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**The Newsletter
for members of
Grace Lutheran Church
422 Valhi Blvd.**

Houma, LA 70360

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September, 2011



The Pipeliner

If you are interested in helping with future editions, please contact Pr Rich, Donna in the office, or Gordon Fitzgerald. This is your newsletter and we need your help to make it a success. Also, if you would like to receive it by e-mail, please let us know.



Pastor's Corner

How's Your Mammon?

"It's only mammon." That was the post of a fellow pastor on somebody's facebook page in the midst of a discussion about the 500+ point drop in the stock market that day. It seems like a true statement. Mammon—worldly wealth and material riches—do not endure forever, can't purchase us eternal life, and therefore can be considered trivial in the grand scheme of salvation. But it also seems a rather flippant thing to say because "mammon" is a blessing from God by which we are sustained in this earthly life. Saying "It's only mammon" to someone whose 401K

has just tanked or who just got laid off or who can't pay their electricity bill is at best insensitive, at worst cruel.

So is mammon trivial or not? People are thinking a lot about the economy and the future of their mammon these days. Mammon also was on Jesus' mind at times because He had some things to say about it.

"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money (mammon)."
(Matthew 6:24)

Jesus here is not saying mammon is trivial or evil. He is saying that you cannot serve it as your master and have another master at the same time. The Greek word for "master" here is the same word more often translated as "Lord." Jesus Christ is our Lord—Lord above ALL Lords. Next to Him and what He has accomplished for us unto eternal life yes, mammon is trivial.

Luke's Gospel has these same words of Jesus, but they follow one of Jesus' more difficult to understand parables in chapter 16:1-13. In that parable a manager who is being fired by his lord uses the wealth of the master to show mercy to the master's debtors. When the master discovers this, he commends the manager. Jesus says, *"If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth (mammon), who will entrust to you the true riches?"*

While this parable says much more about the Lord's mercy and I encourage you to read and ponder it, the point I wish to make is that we can please God in the use of our mammon. If we can not be faithful in the use of wealth then by default we also can be faithful in the use of wealth. In the parable the wealth entrusted to the manager is used to be merciful and the Lord is pleased by this use. If our use of mammon can please God, then it certainly is not a trivial thing.

So is mammon trivial or not? This is a decision each Christian needs to carefully make for themselves.

Examine what standing your mammon or lack thereof has in your life. Has it become an obsession? Are you in financial dire straights and your only hope is in getting more money? Or do you have wealth but are overly concerned about protecting it? Are you in the process of earning and building wealth and see those big bucks and lots of "toys" as your greatest desire? Then for you, mammon must be made trivial. You must realize this. Mammon cannot save you. You are going to die and all the money in the world won't buy you a minute more of life. Wealth is becoming your Lord, but only the Lord Jesus can lead you to true riches in eternity.

Are you on solid ground, knowing that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Savior of your life now and forever? Then take your mammon seriously. Recognize that you are managing this blessing from God. Return the

firstfruits of this blessing to Him. Look at what you need of His gifts to support your body and life, but also carefully consider how you can use your mammon to show mercy to others, for this is pleasing to your Lord. Your mammon can give glory to God and that is no trivial matter.

If you are in financial need, give thanks to God for what you do have but certainly do not feel bad in asking your Lord for increased blessing. Mammon is not evil, only raising it to the status of lord is evil. Recognize Jesus is Lord and from Him come all gifts, temporal and eternal, and ask for what you need.

Whatever your situation, you can be content in the Lord, having the certain hope that the price for true riches has already been paid on your behalf on the cross. Jesus is Lord, because He purchased you into His perfect kingdom, not with silver or gold or mammon, but with His holy and precious blood. Let this truth render your mammon trivial to your hope...and valuable to be used for His glory.

Israel Anyone?

Pastor Rich and Bridgette are considering taking a biblical tour of Israel October 29 to November 9 of 2012. If you might be interested in joining them, ask Pastor Rich for a flyer with the details or look on the bulletin board outside his office.

When is the Right Time to Begin Communing?

"Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an

unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.” 1 Corinthians 11:27-29

At what age can a person properly “examine himself”? The above passage of Holy Scripture and the question of communion age has caused a lot of discussion in the church. The majority of Lutheran churches offer first communion during or after confirmation. However a good number practice what is known as “early communion.”

When I arrived at Grace Lutheran Church fresh out of seminary four years ago we had several pre-confirmation children communing but no set policy for when children should begin to commune. I examined those who were communing to assure myself that they understood what they were doing. They did. Then the Elders Committee and I decided to set 5th grade as the benchmark for first communion age. Since then, fifth graders have had the option of taking a short class on the Lord’s Supper and then receiving the sacrament.

I recently asked the Elders Committee to review this policy and seek input about it from the congregation. I did this for several reasons; While some 5th graders are mature enough to appreciate, understand

and examine themselves regarding the sacrament, others seem too immature to receive it.

Once the children are communing, some families seem to think that confirmation becomes “optional” and fail to see that their children are confirmed. While I don’t like the idea of using communion as a club, failure to follow through on confirmation indicates a lack of maturity of faith and leads me to question if people are communing rightly.

The practice of early communion here seems to be a result of church “peer pressure” because all the children’s Roman Catholic friends were communing. This is hardly sound theological reasoning.

The elders are talking about this subject and we’d like to know your opinions. Please talk with them and with me about this. The Elders Committee has batted around the ideas of moving first communion into or after confirmation, moving confirmation to earlier ages, making all decisions about communion on an individual case basis, and other thoughts.

In a perfect world I think first communion would take place when the pastor, parents and child all agree the sacrament would be received properly. But in my perfect world all parents and children would seek confirmation. This is not a perfect world so all sorts of worldliness can mess with people’s thinking and reasoning. Yet the above Scripture is clear: the body and blood of Christ can be received

to someone's harm. We don't want that to happen. Our main hope and goal should be that all who desire to rightly receive this great gift for the forgiveness of their sins are able to do so and nobody gets hurt. I want Grace to do this the best way possible and I'm interested in your thoughts as Christ's Church.

—Pastor Rich



Mission Guild

The summer quarterly meeting was held Sunday, June 26th. Officers for the next year were elected. They are: Co-presidents: Joelle Gerken & Donna Boger; Secretary: Bridgette Rudnik; Treasurer: Jerrie Fitzgerald.

The ladies voted to donate \$90.00 to the Cima Family Airfare Fund. We enjoyed a nice visit with the Cima family the Fourth of July weekend.

MITES: Mites are collected the 2nd Sunday of each month, however you can put your offerings in the large mite box in the back of the church, any time and we are thankful.

For those who want an update, all Mite monies are forwarded to LWML for mission projects, and all monies collected for baked goods, dish cloths, etc. are used for local projects.

Baked goods are offered the second Sunday of each month also. Thank you to all of the "bakers and partakers" of our goodies. Dish

cloths are available for a \$2.00 donation each; and Christian key rings for \$6.00. We also have covers for our Portals of Prayer/Devotion booklets for \$5.00 each, plus other assorted items. (A special thank you to Susan Songe for providing her time and talents to make these possible). See Joelle, Jerrie or Donna if there is anything you wish to purchase.

Our LWML/Mission Guild sponsors a Seminary student, Jacob Hummel. For those who wish to send him a card or note at any time, his address is:

Box 150 Seminary Place
St. Louis, MO 63105-3196

All ladies of Grace are invited to join us at our next quarterly meeting, which will be September 25, 2011 - immediately following service, in the Conference Room.

Blessings,
Joelle Gerken & Donna Boger

"BACK DOWN MEMORY LANE"

Annual Tea

September 11 at 3pm

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

6154 Press Drive in NOLA

Please mark your calendar and plan to grace the occasion of our annual tea that is being hosted by the Holy Cross Lutheran Women Missionary League. It promises to be a pleasurable occasion. Your presence is not only welcome but will bring warmth and delight to what we hope to be a memorable occasion.

LWML Zone Fall Rally

"Being With Jesus - Living On The Edge"

Saturday, October 1, 2011

At Mount Zion Lutheran Church
1401 Simon Bolivar Ave. New Orleans, LA 70125

In-Gathering Items Needed

For Children's Hospital in NOLA (Girls & Boys ages 2-21 yr. olds)
Socks, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, slippers, lotion, hair brush, hair comb, blankets, stuffed animals, toys and children's books, Items will be distributed on Saturday, October 8th or 15th, 2011. Items may be left in the In-Gathering basket in the narthex

Food For The Poor

Information is on the bulletin board outside PRR's office.

ECC

The two year old ECC classroom is missing some small trains. If you see one laying around the church, please put it on the office desk. Thanks!

FOOD BANK SUNDAY

Thank you to everyone who participated with Food Bank last month. \$168.00 in cash and groceries were donated. Our next collection will be Sunday, September 4, 2011.

ECC PAPER PRODUCTS DONATIONS

Please consider a donation of one or more of the following items:

Baby wipes, paper towels, kitchen-size paper cups, bath-size paper cups, Kleenex and napkins.

Thank you for leaving your donations in the blue box in the narthex.

GOT CONFIRMATION?

Confirmation classes for ages 7th grade through adult begins on Sunday, September 11. This two-year course meets Sundays from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the conference room from September to May. While the focus is on teaching Grace's 7th and 8th grade students, the class is open to all. Materials need to be ordered so if you are attending, please contact the church office to register. If you have any questions email Pastor at pastor@gracehouma.org.

Just a reminder...there will be an Elders Meeting Saturday, September 3rd at 9:00 a.m. in the conference room.

Sunday Morning Worship & Fellowship

Just a reminder to leave the sanctuary, fellowship hall and kitchen tidy on Sunday mornings - or any other time you may use them. Make sure bulletins are picked up, pew envelopes and pencils are in place, fellowship hall tables are wiped off and any food around the chairs is picked up.

Please, do not leave dirty dishes in the kitchen sinks. The ECC is inspected by the state and health departments on a regular basis and the kitchen area is one part of these inspections. Thank you for your cooperation.

Biscuit Makers

September 4 - Seth Cunningham
18 - Jacob & Brandon Cinnater

2012 Board of Directors and Elders

Now is the time to start thinking about serving as a member of the Board of Directors or elder for 2012. Don't be afraid to nominate yourself. Grace needs you! Please prayerfully consider how you can help the Lord's work by volunteering to serve as a candidate for an elected position.

Fall Festival Raffle Tickets

The raffle tickets for Fall Fest are here! These may be picked up from Glenn or Donna in the narthex on Sunday mornings. We are asking each family to take some tickets to sell to your extended family, friends and coworkers. During the week tickets are available from the church office. Let's get out and sell as many tickets as we can to help benefit this year's festival.

Raffle prizes are: 40" Digital Flat Screen TV, Deluxe Barbecue Grill and Kindle Electronic Reader.

Thanks to Kwik Kopy and owners Gordon & Jerrie Fitzgerald for the

donation of the tickets.

Please join us for our monthly Fall Festival Meeting, Wednesday, September 21st after Prayer & Praise (approximately 7:15 p.m.) in the fellowship hall.

SILENT AUCTION

We are starting to collect articles for the Silent Auction. We ask that these be new items only. You may bring your donations to the fellowship hall clearly marked "Silent Auction". Call Gordon Fitzgerald at 879-1913 or the church office if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Fall Festival Rummage Sale Update

We are now looking for items to be donated and volunteers. If you have items you would like to donate, please drop them off at the church in the hallway before the fellowship hall by classroom #3. Make sure items are in good condition (no clothes, please!). Any questions, contact Michele Wallace at 985-262-4568 or the church office.

It's time to start pricing for our Rummage Sale. We will price in the fellowship hall every Tuesday and Thursday from 12-3 p.m. beginning September 13. We are still in need of volunteers and items to sell. We will have two presales for members to purchase items from our Rummage Sale, Sunday, October 16 & 23 from 12- 2 p.m.

There will be No buying of items before then and NO IOUs. Any questions, please see or call Michele Wallace at 985-262-4568.

WORSHIP SERVICE DVDs AVAILABLE

Sunday services are recorded and put on DVD. If you or someone you know would like to receive these, please contact the church office. Extra DVDs are placed on top of the congregational mailbox cabinet and are free for the taking. DVDs are usually available for pick up by Tuesday.

Prayer Meeting

The monthly Prayer Meeting at Grace will resume Friday, September 2 at 7:00 p.m.

The church office and ECC will be closed Monday, September 5th in observance of Labor Day.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Info

After taking several weeks off, SMEC will resume their fellowship time after worship at noon on Sunday, September 18th with "St. Matthew's Day".

GLC Fundraiser Dinner

Please join us for a Fund Raiser Dinner on Thursday, September 1 at 6 p.m. in the fellowship hall. A free will offering will be collected for GLC's Social Ministry, Mission Outreach and LCMS Fan Into

Flame program. Ground meat spaghetti, green salad, French bread and desserts will be served. For entertainment we will watch the last Saints preseason game on the big screen.

Go Saints!

A Month of New Beginnings

Next to January, September is probably one of the biggest and busiest start over months in the year. A number of congregational ministries which may have been on a summer break start up again. A new school year has started. It is interesting to note that September opens with Labor Day when we pause to thank God for honest and fruitful labor. Perhaps that is appropriate since things pick up after vacations and other summer activities and we have more opportunities for service.

September also marks the beginning of autumn and that will be a welcome change for many people who this past summer were impacted by a record number of tornados, serious flooding around major rivers, heat and drought that broke many records, along with many wild fires that caused so much destruction.

In spite of all the above problems God still richly blessed much of our country with seasonable weather so that seedtime and harvest prevailed and the activities of agriculture, commerce and transportation continued so that the earth was fruitful and yielded its increase to supply food for all of God's creatures. Praise God from

Whom all blessings flow!
God's stewards appreciate new opportunities to start over again after life has become like a long, hot summer. In September many of God's faithful stewards can get involved with new and exciting volunteer activities in their churches and communities. In September many of our students can begin one of their best years of learning. In September many of our churches and schools can get involved with some of the most exciting ministries in their history. A fresh start is always appreciated. The past is behind us; the future is still in front of us but the present is where we do our work as God's stewards. God has some great things in mind for us as His stewards. He wants us to use our talents, our time, our resources and our relationships in ways that honor Him and bring blessings to those around us.

Sometimes we may feel like we just can't get started! We may feel inadequate to take on new challenges. We may remember when we have tried some bold ventures before and they didn't work out. We can chase those negative thoughts away when we remember words like these from one of our well-known hymns:

***Let none hear you idly saying,
"there is nothing I can do,"
While the multitudes are dying and
the Master calls for you.
Take the task He gives you gladly,
let His work your pleasure be;
Answer quickly when He calleth,
"Here am I, send me, send
me." (LSB 826)***

So, keep your eyes open for some new opportunities to put your time, talents and resources to work for the Lord and His people, and when those opportunities come, **GO FOR IT!**

Grace Lutheran Youth Group **News**

Grace Lutheran's Youth Group was honored for their hard work and dedication to the church with a swimming party at the Perryman's house Sunday, August 14. Grace's Youth Group has and is working very hard to raise money for the next convention in San Antonio, Texas in 2013.


Youth Group Leader Denise Reaves led the celebration in a beautiful pink string bikini with matching pink princess floaties. Pastor Rich and Bridgette wore matching yellow duck floaties, one with a Pastor's collar and one with magenta bows. Michael Thalheim and Seth Cunningham were showing off their ripped muscles and their 3 pack stomachs. Annie Reaves, Addie Perryman and Hannah Cuneo were competing to see who could run and splash the farthest on the slip and slide while Charles Wallace and Brandon Cinnater were competing to see who the fastest swimmer was. Victoria

Thalheim was riding the blow up crawfish like a true Texas cowgirl (in and out of the water). Sadly the crawfish had to be put down. Jacob Cinnater and Jared Moise were dashing in their Ray Ban sunshades and awesome tans. Future Youth Group members, Faith Wallace, Noah Wallace, Lilly Naquin, and Payton were fabulously dressed with goggles, floaties and blow up rings and having a wonderful time. Chef Carmen Cunningham and Sous Chef Mary Lou Johnston prepared a deliciously awesome hot dog and shish kabob chicken lunch. Addie Perryman had cooked the slow perfectly seasoned beans and Rana Moise prepared a refreshing fruit plate with matching grapes. Rana, Jeannie, Rachel, Michele, and Kristen were looking fabulous in their flowing Moo-Moo like garments. Bradley, Mike and Todd were quite different looking in their man Speedo's, Ray Ban sunglasses, and, well let's just say, slightly white rippled bodies. A Great Time was had by all. We do wish to thank Denise Reaves, Linda Meyer, Pastor Rich and all the Youth Group Members and parents for their wonderful hard work and dedication to Grace.

Church Etiquette

There have been some things brought up about church etiquette. So I (as your fearless editor) thought we could start a new column addressing some of the concerns of the membership. For example, during prayer, please stop whatever you are doing and bow your head and participate. That means if you are going in or out of the sanctuary and Pastor begins a prayer, please stop wherever you are at and join in. If you are about to enter the sanctuary and Pastor begins a prayer, please remain outside until the prayer is finished. You are of course welcome to bow your head and join in wherever you are at. Of course you never wear a hat inside any part of the church, unless of course you are a lady (never have understood that one). We have a very social church and I like that. But during all services including Bible class, side conversations are really not welcome. (I know, I am guilty of that also but I will try to get better.) When it comes down to it, church etiquette is really a matter of courtesy, to each other, the Pastor and especially to God.

OK off my high horse now. If anyone has an area they wish to address, please let me know and I will be glad to include it.
Fitz



Fall Festival 2011
Saturday, October 29th
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Thank you to everyone who attended our August 17th meeting.
Our next meeting will be September 21st after Prayer & Praise.
The meetings wrap up by 8:00 p.m.

The following have volunteered for this year's festival:

Fall Festival Chairpersons: Jerrie Fitzgerald & Donna Boger

Treasurer: Gordon Fitzgerald

Chairpersons:

Bands - Mike Cape

Bingo - Lola Ledet

Bounce Houses - Donna Boger

Charity Liaison - Brigitte Kinsella

Children's Crafts - Linda Meyer & ECC teachers & parents

Elder's Shack - GLC Elders

Evangelism - Pastor Rich

Games of Skill - GLC Youth Group

Grounds Layout - Dale Boger, Henry Stegall & Glenn Meyer

Hayride - OPEN

Kitchen Staff - OPEN

LWML Booth - Joelle Gerken

Popcorn Booth - OPEN

Publicity - Jerrie Fitzgerald

Raffle - Glenn Meyer & Donna Boger

Rummage Sale - Michele Wallace

Silent Auction - Gordon Fitzgerald

Tents - Glenn Meyer & Gordon Fitzgerald

Vendors - Jerrie Fitzgerald

Staffing & Scheduling - Jenny Jones

Welcome Booth - Connie Oswalt

A volunteer sign up poster is in the
fellowship hall for your convenience.

There is a place for everyone at Grace to volunteer.

Proceeds to benefit:

The Bunk House

Our local Food Bank

Project Learn LaTerre

St. Vincent de Paul Pharmacy

Acolytes

Sep 4	Annie Reaves
11	Jacob Cinnater
18	Victoria Thalheim
25	Brandon Cinnater

Ushers

Sep 4	Dale Boger//Joe Deane//Richard LaCour
11	Dave Akins/Dennis Armstrong/Gordon Fitzgerald/Joey Souther
18	Youth Group
25	Jim Kohls/Glenn Meyer/Ricky Reaves/Michael Thalheim

Altar Guild

Sep 4	Marilyn - Penny
11	Kendra - Ann-Addie
18	Mary Lou-Kristen-Lorie
25	John-Patsy-Ellen

Scripture Readers

Sep 4	Mona LaCour
11	Gordon Fitzgerald
18	Youth Group
25	Bonnie Dupre

Offering Stewards

Sep 4	Burt and Marilyn Beach
11	Donna Boger & Glenn Meyer
18	Rana DaSilva and Brigitte Kinsella
25	Joe and Cindy Deane

Greeters

Sep 4	Dale & Donna Boger
11	Dennis & Lynda Kelley
18	Youth Group
25	Dennis & Gwen Armstrong

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