

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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Worships at The Garrick Theater,
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Sunday, August 2, 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
And special music by Greta Brager, Guitar and Vocal

Pre-Service Music: *I Love to Tell The Story*

Pam Aakre, Piano

Welcome/Announcements

- *Pastoral Care: Pastor Hope Deutscher and Pastor Jim Greene are available for pastoral care. If you or a loved one are hospitalized or ill, we would love to be caring for you. Please call or email us at the numbers above. Andrea Keene is also available to talk to parents and youth.*
- *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!*
- *Welcome to Living Grace! This morning we are again worshipping God from Living Grace's home in the Garrick Theater in Hawley. As a mission congregation, one of our favorite hymns is "All Are Welcome"! This morning is no different – we are glad you are here and worshipping with us. It's fun to worship in this space – some tell us of times that they came here and saw movies in the past – and we have used this space to host movie nights! We are grateful for the Bortnems and especially the late Jim Bortnem for his dedication to renovating this beautiful building – and giving us a space from which to worship.*
- *Next Outdoor Worship Service: 9:30 AM Sunday, August 16, 2020
This summer we are holding monthly outdoor worship services. Our next one will be Sunday, August 16th at 9:30 a.m. on the lawn outside of Rollag Lutheran. All are welcome to join us for this worship service. We will continue to provide online worship services, even on Sundays when we host an outdoor one.*

- *Smart Team – under the advisement of our Bishop Bill Tesch, our Mutual Ministry Team, which represents our 4 congregations has become the Smart Team. Parish Council President Chad Mickelson has also joined this Smart Team, which is evaluating and discussing how and when we can safely worship inside our buildings. While we all entered the pandemic in the same way, it has become clear that the leadership teams and councils at our 4 congregation will need to individually address issues related to their particular building and situation. Those conversations will be happening over the next several weeks as they focus on questions – and answers – related to*
 - *Building Space and Sanitization*
 - *How many people can be in our worship space?*
 - *What cleaning protocol will we have?*
 - *What are insurance protocols we need to follow, etc.?*
 - *Health of staff, volunteers and congregation*
 - *We want to ensure that everyone is healthy and remains healthy as they enter the building and afterwards. So how do we do that in respectful and caring ways?*
 - *And worship – how to receive offering, provide communion, removing paper, Bibles and hymnals from pews, and how to provide a participatory worshipful experience for all of us.*
- *A word about our service today:*
 - *You can follow along – large print bulletins are available on our websites!*
 - *Today, we again invite you to participate in Virtual Communion. Please prepare some bread/crackers and wine/juice to share communion during today’s service.*
 - *Thanks to the children for being a part of the worship service. Andrea will have a children’s sermon in a few minutes.*
 - *This morning we have special music provided by Greta Brager from Living Grace. It’s fun for Pam Aakre and myself to be praising God through music – but it’s really fun to have Greta join us today in providing music!*

Today we begin a 5-week sermon series Celebrating Women in the Bible:

From Pastor Hope Deutscher: Celebrating Women’s Ordination: In 2019 and 2020 we celebrate 50 years of Lutheran women being ordained in the United States. On November 22, 1970, Elizabeth Platz was the first woman of European descent ordained in the Lutheran Church in North America. The first woman ordained as a pastor in the Northern Minnesota District of the American Lutheran Church was Pastor Lynn Ronsberg, who was baptized at Gran Lutheran Church, and graduated from Luther Seminary In 1979 in a class that included 15 women.

According to the ELCA, as of December 31, 2018, there were 16,001 on the ELCA Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament - 4,456 were women – about 28%. This month we are going to look at some of the women who have stories that related to us in a variety of ways. From Sarah, to Hannah, to Joanna, Lydia and Dorcas – we’ll hear the story of these women, how does our story connect to them and what can we take from their story and learn from them?

August 2: Sarah (Genesis 12:1-20; 16:1-8; 17:1-22; 18:1-15; 21:1-13)
August 9: Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1-2:11; 2:19-21)
August 16: Joanna (Luke 8:1-3, 24:10)
August 23: Lydia (Acts 16:6-40)
August 30: Dorcas (Acts 9:36-43)

God meets us in our greatest need and satisfies us with divine presence and provision. It is customary here at Living Grace to pause now as we prepare our hearts and minds for worship and we light the Christ Candle.In gratitude for God's presence and provision, let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship this morning.

(LIGHT CHRIST CANDLE)

Hymn of the Month – *For The Beauty of the Earth* (ELW 879 / LBW 879)

Pam Aakre, Piano, Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute

Verse 1: For the beau-ty of the earth, for the beau-ty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth o-ver and a-round us lies:

Refrain: Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.

Verse 4: For the joy of hu-man love, broth-er, sis-ter, par-ent, child,
Friends on earth and friends a-bove; for all gen-tle thoughts and mild: REFRAIN

Children's Message

Andrea Keene, GPR Youth Director

Confession and Forgiveness

Let us confess our sins in the presence of the One who blesses us and meets our need.

God of compassion, we humbly admit that we are broken and in need of healing.

We have wrestled all night with worry instead of resting in you.

We have asserted our own goodness instead of awakening to yours.

We have turned away those hungry for your help instead of trusting you and feeding them from your limitless supply of blessings.

Forgive us, heal us, and help us to hold on to you.

We call upon you, for you will answer us,

O God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Forgiveness

The God of steadfast love is our refuge and Savior. In Christ, we who are broken are healed, forgiven, filled, and transformed. **Alleluia! Amen.**

Let us pray...Life-changing God, you have touched us and transformed us to reach out to all who hunger for what only you can give. Keep our feet in your paths and bless us to multiply blessings to others, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer and Lord. **Amen.**

Special Music: *Ten Thousand Reasons*

Greta Brager

Chorus: *Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul; Worship His holy name.*

Sing like never before, O my soul; I'll worship Your holy name.

Verse 1: The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning, It's time to sing Your song again.
Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me,
Let me be singing when the evening comes. **Chorus**

Verse 2: You're rich in love and You're slow to anger. Your name is great and Your heart is kind. For all Your goodness, I will keep on singing; ten thousand reasons for my heart to find. **Chorus**

Verse 3: And on that day, when my strength is failing, the end draws near, and my time has come; still, my soul will sing Your praise unending; ten thousand years, and then forever more! **Chorus 2 times**

Celebrating Women in Scripture: Sarah

Sarah's Full story can be read in the following scriptures: Genesis 12:1-20; 16:1-8; 17:1-22; 18:1-15; 21:1-13 and Galatians 4:22-31. Sarah was 65, the age many people are when they retire, when she began a journey that would lead her into uncharted spiritual territory. Leaving behind their homeland, she and her husband Abraham, moved hundreds of miles to Canaan, a land fertile with promises of God but barren of everything cherished and familiar.

Today we hear selected verses of Sarah's story

(NOTE: Online Service includes readings from Genesis 18 and 21)

Genesis 12:1-20: - The Call of Abram

12 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Genesis 16:1-2 - The Birth of Ishmael

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian slave-girl whose name was Hagar, ² and Sarai said to Abram, "You see that the LORD has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my slave-girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

Genesis 17:1; 5-8; 15-22 - The Sign of the Covenant

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty;^[a] walk before me, and be blameless. . . . ⁵ No longer shall your name be Abram,^[b] but your name shall be Abraham;^[c] for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷ I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring^[d] after you. ⁸ And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God." . . .

¹⁵ God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, "Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live in your sight!" ¹⁹ God said, "No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac.^[e] I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. ²⁰ As for Ishmael, I have heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. ²¹ But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year." ²² And when he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

Genesis 18:11-15 - A Son Promised to Abraham and Sarah

18 . . .¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" ¹³ The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I

indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴ Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son." ¹⁵ But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "Oh yes, you did laugh."

Genesis 21:1-13 - The Birth of Isaac

21 The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. ²Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. ⁴And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me."

Message

Pr. Hope Deutscher

Grace and peace to you from God, who calls – as men and women – to ventures unknown – but promises to be with us and give us the promised land. Amen.

Sarah....At the age of 65 Sarah began a journey that would lead her into uncharted spiritual territory. Along with her husband Abraham, she moved hundreds of miles south to Canaan – a land fertile with promises of God but also barren...God promised the land to Abraham and his offspring. From Abraham and Sarah would come a nation, a people who would belong to God. And yet Sarah longed for a baby, not a nation, to take care of.

Following a practice in the ancient world, Sarah gave Abraham permission to sleep with her Egyptian slave, Hagar. Sarah's slave would become a surrogate mother for the promised child. Ishmael was born – but the child brought discord between the two women. Eventually Sarah became so jealous that she threw Hagar and Ishmael out into the desert. But God provided for Hagar and her son. God came to Abraham and Sarah and said they would become parents...but Sarah's response was to laugh. A year later, at the age of 90, Sarah gave birth to Isaac, which means Laughter – the joke was not lost on the 90-year old mother who proclaimed: God brought me laughter and everyone who hears about it will laugh with me. Sarah died when she was 127 years old. But I wonder how she reflected on her long life...

- Was she ashamed of her treatment of Hagar?
- Did she remember laughing when God told Abraham that Sarah would bear a child at the age of 90?
- Did she appreciate the irony every time Isaac laughed?
- Did she have any idea of God's plans for her – as mother of Israel...that God would accomplish his purposes despite her frailties, her jealousy of Hagar – how she was entrenched in her own self-reliance of getting things done on her timetable?

Sarah was a risk taker. She was a woman who said goodbye to everything familiar to her so she could travel to a land that she knew nothing about...she traveled on an adventure that was strenuous, filled with hate, filled with love, filled with laughter. ..and a promise from God.

A promise that her husband would be the father of many...and if you look at the family tree – it leads to Jesus Christ. From the gospel of Matthew we hear these words:

Matthew Chapter 1: The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. ²Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, etc...

¹⁷So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

Sarah's story is important in the life and history of Jesus' story...Jesus' ancestors were not all heroes and heroines...but real people with real dreams and real weaknesses.

And Sarah's story is part of our story...As we think about the dreams that God plants in our own hearts for our lives...what are they? What are the big dreams you have?

God uses YOU, God uses me and God used Sarah - in spite of our imperfections! There are times when we try to take control of situations and it doesn't turn out like we had planned. Sarah's attempts to fulfill God's promise of a son through her servant Hagar had disastrous results.

In some ways, we could say we manipulate situations to better ourselves and it doesn't always work out for us...or maybe God joins us in that journey and laughs with us too. And the words of Genesis 21:6 echo in our lives: God has brought me laughter.

This week may you know God's promises as we undertake this adventurous life – and know that God walks with us.

Let us pray...God, we give you thanks that you continue to love us even if our disastrous ways of accomplishing our dreams gets in the way of your work in our lives. As we grow older, help us to trust you – that the dreams you plant in our hearts and lives can lead us to the promises of you. Like Sarah, may we be surrounded by laughter as we see the wondrous ways you accomplish your purpose in our lives – despite our weaknesses and brokenness. Amen.

Hymn – *One Bread, One Body* (ELW 496 / WOV 710)

Refrain: *One bread, one bod-y, one Lord of all; one cup of bless-ing which we bless,
And we, though man-y through-out the earth, we are one bod-y in this one Lord.*

Verse 1: *Gen-tile or Jew, servant or free, wom-an or man, no more. REFRAIN*

Verse 2: *Man-y the gifts, man-y the works, one in the Lord of all. REFRAIN*

Verse 3: *Grain for the fields, scat-tered and grown, gath-ered to one for all. REFRAIN*

Receiving of Offering (SLIDE)

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

Offering Prayer

In the faithful hands of Christ, our little is multiplied to feed many. We come and offer our *loaves and fishes* to the All-sufficient One who empowers us to participate in the miraculous multiplying ministry of Jesus Christ. Almighty God, receive now these gifts you have provided us out of your abundance that your miracle ministry may multiply to satisfy the hungry of this world today; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Scripture: Matthew 14:13-21 – *Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand*

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds

away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”¹⁶ Jesus said to them, “**They need not go away; you give them something to eat.**”¹⁷ They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.”¹⁸ And he said, “Bring them here to me.”¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.²⁰ And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Message and Virtual Communion

Pr. Jim Greene

Grace and peace to you all in the name of Jesus who died to set us free. Amen.

I've been asked by several people “let us know if someone in our Parish or Community is struggling financially; we'd like to help. I've also had several people say they have extra potatoes to share. Both groups have said, “we don't need to know who needs help- we just want to help.” Amen to that!

Every one of us needs help at times. The gospel story today points out how many times the help we need doesn't have to come from a far away place- help starts right here (**point to heart and head**). Matthew tells a story about a large group of people who had followed Jesus and now it was late and time to eat. After the disciples tried to dump the problem on Jesus- Jesus gave it back to them by saying: “**They need not go away; you give them something to eat.**” Have you ever lifted up a problem and had it given back to you to figure it out? Have you ever noticed a problem but didn't bring it up because you were concerned it would be dumped on you?

Too much of life is about seeing problems and dumping the solution on others. Jesus, in this familiar story of the feeding of the five thousand, points out the biggest obstacles we place before ourselves when problems arise. **The problem:** We fail to use the resources God places inside AND all around us. How might life be different if we noticed and developed our God given resources BEFORE problems arise. (Cartoon of a Ladder Factory on fire; people above the fire are scared about dying. One person says, “We're a ladder factory- why don't we use a ladder to get out?”)

Jesus reminds us our resources are ALWAYS greater than our struggles - AND our calling is to daily notice and develop these resources. Money and food are some basic needs and resources are available but pride often gets in the way. One of the greatest joys in life is to connect with others in real and helpful ways. We love this. It's fun to work together on something and lose all track of time! It's rewarding when, out of the blue, we're able to help another person because they asked! We often feel closer to God and each other when we drop the pride and are real with each other.

The story of the feeding of the five thousand is a story about the miracle of being real with each other. We can't do it all on our own and when we realize this and notice the resources we have in God, each other, and ourselves, solutions start to flow. Instead of making the Pandemic another reason to fight with each other, we continue to practice being a helpful resource by respecting all life and offering what we can to each other. Stimulus checks, debt forgiveness, PPP loans, extra benefits for the unemployed all help- AND we have the ability to do that little bit extra when we let down our guard and help each other. Our resources are greater than our burdens if we'd take the time to notice.

I'm serious in saying, if you or someone you know could use a little extra help financially, let myself, Pastor Hope, or Andrea know- we have access to some extra help. Would you like some potatoes? We got them too. Need a mask? We know people who can help. Feeling lonely- there are people who'd love to call you? See another need? Trust God will help you find access to the resources necessary AND as the story of the feeding of the five thousand ended- we'll discover how, even after we've helped other, we'll still have baskets of resources and blessings to spare!

Virtual Communion

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.

Prayers

Gracious God, you have created in each of us the ability to be helpful to others. We have been given a variety of resources in time, talents, and abilities which we need to develop and share. Open the door in the wall pride tries to place around us and guide us to find ways to fulfill the universal call of being helpful to one another. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Jesus, as you refused to take on the problems the disciples tried to dump on you, help us to not dump our problems on you- rather, help us to see how you want to partner with us in all our struggles. Remind us to share all our thoughts and concerns with you and to listen for your guidance and encouragement. We lift up all those in need with financial, health, and grief concerns and trust you have placed people around us who can help. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Counseling Holy Spirit, we need to remember how you pray for us to be close to God and to use the resources placed inside and all around us. Life is less complicated when we walk close to you and trust you before the problems arise. Deepen our relationship with you through scripture, nature, times of solitude and togetherness, and any other way which expands our spirits. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

People of God, while God doesn't cause Pandemics, God walks with us through every struggle and joy to expose us to God's grace, love, and wisdom. May we learn to deepen our walk with God and each other as we pray together:

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. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. 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

Beloved Children of God, we are placed on this earth to nurture and expand on the resources God has blessed us with. Trust this truth:

The Lord is here in our hearts and minds to bless us and keep us.
The Lord will walk right beside us and within us to strengthen us.
The Lord will live inside us to help us find the peace only God can give.

Hold these truths close to your hearts as we remember how we are marked with the cross of Christ and sealed in God's love forever. In the name of the Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter. Amen.

Hymn – We All Are One in Mission (576 ELW / 755)
Pam Aakre, Piano and Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute

Verse 1: *We all are one in mis-sion; we all are one in call,
Our var-ied gifts u-nit-ed by Christ, the Lord of all.
A sin-gle great com-mis - -sion com-pels us from a-bove
To plan and work to-geth-er that all may know Christ's love.*

Verse 2: *We all are called for ser-vice, to wit-ness in God's name.
Our min-is-tries are dif-f'rent; our pur-pose is the same:
To touch the lives of oth-ers with God's sur-pris-ing grace,
So ev-'ry folk and na-tion may feel God's warm em-brace.*

Verse 3: *Now let us be u-nit-ed, and let our song be heard.
Now let us be a ves-sel for God's re-deem-ing Word.
We all are one in mis-sion; we all are one in call,
Our var-ied gifts u-nit-ed by Christ, the Lord of all.*