

**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,  
509 Front Street, Hawley, MN 56549

**Sunday, September 20, 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**

*Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.*

**Pre-Service Music: Great Is The Lord**

**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.
- **Connect With Us** – We are continuing Bible Studies and Book Studies on Zoom. Check out our Facebook page and Newsletter for details.
  - Monday evenings (every 2 weeks): Paul Tillich Bible Study (Hosted by Joe Hass)
  - Wednesdays at 10 AM: Bible Study
  - Wednesdays at 7 PM: Women's Book Study
- **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!
- **Smart Team Update:** 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 and Tabitha Hass have also joined this Smart Team, which is evaluating and discussing how and when we can safely worship inside our buildings.*

The SMART Team met on August 18<sup>th</sup>. The team gave the following recommendations to the Parish Council, which unanimously approved them on August 20<sup>th</sup>.

- Youth Programming: We'll let the first few weeks of school occur and re-evaluate. During September, we'll provide online content and meet outside in person for specific events. We'll also model what the Hawley and Barnesville Schools are doing regarding in-person vs. distance learning.
- Worship and other gatherings:
  - We welcome outdoor worship services, events, meetings and classes – if they can be done safely.
  - Encourage anyone who is feeling ill or showing COVID-related signs/symptoms to not attend in-person church activities.
  - We'll follow the synod recommendations of not holding indoor worship services until all can safely worship.
  - Continue with outdoor services (weather permitting), online worship services, and other online opportunities.

The SMART Team will meet again on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, evaluating how the schools are doing and make appropriate updated recommendations to the Parish Council. In the meantime, our congregations continue to prepare for accommodating indoor worship. (See letter from GPR Parish Council President Chad Mickelson at [www.gprparish.org](http://www.gprparish.org).)

- Clay County Public Health Flu Shot Clinic will be held October 5<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 – noon. There will be clear instructions on how to enter/exit building.
- *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.*
- *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.*
  - *Thanks to Pam Aakre and Pr. Hope for providing music.*
  - *Today Pr. Hope will share about God's generosity – even when we think life is unfair.*
  - *Today Pr. Jim invites you think about the Holy Spirit as Triple A Travel Agency.*

As we light the Christ candle, let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship.

**(LIGHT CHRIST CANDLE)**

## **HYMN – Holy God We Praise Your Name (535 LBW / 414 ELW)**

**Pam Aakre, Piano; Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute**

**Verse 1:** *Ho-ly God, we praise your name; Lord of all,  
We bow be-fore you. All on eath your scep-ter claim,  
All in heav'n a-bove a-dore you.  
In-fi-nite your vast do-main, ev-er-last-ing to-your reign.*

**Verse 4:** *Ho-ly Fa-ther, ho-ly Son, Ho-ly Spir-it, three we name you,  
Though in es-sence on-ly one; un-di-vid-ed God we claim you and,  
a-dor-ing, bend the knee while we own the mys-ter-y.*

### **Children's Message**

**Andrea Keene, GPR Youth Director**

#### **Confession and Forgiveness**

We gather as we live, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Whether we embrace God's call in our lives or try to avoid it,  
Whether we are longtimers or latecomers in the life of faith,  
Whether our lives in Christ are comfortable or bring hardship,  
God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
We take a moment of silence as we reflect on God's gracious mercy, slow to anger and never-ending love for us....as we confess before God and one another our sins.

SILENCE....

In repentance, let us turn toward God's grace and mercy.

**God of abundant goodness, we confess that we want your grace for ourselves but often wish punishment or exclusion on others.**

**We judge the efforts and motives of others while ignoring the faults of our own.**

**Forgive us when we let jealousy overtake us.**

**Forgive us when we are petty even in the presence of your generosity.**

**Forgive us when we feel slighted by you.**

**God, you are gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love with us. May we be gracious, merciful, slow to anger and loving towards one another.**

God extends to us mercy beyond our deserving, and grace beyond our ability to earn it.  
In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us,  
and for his sake God forgives us all our sins.

As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority,  
I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins,  
in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

#### **Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16 (The Message)**

For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup>After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup>When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; <sup>4</sup>and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.

<sup>5</sup>When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. <sup>6</sup>And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?'

<sup>7</sup>They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' <sup>8</sup>When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the

laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.'

<sup>9</sup>When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.

<sup>10</sup>Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. <sup>11</sup>And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, <sup>12</sup>saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'

<sup>13</sup>But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? <sup>14</sup>Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. <sup>15</sup>Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' <sup>16</sup>So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

**Message: God's Generosity, Even when we think it's Unfair Pr. Hope Deutscher**

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

Do you remember as a kid, when your brother or sister would get more of something? Or they would get out of chores because they had homework to do or an extracurricular activity after school? And we all cried: "It's not fair!" Every parent knows...fairness is tricky...There are always two sides to fairness.

Imagine you are standing in an unemployment line. Suddenly someone comes up and says they are looking for workers to help in the vineyard. The pay is good. You go into the field to work, sweat running down your face, glad to have a job. As the day goes on, you see other workers joining the first crew – some come at noon, others begin mid-afternoon. At the end of the day, you all go to collect your paycheck. You all receive the same amount of pay...no matter what time of day you started the job.

Everyone had been smiling – after all you had all begun the day standing in the unemployment line...and had gotten a good day's work in. But it seems unfair that you all were paid the same wage no matter when you started working in the hot sun.

Life can seem pretty unfair at times. We yell – show me the money! But that's not God's response...Growing up my older sister and I attended elementary school a few blocks from my grandmother's house. My grandmother would come pick us up from school and sometimes we'd stop by the general store, which was on the way to her house.

Sometimes grandma would give us a \$1 each to spend at the store – as an elementary age youngster, I'd look over the items carefully on the shelves...which sweet treat or trinket would be bought? But then there were decisions to be made – some of the items cost more than a \$1. ... so what if I saved my money and bought something small so I could save some money and the next time we stopped I could double my savings when grandmother would give us another dollar. Meanwhile my sister would scour the store herself and find some candy and trinkets and spend the \$1 down. So on our way home we went...sitting at the kitchen table, my sister would realize she had no money and I had some left. While the sisterly fight would ensue over the money, my grandmother would quietly end the arguing by giving my sister some coins. We both now had the same amount of money.

Obviously, I was furious. I had saved my money. My sister had blown her money. I thought it was unfair that my Grandmother was showing unconditional love, generosity beyond what I could imagine and grace. Perhaps if I had asked for more money back at the store, I would

have received it.

Fairness is tricky. We complain when the unfair situation works against us, but when it works to our advantage, we say it's an answered prayer. We never say, "Whoa, wait a minute – my piece is bigger than everyone else's!" When it comes to fairness, we are a bit selective of when we complain, aren't we?<sup>1</sup>

God lays aside fairness in its purest form – and opts for fairness in the sense of it being fair for him to extend mercy and grace to all who believe. Our relationship with God is not about fairness. It's about a loving, forgiving and grace-filled relationship. Christ entered the world – and changed it...imparting grace beyond our wildest imagination. I love this acronym for GRACE: God's Riches at Christ's Expense. We don't and can't save ourselves. We come before God to confess our sins...and in doing so, God forgives us. We just confessed our sins – the slate is wiped clean.

In a few minutes, Pr. Jim will lead us in the Lord's prayer, and again, we say *Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us*. Martin Luther said in The Lord's Prayer we ask that our heavenly Father would not regard our sins nor deny these petitions on their account, for we are worthy of nothing for which we ask, nor have we earned it. Instead we ask that God would give us all things by grace, for we daily sin much and indeed deserve only punishment. So, on the other hand, we, too, truly want to forgive heartily and to do good gladly to those who sin against us. GRACE...God's Riches at Christ's Expense.

Does this resonate with our story of the workers in the vineyard? God's grace-filled kingdom comes; God is generous – giving us what we need, when we need it. The laborers forget that they all began the day unemployed...everyone was given a job by the landowner and they were all paid what was promised to them. Their energy went into comparing each other's wages...to become envious of each other's gifts. The human mind suspects injustice, but the heart of God sees only an opportunity to be generous. God provides for each of us, no matter how long we have been working for God rather than ourselves, we all receive the same relationship now and in the future.

God's grace, love and forgiveness go beyond my human ability to reason – and that brothers and sisters in Christ is indeed good news for each of us...and it also gives us a challenge. We are loved! We are just as good as the next person! And we can be challenged to work on being a better person, imparting that same grace, love and forgiveness to others just as God gives us those gifts. Amen.

*And now may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and your minds in Jesus Christ. Amen. (Philippians 4:7).*

### **Hymn of the Month – *Standing on the Promises***

***Pam Aakre, Piano; Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute***

**Verse 2:**     *Stand-ing on the prom-is-es that can-not fail,  
When the howl-ing storms of doubt and fear as-sail,  
By the liv-ing Word of God I shall pre-vail,  
Stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God.*

**Refrain:**     *Stand-ing on the prom-is-es, stand-ing on the prom-ises,*

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<sup>1</sup> Andy Stanley, The Grace of God, page 187-189.

*Stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God my Sav-ior;  
Stand-ing on the prom-is-es, stand-ing on the prom-ises,  
I'm stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God.*

**Verse 4:** *Stand-ing on the prom-is-es of Christ my King,  
Through e-ter-nal a-ges let his prais-es ring;  
Glo-ry in the high-est, I will shout and sing,  
Stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God. REFRAIN*

**Scripture: Philippians 1:21-30**

<sup>21</sup>For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. <sup>22</sup>If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. <sup>23</sup>I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; <sup>24</sup>but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. <sup>25</sup>Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, <sup>26</sup>so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

<sup>27</sup>Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28</sup>and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. <sup>29</sup>For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—<sup>30</sup>since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

**Message: *The Holy Spirit Triple A Travel Agency*                      Pr. Jim Greene**

One piece of advice given at Seminary went like this: "All of you will be given vacation time by the churches you serve- take it! Your Church will need a break from you!" A startling thought- here's what I got out of it:

\* We all need to take care of ourselves otherwise we: 1) Push too hard; 2) Can let our ego's get too big; 3) Find ourselves in prisons of discontent! Prison - not a place for a vacation or a get away, is it?

But Prison is where Paul found himself as he wrote this letter. When you read Philippians you'll quickly see Paul resided in prison but lived in Christ! For too many of us, we reside in our prisons AND forget to live in Christ!

What if we could wear a "Fitbit" which kept track of how long we are in the prison of a foul mood; are frustrated, resentful, and angry AND what if after 90 seconds into this foul mood it beeped to remind us we have a choice. Brain Scientist Jill Taylor had a stroke and wrote in her book, *My Stroke of Insight*, that our foul moods and negative emotions only last around 90 second . . . as long as we don't feed them. Like a fire not fed- it goes out!

In 2 Corinthians 11: 23 - 29 we'd read of all the abuses Paul went through which could fuel the fire of negative emotions toward God, others, life. However, Paul is fed by living for Christ. Note: Living for Christ doesn't mean life goes our way or life is always easy; just that we have a choice on how we travel through life.

One suggestion on how to travel through life? Connect to the Triple A service provided by the Holy Spirit & modeled by Jesus and others in the bible. The Triple A = Attitude; Aspiration; and Action.

Attitude is the type of fuel which energizes us as we travel through life. Paul tells us our attitude needs to be to “stand firm in one spirit and strive side by side. We see the opposite of this modeled by politics and in social media and where does it get us? We will have disagreements (a good thing) and they don’t have to prevent us from striving side by side!

Aspiration helps us take the striving side by side a step further. It’s hard work seeing life through our eyes AND other people’s eyes. To aspire is to eagerly desire to improve our ways of thinking, speaking, and living and Paul says this works best when our one spirit and one mind is connected in faith in the gospel - the good news of Jesus Christ. By being curious, willing to investigate, and ask questions of God the Holy Spirit provides direction and courage to live our lives for the benefit of all.

Attitude and Aspirations need Actions to make travel through life possible. Paul says, “because we are not intimidated by the opponents of the gospel” we live out the good news and gain strength and perspective in our connection with God. This connection helps us to live out the phrase: “God’s work, Our Hands” in service to all.

As we travel through life and live out “God’s work, Our hands” we will get tired and need a break and we can twist the phrase to be “Our Work, Our Hands- where are you God!?” and become imprisoned in our frustrations. Please give yourself permission to step back daily and take time with God. “Standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel and in no way being intimidated by the opponents to the gospel” is quite difficult unless we travel with the help of the Holy Spirit.

As we begin each day, may we learn to be still and trust God’s Holy Spirit will help us with our Attitudes; Aspirations; and Actions as we work together to make our world a better place- one day at a time.

### **Virtual Communion:**

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

### **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](http://Tithe.ly) online (mobile and online option) or by mail. Visit [livinggracehawley.org](http://livinggracehawley.org) or [qprparish.org](http://qprparish.org) for specific information.*

### **Prayers**

Creator God- you didn’t make us indestructible. We need your guidance, wisdom, and encouragement. May we learn to stop and connect with you many times during our day. Sometimes life doesn’t seem fair and we can get caught up in whining and complaining. Guide us to step back and reconnect with you- especially when we don’t feel like it. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Blessed Jesus, you modeled for us what it was like to show up and to be of help no matter what time of day it was. Your inspiration inspired Paul to find joy even in the midst of the times he was in prison. Remind us how the prisons we might feel trapped in are only prisons as long as we feed the unhealthy and negative emotions or actions. Show us how the key to get out is by connecting with you and trusting your love for us- even if we don’t feel it at the time. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Counseling Holy Spirit, as we travel through life work through our Attitudes, Aspirations, and Actions to learn to stand firm in YOU as we strive side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel. On our own we can't change the world, yet, our contribution- no matter how large or small- is part of the building blocks for a better life for all. Help us to show up no matter when we hear your call and serve to the best of our abilities. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Triune God, there is much we don't understand in the world, in our communities, and in our lives. As we step back and work together, grant us courage, strength, and the wisdom needed to make healthy and helpful choices as we remember how you taught us to pray:

### **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**

As we live out our Baptism, may we remember how the Lord is here to bless us and keep us; the Lord is with us and makes his face to shine upon us; and how the Lord is with us to give us peace. All this we believe because of how we're marked in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Hymn – Blessing and Honor (ELW #854 / LBW #328)**

**Pam Aakre, Piano, Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute**

**Verse 1:** Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and pow'r, wis-dom and rich-es and strength ev-er-more, be to the Lamb who our bat-tle has won, whose are the king-dom, the crown, and the throne; whose are the king-dom, the crown, and the throne!

**Verse 2:** Let all the heav-ens sound forth Je-sus' name; let all the Earth sing his glo-ry and fame. O-cean and moun-tain, stream, For-est, and flow'r ech-o his prais-es and tell of his pow'r; Ech-o his prais-es and tell of his pow'r.