen.

God of life, we come to you from many places: some hearts overflow with joy and gratitude, others are barely hanging on to hope and faith. For some this is an ordinary morning; for others, every step feels fragile. Holy One, meet us where we are and bind us to each other, that in the community of your love we might discover our wholeness. We name before you now the concerns of our hearts.

[silence]

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

This day we are thankful for the blessings we have...being able to worship together through technology, coming together outside safely last weekend and in person...may you, O God, guide our Smart Team and all of us in navigating the changing world and how we can be safe, protect others and also be the Body of Christ.

O Living God, may those in need this day feel your presence, meet their needs this day as we remember the prayer Jesus taught us...

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

The Apostle Paul reminds us in Romans Chapter 8:

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God, the creator, ✝ Jesus, the Christ,
and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,
bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**

Hymn – *Amazing Grace*

Pam Aakre, Piano and Sam Helgeson, Trumpet

Verse 1: *Amazing grace! – how sweet the sound – that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.*

Verse 5: *When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.*