

March 2021



WORDS OF GRACE

Monthly Newsletter

Inside the Issue

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR BRAD...

Pastor Brad shares some thoughts adoption, inheritance, and God's amazing gifts of forgiveness and mercy, and freedom from sin.

HELP FOR THE HOMELESS

We have an opportunity to help local shelters & crisis programs! Supplying items helps them greatly. Visit pg 4 to see the most needed items and find out more!

"PASTOR CHAT" NOW AVAILABLE ON MORE PLATFORMS!

You can now view our weekly "Pastor Chat" through multiple media platforms! For more information visit page 2.

MARCH HIGHLIGHTS...

- March 7 Worship with **Communion**
- March 8 Elders Meeting 6:30pm
- March 11 Missions Meeting
- March 12-13 Elders Retreat @ Green Lake
- March 14 **Daylight Savings Begins!**
Clocks move AHEAD!
- March 15 Deacons Meeting 6:30pm
- March 28 **Palm Sunday**



Christ be with me,
Christ within me,
Christ behind me,
Christ before me,
Christ beside me,
Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and
restore me.

- from Saint Patrick's "Breastplate" Prayer

A Note From Pastor Brad

Dear Grace Family,

Today is the 15th of February, the day after Valentine's Day, and although you are reading this in the March Words of Grace.

I make a point of telling you that because Valentine's Day has always been a bittersweet day for me, except for this past day in 2021.

Let me explain...

You see, the 14th of February is also my birthday, and a reminder of the day that a fateful and faith-filled decision was taken by my unmarried birth mother to not terminate her pregnancy and to give birth to me.

But this Valentine's Day was different.

For the previous two weeks, I had been studying and preparing for the teaching I was to give that morning. I felt led by the Holy Spirit to teach about how we are actually able to overcome sin in our everyday lives and not have to live a life of constant shame and guilt before God and others. As I was praying that Sunday morning, I felt an overwhelming sense of thankfulness sweep over me. I realized the incredible work that had been done in my biological mother's heart to not abort her pregnancy, but rather to trust God, perhaps unknowingly, for the life of the child that she had carried for the past 40 weeks in her womb.

I had a sense of sheer gratefulness for the life she had afforded me, and the courage she had displayed to release me from her care and into the arms of a loving mom and dad whom she had never, and would never, meet.

And so I prayed for her and thanked God for her and that fateful yet faith-filled decision. And then I thanked God for the incredible parents he gave me, who also made an equally fateful and faith-filled decision in a time when adoption was not the most common option available to couples unable to conceive.

But how does this tie in with preparing a sermon on overcoming sin in our lives? Well, it is really all about the principle of adoption. Paul speaks extensively about it in Romans 8, and despite me having preached a few messages using this text before, I had never seen it in this light.

I quote verses 12-15, "So then brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if you by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of Adoption as sons, by whom we cry 'Abba! Father!'"

Far from being a scripture passage that just spoke about God's love in adopting us into his family, it now became one that clearly stated our newfound position, authority, and freedom over sin that we have received as sons of God.

You see, Roman adoptions meant that the adopted heir not only received a new name and, therefore, a new identity, but also that ALL of their existing debts and legal obligations were now assumed by the father, and then fully paid for by him. ALL. That is what I said...ALL. Past. Present. And future...*paid in full*, so that the new son not only assumed the position in the present as the heir, but also the promise of what his father would leave him in the future, and that he no longer had any outstanding demands on his life from his past actions.*

That is the truth of the Gospel.

Colossians 2:13-14 states "*and you, (put your name there), who was dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him (Jesus) having forgiven you all your trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against you with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*"

Done deal. Finished work. Nothing more to say!

And so you and I, just like the shameful and desperate prodigal in Jesus's parable of Luke 15, return home to our father to receive the robe we didn't deserve, the ring that we had abused, and the sandals that are to carry us to the new life as a son at our Father's banquet table. And that is what was different!

Regards,



[* I'm Keller in his book, Romans 8-16, ch 2, gives an excellent explanation from which I borrowed]

NEWS & NOTES



HELP SUPPORT OUR LOCAL SHELTERS & CRISIS PROGRAMS!

We are collecting NEW hygiene and cleaning items for local crisis agencies through The Family Radio's annual "Help for the Homeless" hygiene drive.

Feb. 14 - March 7. **Drop your donations in the box in the lobby -- deadline for donations is March 7.** Or make a financial donation for the purchase of supplies for our community at **TheFamily.net**

Most urgently needed items are laundry soap, kitchen size trash bags (shelters go thru LOTS of these), shampoo, cleaning supplies, diapers, toilet tissue, and feminine care. Your donations remain here in the Fond du Lac community and will be going to local agencies like ADVOCAP Homeless Program, Beacon House, New Beginnings, Solutions Center & The Salvation Army.

WE HAVE SOME EXCITING NEWS TO SHARE!

You can now view our weekly 'Pastor Chat' through multiple media platforms! What that means is you can continue to join us LIVE on our Facebook page OR you can join our weekly live stream through our website and/or our YouTube channel.

JOIN US FOR PASTOR CHAT

Wednesday Evenings at 6:00pm.

TUNE IN THROUGH:

Facebook: GraceChurchFDL
YouTube: GraceChurchFDL
www.gracechurchfdl.org

Invite your friends and family to join us!

To start off the month of March Pastor Grant will be joined by a special guest for a SPECIAL 45min EDITION of our weekly Pastor Chat to discuss some topics relevant to us today. His brand new series will then begin on Wednesday, March 10th. Don't miss this great weekly learning opportunity!

CONSIDER HOW A CHRIST-CENTERED EDUCATION WOULD BENEFIT YOUR CHILD!

Your Family may be eligible for full tuition coverage through the WI School Choice program. To learn more join us for our open house, Friday, March 26 from 6:00-8:00pm.
Fond du Lac Christian School - 720 Rienzi Rd. Fond du Lac, WI 54935



HEY FOLKS,

Don't forget to bring your "change" to church each Sunday (or throughout the week during office hours) for our "Change A Life" Mission box project. Boxes are located at the Info Booth and up in the Fellowship Hall. Our goal is to collect \$50 a month to go to the kids at Mahali Pa Maisha in Kenya.



MARCH AWANA SCHEDULE

- March 7th - Backwards Night
- March 14th - Green Night
- March 21st - S'mores Night (bring s'more friends!)
- March 28th - Dress As Your Future Self Night



JUST A REMINDER: SUNDAY, APRIL 4TH IS EASTER SUNDAY! WE WILL NOT BE HAVING AWANA THAT NIGHT!

A Note from the Deacons!

The Deacon Team would like to thank everyone that has continued to give during this challenging time. As of the end of December, we are meeting our annual budget and foresee meeting our projected expenses totaling \$527,375 for the current fiscal year ending in June 30th. This is assuming your financial support continues to remain constant. We thank you again for your contributions during this current fiscal year. We realize these are difficult times and are grateful for your continued giving. We look forward to what God has in store for our congregation and ask you to prayerfully consider your offerings for the future.

The Traveling Drama Troupe of Fond du Lac, WI, invites you to



attend our free performance of **Million Dollar Meatballs**, a comedy written by Todd Wallinger and directed by Dawn Poss, on **Thursday, March 25, and Friday, March 26**, at 7 p.m. at Grace Evangelical Free Church, 163 E. 18th St., Fond du Lac.

"Two bumbling jewel thieves are on the run from the cops when they duck into Chez Monyeu, a restaurant so bad the mice are their only repeat customers. And that's just the start of their problems. Not only has Chez Monyeu's chef just quit, but the city's most powerful restaurant critic is about to arrive. In desperation, the restaurant's owner, mistaking the thieves for famous French chefs, insist that they make their renowned Million Dollar Meatballs for the tough-minded critic. Insanity ensues as the pair try to keep up the ruse while hunting for the seven priceless diamonds they lost.

Will the thieves get away with their crime? Where could the diamonds have gone? And why are the meatballs so crunchy? Find out in this deliciously funny farce!"

There is limited seating each night. There will be no admission charge, **but you must reserve a seat to attend.** Please send an email to drpossfdl@sbcglobal.net with the number of seats you need and the preferred night of attendance. You will receive an email in reply to confirm your reservation.

Million Dollar Meatballs is produced by special arrangement with Pioneer Drama Service, Inc., Denver, CO.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS ON SUNDAY, MARCH 14!

So be sure to set your clocks and **SPRING AHEAD...**



Have you heard of Care INC? Would you like to bless "the least of these" by caring for their various needs?

Become a part of the Care INC network! Care In the Name of Christ is a service to people who are one step away from crisis. People are referred to Care INC from a church or agency when they have exhausted the resources available to them, but still, need a lifeline to keep from a downward spiral. You can help by becoming a donor or volunteering to provide a service. For more information email careincfdl@gmail.com

Please submit information for the April Words of Grace to the church office by March 15th. You can contact the office at (920) 922-7211 or office@gracechurchfdl.org



Monthly Reflection

Heart to HEART

On Monday, February 8, forty members of our Grace Family shared their hearts with the hearts of people in need within our own Fond du Lac community.

This event attracted a multi-generational group of folks who gathered in the Fellowship Hall to pack To-Go Food bags that will be handed out at the Salvation Army Warming Shelter. Our "heart"felt thanks go out to so many who donated food and beverage items, financial support, as well as those who helped out in person. A total of 110 bags were packed for the clients using the shelter, as well as 45 decorated Heart Cookies to serve at an evening meal. We also created handmade Valentine cards with special notes of God's love to be given out to guests at the shelter. After packing the bags, we prayed over them, that God would bless the person who received our love offering.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. John 13:34

Crystal Ogden, the Social Service Manager at the Salvation Army, joined us for the evening. She spoke about the Shelter and the clients it serves in our community. From her, we learned that up to 40 men and women stay overnight during the months of November-March. They are fed a supper meal and breakfast in the morning. Upon their departure, at 7 AM a "bag-to-go" like the ones we prepared, is offered to each person.

Clients may spend their day at a job, or using community buildings such as the YMCA, Public Library, or Holy Family Catholic Community Church to stay out of the elements, before returning in the evening. Many individuals stay overnight at the Warming Shelter for several weeks and some clients stay for just a few nights.

There are many opportunities to volunteer at Salvation Army located at 237 N. Macy Street. Check it out if you are interested.

We are planning to pack and deliver more bags in the coming days, since we received enough in donations to fill an additional 30 or so breakfast bags.

Women of Grace wishes to thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus to care for our Fond du Lac community neighbors.



'I worked at the shelter last night/this morning and I got to give the clients their bags and was able to see them check the bags out! Many commented on how "good" these bags of goodies are and were very grateful! I saw a few smiles when they read the prayer cards! So worth it!'

**A note from Crystal Ogden,
the Social Service Manager at
the Salvation Army**



The Anchor Holds

by Jack Witte

Those Everyday Miracles...

I love to watch the Alaskan Wildlife shows like “Alaska, the Last Frontier”, and others. I guess sometimes I am envious of the way of life those people live. I was watching a show recently where one of the characters was dangerously near rocks as he maneuvered his boat down a raging rapid. After he made it through, he said ... “I don’t just believe in miracles ... I count on them!”

I couldn’t help but think about what he was saying and how it applies to the many years I have shared with Jesus leading my life. As I think back over the many miracles my Lord has worked in my journey, my first thought is one of thankfulness. For on many occasions, when I found myself in hopeless situations, God has come through for me. I must say that His actions were not always what I wanted Him to do, but in the long haul, He has proven Himself to know what is best for me and the direction I needed to follow, much better than I do!

So, I guess I can say, without any doubt or reservation, that “I don’t just believe in miracles ... I count on them!” In every situation, I am dependent on my Heavenly Father to lead and direct me, and through His grace to help me to see my way through.

The best way to experience God’s EVERY DAY MIRACLES is to follow the avenue of prayer. Prayer is the main thoroughfare that leads to our God in heaven, and for many of us an avenue that has been well traveled.

Philippians 4:6-7 gives us the answer ... *“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then we will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”* (NLV)

If you just keep praying and expecting God to answer, miracles happen!

“I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.” Jeremiah 24:7

Let me ask you a question ... Does God have your whole heart? When I read the above verse, I asked myself that same question. Does God own every part of my life?

I guess it has taken me over forty-four years to realize that ... YES! ... God has my whole heart. The older I get, the more I recognize how God has been continually at work in my life. I know I am not to the point where He wants me to be, but every day He shows me His love and carefully leads me. One day my journey will end and I will return to God, my Heavenly Father, with a whole heart.

Do you know the Father? Do you know the God who created you and wants to have fellowship with you?

In Jeremiah 29:13 God says to each of us ... *“And you will seek Me and find Me; when you search for Me with all your heart.”* On a sunny Sunday morning in September of 1976 ... I sought Him. I sought Him at a Christian Business Men’s retreat, and He has been with me ever since. God wants your heart this morning. He sent His Son Jesus to die for your sins and mine, so that we could forever be in fellowship with Him.

Our Lord Jesus is saying this to you this morning ... *“I stand at the door, and knock ... if any man (or woman) hears My voice, and opens the door ... I will come in and sup with him, and he with Me!”* Revelation 3:20

Today is the day, I pray, the day you give your whole heart to God. Need help? Call a Christian friend, or email me and I will be happy to answer any questions you might have. God loves you and is waiting with great anticipation for your return.

Your Anchor will hold ... in spite of your storms!



163 18th Street
 Fond du Lac, WI 54935
 office@gracechurchfdl.org
 www.gracechurchfdl.org

CORPORATE PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES:
 Sunday mornings at 7:45am & 10:15am
 Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm
 Wednesday AM Men's prayer at 6:30am.

*All meet at
 Grace Church
 building*

GRACE CHURCH STAFF

Head Pastor & Chief Shepherd - *Jesus Christ*

Lead Pastor - *Barry Vegter*

cell: 948-5702 email: vegter@gracechurchfdl.org

Associate Pastor - *Grant Baumgart*

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Family Pastor - *Brad Rutherford*

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Administrative Assistant - *Carol Blain*

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Communications/Media Coordinator - *Rachel Titel*

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Office Assistant - *Beth Rutherford*

Custodian - *Mark Jopling*

Pastor on Call: Friday, Saturday & Sunday

(920) 948-9262

Offering & Attendance

		8:30/10:45
1/3/2021	\$925	91/37
1/10/2021	\$21,878	100/41
1/17/2021	\$3,850	64/49
1/24/2021	\$16,774	70/38
1/31/2021	\$6,424	96/36

January Weekly Ave: \$9,970.20 84/38

**Weekly average needed to meet budget
 \$10,142**

Year to Date Givings \$320,694

Year to Date Expenses \$287,212

Totals reflect January month-end totals

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please submit information for the
April Words of Grace
 to the church office by **March 15th**.
 You can contact the office at (920) 922-7211 or
 office@gracechurchfdl.org

Office Hours are:
 Monday-Thursday 7:30am-4:30pm
 Friday 7:30am-11:30am