

The Herald of Grace

A Weekly Newsletter for Grace Lutheran Church

July 9, 2026

Early Communion for Grace's Children

Dear Saints of Grace,

This year Pastor and the Board of Elders have begun exploring early communion for our future confirmands. **This letter will outline the rationale and process for bringing children to the Lord's Supper prior to confirmation.** This letter is intentionally brief to make it readable, so a more thorough explanation of our rationale can be provided by asking the Pastor.

In 1 Corinthians 11, St. Paul instructs Christians to examine themselves prior to receiving the Lord's Supper, lest they eat and drink unworthily and to their judgment (v.27-29). What, then, are Christians to look for when examining themselves? “29 *Anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself*” (v.29). Discern the body. That is, divide between that which is life and that which is death. Is that sacrament on the altar for my good? Is it life-giving? Why?

These questions form the basis for why we instruct both children and adults prior to receiving the Lord's Supper. But *how much* instruction is necessary before a Christian can give that confession to discern the body? And *how much* academic intelligence must be demonstrated in order for a person to receive this Sacrament worthily?

In relatively recent history in our LCMS, “Holy Communion” has been synonymous with “Confirmation” and limited typically to those in at least 7th/8th grade, but the history of Christianity has included the instruction and communion of children of much younger ages. While *some* theological topics might be better taught to older children, does this then mean that the Lord's Supper should be withheld from the young or restricted to those of a certain age?

Perhaps the Church shifted to later confirmation more recently in order to allow for more complicated or age-sensitive teachings than younger children could comprehend (e.g., sexuality issues, evolution, etc.). This had the positive benefit of ensuring a solid intellectual grasp of Christian doctrine. However, time has revealed two significant drawbacks: It presented a picture of Christian life as a purely academic exercise; and it prevented younger children from receiving the life-giving gift of the Lord's Supper until they have jumped through academic hoops.

The results of this approach are evident across recent generations of Lutherans: many confirmands soon leave the church, and many regard faith as an achievement earned by going to classes, not unlike possessing a diploma from an academic institution. The very thing they were being prepared for—the Lord’s Supper—did not become a meaningful part of their life. The habit rarely formed.

In Luther’s own preface to the *Small Catechism*, he instructs pastors of basic catechetical instruction for the young. His basic requirements are a brief teaching about the Ten Commandments, Apostles’ Creed, Lord’s Prayer, Baptism, Confession, and the Sacrament of the Altar. Having made Confession and received instruction in these articles of the faith, the children are admitted to the Lord’s Supper. With the diverse age groups of our congregation, not more than one or two are in the same “class” which makes the structure of age-based stepping stones difficult.

Therefore, what I would like to do as your pastor is to implement a new standard at Grace for instruction in the Catechism and admission to the Lord’s Supper. Children will be admitted to Early Communion Classes, not based on age, but when they have met certain criteria.

Expectations for children desiring catechesis toward receiving the Lord’s Supper:

- 1) The child has expressed a mature desire for the Sacrament to the parents and, according to the parents, the child has an awareness of the significance of the Lord’s Supper.
- 2) The child AND parent(s) have demonstrated a regular faithful worship life and attended all early communion classes.
- 3) The child can recite the basic parts of the Catechism: (1) The 10 Commandments, (2) The Apostles’ Creed, and (3) The Lord’s Prayer.
- 4) After meeting these prerequisites, pastoral discretion and parental agreement are required for receiving the Lord’s Supper.

In doing so, the child will undergo individual examination with the pastor. If the pastor is satisfied that the child knows what the Sacrament is and why he needs it, the child will then be admitted to the Lord’s Supper following the Rite of First Communion Prior to Confirmation.

We hope that this will sustain these children, having been fed with Christ’s gifts, especially when they face the assaults of the devil and their own conscience. Furthermore, we hope this practice might improve the retention of confirmands, strengthening their faith and their joy in receiving the Lord’s gifts. I welcome other questions or concerns about this practice if so inquired. I am already seeing the benefit for our children and there is no better gift!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Wayne J. Miller

Upcoming Sunday Readings and Hymns:

Readings: Isaiah 55:10-13 Romans 8:12-17 Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Divine Service Setting 4

Opening Hymn: Lord, Open Now My Heart to Hear LSB 908

Hymn of the Day: Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing LSB 584

Distribution Hymns: What Is This Bread LSB 629

I Heard The Voice of Jesus Say LSB 699

Your Table I Approach LSB 628

Closing: On What Has Now Been Sown LSB 921

+++++

Weekly Calendar

Sunday, July 12 <i>Seventh Sunday after Pentecost</i>	Children's Sunday School	9:15 am
	Adult/Teen Fellowship and Bible Study @Espejo House	9:15 am
	Worship- Divine Service	10:30 am
	Installation Service at Holy Cross Rev. Scott Jensen	4:00 pm
Tuesday, July 14	Council Meeting	6:00 pm
Wednesday, July 15	Bible Study – @ Our Savior	11:00 am
	No Handbell Choir (restarts in Sept.)	
	No Adult Choir (restarts in Sept.)	
	Confirmation/Communion Youth Class	6:00-7:00 pm
Thursday, July 16	Bible Study	11:00 am
Sunday, July 19 <i>Eighth Sunday after Pentecost</i>	Children's Sunday School	9:15 am
	Adult/Teen Fellowship and Bible Study @Espejo House	9:15 am
	Worship- Divine Service	10:30 am



*July 10 – Virginia Duff
July 11 – Melanie Tims
July 13 – Amen MeKonnen
July 13 – Miles Wilson
July 15 – Chris Rowe, Jr.
July 16 – Deborah Lamb
July 17 – Luke Mueller*



ALTAR FLOWER SIGN-UP SHEET FOR 2026 IS NOW AVAILABLE!

2026 Price: \$100/set or \$50/each

Upcoming Dates available:

August 16, 23, 30

Please return any glass vases and green liners the floral arrangements are placed in when sent home.

Semiannual Congregational Meeting and Potluck on Sunday, July 26.

For the potluck, please bring something to share if you are able.

.....

An Installation Service for the new pastor at our sister Congregation of Holy Cross Lutheran Church on Airport TODAY at 4:00pm. *Reception to follow.* We welcome Pastor Scott Jensen and his family to Mobile as we minister together in Mobile!



Grace Lutheran Camp Dixie Weekend!

All men, women, children and families are invited to a Camp Dixie Weekend on August 14-16, 2026!

More information will be forthcoming!



Sunday School meets from 9:15-10:15 each Sunday morning. Classes include Preschool (Age 3-5), Elementary (Grades 1-4), and Tween (Grades 5-8).

Sunday School News- July 2026

Our Sunday School children are having a great time this summer. During June, the children have been on a discovery hunt, attacked Goliath with slingshots and ping pong balls, built and then destroyed the Walls of Jericho. Our adventures continue during July. Thanks to Kelly Johnson who has planned, organized, and is teaching the summer program. Our adventures continue during July. Come and join us for the fun!



+++++



Carillon Donation Challenge This Summer!

We have a generous anonymous donor who is matching up to \$7500 for a new digital Carillon system. Our goal is having the Carillon operational for Christmas. The cost of the new system will be approximately \$18,000. Together with current funds raised and the donor's \$7500 match, we can easily meet the goal by the end of the summer.

Cash and coins can be placed in the wooden church donation box in the narthex. Checks are to be made to Grace Lutheran Church with the memo line marked "Carillon Project". Checks can be placed in the offering plate.

Thank you and we look forward to bells ringing once again from Grace Lutheran Church praising our Lord and serving the community.

Note from the Treasurer:

Our Semi-Annual Congregational meeting is coming up on Sunday, July 26, after service. If there is anything about the finances that you have questions about please send an email (treasurer@gracelutheranmobile.com) with the question and I will address it in the meeting or in the newsletter.

Carillon Fund Contributions to Date (July 6); \$5,943.09 (Does not include offerings from 7/5)

Espejo Loan from NBC Fund: (After June 22 payment)

Original Loan Amt: \$109,651.00 - Principal Due: \$93,378.39

Just for Laughs:

What's blue and not very heavy? Light Blue

What's Forrest Gump's password? 1forest1

Food for thought: Who is "Theophilus" from Luke 1:3?

From the Concordia Lutheran Study Bible -The gospel is specifically directed to Theophilus, whose name means "one who loves God" and almost certainly refers to a particular person rather than to lovers of God in general. The use of "most excellent" with the name further indicates an individual, and supports the idea that he was a Roman official or at least of high position and wealth. He was possibly Luke's patron, responsible for seeing that the writings were copied and distributed. Such a dedication to the publisher was common at that time.

From Cold-Case Christianity A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels by J. Warner Wallace - ...While no one knows the answer for sure there are many reasonable possibilities:

He's Every "Friend of God" – Some have observed that the word Theophilus is Greek for "Friend of God." For this reason, they propose that Luke wrote his works for all those who were friends of God and interested in the claims of Jesus.

He's a Roman Official – Since Luke used the expression "most excellent" only when addressing Roman officials, many believe that Theophilus must have held some similar Roman position, Paul Maier, in his novel The Flames of Rome, makes a case for Titus Flavius Sabinus II as the person to whom Luke wrote.

He's a Jewish High Priest – Others have identified a pair of Jewish high priests who lived in the first century (Theophilus ben Ananus or Mattathias ben Theophilus), arguing that Luke's focus on the temple and Jewish customs related to the Sadducees could best be explained if one of these two priests was his intended audience.

From the Teen/Adult Sunday School Class a verse that resonated with the class and prompted much thoughtful discussion and mediation from the study of Romans 7:14-25: Genesis 4:7 (the Lord speaking to Cain) “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you, but you must master it.”

(In all fairness I have to admit that no one came to the class but the Leader that day)

If you are into martial arts, what belt to you earn if you master it? See Ephesians 6:14

PAWS for a Cause



The City of Mobile Animal Services has provided a wish list of needed items for their shelters throughout Mobile County. There will be a collection box located in the narthax throughout the month of June. Your generous donations will help the shelters care for the rescue animals they provide for daily. Our pets give us unconditional love, let us return that love to animals in need.



STILL AVAILABLE AT ONLY 8 MONTHS AWAY! BOOK NOW!
Call Galyna Henry. Deposits could be as low as \$50 pp.
More info on next page.



Grace
LUTHERAN CHURCH



6-DAY BAHAMAS CRUISE

Carnival Spirit

Monday, January 11 – Sunday, January 17, 2027

Starting at **\$734.00** per person

ITINERARY:

Monday, January 11: Depart Mobile, AL 3:30 PM
Tuesday, January 12: Fun Day at Sea
Wednesday, January 13: Celebration Key, The Bahama
Thursday, January 14: Nassau, The Bahamas
Friday, January 15: Fun Day at Sea
Saturday, January 16: Fun Day at Sea
Sunday, January 17: Arrive Mobile, AL 8:00 AM

INCLUSIONS:

- ◆ 6-day cruise aboard **Carnival Spirit**
- ◆ Meals and entertainment on board the ship
- ◆ Port charges, government taxes, and fees

NOT INCLUDED:

- ◆ Gratuities to shipboard staff
- ◆ Optional shore excursions
- ◆ Travel Protection

STATEROOMS:

*Prices are per person
based on double
occupancy.*

Cat. 4D - Interior
\$734.00

Cat. 4E - Interior
\$744.00

Cat. 8D - Balcony
\$944.00

Cat. 8E - Balcony
\$954.00

Cat. 8K -
Extended Balcony
\$974.00



Prices are per person, based on double occupancy. Stateroom categories and prices are subject to availability and are on a first come, first serve basis. Other categories may be available by request. Pricing and stateroom availability for 3rd and 4th guests are available upon request. Prices are subject to change due to fuel charges and other vendor charges. **A valid passport is required with at least 6 months validity beyond return date.**

Deposit of \$250.00 per person is due with the completed registration form by February 24, 2025. Final payment is due September 29, 2026.



Galyna Henry

(251) 414-4634

• gghenry@travellleaders.com

CAMP DIXIE 2026

Chicken Dinners

Join us at Camp Dixie for our Chicken Dinner fundraiser events! 11am-2pm on the listed dates. \$15 for a good meal of fried chicken, green beans, mashed potatoes, and more! Stop by our Camp Store while you're with us and grab some Camp Dixie swag like a new t-shirt or water bottle!

2026 Dates

January 11
February 8
March 8
April 12
June 7
September 13
October 11
November 8



A Light Before Others

"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Matt. 5:16

What is Camp Dixie's aim? Ultimately, to glorify God! Let us reflect His light, teach of His sacrifice, and encourage other believers to do the same. Shine on!

In Christ,
Sam "Uno" Schmidt
Camp Dixie Director



Support Camp Dixie

Please keep Camp Dixie in your prayers and consider supporting this ministry further. Options include:

- Monetary Donations (head to website for digital donations)
- Gifts from our Wishlist
- Thrivent Action Team Grants
- Volunteer Service

See our website for more information



Grace Lutheran Church
CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:15 am
SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 10:30 am

Rev. Wayne J. Miller, Pastor
251-230-1886
pastor@gracelutheranmobile.com

Connie Rowe, Organist
251-270-9000
connierowe90@gmail.com

Debbie Milling, Volunteer Office Manager
251-433-2749
debbie.milling@gracelutheranmobile.com

Chris Rowe, Choir Director
251-278-8596
cmrbobcat@gmail.com

Weekly newsletter items must be submitted by Wednesday of each week.



**If you would like to watch our
Worship Services, you can find them here:**

**Grace Lutheran's Facebook page
or**

youtube.com

(Search and subscribe to Grace Lutheran Church, Mobile, AL)