



# GraceNet

Knoxville, TN

July 2023

## Where Are The 500?

It is interesting that the Bible mentions numbers so often. Let me give some examples. There is the dramatic faceoff between Elijah and the prophets of Baal in I Kings 18. It is worth re-reading. Elijah wins a smashing victory over these diabolical 450 prophets of Baal. But then in chapter 19, Jezebel, the evil queen and devotee of Baal, promises to kill Elijah. Surprisingly, the previously courageous Elijah falls apart and runs for his life.

In his back and forth with God, he claims that he has been very zealous for the Lord and now is the only one left who stands with the true God. Then the Lord responds giving Elijah many assignments and then adds: "Yet I reserve 7,000 in Israel - all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him (I Kings 19:18)." There were 7000 that remained loyal to God --- 7000 who were worshipping the one true God.

The Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus in the 40 days He walked this earth after His resurrection and before His ascension, appeared to the Twelve and to 500 of the brothers at the same time (I Corinthians 15:5).

On the Day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was unleashed and Peter preached his powerful sermon, there were some 3,000 who were convicted and baptized. They were added to the nascent church, strengthening the local fellowship (Acts 2:41). The apostles bravely kept teaching under threat of arrest and another 5,000 were added (Acts 4:4)

The Book of Revelation speaks of the persecuted church of Asia Minor. To the church at Smyrna, Jesus says, "Be faithful even to the point of death and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10b). Later in chapter 7 the symbolic number of 144,000 is given representing all who held on to the faith and were saved.

Now to the numbers that concern Grace Lutheran Church: we have approximately 1,200 baptized members and 944 communicant members, and throwing out the

Covid timespan we usually average 475-500 weekly worship attenders. In my calculation about 700 baptized (children and adults) attend weekly or at least occasionally. So where are the other 500?

The third commandment is: "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." There are all kinds of reasons that people who claim to be faithful Christians give for not attending church. Outside of health reasons, none of them are very good. They are not being faithful, not acknowledging their Savior Jesus Christ, and yes, letting down their fellow church members. And, we are not even facing persecution at this time. I am sure non-attending members of any church do not like to hear this, but it is the truth.

The Bible gives one clear answer to this: Repent, turn around, and begin to worship faithfully and put Jesus first in your life. Find the joy and peace in your Savior once again. You are not going to find this sitting at home. Jesus poured out His love for you and has called you to believe in Him and worship Him. Be one of the 7,000, of the 500, of the 3,000, of the 5,000, and of the 144,000! Be a faithful worshipping Christian!



**DON'T TAKE A  
VACATION  
FROM CHURCH**

~ Pastor Rich



**You are Invited to the  
Ordination and Installation of  
Associate Pastor Jake Childers  
Sunday, July 9, 4:00 p.m.**

**Followed by dinner in the Family Life Center**

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*The Grace Family would like to shower Pastor Elect Jake and Christina with our love! There is a blue box on the Grace Information Desk for collection of cash, checks, and gift cards to help stock their home pantry or enjoy local restaurants as they explore Knoxville. Your generosity to bless their move and transition is appreciated.*

*Let's welcome Pastor Jake and Christina in a big, loving way!*

## **Grace Prayer Team Welcomes Requests**

**T**he Grace Prayer Team is constantly at work! If you have a prayer request that you would like prayed over by the Grace Prayer Team, we welcome your requests. Please contact **Kristin McGee** at [kdmcgce08@gmail.com](mailto:kdmcgce08@gmail.com) (865-384-9834) or **Ev Brown** ([evbrown3@gmail.com](mailto:evbrown3@gmail.com)) (757-870-5603). The request will then be passed on to the team. We continue to welcome Prayer Team members as well. If you are interested in praying for the needs submitted by our church family, please contact Kristin or Ev with your interest.



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*Articles for GraceNet are due by the 1st of each month for the following month's edition.*

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*If you have a special event you would like to have publicized in GraceNet, please submit the information to Debbie Booher by the 1st of each month for publication in the following month's newsletter.*

*Our Pastor's*  
**RETIREMENT**  
*Save the Date!!!*

**Sunday, October 29, 10:00 a.m.**  
**ONE SERVICE ONLY**

*Pastor Rich's final sermon followed by a Retirement Celebration. Time: TBA*

**V**acation  
**BIBLE SCHOOL**

**July 17-20, 2023**

**9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.**

Registration forms are available at the info desk for children 3 years old—5th grade. We need volunteers for: arts & crafts, music, story time, games, group leaders, snacks, and decorations. This is a great opportunity for grandparents, parents, and middle/high school students to serve. Contact **Marlene Landon** (winland@aol.com) for more info.

**Lutheran Women in Mission**

Calling ALL women to plan to join us at the Eagle Rock Retreat on **October 6-8, 2023**. The theme of "For Such a Time as This" from Esther 4:14 will be presented with a Bible study by Miriam Maasel Neumann. There will also be crafts, songs, skits, hikes, and the most beautiful sunrises you have ever seen.

More information is available in the Grace Coffee Bar area or go to the following website:

[www.midsouthlwml.org/district-retreats](http://www.midsouthlwml.org/district-retreats)

You may also contact Kathy Bohlken at (360) 771-2685. Sign up now!!

A big THANK YOU, one and all, for helping the LWML, as our MITES collection in May equaled \$550.20, and in June we collected over \$600. These MITES share the love of Jesus around the world!!



**Our 2023 College Graduates**

**Remy Tunstall**

*Graduating from The University of Alabama  
 Masters of Business Degree*

**Erin Strickland**

*Graduating from The University of Tennessee  
 Degree in Food Science*

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Please keep these young \*  
 \* people in your prayers \*  
 \* as they begin the next \*  
 \* phase of their life jour- \*  
 \* ney. Pray that they will \*  
 \* remain steadfast in their \*  
 \* faith. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*



7/1	Dina Augustus	7/16	Michael Ivens
7/1	Harvey Booher	7/16	Paul Wittke
7/1	Jesse Smithey	7/17	Donna Bueckman
7/2	Carrie Cleland	7/17	Eric Schmidt
7/2	Genevieve Elseroad	7/17	Cai Shafer
7/2	Craig Emerson	7/17	Rachel Stock
7/3	Eric Horlbeck	7/18	Tommy Colwell
7/3	Sandi Larson	7/19	Tom Theilmann
7/3	Rod Maples	7/20	Larry Granquist
7/4	Tom Cruise	7/20	Ralph Harness
7/4	J.R. Ray	7/20	Joyce Holcombe
7/4	Ivonne Robertson	7/20	Pam Rogers
7/5	Rene' Mackley	7/21	Freia Micha
7/5	John Stegner	7/24	Douglas Butzine
7/6	Ralph Ferraro	7/24	Linda Roberson
7/6	Benjamin Muench	7/27	Everett Bloom
7/6	Amy Teague	7/27	Jackson List
7/6	Bernard Wrasman	7/27	Alexandra Roettger
7/7	Megan Kleckley	7/28	Ella Aanestad
7/7	Kristen Reinke	7/28	Reagan Haase
7/7	Ella Ross	7/28	Jeff Jaekel
7/9	Jamie Duenckel	7/28	Christine McCay
7/9	Rick Jones	7/28	Holly Mings
7/9	Bryan Payne	7/28	Byron Strickland
7/9	Amy Williams	7/29	Holly Blankenship
7/10	Britta Aanestad	7/29	LaTina Haynes
7/10	Eleanor Anderson	7/29	Paul Price
7/11	Lew Stoner	7/30	Cheryl Pipe
7/12	Wendy Butzine	7/30	Darlene Reinke
7/12	Wendy Manley	7/30	Laura Smithey
7/12	Al Streufert	7/30	Amy Spradlin
7/13	John French	7/31	Matthew Dreke
7/14	Brennan Cleland		
7/14	Alex DeTrana		

7/1	Larry & Sylvia Belt
7/1	Rick & Jane Jones
7/1	Charles & Lois Robinson
7/3	Mike & Kelly Masters
7/4	Michael & Morgan McCay
7/4	Bernard & Becky Wrasman
7/6	Everett & Pat Bloom
7/8	Ralph & Margaret Ferraro
7/8	David & Kemper Smith
7/10	Peter & Mary Belle Early
7/12	Paul & Andrea Muench
7/13	Kevin & Erin Kragenbrink
7/15	Philip & Traci Roth
7/16	Mitch & Carrie Fisher
7/20	Jim & Ev Brown
7/20	Scott & Brittany Pafford
7/22	Jeff & Amy Spradlin
7/22	Dan & Heather Wilson
7/24	Tom & Susan Lewis
7/24	Darlene & Ken Reinke
7/29	Stephen & Rhonda Smith
7/31	Pastor Roger & Esther Reckling

## July Scripture of the Month

*Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.*

~ 1 Peter 2:16, NIV

### Bible Quiz

*In what land and at what age did Moses die?*

- A. The land of Israel; 100 years old
- B. The land of Canaan; 70 years old
- C. The land of Moab; 120 years old
- D. The land of Judah; 102 years old



Answer: C ( see Deuteronomy 34:5, 7)

## July Children's Curriculum Themes

In an attempt to connect the adults and children of Grace just a bit more, I will be letting people know the theme and verse of the week in our children's Sunday school classes. I would love it if the adults would join in memorizing or at least talking about it to the children as they see each other in the halls. Listed below are the themes and scripture for July.

~ Frieda Guthrie

<b>DATE</b>	<b>THEME</b>	<b>VERSE</b>
July 2	<b>God is holy.</b>	<i>Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. (Psalm 95:6)</i>
July 9	<b>God's word changes our lives.</b>	<i>All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)</i>
July 16	<b>Stand strong for God</b>	<i>Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. (1 Corinthians 16:13)</i>
July 23	<b>God protects us.</b>	<i>Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)</i>
July 30	<b>We seek God no matter what happens.</b>	<i>"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)</i>



## Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child is a year-round opportunity to share the spirit of Christmas with children around the world who would not otherwise receive gifts. Please consider filling a shoebox to bless a child. If you don't want to fill the box yourself, you can contribute funds for a box and we'll fill it for you. If you don't know what to put in a box, there's information in the Children's wing on suggestions for items. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact Frieda Guthrie at [childrensmin@visitgrace.org](mailto:childrensmin@visitgrace.org) or Paul Guthrie at [pgvint3@gmail.com](mailto:pgvint3@gmail.com).

Thank you for supporting this important ministry!



## *Mission for Christ Network (MCN)*

**L**ighthouse Transformation Ministries is made up of a team of five Mission of Christ Network missionaries serving high school students in the coastal community of Parrita, Costa Rica. The mission of Lighthouse is to transform lives and communities through informal education and Gospel proclamation.

Parrita, like many areas of Costa Rica outside of the Central Valley, is a community plagued by poverty, human trafficking, and cycles of broken homes and domestic abuse. Education (particularly in the area of English which opens doors for jobs in tourism) and the life-changing message of the Gospel open new doors for students and transform their futures.

Lighthouse has recently started a Transformation Center on the campus of the Parrita public high school, where 1,500 students attend from grades 7-12. This center offers supplemental dynamic activities in English classes. Engaging, relationship-building activities are also offered during lunch periods. Through English programs and tutoring services, youth are empowered to graduate from high school and statistically more likely to break the cycles.

Worship opportunities, Bible classes, and conversations are offered to share the good news that the Lord has come to restore all things, no matter one's situation. As tutoring and teaching occur, meaningful, one-on-one relationships are built that naturally lead into mentoring relationships as life circumstances arise. These, then, eventually lead to discipling relationships, where lives are transformed by the grace of the Lord. As Lighthouse has seen in the past five years, once youth find their identity in Christ, lives are transformed to respect themselves and others, breaking the cycles of poverty, broken homes and abuse, and human trafficking.

Want to hear more stories of Gospel proclamation and life transformation? Email [churchpartners@missionofchrist.org](mailto:churchpartners@missionofchrist.org) to join the Mission of Christ Network newsletter list and hear stories from missionaries serving around the world! You can also follow @missionofchristnetwork on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube for regular updates and stories.



## *Proving the Christian Faith*

**H**as Noah's ark been found? During my years there have been multiple different, seemingly solid discoveries, each of which held out the tantalizing probability Noah's ark had been found. Sometimes there were fragments of wood that seemed to fit all of the requirements for the type of wood and age since felling the tree. Literature then appears cheering evidence that will finally convince the unbelieving skeptics.

Such an approach is common among fundamentalist Christians. They reason if we can find evidence to prove the Bible, we will be able to convince people to believe what is in the Bible, namely, believe in Jesus. It sounds like a noble and valid endeavor. But, what happens if the piece of wood we believed to have been from Noah's ark is proven to be the result of an elaborate hoax perpetrated by a very clever person with the expertise and the tools to create a faux artifact? Such hoaxes have happened for other purposes.\* What then? Does someone lose his faith because it actually rested in something that was proven false? We refer to this as a human faith.

Lutherans have always taken a different approach, even though some individuals may fall into the easy temptation of a human faith. In the New Testament faith is never in the Bible, but always in Jesus Christ. Telling people we are lost sinners for whom Jesus gave Himself so that all who believe in Him have the forgiveness of sins is proclaiming the Gospel. We proclaim the Gospel

and the Holy Spirit uses what is foolish to humans to call people to faith in Jesus Christ. Once we have come to believe in Jesus we recognize and accept the Bible as God's authoritative witness to Jesus. We believe in Jesus and then accept the Bible as true. As one person said it, "Let me introduce you to the author. Then you will not have any problems with His book." "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)

If faith is proven, it is no longer faith. Skeptics often raise objections. Refuting those objections does not prove what God says, but can give a reason to pause and give consideration to the claims of Christ without summarily dismissing them. Real faith in Jesus will always be created in the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is not anti-intellectual, but sometimes defies all reason. In the end, it makes perfect sense. As St. Augustine said, "The human heart is restless until it finds its rest in You, O God."

~ Rev. Phil Bohlken

\*It seems jealousy between two professors resulted in one hoaxing the other with a carefully manipulated bone from an ape. It was classified as the Piltdown man. The hoax was so well done that the scholarly world believed it real for forty years before it was exposed. The hoaxer was not able to humiliate his intended victim as planned.

## *HealthLine*

**P**lease note that everything written in this column will be backed by research, various studies and facts. There will be no personal opinions.

~ Sheila Wittke



## *Chores, Exercise, Leisure Activities, Socializing Lower the Risk of Dementia*

**A**ccording to a study published in *NEUROLOGY*, people who regularly do household chores, exercise, and visit with family and friends, lower their risk of dementia. This study involved 501,376 men and women without dementia who filled out questionnaires about their daily activities. After a follow-up average of 11 years, people who engaged in frequent exercise, household chores, and daily visits with family and friends lowered their risk of dementia by 35 percent, 21 percent, and 15 percent, respectively. The author of this study, Huan Song, M.D., Ph.D., said, "Our results are encouraging that making these simple lifestyle changes may be beneficial." Also, *NEUROLOGY* published an analysis of 38 studies in which people participated in leisure activities such as reading a book and doing yoga. These studies found that leisure activities lowered their overall risk of developing dementia. However, some activities were more effective than others. Mental activity, which included reading or writing for pleasure, playing games or musical instruments, watching TV, or listening to the radio, lowered the risk by 23 percent, while physical activities such as walking, running, swimming, playing sports, doing yoga, and dancing lowered dementia risk by 17 percent.

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Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. (Traditional) and  
9:30 a.m. (Blended)/11:00 a.m. (Contemporary)

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

TO:



Connect ~ Grow ~ Serve

