

Bethany Banner – August 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

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

These words are so commonplace, so frequently used, that we may not take the time to reflect on what we have just said to each other. But let's look at this sentence.

When we greet each other in this way, we extend a blessing to the person with whom we speak. This greeting is actually a form of prayer in which we ask that the person receiving the blessing receives the very gift of God's self – God's presence, God's Spirit, God's love, God's hope, God's very life – that is, God's grace. And this grace is freely given to us through the person and work of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. There's nothing we can do to make any of this happen – no human effort on our part will make right before God, give us eternal life, or save us from death and the devil. God gives, we receive.

Likewise, we ask God to extend God's peace to the one with whom we speak. God's peace is not necessarily the absence of conflict, although, from time to time, such absence of conflict may be experienced. Rather, God's peace is the certainty of the gift of God's love to us that was first given to us by Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the tomb. This gift continues to be extended to us by God through our baptism and the eating of bread and drinking of the wine at Holy Communion; the reading of God's word; individual and corporate conversation with God; and through interactions with the people we experience each day. God's peace is the certainty of our identity – we are God's children and heirs to God's kingdom; a brother or sister of Christ, alive in Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our identity is defined not by our own actions, or by the expectations and demands of our neighbors, town, communities, country or the world – but by God's actions.

I can think of no greater prayer to pray, no greater blessing to extend to each of you, then to ask God to bless you with God's peace which passes all understanding; and God's gift of love which is the very presence of God's self. According to Luther's Small Catechism, "Amen" means, "yes, yes it is going to come about just like this", (page 42). May our "amens" always be heartfelt.

So, the next time you greet someone, try saying, "Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen." You might want to try it in your head as you are saying, "Hey! How are you doing?" But that's okay. Such an exercise still pulls us up into a different mind set in which God is center stage, in our life and hopefully, prayerfully, in the life of the people we meet.

God be with you as we walk the life of faith together. Pr. Nancy

Lectionary for August

8/1 Psalm 78:23-39	Exodus 12:43-13:2	1 Corinthians 11:27-34
8/2 Psalm 78:23-29	Exodus 13:3-10	Matthew 16:5-12
8/3 2 Samuel 11:26—12:13a	Psalm 78:23—29	Ephesians 4:1—16 John 6:24—35
8/4 Psalm 107:1-3, 33-43	Numbers 11:16-23, 31-32	Ephesians 4:17-24
8/5 Psalm 107:1-3, 33-43	Deuteronomy 8:1-20	1 Corinthians 12:27-31
8/6 Psalm 107:1-3, 33-43	Isaiah 55:1-9	Mark 8:1-10
8/7 Psalm 34:1-8	1 Samuel 28:20-25	Romans 15:1-6
8/8 Psalm 34:1-8	2 Samuel 17:15-29	Galatians 6:1-10
8/9 Psalm 34:1-8	1 Kings 2:1-9	Matthew 7:7-11
8/10 2 Samuel 18:5—9, 15, 31—33	Psalm 34:1—8	Ephesians 4:25—5:2 John 6:35, 41—51
8/11 Psalm 81	1 Kings 17:1-16	Ephesians 5:1-14
8/12 Psalm 81	Ruth 2:1-23	2 Peter 3:14-18
8/13 Psalm 81	Jeremiah 31:1-6	John 6:35-40
8/14 Psalm 34:9-14	Job 11:1-20	Acts 6:8-15
8/15 Psalm 34:9-14	Job 12:1-25	Romans 16:17-20
8/16 Psalm 34:9-14	Job 13:1-19	John 4:7-26
8/17 1 Kings 2:10—12; 3:3—14	Psalm 34:9—14	Ephesians 5:15—20 John 6:51—58
8/18 Psalm 36	Genesis 43:1-15	Acts 6:1-7

(Lectionary continued..)

8/19 Psalm 36	Genesis 45:1-15	Acts 7:9-16	
8/20 Psalm 36	Genesis 47:13-26	Mark 8:14-21	
8/21 Psalm 34:15-22	Joshua 22:1-9	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	
8/22 Psalm 34:15-22	Joshua 22:10-20	Romans 13:11-14	
8/23 Psalm 34:15-22	Joshua 22:21-34	Luke 11:5-13	
8/24 1 Kings 8:[1, 6, 10-11] 22-30, 41-43	Psalm 34:15-22	Ephesians 6:10-20	John 6:56-69
8/25 Psalm 119:97-107	Nehemiah 9:1-15	Ephesians 5:21-6:9	
8/26 Psalm 119:97-107	Nehemiah 9:16-31	Ephesians 6:21-24	
8/27 Psalm 119:97-104	Isaiah 33:10-16	John 15:16-25	
8/28 Psalm 15	Exodus 32:1-14	James 1:1-8	
8/29 Psalm 15	Exodus 32:15-35	James 1:9-16	
8/30 Psalm 15	Exodus 34:8-28	John 18:28-32	
8/31 Song of Solomon 2:8-13	Psalm 15	James 1:17-27	Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Happy Birthday

Kevin Thompson (1), Bonnie Ballantyne (2), Ron Finch (4), Dean Osterhout (4), Ray Ringgenberg (10), Julie Winchell (11), Karen Hadaway (12), Wilma Kaltenheuser (18), Orland Nerness (19), Julia Sullivan (20), David Hadaway (22), Sara Robinson (22), Barb Kaltenheuser (24), Scott Thorson (26), Steve Kaltenheuser (29), Lynne Osterhout (29), Carol Manske (31).

Happy Anniversary

Diane and Martin Aust (1), Tom and Jean Loynachan (3), Chris and Trace Houge Brakke (4), Mark and Karen Holland (4), Rick and Rosanne Ringgenberg (15), Kevin and Jennifer Thompson (15), Mark and Tracey Finch (27), Martin and Nancy Phoenix Reed (28).

Serving this Month

Ushers: Jerry Peterson and Larry Kallem

Greeters Larry and Donna Kallem (2 & 9), Don and Shirleen Brendeland (16 & 23), Ron and Jean Finch (30)

Lectors: Rita Thorson, Larry Kallem, Karen Holland, Julia Sullivan, Amanda Hall.

Attendance and Giving from 6/28-7/19

Total Attendance 184

Total Giving \$5290.11

Needed each month \$8109.00 Thank You!

Prayer List

*For all who suffer from spiritual, mental, or physical illness: Toni Robinson, Kevin Stevens, Mikayla Rietgraf, John Maul, Jim Phoenix, Linda Dunn, Henry Haapala, Marvin Grulke, Lawrence Kennedy, Fritz Erickson, Mary Jane Thompson.

*For the Ed Thomas family, friends, the Becker family and friends, and all the people of Parkersburg

*For this congregation's discernment of their mission

*For all people attending the ELCA churchwide event in August

*For those experiencing violence in their relationships or in their countries

*For all military personnel and their families

*For all missionaries, especially Tim and Paula Tjernagel and their family

*For all youth and adults attending the Jesus, Justice, and Jazz ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans July 21-26, 2009

Mark your calendars for the Madrid Home ice cream social, which will be held from 1-3 on Sunday, August 9. Everyone is invited