

# *The Spirit*

## May 2021



### WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER

“The church lingers; it does not flinch at loss. It engages in no cover up or false assurances. It grieves. It prays. Belatedly it remembers promises and sets about to keep them.”

Those words are the conclusion to the Bible study led by the insightful Walter Brueggeman. You'll find it just after this letter and continued at the end of this month's newsletter. It's a timely message as we begin to grasp for “normal.”

Understandably, we are desperate for normalcy. It's been a long, hard slog to get to this point from a year ago. But, the church of Christ crucified never engages in cover up. We “call a thing what it is” according to Martin Luther. And so, in this transition time we name the truth that as someone said, “We may all be in the same storm but we're sure not all in the same boat.” We're all held in God's love and so we'll “get through” in that sense. Nothing can shake that bond. But what that “getting through” looks like will be very different depending on our circumstances, much of which was beyond our control.

I encourage you to take 20 minutes to engage prayerfully and thoughtfully with this study. Bring your Bible so you can read the referenced passages from Amos for yourself and explore the verses around them. (Or find it at this link: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=amos+3&version=NRSV>)

**I hope you will come to this study with an open heart and an open mind. The world has shifted drastically in the last year. We'll need all the grace, patience, and open heartedness we can bring to this moment so that we “remember promises and set about to keep them” for those who have been left behind.**

Pastor Val



“It has become a familiar mantra among us: “We will get through this together.”

It is on the lips of many public officials including the president. It intends to reassure, to assuage our anxiety, and bring calm. There is, moreover, a self-serving element in the mantra with an implied addition, “Trust me.” Trust me to get us through this together.

While such an assurance is welcome, it also makes one wonder: **who is the “we” in this mantra?**

- The “we” might include all those who have gotten the vaccine, including those who have jumped the line ahead of others. But it does not, surely, include the more than 550,000 dead. And for now it does not include their grieving families.
- The “we” might include all those who have received government assistance, including those who have gamed the system for a disproportionate share. But it does not, surely, include all those who have lost their

# REDEEMED, RECONCILED AND UNITED



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Twice in the Gospels there is a story about a woman anointing Jesus with pure nard, one in **Mark** and one in **John**. In Mark, an unnamed woman comes to Jesus and anoints his head. In John, it's Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who anoints Jesus' feet. In both Gospels the anointing happens just days before the crucifixion. In both stories the disciples criticize the women for their wanton extravagance. In both stories Jesus defends the women and declares that they have anointed his body for burial.

This is a **very human Jesus** facing his impending death and pausing in the midst of all the turmoil to be ministered to so tenderly. Jesus is with his friends sharing a meal in their warm company. Soon his head and feet would be pierced by thorns and nails. But in these moments, his head and hands are soothed. In John we hear the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume (12:3).

Not long before this, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. Impatient Martha ran to meet Jesus and chided him for not coming sooner. When Jesus commanded that the stone be rolled away from the tomb, Martha cautioned, "Lord, already there is a stench, because he has been dead four days" (John 11:39). Quite a different fragrance.

Not long after Jesus was anointed with the pure nard, he would gather with his disciples to eat the Passover. Dear friends, good food and wine, and the remembrance of not only the spiritual struggle for freedom but of the physical experience of oppression and violence against their own bodies in Egypt. The bread and wine of that supper fed and warmed the bodies of the disciples.

I had a colleague who once said that **our lack of awareness of our spiritual hunger—distracted as we are by all the cares of life—is like someone not even realizing that she was hungry until she smelled baking bread**. Stephen Bouman, former executive director of the Domestic Mission unit, remembers as a child that when his parents came back from receiving communion, they smelled different—certainly the wine, but also a fragrance of life.

**All of this points to creatureliness—Jesus' and ours.** In significant and sometimes disastrous ways, we have separated ourselves from the creation and the Creator. Adam was formed from Adamah, the dust of the earth. Adam was the earth creature. **We are earth creatures.**

At the beginning of Lent we heard: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Too often in Western thought the material, created world has been deemed inferior to the spiritual—as if God would divorce God's self from the universe God created in love. "[Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice](#)," the 1993 ELCA social statement, acknowledges humanity's separation from God and from the rest of creation as a central cause of the environmental crisis. Can we return home to God, the creation and ourselves?

Just before his crucifixion Jesus said to his disciples: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). It falls into the earth, the created earth. **God keeps creating.**

Back to nard. Nard was rare and expensive. It was also pungent. It has been described as earthy, woody, dank, musty. In short, it smelled like the earth. And it was strong. The account in John says that the fragrance filled the room. It's likely that that fragrance clung to Jesus' body on the cross and in the tomb. Here was the complete accomplishment of the Incarnation—the **earth creature of Eden is redeemed by the earth creature of Calvary**, Emmanuel, God with us. All of creation is reconciled.

This April we celebrate Easter and observe Earth Day. **Heaven and earth meet—redeemed, reconciled and reunited in the beauty of the Creator's loving handiwork.**

Bishop Eaton



# WE ARE ENTRUSTED WITH THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER

## A PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

We like to teach the children: I am the Church, you are the Church, we are the Church together...

The question remains:

is our greatest desire as the Church that people will become like us,

or that all of us together will become like Christ?

**The Holy Spirit has overcome distinctions, and through faith we are one in Christ Jesus.**

When we hear each other's stories, from near and far,

**may we believe their truth, and rejoice in God's work.**

When we meet together to discern the Spirit's movement,

**may we have courage to follow Christ's call to break down hostility and create justice.**

When we read the word together,

**may we allow it to speak to our time and place in new ways.**

When we find that God is ahead of us, in welcome and in mission,

**may we refrain from limiting God to our comfort zones.**

And when we are walking this journey of life

**may we joyfully share the good news at every step of the way.**

For on Sunday and on Monday and on Friday night, at church and at home and at work and in the streets, alone and in community,

our way of life must proclaim:

**I am the Church, you are the Church, we are the Church together.**

**The promise is for me, and for you, for our children, and all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God shall call.**

**Amen.**

**By Terri Peterson**

THE QUILTERS are back in full mission swing this Spring! During the month of April the team put together hygiene and school kits along with packing up many boxes of quilts. This ongoing labor of love is sent to Lutheran World Relief.

Photos submitted by Diane Hanson

Other quilter pictures throughout newsletter

## **God's people join in prayer for:**

Jenny Yates, Tim Leithold, Tom, Cheron and Tanner Stanley, Tanya Anderson-Bowers, Jim Hall, Nick Wehage, Monica Wilson, Melanie Roffler, Bob Parker, Aaron Larsen, George Susewind, Tiffany Powell, Fred Thurman, Joseph, Madonna Posey, Ray and Jean Hodge, Cindy & Harley, Isaac & his mother, Courtney, Adrienne, Carl and June Bender, Ginny Clark, Philip, Matthew Green and his family, David Shaw, Don Rabung, Whitney Morean.

**for those unemployed or underemployed;** those ill or dying; those displaced from their homes around the world, especially those seeking asylum, fleeing violence, poverty, and despair in Central and South America.

**for those who have served in the military in the past and for those in active military service:** especially Caleb Berken, Steven Kincaid and John Kupka.

**for missionaries around the world:** especially Stacie Evensen's Myanmar Mission.

**for those who live on the margins in our own community:** those who live outside, in cars, or in unstable housing; those who live with food insecurity; those who are unemployed or under-employed.

**for those who work for the care of the vulnerable in our community in:** Cold Weather Shelter, Health care, especially those who may be exposed to Covid-19, Food Banks, Family Promise, Salvation Army and Union Gospel Mission.

*(We periodically update the prayer list. Please contact the office 532-8250 to let us know if we should continue praying for the person whose name you submitted.)* Contact Brenda Grant with prayer requests at: [brenda\\_k\\_grant@hotmail.com](mailto:brenda_k_grant@hotmail.com)







## May BIRTHDAYS and ANNIVERSARIES

### BIRTHDAYS:

Al Kelling, May 1  
Molly Gunderson, May 2  
Kari Ann Larson, May 2  
Janice Frafjord, May 6  
Hiedi Seelke, May 6  
Sophie Kupka, May 8  
Hank Bilderback, May 9  
Eilidh Channel, May 9  
John Pellesier, May 14

Kristine Finazzo, May 17  
Mark Smalley, May 20  
Cindy Penttila, May 23  
Tessa Buckman, May 24  
Joelle Buckman, May 27  
Madison Winter, May 28

### ANNIVERSARIES:

Jeff & Stephanie Gundersen, May 26  
Al & Marge Kelling, May 27

**Marge Kelling & Naomi Kraiger** for the beautiful Easter lilies.

**Kristine Finazzo & Judi Hubbard** for delivering the April newsletters and for doing the depositing.

**Amy Ostwald & Joni Hildreth** for picking up and delivering the items to the Food Bank.

**Everyone** who has served as usher.

**Sunday School teachers** for leading Sunday schools lessons online.



### CHAPLAINS DINNER THANK YOUS

Thanks to all that helped out with the March Chaplains Dinner to feed hungry folks in our community. Your cooking, baking and food donations are much

appreciated: Dee Erickson, Pastor Val, Joan Rabung, Lynette Life, Judy Njoku, Carmon Shaw, Darci Jewitt and Mike & Karen Barkstrom.



## THANKS WE'VE RECEIVED FROM OTHERS

- **Family Promise** thanks Amazing Grace for a donation of \$182.15
- **Pacific Lutheran University** thanks Amazing Grace for a donation of \$182.15

## SERVING AT AMAZING GRACE

### LITURGISTS

Curtis Steinhauer, May 2  
Laura Carle, May 9  
Hank Bilderback, May 16  
Keith Lile, May 23  
Charles Scamman, May 30

### STREAM TEAM

Amy, May 2  
Keith, May 9  
Hiedi, May 16  
Curtis, May 23  
Joe, May 30

### USHERS

Carmon, May 2  
Dee, May 9  
Michelle & Jim, May 16  
Phil & Suzan, May 23  
Dee, May 30

## UNION GOSPEL MISSION May 4

Kristine Finazzo, Leader

Liz Ellis, Molly Leithold, Michelle Weiberg, Lynette Lile, Marti Debandt

Substitutes: Hiedi Seelke, Carmon Shaw 360-532-2940

Kitchen manager, Doug, would like to have food there at **3pm** if possible.

When you deliver, drive into the back alley, then call the Union Gospel office at 360-533-1064 and they will come out to the back alley to carry the food in for you.



## SYNOD ASSEMBLY

### REPRESENTATIVE NEEDED

We need a male representative to attend the Synod Assembly May 14 and 15<sup>th</sup> on ZOOM. Please

contact Pastor Val if you can fill this important role for a few hours each of those days.

## CHAPLAINS DINNER

Our next Chaplains Dinner cooking day is Sunday, May 16, deliver food at 1pm to church kitchen.

We'll need the following:

- 4 casserole cooks (making 2 pans each) We will shop for these ingredients and get them to you to do the cooking.
- 160 rolls
- vegetables to serve 160 (not salad as it goes in to-go container with hot food)
- dessert — cookies or brownies, etc. for 160 (store-bought or home-made)

- donations to cover cost (or donation of the food)

Chaplains Dinner is a mission of 'Chaplains on the Harbor' and feeds 140-160 hungry people in Aberdeen each Sunday afternoon at 4pm out of our church kitchen. Currently all meals are 'to-go.'

Contact the church office or Amy if you can help.

360-482-2306 [aaostwald@olynet.com](mailto:aaostwald@olynet.com)



## MEAL SUPPORT FOR OUR NEW FAMILY

Dear Volunteer Coordinators, Board Members, Volunteers, and Friends of Family Promise.

At long last, we recently welcomed a new family to our program! The family consists of a Mom and three boys ages 7, 4, and 22 months. Our rotational shelter program continues to be suspended and the Day Center will be utilized as a static site. Thank you to Amazing Grace Lutheran Church for graciously allowing use of the Day Center as our static shelter site!

Volunteers are needed to prepare and drop off meals at the Day Center between 5 pm and 6 pm daily. Meal support will be needed for as long as the family is hosted in our program. If you are interested in volunteering, please visit:

<https://mealtrain.com/k5d4yd>

For the health and safety of everyone, we ask that volunteers delivering meals please wear masks and knock loudly on the door of the 4th St entrance and someone will meet you there. Food should be delivered in disposable packaging. *Please note that one person has a life-threatening, airborne allergy to crustaceans, mollusks, and squid. We ask that meals do not contain any of these items: crab, lobster, crayfish, shrimp, prawns, squid, snails, clams, oysters, or scallops.*

If you have any questions or would like more info, please don't hesitate to reach out to me by calling 360-986-3948, emailing [fpgcasemanager@gmail.com](mailto:fpgcasemanager@gmail.com), or via our Facebook Messenger. Any help is greatly appreciated. Thank you so much for volunteering your time and talent to support to Family Promise of Grays Harbor!

Best regards, Darci Jewitt

## USHERS NEEDED

**We need more ushers while we're following safe Covid protocols, two at each service. Please sign up if you are vaccinated and able**

**to help.**

Contact the church office at 360-32-8250 or [amazing111@comcast.net](mailto:amazing111@comcast.net)



## TASK FORCE UPDATE

**We're welcoming up to 40 people in the sanctuary.** Masks and social distancing are required. You

will be seated and excused to minimize crowding at the door. Visiting after worship will be outside with distancing required.



## THE FOOD BANK HAS A HOME!!!

The new address is 2120 Commerce St. in Aberdeen. Drop off day is Tuesday from 8:30 – 3. You may drop off donations at the new address Tuesdays from 8:30-3 or at the church.

**Amy Ostwald and Mike and Joni Hildreth will transport donations left at the church. If you'd**

**like to help with that, please let Amy or Pastor Val know. Food bank is especially in need of baby wipes, peanut butter, mac & cheese and diapers sizes 2,4,5, & 6.** If you prefer to send a monetary donation, it may be sent to: P.O. Box 444 Aberdeen, WA 98520

## GROWING AT AMAZING GRACE

### ENDOWMENT FUND

The budget for 2021 has increased up to \$12,000. Scholarship applications and endowment fund requests are available in church office or from Darrell Lokken.

Applications are due June 1st. There will be more information on this later. All completed forms can be returned to the office or to a committee member.



### 4-F PICK UP DINNER

**Save the Date.** The dinner will be on Saturday June 26th and pick-up will be after 5pm. The cost

is \$20. Choose between pork loin or chicken with all the fixings. More details to follow, your 4-F team.



## UNDERGROUND MINISTRIES ON THE COAST

Living Stones ministry at the prison in Shelton is partnering with Underground Ministries on a project they call, "One Parish, One Prisoner" While Living Stones focuses especially on the "tomb" part of incarceration, UM (and OPOP) focuses on the resurrection of reentry! Over the past year or so, our organizations have come to realize the advantages to working more closely together to ensure that those who have experienced incarceration can be given the supportive and transformative opportu-

nities they need, both inside and outside the walls.

OPOP is dedicated to forming, training, and stewarding groups of people who can walk with and support recently released individuals as they reenter society.

An individual is preparing to return to the Aberdeen/Hoquiam area, and so Amazing Grace is being asked to consider getting involved in this person's successful return.

You'll hear more about this later. Please contact Pastor Val if you're interested in this opportunity!



**GUESS WHO?** If you think you know who this is, how about dropping him a note of thanks for all his work!

**Mike Hubbard**



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Wednesday Quilters:** 5/5, 5/19, 6/2

Time: 9-12

**Wednesday Handbells:** 5/5, 5/12, 5/19, 5/26

Time: 6pm

**Thursdays Master Quilters:** 5/6, 5/13, 5/20, 5/27

Time: 9-3

**Sunday School meets at NOON Sunday 5/9 and 5/23 Zoom. Watch for an email from the church for more information. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89503235721>**

**Graduation celebration for Kylie Weiberg on June 6th during worship.**

**4-F pick-up Dinner.** June 26th, cost is \$20, pick-up after 5pm

Below picture: A wonderful tea time in Naomi Kraiger's back yard to celebrate Spring! Guests are Maurita White, Joyce Smith, Diane Hanson, and taking the photo Kathy Wehage. We look forward to fellowship with the rest of our Amazing Grace family. Photo submitted by Diane Hanson.



From Left: Mike Hubbard, Roger Shaw, Hank Bilderback and Gene Schermer

The guys take time for a coffee break after assisting the quilting group pack up the quilts to be shipped. Many projects have been completed on the church building during COVID-19, too! It takes a team!

Photo submitted by Diane Hanson.



## OFFICE HOURS

Church office is open: **Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8-1 & sometimes Friday 11-4.** If you visit the office wear a mask when Vicky is there. AGLC Office 360.532.8250 [Amazing111@comcast.net](mailto:Amazing111@comcast.net)

Pastor Val will be mostly working from home. You can usually reach me but leave a message and I'll get back to you asap. **Please call, text, or email if you want to pray together or talk. Let me know what you need. I pray for you all constantly, but I miss you! I would love to connect in some way with each of you!**

Pastor Val 360.580.8977 [vmetropoulos001@luthersem.edu](mailto:vmetropoulos001@luthersem.edu)

## HEALTHY COMMUNICATION IN TOUGH TIMES

Healthy communication is important in the best of times. Throw in a pandemic and political turmoil and things can get messy. In the church we are especially careful to express our love for each other and for all our neighbors by practicing healthy communication skills. Some basics that are helpful in all relationships include the following.

- Everyone speaks for themselves. Each of us

needs to take responsibility for expressing our own feelings or concerns.

- When there is a concern, we go directly to the person involved. Honest, direct, loving communication is the basis of all healthy relationships.
- If the concern is not resolved after direct communication, we ask a neutral person to join us in that conversation for the sake of understanding and healing.
- We avoid triangulation. Triangulation occurs when one person does not communicate directly

with another person, instead using a third person to relay communication to the second. Triangulation distorts relationships and makes clear

communication difficult.

- We pray for each other trusting that God loves us all and in prayer can heal our hurts and re-

## **Amazing Grace Lutheran Church Administrative Council Meeting Minutes March 23, 2021**

**Vision:** A welcoming place where grace happens.

**Mission:** To Experience and share God's love through worship, education, and community.

**Values:** Radical Hospitality; Passionate worship; Intentional faith development; Risk-taking mission and service; Extravagant Generosity.

**As Church Council, we 1. Ensure that the mission of the church is fulfilled (Love God and Love Neighbor) and 2. Manage the property and finances of the congregation so that purpose #1 can be fulfilled.**

Attendance: Joelle Buckman, Amy Ostwald, Mike Barkstrom, Carrie Erwin, Pastor Val, Joelle Buckman

**I. Call to Order by Pres. Joelle Buckman 7:01**

-Motion to authorize Joelle Buckman to sign closing documents and sale documents for the sale of the Bel-Aire property. \$70,000 sale price with closing cost to be paid by Amazing Grace, approximately \$2600 **M/S/P**

-March 23 Administrative meeting will be covered during the April 13th Mission meeting.

-Small discussion on re-attending church in person

**II. Task Assignments**

-Mike Barkstrom may need to sign minutes

**III. Adjournment and closing prayer 7:07**



## **Amazing Grace Lutheran Church Mission Council Meeting Minutes April 13, 2021**

**Vision:** A welcoming place where grace happens.

**Mission:** To Experience and share God's love through worship, education, and community.

**Values:** Radical Hospitality; Passionate worship; Intentional faith development; Risk-taking mission and service; Extravagant Generosity.

**As Church Council, we 1. Ensure that the mission of the church is fulfilled (Love God and Love Neighbor) and 2. Manage the property and finances of the congregation so that purpose #1 can be fulfilled.**

Attendance: Dee Erickson, Joelle Buckman, Phil Stegemoeller, Pastor Val, Mike Barkstrom, Amy Ostwald, Curtis Steinhauer, Theresa Kaufman

**I. Prayer & Highs and Lows**

**II. Call to Order by Pres. Joelle Buckman 6:21**

-Update on March 23<sup>rd</sup> Administrative meeting. Regrouped at 7 when they had a quorum. Made a motion to authorize Joelle to sign the closing paperwork on the Bel-Aire property. During the April 27<sup>th</sup> Administrative meeting council will go over February and March Financials

**III. Establish Quorum (I – III: 15 min)**

**IV. Review and Approve Agenda (IV: 2 min)**

**V. Business items (these are generally items that are beyond any one ministry or don't fit under any ministry, special requests from the community) (20min)**

**A. Mutual Ministry Update – Joelle**

-Getting close to wrapping up the 5 Practices and will need to decide what they will be doing next.

**B. Information on property sale and proposed use of funds; congregational meetings**

-The property closed on Monday. Money is General checking until it's decided where it will go. A second information meeting was held and is available on the church website. We'll plan another meeting for May or June when more people can attend in person.



## VI. Ministry Reports (25 min)

### A. Worship – Dee Erickson and Pastor Val

1. Resuming in-person worship Task Force – report; Council conversations with congregation;
  2. Report on audio/video status
- Many hours put into this project. Roger Shaw and Mike Hubbard built the platform area. The next step is having the people at home and those in the Sanctuary seeing the same thing.

### 3. Lent & Easter worship review

#### B. Outreach – Amy Ostwald

1. Family Promise- Still looking for a family, otherwise no update.
2. Chaplain's dinner- Continues to go well.
3. Food Bank- Steady contributions.
4. Synod Affordable Housing Initiative – Pastor Val/Curtis  
-There will be a meeting at the end of the month. Pastor Val was in contact with the Bishop that Amazing Grace is moving ahead and would appreciate hearing from a Synod representative.

### C. Youth & Family – Curtis Steinhauer

1. Sunday School- 3 sessions of Sunday school have been successful. Will be done every other week.
2. Confirmation-Continues to meet every week. Will be making a graduation blanket for Kylie, which will be presented on June 6<sup>th</sup>.
3. Adult group study- No group at this time.

### D. Fellowship – Carrie Erwin

-No report

### E. Quilting Group

-New quilting group of 5-10 people are meeting on Thursdays from 9-3.  
-motion to allow the Thursday quilters led by Tobi Buckman to use the facilities and a small amount of storage if necessary while following safety protocols. **M/S/P**

### F. Property – Mike Barkstrom

-Threw away large extension ladders and replaced it with a 12-footstep ladder. Making adjustments to the closet in the back of the Sanctuary where the ladders are kept. Let Mike or members of the maintenance crew know if anything needs to be fixed or done.

## VII. Pastor's Report

## VIII. Task Assignments

- Joelle will speak with Tony at the bank about where to put the money.
- Pastor Val will ask new quilters group about any storage space needed.
- Pastor Val will get in contact with Charles about Family Promise.
- Pastor Val and Amy will look at what they need or do not need for Sunday school.

**Adjournment and closing prayer 6:54**



## **PASTOR'S REPORT March 2021 - regular activities during pandemic; all meetings on Zoom**

### **WORSHIP/DISCIPLESHP**

Sunday worship – Plan and lead  
Plan adult education  
Plan seasonal and special worship services  
Sermons – prayer, study, reading, writing  
Prayer

### **ADMINISTRATION**

Meet with ministry leader as needed  
Reports: congregational; synod; ELCA  
Conference Pastors meet with Bishop weekly  
Conference deans – meet bi-annually & as needed  
Recordkeeping: updates to documents; church ledger  
Work with office administrator: bulletins, newsletter, etc.  
Council meeting & Exec. Comm. meeting monthly  
Newsletter - writing, editing  
Meet with treasurer as needed

Mutual Ministry meeting monthly  
 Endowment Committee advisor

**FELLOWSHIP/PASTORAL CARE/COUNSELING** PSALM – mentor; spiritual direction  
 Prayer Chain – coordinate w/ Brenda Grant  
 Grace notes weekly or as needed  
 Pastoral care as needed  
 Visits at homes or parks during good weather  
 Coordinate with ministry leader as needed

**OUTREACH** Affordable housing Synod meeting  
 Facebook page – outreach through social media.  
 Coordinate with others to support homeless and marginalized people  
 Meet w/ ministry leader as needed

**BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE** Meet w/ ministry leader as needed

**YOUTH AND FAMILY** Adult study: plan and participate  
 Confirmation: plan and lead  
 Sunday School: coordinate with ministry leader

**STEWARDSHIP/EVANGELISM** Study and integrate into sermons

**PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:** Spiritual Direction Supervision Group  
 Trauma Informed Ministry webinar

**OTHER ACTIVITIES in March**

**OFFICIAL ACTS:** None in March

**ADMINISTRATIVE:** Sale of property committee  
 Task Force for resuming in person worship  
 Synod Dean's meeting with Bishop

**PASTORAL CARE:** Visits, calls, texts, messaging as needed

**WORSHIP:** Lent services weekly; holy week services  
 Planning for in-person worship, Lent and Easter services  
 Planning for Easter season

**YOUTH/FAMILY/Education:** Sunday School – send lessons to families; coordinate with teachers  
 Confirmation  
 Coordinate with Michelle W. for Easter basket delivery

**OUTREACH:** Food Bank meetings  
 Synod Affordable Housing Initiative meeting  
 Plan informational meetings for congregation on use of proceeds from sale of property

**VACATION:** None

**UPCOMING:** Congregational meeting in May to decide on use of funds from sale of property.



President	Joelle Buckman	(360) 589-6111	Joelle_buckman@email.com
Treasurer	Theresa Kaufman	(360) 537-1190	Theresamarie4739.3@gmail.com
Financial Secretary	Phil Stegemoeller	(360) 580-9310	phil@willisent.com
Youth & Family	Curtis Steinhauer	(360) 580-2301	turtis21@gmail.com
Outreach	Amy Ostwald	(360)-482-2306	aaostwald@gmail.com
Worship	Dee Erickson	(360) 533-7948	deekaye1@comcast.net
Fellowship	Carrie Erwin	360-500-3767	mcerwin@comcast.net
Property	Mike Barkstrom	(360)532-3319	mkbarks1@gmail.com
Pastor	Val Metropoulos	(360) 580-8977	vmetropoulos001@luthersem.edu
Church Secretary	Vicky Kolb	(360) 532-8250	amazing111@comcast.net
Endowment committee:	Darrell Lokken	(360) 532-0615	delokken@comcast.net

## BUILDING REPAIRS/MAINTANCE

Please notify Mike Barkstrom or send a message to the church office if there are any repairs needed at the church. Sometimes members or visitors notice things that need to be fixed that the committee is not aware of. Your input is helpful in these matters.

Mike Barkstrom: mkbarks1@gmail.com - (360) 589-1393

### Ministers: The People of Amazing Grace

111 E. 4th Street, (360) 532-8250

[amazinggraceaberdeem.org](http://amazinggraceaberdeem.org)

[amazing111@comcast.net](mailto:amazing111@comcast.net)

**Pastor:** Val Metropoulos (360) 580-8977

[vmetropoulos001@luthersem.edu](mailto:vmetropoulos001@luthersem.edu)

**Office Administrator:** Vicky Kolb

**Liturgists:** Hank Bilderback, Keith Lile, Laura Carle,  
Curtis Steinhauer, Charles Scamman

**Musicians:** Kristine Burns, Heidi Seelke



## MARCH BALANCES OF CHURCH ACCOUNTS

Name		Date	Total
Checking			\$ 25,007.62
-PSALM			\$ 100.00
-Technology			\$ (64.55)
-Caring Cupboard			\$ 433.51
-Pastor's Sabbatical Reserve			\$ 2,620.00
-Music			\$ (393.54)
-Bells			\$ 965.95
-Friends in Need			\$ 1,455.88
-Reformation Fund			\$ 1,071.20
-Outreach Funds			\$ 500.00
-Altar Restore			\$ 386.83
-Altar Guild			\$ 367.00
-Noisy Offering			\$ -
-Family Promise Maintenance Holding			\$ 1,944.57
-Chaplain's Dinner			\$ 346.89
-Grace Fund			\$ 340.00
		TOTAL	\$ 35,081.36
			\$ -
Maintenance Checking			\$ 15,850.98
-Windows			\$ 11,388.06
Youth Checking			\$ 295.75
Memorial Savings			\$ 13,848.93
Mikkel Thompson Savings			\$ 1,908.53



jobs or their businesses due to a necessary shut-down.

The “we” might include the advantaged children of the well-connected who have prospered with on-line schooling, who have benefitted from vigorous parental support, state of the art technology, and, consequently, high motivation. But it does not, surely, include the many children who lack such privilege, such support, such technology, and such motivation.

It turns out, in my judgment, that the mantra is in part a denial; **it disregards the victims of the virus, the victims of the economic slow-down, and the victims of online schooling. It is in part denial, but it is also in part an illusion because it is unmistakably clear that “we” will not all get through this together.** Many of us surely will, but many of us just as surely will not.

When I consider how many of us are well and how many of us will get through this in good shape, my mind drifts to an odd verse in the prophet Amos:

*Thus says the Lord: As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who live in Samaria be rescued, with the corner of a couch and part of a bed (3:12).*

This verse is odd because it is prose in the midst of poetry, suggesting it is an intrusion. Nonetheless this verse, like much of Amos, concerns Samaria, the capitol city of Northern Israel. We are familiar with the confrontation the prophet had with the priest at the royal shrine of Bethel (7:10-17). Amos was accused by the priest there of conspiracy; the charge against the prophet distorted his message in order to make the accusation of conspiracy stick (7:11). The priest seeks to silence the prophet and his unwelcome message of coming disaster. He avers that such negative talk is not permitted in the sphere of the king, certainly not in the sanctuary of the king:

*O seer, go flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there; but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king’s sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom (vv. 12-13).*

Amos, however, persists in his anticipation and in his utterance that big trouble is coming to Israel and to Samaria, whether or not the king wants to hear of it:

*Therefore, thus says the Lord:*

*‘Your wife shall become a prostitute in the city,  
and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword,  
and your land shall be parceled out by line,  
you yourself shall die in an unclean land,  
and Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land (v. 17).*

The prophet anticipates death in war, confiscation of the land, and exile away from the land. He anticipated the undoing of all that royal Samaria believed to be an assured given.

It turned out, in fact, that the anticipation of the prophet was vindicated. In 722 BCE the army of Sargon, the Assyrian, came and routed the city, and deported leading citizens:

Then the king of Assyria invaded all the land and came to Samaria; for three years he besieged it. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria; he carried the Israelites away to Assyria. He placed them in Halah, on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes (II Kings 17:5-6).

The vigorous royal-priestly stonewalling in Samaria and Bethel did not alter and could now slow historical reality that the prophet took as evidence of God’s governance of history.

What interests me in this odd verse, 3:12, is that Amos responds to the official line that **“We will get through this together.”** We will get through the threat to Samaria together; Amos answers the illusionary assurance of the priest via the image of a shepherd and a sheep. Let Assyria be the lion; let Samaria be the vulnerable sheep. The shepherd seeks to rescue the sheep by pulling it out of the mouth of the lion. But all that he can pull out and rescue is “two legs” of the sheep and “a piece of an ear” of the sheep. That is all that is rescued! So says the prophet, it will be like that: Samaria will be saved from the Assyrians.

**But all that will be rescued will be “the corner of a couch” or “the part of a bed;” otherwise all will be lost in the same way that the rest of the sheep will be lost to the lion.** (Indeed archaeologists claim to have found a piece of an ivory bed in the ruins of the city, a sign of extreme luxury; see Amos 6:4.) But that is all. The notion that Samaria will be rescued from Assyria is an illusion. Or it is a denial that the capitol city will be destroyed by a force dispatched by YHWH. In prophetic horizon, the “we” that will get through this is a we remnant, only two legs and the piece of an ear, the corner of a couch or part of a bed, nothing more.

**The prophet speaks in imagery.** The point is not a literal one. **The point, rather, is to recognize that the 12**

**cost of a disordered public life is inescapably very great.** The cost cannot be denied or understated. Most of the sheep is lost; most of the house (palace) is done in. The priest in Bethel is lying when he says, “We will get through this together.” Because many sheep, many houses, many cities, many people will not “get through.””

“... we should not be under any illusion. We should not engage in any denial. The truth is **that the “we” that we will get through this together consists in those of us who are privileged and connected and, well, lucky. The “we” that survives in wellbeing is limited and not comprehensive.**

It is important that this truth be told, acknowledged, and performed, even if the official mantra says otherwise.

**It is surely the work of the faith community to be truth-tellers about those who have dropped out of the successful, rescued “we.” It is important that this other “we” of loss be remembered and taken with great seriousness.** That of course is what Amos did. He engaged in lament for the loss that the priest wanted to deny:

*Hear this word that I take up over you in lamentation, O house of Israel:  
Fallen no more to rise,  
is maiden Israel;  
Forsaken her land,  
with no one to raise her up (5:1-2).*

The prophet engaged in petition for his community in its helpless vulnerability:

*O Lord God, forgive, I beg you!  
How can Jacob stand?  
He is so small (7:2).  
O Lord God, cease, I beg you!  
How can Jacob stand?  
He is so small (7:5)!*

Eventually the prophet would engage in recovery and restoration; but **not too soon.**

So imagine the church as a venue of grieving and petition:

- *Naming* the lost, one by one, as long as is required;
- *Advocating* for those who have lost jobs and businesses;

*Lobbying* for the “left behind” children who have not had the benefit of privilege, advantage, and technology in their families.

Unless we do that with some sustained intentionality — *naming, advocating, and lobbying* — we who “get through this together” will not long grieve or remember. We will not reallocate funds. We will, as soon as we can, return to the old “normal” that disregards the dead, forgets the lost, and neglects the left behind.

**The church in its remembering must, I suggest, contradict the ubiquitous mantra, “We will get through this together.”** Because many of us will not. While we get through this together, Amos holds up for us two legs and the piece of an ear. While we watch Amos’s poignant reminder to us, we might remember as well that later trope on a shepherd:

*“Which of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it (Luke 15:4)?”*

Eventually Amos will end in hope:

*On that day I will raise up  
the booth of David that is fallen,  
and repair its breaches,  
and raise up its ruins,  
and rebuild it as in the days of old (Amos 9:11).*

**But not too soon.** Before he does that, Amos will be in anticipation of the later imagery of Ezekiel:

*I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice (Ezekiel 34:15-16).*

**Not too much credence should be given to “the fat and the strong” who will want to move on quickly to the old normalcy. The church lingers; it does not flinch at loss. It engages in no cover up or false assurances. It grieves. It prays. Belatedly it remembers promises and sets about to keep them.”**

Walter Brueggemann

Walter Brueggemann is one of the most influential Bible interpreters of our time. He is the author of over one hundred books and numerous scholarly articles.



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