



Grace Lutheran Church, 2006 60th Street, Kenosha, Wisconsin

March 21, 2021

Grace Reopens for In-Person Worship

As more and more of our community become immunized against COVID-19, Grace Lutheran Church has reopened worship services to in-person attendance.

For the time being, we will limit attendance to 50 persons, with family groups spaced appropriately. You do not need to phone the church office to tell us you plan to attend the service.

To improve the experience of those who are worshipping from home, we can lend out hymnals. You can sign out a hymnal from Paul Tuesdays-Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and keep it through the duration of COVID-19.

If you have not yet been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and are in a high-risk group either because of age, or because of a pre-existing condition, or because you live with a family member who falls into one of those categories, we strongly recommend you not join us for worship. We will continue to send out the sermons in the mail and will continue to live stream worship services on our Facebook page and at www.GraceKenosha.com

Please monitor yourself for COVID-19 symptoms of fever and respiratory illness. If you have

either of these symptoms, please do not come to worship. If we notice you are having acute symptoms, we will politely ask you to leave.



Weather permitting, we will keep doors open until 9:30 a.m. so that people don't touch the door handle. This includes the front door by the church offices. Please note that due to salt damage, the stairway to the ramp entrance is not safe to use; you must use the ramp or front door.

There will be hand sanitizer in the narthex as well as masks. Masks are required for everyone other than the Pastor and

Reader. We strongly recommend using hand sanitizer as you enter the sanctuary.

The bathrooms will be sanitized before Sunday morning.

Worshippers are invited to pick up a bulletin from a stack near the door. (They will not be handed out.)

To cut down the risk of spread we will not be doing any singing, but will still have Nancy play the organ. Also, we will no longer be having responsive or communal prayers and readings—all of that will be done by Pastor. The reason for this is indoor singing and loud speaking are two of the easiest ways to spread coronavirus.

There will be no-touch passing of the peace. The offering plate will be on a stand at the back of the church.

Every other pew has been blocked off. It will be one family unit per pew.

For communion, Pastor and one communion assistant will stand in the middle aisle. While practicing social distancing, people will come up in family units to commune. They will receive the bread and cup of wine or juice, then walk toward the side aisle to eat and drink the

→ Please turn to page 10

Gathering Liturgy for Fifth Sunday in Lent

OPENING LITANY

¶ God of all people and the whole of creation,
C **make us into who you have created us to be.**
¶ Make us your hands, your feet, your eyes, your lips,
C **your body in the world.**
¶ Spirit of Peace, reconcile us,
C **connect us to yourself, to each other.**
¶ You are the source of our healing and hope,
C **for if one is hurt, all of us are hurt.**
¶ Clothe us, your body in the world,
C **with your love, mercy and grace. Amen.**

CONFSSION AND FORGIVENESS

¶ Blessed be the Holy Trinity, + one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer.
C **Amen**
¶ God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.
Fountain of living water,
C **pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free.**

Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.

¶ Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are + forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus.

C **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG: "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross" (ELW #335)

vv. 1 & 4

1 Jesus, keep me near the cross,
there's a precious fountain;
free to all, a healing stream
flows from Calvary's mountain.

Refrain: *In the cross, in the cross
be my glory ever;
till my ransomed soul shall find
rest beyond the river.*

4 *Near the cross I'll watch and wait,
hoping, trusting ever,
till I reach the golden strand
just beyond the river.* Refrain.

GREETING

¶ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

KYRIE (ELW p. 203)

*Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.
We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.
Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.*

*Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart.
Renew us with your saving power; create in us new hearts!*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

¶ Let us pray.
O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Readings for Fifth Sunday in Lent

Jeremiah 31:31–34

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though

I was their husband, says the LORD.

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other,

"Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Psalm 51:1–12

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot

out my offenses.

**2Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin.**

³For I know my offenses,
and my sin is ever before me.

4Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;

so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.

⁵Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my mother's womb.

**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

⁷Remove my sins with hyssop,
and I shall be clean;

wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

8Let me hear joy and gladness;

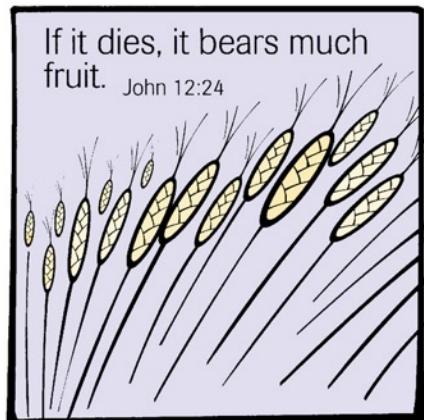
that the body you have broken may rejoice.

⁹Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my wickedness.

**10Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.**

¹¹Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

**12Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**



Hebrews 5:5–10

Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

"You are my Son,
today I have begotten you";
as he says also in another place,

"You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek."

In the days of his flesh,
Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

LENTEN GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (page 142)

*Return to the Lord, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in
steadfast love,
and abounding in steadfast love.*

GOSPEL: John 12:20–33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, 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. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

"Now my soul is troubled.
And what should I say—'Father,
save me from this hour'?

"No, it is for this reason
that I have come to this hour.
Father, glorify your name."

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him."

Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Pastor Barker's Sermon on John 12:20–33

I want you to think for a moment when you have experienced a death. Maybe a death of a loved one, maybe a death of a dream, or maybe a

death of a way of life. We experience death like experiences all the time.

I will never forget the day my wife's plan to go to grad

school in theology died. She was in the middle of the application process just after she finished her masters in theology at Marquette. We went for a sunset

walk in Havenwoods State Forest on a beautiful early summer evening.

As we made it around the loop in the park she turned to me and said, "There is something missing tonight. I don't feel like anything is hanging over my head." And very shortly after that she decided to stop applying for grad school.

It was definitely a death for my wife—especially the death of an identity. She had been a straight A student and those around her had been encouraging her to get a Ph.D. since high school. And now she was going a different direction.

Again, I imagine many of us have had similar experiences where a direction, dream, way of life, or person has died.

In our gospel reading this morning we read about Jesus' death. Jesus speaks of his death as a seed falling into the earth and dying.

But, Jesus reminds us that out of this death comes great new life. The seed isn't reborn, but rather it comes forth bearing much fruit as a new stock of grain with many seeds.

This is the center of our resurrection hope. As Christians, we don't just hope to have the

same life again, but we hope to have a life that is renewed a thousand fold. Think of the grain of wheat and how it compares to the stock of grain that grows from it. The stock of grain is almost infinitely more than the original grain.



Now, in this passage, like we read earlier in Lent, Jesus calls us to be willing to follow him even to death. And again, he names that in death we have abundant eternal life.

Now, as a small example, I think back to my wife loosing her grad school identity. It felt like death, but so much has been born out of that decision. She has helped thousands of women suffering from domestic violence. She has become an artist. She has gotten to take hundreds of walks

in Havenwoods where she is not worried. And not just for her but also for me—that decision meant that we stayed in Wisconsin and I get to serve here at Grace Lutheran.

So, in what was an initially very painful experience, there emerged so much new life.

There are two things I hope this passage will guide us towards. First, this passage has a lot to say about our own death and the death of our loved ones. Death is incredibly sad and the appropriate response is our mourning. But our faith reminds us too that in death we are turned into more than we can imagine. Again, this isn't to discount grief, but this is our overarching understanding of how the universe works and I hope we can all hang onto that.

Second, this passage invites us into resurrection thinking. Where there is death it is not the last word. The seed might die but then comes the stock which is so much grander. And we need resurrection eyes. Where we see death we need to see the possibility that God will bring tremendous new life.

Amen.

Creed, Prayers, and Communion Liturgy

HYMN OF THE DAY: "Now the Green Blade Rises"
(ELW #379) vv. 1 & 4

- 1 *Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
love lives again, that with the dead has been;
love is come again like wheat arising green.*

- 4 *When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain
your touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;
love is come again like wheat arising green.*

Text: John MacLeod Campbell Crum, 1872-1958, from Oxford Book of Carols © Oxford University Press 1928. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under OneLicence.net permit #A-733643

APOSTLES' CREED

P With the whole church, let us confess our faith.
C **I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son,
our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy
Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered
under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died,
and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended
into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of
the Father, and he will come to judge the
living and the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

INTRODUCTION TO PRAYERS “Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying” (ELW #752)

*Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace.*

“Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying” by Ken Medema copyright © 1973 Hope Publishing Co. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under OneLicence.net permit #A-733643

PRAYERS of INTERCESSION

P Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

You wash us through and through and remember our sin no more. Make your church a community of forgiveness throughout the world. Give your people courage to forgive; through them show the world new possibilities. Bless ministries of repentance and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P You fill the earth—from tiny grains of wheat to the mighty thunder—with your presence, and you call us to attend to your will for all creation. Grant weather that prepares the soil for seeds; protect all from violent storms, flooding, and wildfires (*especially...*). Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P You promise to write your law on our hearts. Guide citizens throughout the world to shape communities that reflect your mercy, justice, and peace, and give them creativity to work for the welfare of all. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P You sustain us with your bountiful Spirit. Restore the joy of all who need to know your presence: those who are lonely or feel unforgivable, those who need healing of mind or body, those who are dying, and all who grieve. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Jesus calls us to follow him in life and death. Empower this congregation in discipleship. Equip children and teachers in Sunday school, confirmation, and learning ministries. Give us your truth and wisdom and teach us to follow Jesus. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Your mercy endures forever. Deliver all who cry to you, especially those who are hungry or without homes. Give life in places where death

seems triumphant; give healing to those who are sick and comfort to those who mourn, especially:

- Doug Becker (son of Marlene Binnerger)
 - Mary Andrews (Welcome Center volunteer from St. Anthony's)
 - Dawn Bench (Welcome Center volunteer)
 - Jackie Brichacek (Nancy's sister-in-law)
 - Jean Boothe (Grace soup kitchen supervisor)
 - Hank Buehrens
 - Andrew Calvert
 - Pat Calvert
 - Barb Caputo
 - Holly Cummings
 - Eric Dangerfield (Carolyn Reynold's boyfriend)
 - Alyssa and Aaron Dell
 - Connie, mother of Welcome Center volunteer Lynda Eirich
 - Gregory Foster
 - Steve Gapko
 - Shirleen Gulick
 - Aggie Hartnell (Bert Felland's mother)
 - Sydney Houston
 - David & Jackie Kramer
 - David Kristopeit (Nancy's brother-in-law)
 - Dorothy Keuffer
 - Dean O'Hanlon
 - Carolyn Reynold's children Eddie, Santino, and Lytoshia
 - Cynthia Schwartz (Norma's daughter)
 - Marcia Swanson
 - Joyce Swift
 - Helen Usinger
 - Linda Wadham
 - Florence and Jacqueline Walker (Carolyn's sisters)
 - Dottie Watts
 - Kristi Weiss (Rollie's daughter),
- Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P You form all humanity to bear your divine image, and you intend for everyone to live together in harmonious dignity. We pray for all people, whether ourselves or others, who suffer the cruelties of racial or ethnic prejudice. Grant your Spirit of power to all who are oppressed. Give healing to victims of violence, protection to the vulnerable and abused, better housing and worthy employment to the mistreated, courage to the fearful, a remedy for rage, strength to parents and caregivers, and hope to children and youth. Purge the privileged of their sense of superiority, and lead church and society to foster communities of equity and diversity. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P In the cross of Christ, your name is glorified. We praise you for those who have given us words to worship you (*especially Thomas Cranmer*). With all those who have died in Christ, bring us into life everlasting. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEAL

OFFERING. "We Give Thee but Thine Own" (ELW #686)

1 *We give thee but thine own,
whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone,
a trust, O Lord, from thee.*

OFFERING PRAYER

P Let us pray.

Faithful God, you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in this meal, that we may pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING. SONG: "My Song Is Love Unknown" (ELW #343, to RHOSYMEDRE) vv. 1 & 7

1 *My song is love unknown,
my Savior's love to me,
love to the loveless shown,
that they might lovely be.

Oh, who am I, that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh and die?
My Lord should take frail flesh and die?*

7 *Here might I stay and sing—
no story so divine!
Never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine.

This is my friend, in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend!
I all my days could gladly spend!*

DIALOGUE & PREFACE

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 207)

*Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might:
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.*

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.*



rock.

We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water, who joined us in our desert, pouring out his life for the world.

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 for 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 for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await your salvation for all this thirsty world. Pour out your Spirit on this holy food and on all the baptized gathered for this feast: wash away our sin, that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

C Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

C Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven:

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Jesus draws the whole world to himself. Come to this meal and be fed.

COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 208)

*Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
you suffered death our lives to save: have mercy now, we pray.
O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mercy now, we pray.
O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
eternal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Let us pray.

God of steadfast love, at this table you gather your people into one body for the sake of the world.

Send us in the power of your Spirit, that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

SENDING

NOISY OFFERING

BLESSING

P You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor.

God bless you ⁺ that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

C Amen.

SENDING SONG "Savior, Again to Your Dear Name" (ELW #534) vv. 1 & 4

*1 Savior, again to your dear name we raise
with one accord our parting hymn of praise;
once more we bless you ere our worship cease,
then, lowly bending, wait your word of peace.*

*4 Grant us your peace throughout our earthly life,
our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife;
then, when your voice shall bid our conflict cease,
call us, O Lord, to your eternal peace.*

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Share the good news.

C Thanks be to God.

Liturgy from sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission: annual permit #SAS017083

Worship Opportunities of Holy Week

Grace Lutheran Church will celebrate Holy Week 2021 with worship services offered both in person and on line. Our worship services are livestreamed on our Facebook page and at www.GraceKenosha.com

We commemorate Christ's Last Supper at a special Maundy Thursday communion service at 6:30 p.m. April 1.



Good Friday, April 2,
Pastor Jonathan will lead a
solemn worship service at 6:30
p.m.

Easter morning, April 4, we
join with our fellow Kenosha
ELCA congregations for a sunrise
service 6:30 a.m. at Wolfenbuttel

Park Rose pavilion, 5901 Third Avenue.

Then at 9:30 a.m., Grace celebrates Christ's resurrection with a festival service of Holy Communion in our own sanctuary.

Tune In to Lenten Midweek Worship, Daily Devotions

The Lutheran congregations of Kenosha offer midweek worship services online Wednesdays during Lent with the theme of "Wilderness Faith." You can find them on gracekenosha.com and on our Facebook page, GraceElcaKenosha and watch them any time.

Pastor Barker and the Grace Welcome Center are among the ministries that have contributed to



Outreach for Hope's Lenten devotion series, "What Does It Mean to Give?" The series features 40 video reflections released Mondays through Saturdays during Lent from 2021 Ministry Partners and staff.

You can sign up for a daily message, either text or video, at <https://outreachforhope.org/lenten-devotions/>.

Outreach for Hope sent out Pastor Barker's message on February 22 and Grace Welcome Center's Denise Russell on March 13; the video by Leif Peterson is scheduled on March 13 and 27.

Infant Moses, Clothing Bank Trade Places

Infant Moses and the Welcome Center clothing bank have traded rooms at Grace Lutheran Church.

Infant Moses is now located on the main floor of the church building in room 102. Longtime

members will remember that room as having been the nursery, so it's sort of a return to its former use.

By moving into the room below the library,



the Welcome Center clothing bank centralizes its storage facilities at the lower level of the church building.

Infant Moses Ministry is open Thursday afternoons from 2:00 to 5:00.

Wisconsin 7 Rally in Racine, Milwaukee

The Wisconsin 7 will be at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection (322 Ohio Street, Racine) on Friday, March 19 at 10:00 a.m., and will be at Redeemer Lutheran Church (631 N. 19th Street, Milwaukee) on Sunday, March 21 at 2:00 p.m. Both events will be outdoor

rallies requiring masks and social distancing.

At both events there will be a great list of speakers, including Bishop Paul Erickson on Sunday. The Wisconsin 7 are on a 22-day fast for climate justice in the state budget; this weekend will be on day 15 and 17 of their fast.

The Wisconsin 7 are Andy Berg, Justin Blake, Joe Cardinalli, Jill Ferguson, Tori Lowe, Vaun Mayes and Pastor Jonathan Barker.

Please come out to support the Wisconsin 7, and lift the Wisconsin 7 up in your prayers as their 22-day fast continues.

Grace Receipts: March 14, 2021

General offering	\$ 1,403.00
Benevolence.....	\$ 41.00
Initial offering	\$ 3.00
Ash Wednesday	\$ 10.00
Maundy Thursday	\$ 35.00
Good Friday	\$ 35.00
Easter	\$ 10.00
Infant Moses Ministry.....	\$ 10.00
Welcome Center / Food pantry.....	\$ 10.00
Loose cash	\$ 23.00

Non-member, non-designated	\$ 120.00
Holy Assembly building use	\$ 500.00
Parking lot use	\$ 100.00
<u>Minus banking fees.....</u>	<u>\$ (9.10)</u>
Total	\$ 2,290.90
Grace weekly budget in 2021: \$	3,224.20

Please remember you can contribute by mail, or electronically through the "Donations" link at GraceKenosha.com.

'Churches Beyond Borders' Issues Statement on Eliminating Racism

*From Churches Beyond Borders:
Evangelical Lutheran Church in
Canada, Anglican Church of
Canada, The Episcopal Church
and the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America*

In Advent 2020, *Churches Beyond Borders* expressed a commitment to dismantling racism, combating white supremacy and actively seeking opportunities to engage more deeply on these important issues. In this season of Lent, we continue our journey as we join together in observing the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This is an annual day of recommitment in remembrance of the day police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid "pass laws" in 1960. (www.un.org/en/observances/end-racism-day) Recognizing that the March 21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is a calling to be lived out every day, we offer this reflection as encouragement to continue the journey with renewed determination.

I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them. (Exodus 3:7-8a, NRSV)

How do we lament the sin of racism?

Racism and xenophobia have a painful, violent, deadly history that traverses all borders. The institutional church shares in the complicity of the legacies of the Doctrine of Discovery colonization, forced removal and genocide of Indigenous people, the enslavement of African and Indigenous Peoples and

injustices perpetrated against all people of color. The sin of racism is structural, institutional, interpersonal and internalized. It lives in communities inside and outside the church; it continues to inflict harm on a daily basis and generate new history. How do we repent of all of this?



At the burning bush, Moses hears God say, "I have heard the cries of my people." We who follow the God of Freedom must also hear the cries of God's people, of each other, and especially those among us who live under the constant threat and violence of racism and white supremacy. For those of us who have the privilege of closing ourselves off, we need to open ourselves to feel the painful truths of the sins of racism and white supremacy in our hearts and bodies and minds and souls. We must create spaces and structures that welcome and include the voices of those most directly impacted by the sins of racism. This message is being shared during the season of Lent, a period of self-examination, reflection, and making amends. We need to lament, repent and be transformed.

Moses is told to take off his sandals. We need to lament in worship: to remove our shoes, to stand in humility, to feel the ashes on our foreheads, to be honest in the presence of God about our sins and shortcomings. Holy Ground is a gift that supports lamentation, repentance, transformation and discernment.

Moses is sent to work for the freedom of people. Oppression is not inevitable or insurmountable. Things can change. Challenging racism and white supremacy calls each of us to deep and honest consideration of perceptions, biases, behaviours and systemic patterns. We echo the United Nations call to take the strongest possible stand against racism, discrimination and intolerance of every kind, to spread the word to fight racism and to take stock of the state of human rights and hate speech today and reflect on how each of us can stand up for rights. In lamentation and repentance, we hear God's call to act for the dismantling of racism.

Moses admits his own fears and reluctance. God directs Moses to connect with his siblings. God provides Miriam and Aaron to make up for Moses' weaknesses and to enhance his strengths. The journey is long and the work is hard, crossing many difficult borders in our lives, communities, and our churches. We give thanks for the gift of community on this journey and in this work.

We invite you to join us in prayer:

God of Holy Ground, move us to lament and repent. Open our hearts, bodies, minds and souls to the cries of your people. Transform us by your presence. Drive us into action for the dismantling of racism in relationships, communities and societies. Bless us with companions who support us, challenge us and help us keep going. We pray for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Grace Lutheran Church
2006 60th Street
Kenosha, Wisconsin 53140-3893**

<https://www.GraceKenosha.com>

Worship services livestreamed at www.facebook.com/GraceElcaKenosha/

Pastor Jonathan Barker: jonathan.w.barker17@gmail.com 626-864-6404

Church office: graceoffice@wi.rr.com 262-654-9143

Office hours: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday

Grace Reopens Carefully

→ Continued from page 1

elements and will then throw their cup away in a trash can there and walk back to their pew by the outside aisle. Pastor will use a no-touch wafer dispenser. Pastor and communion assistants will have masks and gloves on.

As we leave worship, we will need to maintain social distancing of six feet. Pastor will stand in the middle of the narthex to avoid causing a line. Those who want to speak with pastor may do so, but will need to keep social distancing.

After worship the sanctuary will be thoroughly cleaned, including using Lysol spray on the pew cushions.

If we learn that anyone has come to worship that has COVID-19, we will call everyone on the list who came to worship, as well as the Kenosha County Health Department, and we will shut down the following Sunday to make sure nobody became infected. Executive council will closely monitor the situation and if needed, will shut down church for more weeks until it is safe to return.

