

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, October 4, 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

In today's gospel reading, Jesus tells a vineyard parable, which serves as an image of Israel, the prophets' mission, and Christ's death. For Christians, the vineyard also speaks of God's love poured out in the blood of Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. Grafted onto Christ the vine at baptism, we are nourished with wine and bread so that we may share Christ's sufferings and know the power of his resurrection.

Prelude: *Be Thou My Vision*

Pam Aakre, Piano

Welcome/Announcements

- *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.*
- *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!*
- *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.*
- *SMART Team/Worshipping Update: Our worshipping communities are working on Business Plans to reopen, when it is safe to do so, and when we are prepared to do so following MN Department of Health guidelines. The Smart Team will meet this Monday to continue conversations.*

- **Clay County Public Health Flu Shot Clinic will be held October 5th** from 10:30 – noon. There will be clear instructions on how to enter/exit building.
- **Connect Through Bible and Book Studies!**
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.
 - *Monday evenings (every 2 weeks): Paul Tillich Bible Study (led by Joe Hass)*
 - *Wednesdays at 10 AM: Joel Study*
 - *Starting Monday, October 19th @ 7 pm: Women’s Book Study: It’s Not Supposed to be This Way: Finding Unexpected Strength When Disappointments Leave You Shattered by Lysa Terkeurst. Contact Pr. Hope for Zoom log-in details! We will meet the first and third Mondays via Zoom.*
- **Saturday, October 10:** 3 PM Fall Clean Up at Rollag Lutheran; 5 PM Campfire worship and Meal. *We will provide hotdogs/brats, chips and bottled water in a safe manner! Come for fun, fellowship, food and faith!*
- *Are you interested in reading or playing a musical instrument or singing? We are interested in more people helping with worship – if you would like to read scripture, sing or play a musical instrument, please contact Pr. Hope.*
- **Notes about today’s service:**
 - *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 asks us: What is our goal - in life and in faith.*
 - *Today Pr. Jim reminds us we are appreciated and loved by God.*

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

(LIGHT CHRIST CANDLE)

Hymn of the Month: Listen, God is Calling (ELW 513 / WOV 712)

Pam Aakre, Piano; Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute

Refrain: *Lis-ten, lis-ten, God is call-ing, through the Word in-vit-ing,
 Of-fer-ing for-give-ness, com-fort, and joy.*

Verse 1: *Je-sus gave his man-date: share the good news
 That he came to save us and set us free. REFRAIN*

Verse 2: *Let none be for-got-ten through-out the world,
 In the tri-une name of God go and bap-tize. REFRAIN*

Verse 3: *Help us to be faith-ful, stand0ing stead-fast,
 Walk-ing in your pre-cepts, led by your Word. REFRAIN*

Children’s Message Andrea Keene, GPR Youth Director
Based on Matthew 21:33-46

Confession & Forgiveness

Whatever good we may have done is nothing compared to the righteousness of Christ. Whatever wrong we may have done is nothing compared to the grace of God. With faith in Christ's righteousness and confidence in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

Loving God, you have planted us like a vineyard on a fertile hill. You cleared away the stones, planted us with choice vines, and kept watch over us by night and day. But we have not yielded the good fruit that you expected or desired. We are overgrown with sin, choked with violence and injustice. Forgive us, uproot our evil, prune away our sin, and shower upon us the gift of your grace.

Our salvation does not depend on anything we have done, but comes from the grace of God alone through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the good news: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Let us pray, Holy God, Maker of heaven and earth, out of your great love for the world you sent us your beloved Son – but we sent him to his death. Have mercy on us, O Lord; forgive us, renew us, restore us so that we may be the people of your vineyard and bear good fruit for your holy kingdom. **Amen.**

Scripture: Isaiah 5:1-7

¹Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. ²He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

³And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

⁵And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. ⁶I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

⁷For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!

Message

Pr. Jim Greene

When we look in a mirror there are two questions we can ask: **What** do we see & **Who** do we see? (I want to keep these two separate to make a point)

“What” we see: hair, face, eyes, wrinkles, nose, mouth, injuries; sadly we can make the mistake of making nasty judgments about what we see!

“Who” we see is far more important because it deals with our inner person. Even though the outside is less agile, the inside is more available to be kind, caring, and understanding. Which question helps lead a better life: What you see or Who do you see? Think about that for awhile.

As you think about this- add this thought: Isaiah emphatically wants us to see ourselves through God's eyes AND while what we are is God's child, who we are in God's eyes is a “beloved” person - let that sink in!

When we fall prey to “what” we are we often bring unrealistic expectations- like we should never change- but all people change. As God’s beloved there is also an expectation. The Prophet Micah says : “The Lord requires of you to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

Notice how, the reading from Isaiah is a love song which has fallen on deaf ears. Instead of having God be the beloved in return, the house of Israel is more concerned with “getting” than they are as sharing help to others. Isaiah says, the beloved was to do justice but instead sheds blood; the beloved was to be righteous but people have cried out at how unfair the “beloved” has been! Notice the problem if people are more concerned with what they can get over how they can be of help? Notice the problem when we are weighed down with what we are instead of who & whose we are?

This mirror is at the bottom of the steps on our main floor. Most of the time I don’t look at it when I’m coming down to head out for the day. What if every time I walked down the stairs and every time you came upon a mirror we stopped and said to ourself- “I am God’s beloved and I will go out from here and do no harm, be as much help as I can, and trust God will guide me in the best way I can go!”? How might we live differently from looking only at our outsides. Is having a bad hair dare really bigger than being beloved?

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.

Hymn: *The church’s one foundation* (ELW #654, LBW #369)

Pam Aakre, Piano; Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute

Verse 1: *The church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is his new creation by water and the word.
From heav’n he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.*

Verse 2: *Elect from ev-’ry nation, yet one o’er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation one Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses with ev-’ry grace endued.*

Scripture: Philippians 3:4b-14 (The MSG Translation by Pastor Eugene Peterson)

⁴⁻⁶ We couldn’t carry this off by our own efforts, and we know it—even though we can list what many might think are impressive credentials. You know my pedigree: a legitimate birth, circumcised on the eighth day; an Israelite from the elite tribe of Benjamin; a strict and devout adherent to God’s law; a fiery defender of the purity of my religion, even to the point of persecuting the church; a meticulous observer of everything set down in God’s law Book.
⁷⁻⁹ The very credentials these people are waving around as something special, I’m tearing up and throwing out with the trash—along with everything else I used to take credit for. And

why? Because of Christ. Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant—dog dung. I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by him. I didn't want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ—*God's* righteousness. ¹⁰⁻¹¹ I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself. If there was any way to get in on the resurrection from the dead, I wanted to do it.

Focused on the Goal

¹²⁻¹⁴ I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.

Message

Pr. Hope Deutscher

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Greetings...today I'm outside sitting in the cemetery at Rollag Lutheran Church. I thought it was a good place to talk about goals. **Goals in life and goals in our faith.** The past few months I have set the goal to survive 2020. While some might laugh at that...or join in and say, yes that's my goal too. The reality is that 2020 has been a trying, hard year in a number of ways. We are in some ways running a race...not a sprint but a marathon.

I love how Paul focuses on a goal in the text I just read. He says, "¹²⁻¹⁴ I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back."

I don't know about you – but most days, I don't feel like I have it all together...but I do have my eyes on the goal...of having Christ in my life...and in my faith. You know, Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians while he was physically in prison. He wasn't focused on his own life behind bars but rather how much knowing Christ had changed his life.

He used to be focused on the achievements – who his family was, his nationality and faith, and accomplishments. His former identity was bound up in a set of given relationships, personal achievements and failures. Ironically, his greatest achievement, being perfect in relationship to the Law of Moses... was also accompanied his greatest failure, persecution of the church.

Having once considered his personal story an asset, he now considers it a loss -- even more, "garbage." We also have our personal stories, some of which we cherish, some of which we would gladly bury. In either case, we often feel that our identity is bound up in those stories... But Paul says his life changed – and ours changed the day Christ entered our life. For most of us – that was the day we were baptized. It changes our focus from destructive ways of living and following false gods...to growing in his own faith...and ultimately testifying about his own life and the impact that Christ had on it – and on him.

Paul says his goals of life went from focusing on the inferior stuff to knowing Christ more

personally, experiencing his resurrection power, being a partner in his suffering, and going all the way with him to death itself.

Like Paul, we don't find our life, our purpose, our worth and our identity in the past...but only in the discovery of who we are in Christ. How has your life changed because you knew Christ?

In Baptism, we receive freedom from our past. We are no longer defined by that history, because only God can tell us who we are. Paul says it's a matter of life and death, and having broken with his former identity, Paul doesn't walk; he runs into the future that is his in union with Christ.

Knowing Christ and Christ's redeeming work is liberating – but it's also difficult to grasp and comprehend...it can be scary and unfamiliar...God pulls us from what we are comfortable and familiar with – and sets our eyes on the goal of growing deeper in our faith with God...and a glorious new future as a child of God.

When I was in junior high school my best friend Rhonda lost her grandmother. She was sad. We were sad for her. One night sitting on her bed we were talking and she shared with me how she was jealous...when my grandmother died I knew she had gone to heaven. But Rhonda didn't believe in Christ or Christ's redeeming work in our lives, neither did her grandmother – or so Rhonda believed. So she felt like the end was there at the grave. I think I came up with some teenage words to comfort her...but it left a lasting impression on me.

Christ is our rock, the foundation of our faith – and the foundation for our lives. Even when we turn away or reject him, Jesus turns to us with love and forgiveness... God's grace and love enter our lives and world. In joy, we discover the open arms of Jesus on the cross, bringing life into this world even where there is death; bringing hope where there is despair; and bringing resurrection to all creation.

Paul uses the image of a race to describe the Christian life. As one pastor put it "A runner who keeps glancing over his shoulder will not win the race. Rather, the one who keeps their "eyes on the prize" will stay on track." Similarly, the runner who mistakes the half-way marker for the goal and stops there, saying "I made it!" will drop out of the race. We are striving to reach the goal... in faith as we grow deeper in our relationship with God. In life – as we turn from our past to run towards the future in union with Christ. Amen.

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 gprparish.org for specific information.*

Prayers

Creator God, you call us your beloved and you show us your love for us through creation, the seasons, and through of gift of our relationships with each other. Forgive us when we get distracted by our possessions, our fears, and our hate for anyone or anything which we disagree with. May we see and believe we are beloved by you and to show this love in all we think, say, and do. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Blessed Jesus, the Apostle Paul had a lot to brag about in his life, however, he chose to keep his focus on you, Lord Jesus, and what you do for all creation through your trust in God. Thank you Jesus for making us your own, and help us to keep moving forward as we live out our call to love one another as you love us. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Counseling Holy Spirit, infiltrate our hearts and minds to help us have a better understanding of how to let your wisdom guide us. On our own we only see a small portion of life, but with you we have an expanded vision which reminds us no matter what happens to us you are always able to guide and direct us. Remind us how much easier it is to feel your presence, strength, and insight when we daily connect with you. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Triune God, pull out all the stops as you help us learn to live and work together in real and healthy ways. Attacking people who think different than we do only brings dissension, distrust, and fear. Despite the fact COVID-19 is extremely frustrating, help us to be of support and help to each other. In all our lives there have been losses and blessings- guide us to stay close to you. We pray this, and all we need, trusting in your name. **Amen.**

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 God our Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter. Amen.

Hymn: *Thine the Amen!* (ELW 826 /WOV 801) (MUSIC & WORDS)

Pam Aakre, Piano, Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute

Verse 1: *Thine the a-men thine the praise al-le-lu-ias an-gels raise
Thine the ev-er-last-ing head thine the break-ing of the bread
Thine the glo-ry thine the sto-ry thine the har-vest then the cup
Thine the vine-yard then the cup is lift-ed up lift-ed up.*

Verse 3: *Thine the tru-ly thine the yes thine the ta-ble we the guest
Thine the mer-cy all from thee thine the glo-ry yet to be
Then the ring-ing and the sing-ing then the end of all the war
Thine the liv-ing thine the lov-ing ev-er-more ev-er-more.*