



Grace Notes

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COMMUNITY SENSE

An Essay on Government and Civil Society from a Confessional Lutheran Perspective

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It wasn't that long ago that we were hearing from some candidates for U.S. President that we should replace the system of government we have with a socialist one.¹ Following the death of George Floyd, we saw political protests, looting, and riots motivated by his death.² Then we heard that the U.S. government "system" must be changed or dismantled.³ We have heard that police departments all around the country need to be "defunded" or "dismantled," which political pressure against the police may be causing an increase in violence.⁴ More recently we have seen an ongoing pattern of destruction and defacing of historic public statues, monuments, and buildings, which appears in many cases to be a form of political protest.⁵

Will the U.S. government and its "system" survive this "stress test"? Will our police departments, sheriff departments, F.B.I., Homeland Security, courts of all types, and our justice system survive these attacks and criticisms? What is the Lutheran view of government and does our country live up to that standard?

Let me begin by stating that I do not have a political-party or political-candidate agenda in this essay. We need to have two strong political parties—at least two—to keep our governing officials honest and to offer competent candidates when the officials of one party are corrupted or go bad. My intent here is not to support one party or another, but to explore the historical roots of the ideas upon which our government is built, to analyze those roots from a confessional Lutheran perspective, and to apply the derived insights to our current problems.

The most influential essay that established the ideas of government for the U.S. government "system" was known as *Common Sense*, published in 1775-1776 by Thomas Paine (1737-1809).⁶ Although John Locke (1632-1704) is rightly considered to be the original source of American political philosophy, Locke was in favor of a "constitutional monarchy." That is, he favored having a king who was limited in power by a constitution. Paine disagreed, arguing that, in Locke's system, the power is concentrated in the hands of a monarch, who will use that power to avoid any limitations of constitutional law put on him. The American founders agreed with Paine, creating a three-way balance of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

In the first section of Paine's treatise, titled "Of the Origin and Design of Government in General, With Concise Remarks on the English Constitution," he made a crucial distinction between *civil society* and *government*. This distinction came from the Enlightenment political philosophers who preceded Paine. He argued in that section that *government* is a "necessary evil." He illustrated the power of society to create and maintain happiness in man through the example of a few isolated people who find

it easier to live together rather than apart, thus creating *civil society*. As *civil society* continues to grow, a *government* becomes necessary to prevent the natural evil Paine saw in man.⁷

Here then is the essential idea of government, according to Thomas Paine and the American founding fathers of our “system”: Government is a necessary evil to restrain the evil that is in man by nature. *Government* is “necessary,” because without it there is chaos, robbery, rape, murder, and destruction of property; and eventually *civil society* is destroyed. Almost all Enlightenment political philosophers,⁸ except for the utopians, agreed on the necessity of government to protect citizens and civil society, due to the evil that is in man by nature.

How does government restrain the evil that is in man by nature? By electing or appointing: 1) Police, Sheriffs, and their Deputies, to protect citizens from each other; 2) Border guards and defined borders, to protect citizens from unfriendly foreigners; 3) Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen, to protect citizens from unfriendly countries; 4) Courts and Justices, to protect body and property from damage, and to restore damaged goods and assets where possible; and 5) Rulers, of various sorts, to make and enact laws to protect persons and properties. Government may do other things, such as regulation of business and education, but if it fails to do its job of “restraining the evil that is in man by nature,” then everything else it does is fruitless.

Where did the idea that there is “evil in man by nature” come from? Almost all ancient,⁹ classical, and pre-modern religions believed in the idea of evil or sin, but only the Bible had a good answer for the question of evil’s origin. Sin entered the world through the Fall of Adam (Romans 5:12-14). Christians have called it “original sin.” Confessional Lutherans, i.e., those who adhere to, and teach according to, the 1580 *Book of Concord*, define “original sin” as “the horrible, dreadful, inherited disease corrupting the entire nature [of men]” and that it “is above all actual sin and indeed is the ‘chief sin.’ It is the root and fountainhead of all actual sins” (FC SD I, 5).¹⁰ Such Lutherans believe that “since the fall of Adam all human beings who are born in the natural way are conceived and born in sin. This means that from birth they are full of evil lusts and inclination” (AC II, 1).¹¹

If every man is by nature filled with evil desires, then it would appear that the only way that the evil in human nature can be restrained is by super-natural forces. In the middle ages, the Western church, i.e., Roman Catholic church, eventually came to believe that secular kings, princes, and governments, who were constantly feuding, must be restrained and governed by the popes, who were the only rulers believed to be holy, supernaturally wise, and infallible.¹²

The Lutherans, in contrast, believed that natural man, despite the evil that is in his nature, has sufficient “civil righteousness” to govern. They stated:

The human will possesses freedom regarding works and matters that reason can comprehend by itself. It can to some extent produce civil righteousness or the righteousness of works. It can talk about God and offer God acts of worship with external works; it can obey rulers and parents. By choosing an external work, it can keep back the hand from murder, adultery, and theft. Because human nature still retains reason and judgment concerning things subject to the sense, it also retains the ability to choose in such matters, as well as the freedom and ability to achieve civil righteousness. . . [but] even civil righteousness is rare among human beings (Ap XVIII, 4-5).¹³

Based on this belief about human nature, i.e., that it both contains evil desires and is capable of civil righteousness, the Lutherans set forth their position on civil government:

Concerning public order and secular government it is taught [by us] that all political authority, orderly government, laws, and good order in the world are created and instituted by God and that Christians may without sin exercise political authority; be princes and judges; pass sentences and administer justice according to imperial and other laws; punish evildoers with the sword; wage just wars; serve as soldiers; buy and sell; take required oaths; possess property; be married, etc. Condemned here are the Anabaptists who teach that none of the things indicated above is Christian (AC XVI, 1-3).¹⁴

Who were the Anabaptists and what did they think about government? They were various “radical” groups of Christians in sixteenth century Europe who were rejected and/or condemned by Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican churches.¹⁵ They were usually persecuted or exiled by the civil governments because of their radical political views. They should not be confused with Baptists, who separated from the Anglican church in 1612.

Chief among the doctrinal errors of the Anabaptists was their rejection of the doctrine of original sin, and thus also their rejection of the idea that there is “evil in man by nature.” Therefore, they refused to baptize children and infants until they reached the “age of reason.” Their errors in the matter of government were listed by the Lutherans in the *Formula of Concord* as follows:

8. *That government service is not a God-pleasing walk of life in the New Testament.*
9. *That a Christian cannot hold an office in government with a good, clear conscience.*
10. *That Christians may not with a clear conscience exercise their governmental office against the wicked in appropriate situations, nor may Christian subjects of the government appeal to its power.*
11. *That Christians may not with good conscience swear an oath in court or pay feudal homage to their prince or lord with an oath.*
12. *That governmental authority may not with a clear conscience impose capital punishment upon criminals.*
13. *That a Christian may not with a good conscience own or possess private property, but rather is bound to surrender all to the community.*
14. *That a Christian may not with good conscience be an innkeeper, merchant, or weapons-maker. (FC SD XII, 17-23).¹⁶*

Do you see the connection between the Anabaptist view of human nature and its view of government? It is extremely important for the history of Western thought, both secular and religious. If no man has sin in him by nature, i.e., by birth, then all persons must be originally good and are only corrupted by civil society or by evil rulers. Then government becomes not only an unnecessary evil, but an “evil” imposition on the “good” individual. Government is seen, in the Anabaptist view, as essentially oppressive. Notice also point #13, in which the Anabaptists rejected private property in favor of communal ownership of property.¹⁷ Thus the Christian Anabaptist movement was the historical root of modern utopian political views, including collectivism and communism.

Another movement—rather a small group actually—of thinkers was also breaking new theological ground simultaneously with the Anabaptists. These were known as “Socinians” or “anti-Trinitarians.” The first name was based on their founders and the second name from their most obvious doctrinal error. Arthur C. McGiffert observed that:

[T]he Socinians rejected the traditional doctrine of original sin, as accepted by both Catholics and Protestants, asserting that man was created mortal, not immortal, and that he lost neither life nor freedom by Adam’s fall. He is still able to obey the commands of God as Adam was; his nature is not corrupt any more than was Adam’s; and he, therefore, does not need to be regenerated and transformed by divine power. The whole Catholic [and Protestant] system of redemption thus became unnecessary, and it is characteristic of the Socinian intellectualism that, finding it to be so, they repudiated it unhesitatingly.¹⁸

In turn, the *Formula of Concord* repudiated the Socinian doctrine unhesitatingly (FC SD XII, 36-38).¹⁹ The Socinians have often been ignored in the history of Christian and Western thought, but new studies are increasingly giving them credit for being a source of ideas and inspiration for the Enlightenment.²⁰ Church historians have known for a long time that Socinians were a major source of ideas and inspiration for British and American Unitarianism and, later, Liberal Protestantism.²¹

Although the Anabaptists were rejected, condemned, and persecuted from one country to another, their basic ideas and utopian hope did not disappear. The story of modern Western utopian ideas, leaders, and communities is told in a superlative way by Frank and Fritzie Manuel in their book *Utopian Thought in the Western World*.²² Major utopians covered in that work include: Thomas More (1478-1535), the author of *Utopia* (1516); Thomas Münzer (1490-1525), who was an Anabaptist; Giordano Bruno (1548-1600); Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778); William Godwin (1756-1836); Claude-Henri Saint-Simon (1760-1825); Charles Fourier (1772-1837); Robert Owen (1771-1858); Karl Marx (1818-1883); Friedrich Engels (1820-1895); and most recently, Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979).²³

As everyone knows, these utopian hopes were finally realized on a large-scale in the twentieth century with the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in October 1917. It was extended west to Eastern Europe after the fall of the Nazi government in 1945. It was extended east to China with the establishment of communist China in 1949.

Another version of utopian ideas entered the Christian church with the “Social Gospel,” whose most well-known theologian in America was Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918; professor of theology at Rochester Theological Seminary).²⁴ More recent types of utopian theology in America have been espoused by the so-called “Liberation Theologians,” among whom the following might be noted: James Luther Adams (1901-1994; professor at Harvard Divinity School),²⁵ Gustavo Gutiérrez (1928- ; a native of Peru and visiting professor at many universities in North America and Europe),²⁶ Rosemary Radford Ruether (1936- ; a professor of theology at several North American divinity schools),²⁷ and James H. Cone (1938-2018; a professor of theology at Union Theological Seminary, New York).²⁸ An insightful discussion of how the “Social Gospel” and “Liberation Theology” has existed within the context of American Liberal Protestantism, and how their ideas have contributed to that wider religious community, may be found in Gary Dorrien’s three-volume history *The Making of American Liberal Theology*.²⁹

What does this history mean for our current problems? For one, we need to recognize that many of the mainline Liberal Protestant churches have been influenced by, or even in some cases, become completely captive to the utopian ideas of the “Social Gospel” and/or “Liberation Theology.” An example of evidence for this may be found in the memoirs of Carl E. Braaten. Braaten is a theologian in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), who has warned his church about the problems and dangers of “Liberation Theology” in the ELCA and its institutions.³⁰ In my personal estimation, all of the “Seven Sisters of Mainline Protestantism”³¹ have gone this way to various degrees. Many of the American divinity schools and seminaries have become institutions whose goal is to convert both conservative and liberal seminary students into “Liberation Theologians” of various sorts.³²

Second, those who oppose the present form of the U.S. government should realize that neither the founders, nor the Enlightenment philosophers, nor Christian theologians ever thought that any governmental system was “perfect.” Only utopians think that is a possibility. No government can be perfect in the Christian and Enlightenment view because it is administered by imperfect people. The U.S. government system provides many ways for evil, corrupt, and criminal persons to be removed from office after due process. Our government system is self-correcting, in a way that few other government systems are.

Third, as to the specific point of the recent protests, I don’t understand why police departments are still using the “chokehold” (a.k.a. lateral vascular neck restraint). This method of restraint was banned by the Los Angeles Police Department in 1980; and it was banned nationwide in 1990 after New York City reinforced its ban on chokeholds.³³ In my opinion, its continued use in some cities—not everywhere—is a fault of not just those local police departments, but also a fault of the respective city councils. The city councils are supposed to appoint the directors of those police departments and supervise them. Why are the city councils defunding the police, when the council members themselves are at least to blame for lax oversight? Why are those city councils still approving the chokehold thirty years after it was previously banned nationwide? Protecting citizens—all citizens—is the chief work of city councils.

Fourth, as I pointed out in our previous Grace Notes newsletter,³⁴ racism continues to be a problem in American society. Our synodical president, the Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, has issued a very fine statement on the immediate concerns that is in keeping with our theology and with previous synodical statements.³⁵ To understand all the issues involved and the path toward solutions, I urge you to read the fine study issued by our LC-MS Commission on Theology and Church Relations in 1994 titled “Racism and the Church: Overcoming the Idolatry.”³⁶

Fifth, and finally, we need to remember Thomas Paine’s distinction between *government* and *civil society*. By design of our U.S. system, *government* cannot bring us “happiness,” it can only protect *civil society*. If people want to “pursue happiness,” they need to look to the institutions that provide that in “civil society”, i.e., the family, houses of worship, fraternal orders, charitable organizations, clubs, and other forms of association. This is what the founding fathers meant in the Declaration of Independence when they promised us “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” They promised us freedom to associate—with our families, relatives, friends, neighbors, immigrants, persons of different ethnic ancestry, and fellow believers—for the good of all.

As Christians, we heartily agree with that promise in the Declaration of Independence, since we believe that civil society was a divine creation at the start of human history when Eve was brought to

Adam. We believe that the church is also a divine creation. The church was created at that moment in history when God himself visited this planet to save us from the evil that is in man by nature. So, Jesus taught us to pray, "Deliver us from evil." Amen!

¹ See <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/02/20/bernie-sanders-socialism-represents-different-ideologies-democrats-socialist-column/4795365002/> ; accessed 15 July 2020.

² Floyd's death was caused by his arrest by a policeman in the Minneapolis Police Department. See KPIX report of looting in San Francisco: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GFshfFu6eaI> ; San Francisco Chronicle report of looting in Oakland: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMB0qAaGM3k> ; and Associated Press report of ongoing protests and looting in Portland: <https://apnews.com/4533bdf304692961ece51a828a1f5600> ; accessed 15 July 2020.

³ See New York Post report: <https://nypost.com/2020/06/25/blm-leader-if-change-doesnt-happen-we-will-burn-down-this-system/> ; and The Wire report: <https://thewire.in/world/black-lives-matter-progressive-international-solidarity> ; accessed 15 July 2020.

⁴ See NBC report: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/majority-minneapolis-city-council-commits-dismantling-city-s-police-department-n1227116> ; KQED report: <https://www.kqed.org/news/11823958/defund-the-police-what-it-means-and-how-bay-area-cities-are-responding> ; and a New York Times report on how political pressure for dismantling police is leading to increased violence in New York City: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/16/nyregion/nyc-shootings-nypd.html> ; accessed 16 July 2020.

⁵ See Wikipedia article: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_monuments_and_memorials_removed_during_the_George_Floyd_protests ; accessed 15 July 2020.

⁶ See Wikipedia article: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Sense ; accessed 15 July 2020.

⁷ This paragraph is a slightly revised quote from:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Sense#.Of_the_Origin_and_Design_of_Government_in_General,_With_Concise_Remarks_on_the_English_Constitution ; accessed 15 July 2020.

⁸ See Wikipedia article's section: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_philosophy#European_Enlightenment ; accessed 15 July 2020.

⁹ Not only did ancient religions deal with the problem of evil, but ancient mythology also expressed the nature and problem of evil, see: Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967).

¹⁰ Formula of Concord Solid Declaration, Article I, 5; see Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord* [hereafter BOC] (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 533.

¹¹ Augsburg Confession, Article II, 1, German text; BOC, 36, 38.

¹² For the claims of the papacy to rule over the civil government, see the *Dictatus papae* (1075) in:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dictatus_papae and the *Unam Sanctam* (1302) in: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unam_sanctam . The struggle for power between the papacy and civil governments was typified by the Investiture Controversy: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Investiture_Controversy ; accessed 15 July 2020.

¹³ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XVIII, 4-5; BOC, 233-234.

¹⁴ Augsburg Confession, Article XVI, 1-3, German text; BOC, 48.

¹⁵ A short treatment describing the Anabaptists and their doctrine can be found in: Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *Protestant Thought Before Kant* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1971), 100-106. Luther's interaction with Anabaptists and other sectarians is treated in: Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Luther and the False Brethren* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 6-81. Calvin's denunciation of Anabaptists can be found in English in: John Calvin, *Treatises against the Anabaptists and against the Libertines*, tr. and ed. B. W. Farley (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982). A full treatment of the various Anabaptist groups can be found in: George Hunston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed. (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth-Century Press, 1992).

¹⁶ Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article XII, 17-23; BOC, 658.

¹⁷ The Anabaptist rejection of private property was not only explicitly condemned by Lutherans in their official confessions, but also by the Anglicans; see for example the Anglican “Articles of Religion,” Article XXXVIII, in: *The Book of Common Prayer* (n.p.: The Seabury Press, 1977), 876.

¹⁸ McGiffert, *Protestant Thought Before Kant*, 110; for McGiffert’s complete treatment of the Socinians, see *ibid.*, pp. 107-118.

¹⁹ Formula of Concord Solid Declaration, Article XII, 36-38; BOC, 659-660.

²⁰ One of the finest recent works in this respect is: Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²¹ For example, see Albrecht Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, tr. John S. Black (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872), 234-319; chapter VI; and Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805-1900* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 1-57. Dorrien correctly sees Unitarianism, in the person of William Ellery Channing, as the fountainhead of Liberal Protestantism in its American form.

²² Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979).

²³ All these persons are well-known figures in Western political thought. I direct the reader to the Wikipedia articles on these persons for an introduction to their thought and influence.

²⁴ See Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1945).

²⁵ See e.g., James Luther Adams, *The Prophethood of All Believers*, ed. George K. Beach (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986) and James Luther Adams, *The Essential James Luther Adams: Selected Essays and Addresses*, ed. George K. Beach (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1998).

²⁶ See e.g., Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1973), a translation of: *Teología de la liberación. Perspectivas* (Lima: CEP, 1971).

²⁷ See e.g., Rosemary Radford Ruether, *New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies & Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975) and Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983).

²⁸ See e.g., James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis: The Seabury Press, 1975).

²⁹ See Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805-1900*; Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, Realism, and Modernity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003); and Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Crisis, Irony, & Postmodernity, 1950-2005* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

³⁰ See Carl E. Braaten, *Because of Christ: Memoirs of a Lutheran Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010).

³¹ On the seven sisters term, see the first paragraph here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mainline_Protestant#Denominations ; accessed 17 July 2020.

³² I know this from personal experience through four years of resident doctoral work at Union Theological Seminary, New York City. On their political ideas, you only need to browse through their website at: www.utsnyc.edu , for example, see <https://utsnyc.edu/event/the-spirit-of-justice-a-conversation-between-michelle-alexander-and-patrisse-cullors> , <https://utsnyc.edu/event/khabeer> , <https://utsnyc.edu/reflections-on-anti-black-violence> , and for more reading, check out the alumni magazine, called “Union Collective” since Fall 2018, here: <https://utsnyc.edu/alumni-ae/union-collective-magazine> ; accessed 17 July 2020.

³³ See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chokehold#Use_in_law_enforcement_\(lateral_vascular_neck_restraint\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chokehold#Use_in_law_enforcement_(lateral_vascular_neck_restraint)) ; accessed 17 July 2020.

³⁴ See Martin R. Noland, “COVID-19, Protests, School Closing, and the Phased Re-Opening of Worship,” *Grace Notes* 65 no. 5 (June 2020): 2 [the newsletter of Grace Luther Church, San Mateo, CA], available here: <http://gracelutheransanmateo.org/church/gracenotes.html> ; accessed 17 July 2020.

³⁵ See <https://blogs.lcms.org/2020/statement-on-the-death-of-george-floyd-and-the-ensuing-riots/> ; accessed 17 July 2020.

³⁶ This report can be downloaded for free at: <https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=2ZSjBpgjY39Eo1H1vqCgl79YUGmfrve> ; accessed 17 July 2020.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Since July 1, we have conducted 2 Planning Council Meetings, 1 Voters' Meeting and 1 Board of Administration meeting in person in the Parish Hall by following guidelines issued by the County of San Mateo.

Here are the highlights taken from the Minutes of the Planning Council and Voters' Meeting.

The Planning Council meeting highlights held on July 7, 2020:

Michelle moved that due to the fact that Covid-19 restrictions have eased, Planning Council resume meetings in person to replace the virtual ZOOM meetings that had been held during the restrictions. **The motion passed.**

Fred's legal agreement for his peaceful release has been completed, pending signatures. A copy of the signed document will be attached to the official minutes in the office. (Note by the President: This was incomplete on July 1st, but with input from Mr. Brauer, Kelly Archer and Pastor Noland, on July 2nd, we were able to finalize an agreement that satisfied everyone included our District President and our lawyer updated the agreement that same afternoon.)

It was **moved** that Planning Council accept the 2020-2021 budget as an interim budget since Michelle is not sure how the school closure will affect various budget items. The interim budget will be taken to the voters at the Voters' Meeting on Sunday, July 12, for approval. **The motion passed.**

Discussion centered on stipends that are perhaps due two of the school teachers, stipends that haven't been paid. It was decided more information is needed from the School Board in regard to these stipends. George will look into it.

Note from the President: Mr. Brauer forwarded the documentation needed so that 2 teachers were paid the stipends of \$1000 each for special projects they accomplished.)

Discussion was held in regard to Welcome Amigos and their future contract with Grace. Because there was no contract to review, Trish was encouraged to finalize a contract and bring it to the Board of Admin to review before the Planning Council can vote on it.

Judy gave an update on the cleaning of the school. The upstairs classrooms are done.

Discussion followed in regard to the Chrome Books and other computer gear, as to what should be done with them/it.

The Voters' Meeting highlights held on July 12, 2020:

George reviewed actions the church and school have taken to follow the ordinances of the state/county/governor in regard to the virus. San Mateo County is presently not on a watch list. As of July 6, new rulings indicate there be no singing in church during services and meetings should not be held in the sanctuary.

A Peaceful Release document will be presented to Fred Brauer for signature on July 15, 2020. (Note by the President: the signing was completed on July 15th and the severance check was mailed 10 days later, per the agreement.)

A former teacher at GRACE filed a claim in late April 2020. A law firm based in San Mateo was assigned to Grace. Since the requested documents were not forwarded in the 30-day time frame required by law, our lawyer has indicated Grace has violated a couple of labor laws. (Note by the President: As of July 1, these documents were still not provided. By July 4th, the President gathered all necessary documents to conform to the law. On July 3rd, all necessary documents had been hand delivered by the President to our lawyer.)

Michelle Semmler presented Budget Draft #5 for Grace Lutheran Church. A more solid budget will be ready at the next Voters' Meeting in September. Now that the school has closed Michelle has no way of knowing actual income and expenses for a while. Additionally, rental income is not finalized.

Michelle asked approval from the voters for the interim budget, which balances and is not using restricted funds to balance. She is not requesting we use any restricted funds. Planning Council wants approval by the voters for this interim budget.

A vote was taken to approve the interim budget until the September voters' meeting. It was approved.

It was pointed out the last time the budget was brought to the voters it was determined the deficit would be taken care of by the Friends of Grace fund.

Michelle reported that we do have to pay bills and that she may have to go into the scholarship fund.

The restricted funds cover expenses from the 2019-2020 fiscal year and are not requested for the 2020-2021 Budget.

However, we will need to pay a \$25,000 retainer for the law firm. Michelle **moved** we use the Educational Endowment Fund, which has about \$80,000 - \$90,000 in it, to pay the \$25,000 when that amount is requested by the attorney, along with other fines associated with the lawsuit amounting to \$1500 for two labor code violations.

Michelle **amended her motion** to add that the Educational Endowment Fund would also pay for other fines associated with the lawsuit amounting to \$1500 for two labor code violations. Mike Bannister seconded the amended motion. A vote was taken and there was one opposed.

The Planning Council Meeting highlights held on July 27, 2020:

Judy Boyd, who was hired to help with work that needed to be done after the school closed, has documented the work she has done in regard to closing the school and read the information aloud. She also listed the work that still needs to be done, and this was discussed.

It was moved by Martin Semmler, and seconded that due to recent financial issues, Grace turn the remaining chores related to the school closure over to volunteers. The motion carried.

Martin Semmler will head-up the volunteer task force and will help with the work. Bill Bethke offered to help Martin with work that needs to be done.

Many thanks were expressed to Judy Boyd and Trish Bailey for all the work they have been doing. It was agreed it was money well spent.

The Welcome Amigos contract for July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021, has not been signed for various reasons. Elizabeth, head of Welcome Amigos, has been in and out of ER, recently, but has promised to read the contract this week. Discussion centered on the contract and how it reads or needs to read due to Covid-19 concerns. This discussion has been tabled until the next meeting. Trish will follow through with the tenant and the contract in place. (Note from the President: Welcome Amigos received money from the Cares Act and paid the rest for July and August on July 30th. Trish Bailey is close to finalizing an agreement that would keep the rental amount the same, but Welcome Amigos will have to be responsible for the cleaning and sanitizing of the bathrooms and for whatever is needed to keep them stocked with essential supplies.

New Business

It was moved (Martin Semmler) and seconded that Grace Lutheran Church allow Marty Udishes to work as IT liaison to assist Paul McKenna/Tech Solutions. The motion carried.

Kay Bell raised concern over the fact that an audit of finances is due, pointing to the Bylaws which state that Grace needs to have periodical audits.

Kay moved that Grace Lutheran Church get a financial audit of church finances for past, present, and future planning and that we engage Synod to guide us in this venture, and then that we create a fund to pay for it, reaching out to the congregation to contribute to the fund until enough money is available to go through with the audit.

As an auditor may only look at current finances, the motion was **amended that we perform an audit as described on page 16 of Board of Finance information in the bylaws.**

After Pastor read aloud the description of what an auditor would do, it became clear that Grace has the ability to ask an auditor to do several levels of work.

The motion, as amended, carried.

Kay has agreed to find an auditor and Trish will assist in this endeavor.

Final Notes:

I am especially thankful to all the Planning Council members who participate and carry on the church's business, even during a pandemic. Please pray for them all and for each other often.

A special thank you to Mr. Bill Eng for all the help in setting up and sanitizing the meeting room and for his diligent collection of our contributions that allow us to remain open during this pandemic. As I write this on July 30th, our county has been placed on a monitoring list. Most news reports expect us to be on further restrictions by Saturday, so if we do not have in-person Worship Service on Sunday, August 2, 2020, the Sermon will be sent by email. The Elders met on July 30th to discuss the options for future services that could include streaming the services or having an outdoor service which was noted has many obstacles.

Pastor Noland will inform you by email of any changes should San Mateo County issue any new Health Orders in the next day or two.

Thank you all for your continuing support financially and a special thanks to all the volunteers who have made inside Worship Services possible. To be safe, wear a face mask when you are outside or among a group of people who do not live with you. Physically distance as the county mandates and wash your hands often with soap and water to lower your risk of getting sick with this deadly virus. Pray for your Pastor, those serving at Grace in any capacity, all members and your neighbors during these challenging times.

Respectfully submitted,



George Melke
President, Grace Lutheran - San Mateo

Lutheran Women's Missionary League



Grace LWML Mission Statement

“Our mission is to encourage the women of Grace to grow spiritually through Word and Sacraments that they may serve our Triune God with their time, talents and treasures.”

Serve the Lord with Gladness



Already paid #1 – 2020-2022 Mission Grant below:

1. Sewing Machines for Kenyan Deaconesses -\$8,800 Zone 8 and Neema Lutheran Theological College, Kenya The Rev. Charles Froh and his wife, Jan, have been teachers at Neema Lutheran Theological College, Kenya, since 2013. The seminary prepares Pastors and Deaconesses to spread the Gospel and serve congregations in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, Sudan, Zambia, Zimbabwe and the Congo. Deaconesses receive 2 to 3 years of sewing classes along with their theological training. They design, sew and tailor clothes, make paraments for their churches and save scrap material to make quilts for the widows, widows, orphans and homeless. The problem is they have no way to sustain or use their skills once they return to their villages, as they have no sewing machines. Most Deaconesses receive little or no support from their churches. Machines are gifted to the deaconesses to sustain them after graduating from Neema. This grant requests money to purchase sewing machines for 101 graduating Deaconesses for the next 4 years, until the program becomes self-sustaining. The sewing machines provide an income generating business to sustain the Deaconesses and their families as they minister by sowing the seeds of the most precious gift of the Gospel while “sewing” kindness and “mending” lives in mercy through their vocations as deaconesses.

2020-2022 Mission Grants

2. Loving retreat for the Lord's Disabled
St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Stockton, CA

\$7,075.00



Save your mites

Send your mites to: Ellen Bordy

Notices!!!

The **Flower Chart** has been moved into the narthex to make it more easily accessible to those wishing to donate flowers. If you are interested in donating flowers for our Sunday services, please sign up on the chart as you enter the church. The cost of the flowers is still \$68.



The **Altar Guild** is looking for more ladies to assist with the preparation and cleanup of Holy Communion each week. Anyone interested in serving should contact **Ellen Bordy** at (650)747-0501.



July 2020 Birthdays and Anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Randy Wimmer	3	4
			8	9	10 Karla Brauer Detlef-Hannelore Sairkowski	11
5 Daniel Semmler	6	7				
			15	16	17	18
12	13 Barbara Smoot	14 Arthur Hayanne Doug-Patty O'Donnell				
			22	23 Marty-Leann Udisches	24	25
19	20	21				
			29	30	31	
26	27	28				

August 2020 Birthdays and Anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6 Alex Gomez	7	8
9	10	11	12 Darren-Joy Hayame	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 Pastor-Karla Noland	22
23 Caden-Rebecca Young	24	25	26 Doug O'Donnell	27	28 David Smoot Stefanie Kilcullen	29
30	31 Paul Brownlee					

Prayer Page

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." ~Galatians 6:10

Egon Adam	Charlotte Custino	Donald Iocco	Patty O'Donnell	Gina Tuft
Bella Archer	Robert Doody	Heather Iocco	Elizabeth O'Donnell	Mark Tuft
Marilyn Baillie	Natalie Dubbel	John Iocco	Gil Ramirez	Sue Tuft
Patricia Bailey	Bob Egan	Judy Iocco	Kathleen Ramirez	Martin Udisches
Richard Bailey	Maria Eggert	Ko Ishikawa	Fred Robinson	Leann Udisches
Rev. Frank Balgeman	Doris Emery	Mariko Ishikawa	Roberta Robinson	Christine Ullrich
Valerie Balgeman	Bill Eng	Yuzo Ishikawa	Akram Saber	Zachary Ullrich
Chandler Balgeman	Sara Epler	Lance Johnson	Ghada Saber	Octavian Vasilescu
Mike Bannister	Carly Epler	Doreen Johnson	Daniel Saber	Diana Vasilescu
Tami Bannister	Larry Franquez	Katarina Johnson	Michael Saber	Flora Lisa Vasilescu
Nathanael Bannister	Shelly Franquez	John Kilcullen	Maria Schaefer	Joan Weckerle
Mike Beebe	Nick Franquez	Stefanie Kilcullen	Martin Semmler	Randy Wimmer
Jolene Beebe	Chad Franquez	Katie Kilcullen	Michelle Semmler	Caden Young
Kay Bell, III	Pam Frisella	James Kilcullen	Scott Semmler	Rebecca Young
Kay Bell, Jr.	Shirley Gangelhoff	Michael Kilcullen	Daniel Semmler	Chandler Young
Nathanael Bell	Rev. Glenndon Genthner	Barbara Kilpatrick	Julia Semmler	Logan Young
Adele Bergstrom	Brooke Genthner	Bill Koester	Sandy Shanks	Rowan Young
William Bethke	Alex Gomez	Faye Koester	Jessica Shanks	Eugene Zahnow
Susan Bethke	Anjanette Gomez	Ryan Koester	Detlef Siarkowski	Judy Zahnow
Alice Boerschinger	Angelique Gomez	Amanda Koester	Hannelore Siarkowski	Charles Zimbelman
John Bordy	James Graziano	Glenn McEnroe	Ehan Smith	Marnie Zimbelman
Ellen Bordy	Roger Guse	Alison McEnroe	Dave Smoot	
Judy Boyd	Dan Hahn	Alexis McEnroe	Barb Smoot	
Fred Brauer	Lori Hahn	Fred McKenna	Paul Soals	
Karla Brauer	Abby Hahn	Marilyn McKenna	Stacey Soals	
Jordyn Brauer	Arthur Hayame	Steve McLaughlin	Jacquelin Soals	
Justin Brauer	Barbara Hayame	Heather McLaughlin	Dimitry Spencer	
Klayton Brauer	Tim Hayame	Sandra Means	Tamaray Starling	
Paul Brownlee	Darren Hayame	George Melke	Darryl Sterner	
Lois Brownlee	Joy Hayame	Molly Munson	Sandra Sterner	
Marcus Brownlee	Hannah Hayame	Caroline Nagy	Michelle Sterner	
Scott Brownlee	Miriam Hitzeman	Pamela Nelson	Chris Strom	
Katherine Brownlee	Richard Hoffmeister	Rev. Martin Noland	Brett Toensing	
Robert Crews	Theresa Mui	Karla Noland	Anne-Marie Toensing	
Veronica Crews	Robert Innes	Renee Noland	Brooke Toensing	
Clara Crews	Shirley Innes	Heidi Noland	Ryan Toensing	
Celeste Crews	Michael Innes	Doug O'Donnell	Hans Tuft	

