

...from the Heart

Published quarterly by the Patchogue Church of the Nazarene Summer 2020



Continue to Live by Grace

When grace is no longer an experienced reality, it seems the realm of freedom is lost too. -

Richard Rohr

We've all been through a lot these past few months. My thoughts have been turning to our need for God's grace, its power to save, and the freedom for living it provides.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

The gift of God's grace continually gives. It opens up the extraordinary world of His presence to us. It can be said grace "gets the ball rolling." But it goes far beyond that! Although COVID 19 has restricted our ability to move freely, it serves as a reminder of freedoms preciousness! And I believe God's saving grace is the *rebar* in the foundation of all our freedoms.

It's important to understand that God's grace doesn't merely provide the *boarding pass* for our *flight home*, which is no small thing in and of itself. But He also sees that we have what we need for the *entire journey*. For instance, (I'm not an avid flyer so I'm working from memory) if the cabin pressure drops, oxygen is provided, so we can continue to *breathe freely*. Upon an emergency landing on water, *life jackets* and rafts are provided, and your seats act as a floatation device. Also, if cabin lights go down, the aisle will be lit to *show you the way*. Please note there are multiple exits in case of a *crisis*. Be careful if we should hit turbulence, as *we so often do*, a bag could break free from the overhead luggage compartment and *strike you*.

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I can't help but wonder how many of us have grown *fearful* during this "leg" of our trip, gasping for air while contending with issues of anxiety, and praying *Oh God, when are we going to land?!*

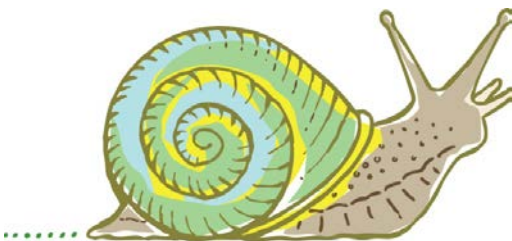
Now, today COVID 19, tomorrow something else. Jesus put it this way: *Here on earth, you will have many trials and sorrows.* But He immediately followed that by saying, "*But take heart, because I have overcome the world.*" **John 16:33 (NLT)** And that's where grace comes in! Jesus warned His disciples, and He is warning us. He then directed them, and He directs us... to **look to Him**; He provides grace in every circumstance, helping us to deal with all our fears, breaking the chains of fear!

Since this has all gone down, there has been a lot of talk about what is "essential" and "non-essential." Let me tell you what's **essential!** God grace! God's presence! In light of business closings, in coming face to face with the threat of death, facing the potential loss of a loved one, He enables us to live freely. Therefore, I leave you with this:

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times you may abound in every good work. 2 Cor. 9:8 (ESV)

Continue to live by grace!

Pastor Vincent Linguiti



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Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

2 Nazarene Way

Patchogue, NY

Mail:

65 Franklin Street

Patchogue, NY 11772

Phone & Fax 631-289-3483

Sunday Service at 10am

Pastor: Vincent Linguiti

Check out our website at www.patchnaz.net
for Sermons, Church activities and other
events or changes.

A Time for Everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 NLT)

*For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.
A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest.
A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build up.
A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance.
A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away.
A time to search and a time to quit searching. A time to keep and a time to throw away.
A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak.
A time to love and a time to hate. A time for war and a time for peace.*



What do people really get for all their hard work? I have seen the burden God has placed on us all. Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. So, I concluded there is nothing better than to be happy and enjoy ourselves as long as we can. And people should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of their labor, for these are gifts from God.

And I know that whatever God does is final. Nothing can be added to it or taken from it. God's purpose is that people should fear him. What is happening now has happened before, and what will happen in the future has happened before, because God makes the same things happen over and over again.

Well, what a difference a couple of months can make. Last time I wrote an article for the newsletter, Corinne, Moe and I were in Florida sitting in the sun and not thinking about much of anything, except relaxing. We came back to NY on Sunday, March 1, 2020. It seemed like the next day the whole world changed before we could catch our breath. The coronavirus came upon us to an unusual extent. People were being hospitalized, and some were dying. People started storming the stores in search for water, toilet paper, paper towels, etc. Shelves were empty and lines started forming just to enter. Then the lock-down began, and things just got worse.

We started to adapt to this new and challenging approach to life and church. Virtual church services were launched, and social media began to be a main source of information sharing. We continue our services in this way, and we're trying to figure out what to do when the quarantine is lifted. How will our church attendance be affected? How will our services be affected? We are trying to pray through all this. We will certainly need God's wisdom, direction and grace.

Then we read Ecclesiastes chapter three... Nothing is new to God! He saw all this coming. He knows how it will end and who will be affected. There is a time for every purpose under heaven. He has the details in mind and written in the palm of His hand. This all may be new to us, but all these things have happened in the past and will happen in the future – yet He is still God and in control.

So, there's no need to panic; no need to hoard; no need to fear. We need to do our part in obeying the authorities and not rebel or ignore. We'll come out of this by the grace of God. Things may never be the same as they were, but we'll be OK. God will take us through. Let's keep praying for our nation, our communities, our church, and each other. That is the most important thing we can do. Paul tells us the secret...

Philippians 4:4-7 (NLT) - *Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.*

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you 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.

I can't wait until we can be together again. I have a storehouse of hugs waiting for you all. I love you, and I'm praying for you.

Blessings,
Pastor Nick



Listening to Luther

In the most recent session of our virtual Bible study on the Gospel of Matthew, we began to look at our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. This sermon on discipleship is of course well known, but at the same time it is also a source of unending riches. In particular, we focused on the verses where Jesus tells his disciples that they are to be salt and light. What does it mean to be salt and light during this time of uncertainty and fear? As I reflected on this question, I found Martin Luther to be a helpful guide.



I first read Martin Luther's open letter to John Hess, commonly titled "Whether One May Flee From a Deadly Plague," when I was in college. I never expected it to have a direct relevance to my life today! Having read over it again, I was both encouraged and challenged. Therefore, I would like to share some brief reflections on how Luther teaches us to be disciples of Christ in the midst of this Covid-19 pandemic.

First, Luther reminds us that we are not meant to go through this outbreak, or any crisis, by ourselves. "If a deadly epidemic strikes," he writes, "we should take courage in the fact that we are mutually bound together." From the singing together on the balconies in Italy, to the nightly "Howlings" in Missoula, this expressed solidarity bears truth to Luther's writing. We honor the healthcare workers and first responders and essential workers because, in a sense, we recognize (even if they do not) that they are doing the Lord's work. To take care of someone who is ill, or to provide for someone in need, according to Luther, is an example of faith in action. He reflects that "godliness is nothing but divine service and divine service is service to one's neighbor." Luther himself lived through three outbreaks of the Plague, all the while preaching and administering the sacraments in Wittenberg. He reminds us that to be present to a neighbor in need is to fulfill the Law of Christ: "There you hear that the command to love your neighbor is equal to the greatest commandment to love God."

Secondly, Luther warns us against recklessness. The man who preached "faith alone" cautions us not to be either foolhardy or rash with that faith. For Luther, there is a distinction between trusting in God and tempting God. He notes, "God created medicine and gave us our reason in order that we may so manage and care for our bodies as to be well and live." In order to be effective disciples we have to be thoughtful in how we go about serving, utilizing the right precautions, and taking care not to infect others or spread the virus. Luther compared the spread of the Plague to a burning house and counsels that we should therefore act like those who want to put out the flames.

With all that said, this leaves us in a precarious position. How are we to be neighborly and helpful in this time of "social distancing?" How do we balance the mandate to serve others with the need to slow the spread of the virus? I'm encouraged to see people figuring this out in creative ways. The Lighthouse Mission has been delivering food baskets to the elderly; Alissa and the 'Pen Pals' have been continuing to write and send encouraging notes even while we are apart; and I'm blessed to see moms and dads take a direct role in teaching their children with love, grace, and patience.

These are trying times, to be sure, but I am encouraged and challenged to find those ways where I can be a help to someone in need, to be salt and light in the fear and darkness affecting so many. Finally, I take heart in Luther's example and words of spiritual comfort: "I am staying here, and it is necessary that I do so because of the terrible fear among the people . . . but Christ is present here too, that we may not be alone." It is true even today, "Christ is present," and we are not alone.

Χάρις,
Jonathan O

FOOD pantry



FOOD PANTRY

OPEN: MON, WED, FRI
10AM - 2PM
65 Franklin St. (HPYC Building)
Rear Entrance
631-289-3483

*"...for I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me..."
Matthew 25:35 (ESV)*

If you know of someone in
need of food, or if you would like to donate,
please contact our Food Pantry at 631-289-3483.



SUNDAY JUNE 21, 2020



SATURDAY JULY 4, 2020

The Generosity Cycle

I want to thank all who have continued to send their tithes and offerings through this time of being apart. Whether you sent a check or made a PayPal donation please know they are appreciated. Your faithfulness is keeping us going and the bills paid. We were also able to send \$500 to the World Evangelism Fund from our Easter offering and \$300 to the Lighthouse Mission. Praying we are together again soon; until then keep in touch with our online services & Bible study, emails and texts, facetime and letters. — Corinne Franco

God makes us rich in every way so we can be generous on every occasion, which will result in thanksgiving to God. ... God doesn't bless us to provide for our own needs; he blesses us so we can be generous.

—Rick Warren (based on 2 Corinthians 9:11)



Some Reflections



This certainly is an unprecedented time for all of us. Not being able to gather together with family and friends has been difficult but hopefully has helped us realize how much we miss and need one another.

Our usual church gatherings, whether it be for Sunday Service/Sunday School, Men, Women and Teen Ministries, etc. are not happening. Thankfully, our pastors have provided a weekly service and study via social media. These have been a real blessing.

Early in April, I received my usual newsletter from LI Youth Mentoring. John Cragg, the Executive Director of this ministry, wrote an article that speaks to some of what we are dealing with now. His words were an encouragement to me and I would like to share some of what he wrote with you. The event he speaks about happened in the state of Washington in 1980. He and his newlywed wife were living there at the time. The following is an excerpt from this article.

“We had been invited to a church picnic by my boss so of course we went. It was a large gathering of about 1000 people doing simple things.... I remember where we were standing and what we were looking at like it was a picture hanging in my office.

The western sky had a very dark line on the horizon. I had never seen anything like it. It was not the color of a bad storm; it was black. It was moving towards us at a predatory speed, not even close to any storm I had ever seen. As we headed to our car, the crowd did the same thing. We were like a storming herd of a thousand wildebeest running from the lions.

As we got into our car, something started hitting the windshield...it flowed across the window like a wave. We turned on the news. Mount St. Helens had erupted and the ash had crossed a couple of hundred miles at the speed of 600 miles an hour.



All kinds of crazy rumors were spread by the chattering radio guys who, like gossips on the sidelines, shared and validated each other's ignorance. Everything was shut down. The people who did venture out had towels wrapped around their mouths and noses and ski masks covering their eyes. Toilet paper was in abundance but face masks and air filters were no longer available. There was a run on food. Then...with the gracious passage of time, colors came out, food returned to the shelves and we all took a deep breath.

Mount St. Helen's, 9/11, Hurricane Sandy, wars, the Great Depression and other pandemics have all been captured by short names but they have had a long, emotional impact on all of us who have experienced them. This virus, covid-19, has been added to the list...

It is easy for us to get caught up in the darkness. There is nothing new here. Crisis and trials are a big part of life. If we do live through this crisis, and we probably will, we must be mindful of the fact that God is still in charge. God is still at work.

We are walking *through* the valley of the shadow; let's look around and see what God has for us while we are here. There are great opportunities for us if we take our eyes off of the fear, the inconvenience and the loss and draw near to the One who will take us THROUGH".



I hope you are encouraged by those words that John Cragg shared.

Let us come before our Lord each day seeking His wisdom and guidance in what He would have us do. Whether it be providing food and supplies to the needy, sending an encouraging note or joining our hearts in prayer for all the needs we see, may you find peace, joy and strength in the fact that God is still Sovereign over all the earth. He loves us with the unconditional love that sent Him to the Cross.

I look forward to the day when I can once again hug my brothers and sisters as we come together to give thanks and praise to the One who has never left our side.

Serving together,
Mary Ann

Ladies Sewing & Crafts

I'm going to say that our monthly meetings will most likely be on hold until the Fall. I do miss our little get togethers but hope you are using this time to be creative in some way, be it sewing, crafting, gardening, or writing notes, etc. I have been able to work on some of my UFO's (UnFinished prOjects) while trying to use up some of my "stash." It's always a happy thing when you find something you need in some of your "collection." Over the course of this social distancing the strangest things have become scarce even in the crafting world. Elastic, interfacing, yarn, and even thread are now hot commodities. Thanks to Sue Cerruto donating some of her "stash" elastic, I was able to make and donate a large amount of face masks, that is until I ran out of interfacing. Hopefully, this experience will teach us all to be a little more conservative with what we have vs. hoarding what we can get. With the shortage of paper toweling I have made some reusable paper towels out of flour sack material. Use this time to get creative!

Corinne Franco



"Creativity is God's gift to you, and what you do with it is your gift to God."

Please continue to pray for anyone affected by the Covid-19 virus. Those who have lost loved ones, many are still fighting the virus, some are left to care for the families. Everyone has been affected in one way or another.

We also have many prayer requests that are not virus related.
A full list can be found in our weekly bulletin.
GOD BLESS YOU!

No Time like the Present



“At the Braefield School for the Deaf, I met Joseph, a boy of 11 who had just entered school for the first time-an 11 year-old with no language whatever. He had been born deaf, but this had not been realized until he was in his fourth year. His failure to talk, or understand speech at the normal age was put down to ‘retardation,’ then to ‘autism.’ ... When his deafness finally became apparent he was seen as ‘deaf and dumb,’ dumb not only literally, but metaphorically, so there was never any attempt to teach him language (for the first 11 years of his life). Joseph possessed normal intelligence ... but was completely literal, unable to enter into an imaginative or figurative realm. It wasn’t only language that was missing: there was no clear sense of the past, no distinction between a day ago and a year ago. ...his life only existed in the moment, in the present.” Charles G. Morris PHD

A life that exists only in the moment, with no attachment to the past, sounds like a science fiction flick where the main character is suffering from amnesia. Joseph had missed the foundational building blocks of his childhood including: language, images and concepts. Would he ever be able to make up those lost years? What if this was to happen, to an entire generation, a people who have no historical connection to the past only to the moment.

The prophet Isaiah, speaking as the voice of God to a nation recoded these words: Remember the thing I have done in the past – for I alone am God. [Isaiah 46:9](#) (NLT) There are many similar references in the Bible where God reminds us, even warns us that if we, as a nation, forget what he has done in the past we will have nothing to lean on when moving forward. God is concerned about our future, not remotely, but in a hands on and up close way. He seeks a relationship with each of us that can be boiled down to one word, **Faith**. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not yet seen. [Hebrews 11:1](#) (KJ)* Faith isn’t a theological catch phrase to be framed and hung on our office wall. It’s a living thing, a tool used to build foundational relationships. It’s the bedrock of friendships, the glue of successful marriages, and its trustworthy leadership. Children don’t sweat the details, because they have a connection to the past with their parents. Past experience, is the basis of their faith.

God provides us with an amazing resource for building a successful life, it’s called the Bible. It not only contains the story of who he is, it contains the story of what he’s already done. A frame work we refer to as history. Interestingly, there is no Hebrew word for history - the word is *Remember* - a dynamic word, which involves our heart and our soul and looks forward as well as behind. The Holy Spirit builds relationships of trust in various ways but they usually involve challenge, a sense of insecurity and sometimes pain. When we cry out for help God seizes the opportunity to build our faith. Using his inspired Word, the Bible, he will lead us to any one of a hundred passages that reminds us of his past faithfulness. This is his unshakable logic: If he was faithful in the past, why wouldn’t he be faithful in the present and the future? When our heart establishes that this Great God of the Past is the same faithful God of the present we begin to form a historical track record of our own to fall back on, this is the message we must pass on to a generation of Americans that in some cases have not only been steered away from their own history but from the history of God’s redemptive work through Jesus Christ.

Perhaps as you read this you're realizing like 11 year old Joseph, you were misdiagnosed, mislead, that there's nothing wrong with you physically or emotionally you're just missing an historical connection to the living God. *Remember the things I have done in the past, for I alone am God. Only I can tell you the future before it even happens.* [Isaiah 46:9, 10](#) (NLT)

Maybe it's time to humble yourself, crack open a Bible and begin to read. You will not only discover who God really is you might even discover who you are for the first time.

"It's never too late to be who you might have been." George Elliot

Serving Him Together,

Pastor John Mercurio

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*With Deepest Sympathy and Prayers we mourn the loss of Michael Iarocci who passed away on April 24, 2020. Mike and Jill moved to Georgia a few years ago and about a year and a half ago, Mike suffered several strokes from which he never fully recovered. Please pray for Jill and the rest of the family.*  
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**Stay
in the
Word**



Virtual Meetings

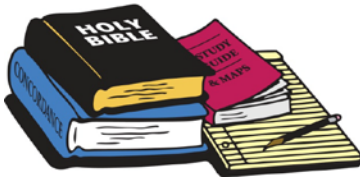
SUNDAY SERVICE ON U TUBE **Get link from e mail or Website**



SUNDAY AT 1PM. CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ON ZOOM
TUNE IN FOR A DEVOTION AND FUN GAME EACH WEEK
CONTACT DESIREE BOUTSIKOS



Be
Nourished

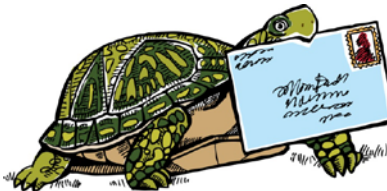


MID WEEK BIBLE STUDY ON ZOOM
WITH PASTOR JOHN
WEDNESDAY'S AT 7:30PM

TEENS, CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER
YOUTH GROUP MEETINGS
FRIDAY NIGHTS FROM 7:30-9:00
ON GOOGLE HANGOUT
CONTACT THE LASPISA'S



PEN IT FORWARD
FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH
VIRTUAL MEETING ON ZOOM FOR A
TIME OF FELLOWSHIP AND LETTER WRITING
CONTACT ALISSA DONATO



UNTIL WE CAN ALL GATHER TOGETHER AGAIN

A Light in Darkness

Outside in bright daylight, the light beam of a standard household flashlight is hardly noticeable. However, as daylight disappears and night begins to descend the flashlight's beam seems to become brighter. Have the bulb's lumens increased? No, the lumens are exactly as they were before night arrived. What has changed is a difference in contrast between light and dark and how we perceive that difference.



What has also changed is our *appreciation* for the light. When the sun is up, we may consider the flashlight's beam insignificant. After all, what use is it? The flashlight doesn't make any difference in our ability to see during the daytime. Then night comes, and we search frantically for the light we considered useless.

In our present situation with COVID, multiple crises are happening simultaneously, and life has turned upside down. There are times when our Sovereign Lord will allow calamity as He sees fit to stop us dead in our tracks. (Amos 3:6, Jeremiah 13:16, Isaiah 30:20a) If we're searching for a light at that moment, how will we help others to find their way?

I believe our first response to any crisis is to make sure we trust in *His* ability to save us and no one else. (Ps. 107:6,13,19,28. Is. 31:1,3. Matt. 14:30-31. Mk. 4:38-41)

When our faith has anchored itself to Him and His light we, and those who are with us, can confidently walk in darkness until the night is ended.



Recently, as I was looking up scripture for this article, the Holy Spirit led me to Zechariah 8. The 70-year exile is almost over. The rebuilding of the Temple and Jerusalem is almost finished. Mostly it is men who inhabit the city because they are doing the rebuilding. Emotions are a mix of gladness and apprehension. Nothing is the same as it was, but God makes a promise!

"The Lord Almighty says...I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem...There will be people in the streets again...I will save you to be a blessing...Let your hands be strong...Do not be afraid...Many will say to the Lord's people, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you!'" Eph. 6:10