

Perseverance through the Pandemic

When I began as Council President for Grace Lutheran this year, we were already 9 months into the Pandemic. So, I knew what I was getting myself into. We had already seen the lockdowns and the mask mandates and had stopped gatherings. But there was hope. Hope of what the vaccines would provide. Hope that more people understood how this virus needed to be controlled and hope that God would see us through....

Grace Lutheran took a conservative approach compared to some of the other churches in our area. Maybe we started later than others with in-person worship. We did not have in-person meetings for a long time. We continued to use Zoom. Some may have wanted to get back in-person much sooner but Council decided until the numbers showed a decline, we would protect our congregants and continue with online worship. Only until the vaccines showed the spreading had diminished, did we come back, but still with mask, just to be sure. Only recently did we allow people to worship without masks and only recently started singing again.

Why not sooner? Some wanted full open worship. ...Because we didn't want to put people in a situation where they felt uncomfortable about attending church. Because we didn't want people to feel they were at risk attending our church. Many of us have stories about other churches that opened too early and had to close again. We didn't want that to happen. Faith in God doesn't mean that we deny the health risk. The fact is that now that the majority of our congregation has been vaccinated, that risk is very low now.

What has happened between March of 2020 and now? We've had videos of Baptisms to share. We've worshiped online with phenomenal music and editing by Jeremy and Craig and volunteers reading the liturgy and prayers. Several months ago we were able to worship in-person and then add Communion. We've done committee meetings by Zoom but now in-person. We've had Zoom Sunday School classes. The connections continued with our Seniors. We've been able to conduct outreach with our gifts to a growing need of assistance. We have made improvements to our facilities that needed to be done. We continued to connect with our youth through virtual activities and continue our Scouting program.

In short, we have continued to do the mission of what God wanted us to do through this pandemic. We have continued to have faith. Our Pastors and staff at Grace have had to work harder than before the pandemic as well as many volunteers in our congregation to keep all the parts moving and synchronized. Our Council has stayed connected and on track. Nothing was perfect because in a pandemic we kept learning and adapting. God doesn't expect perfection. He only expects us to continue in worship and prayer and giving Him the gratitude. I sincerely thank everyone who has kept Grace moving forward.

-Walker Stockley, Council President