

Dear Friends and Members of Grace Lutheran Church,

At present, I am your part-time interim pastor. I have been worshiping with you two Sundays a month for several months. I am enjoying being with you and pray that I can make some worthwhile contribution to Grace's ministry. I am retired, and after forty years of ministry, which is being on duty seven days a week and twenty-four hours a day, I am spending some valuable time with my family.



I certainly have no right to tell anyone what to do; however, prayerfully, I do share some thoughts for the good of your personal faith, and the life of the congregation.

First, it is all about the Bible and the Gospel. I learned a long time ago that faith is first above tradition. Never let tradition, etc., take precedence over Bible and Gospel based faith. I belong to a congregation that left the Evangelical Lutheran Church and joined the North American Lutheran Church. Why? We want to be affiliated with a church body that embraces our own Biblical and confessional beliefs. The ELCA no longer does this.

All stewardship decisions, both concerning money and service, should be based on the Bible and faith. To grow on understanding the Bible and increasing our faith to guide our life by this, is a church's first responsibility.

I have been told about the Capital Building fund to change and increase your present facility. When Grace Lutheran was constructed, it certainly met the needs of the congregation. It is a fine worship, Christian education, and fellowship facility. Times have changed. We live longer and we have more problems in mobility and being accessible to all facilities. I have been pastor of two congregations in building programs. Both were built with no steps, 100% handicap accessible. I attended the theater/brunch

presentation of the Sunday School's Christmas Presentation. Your present fellowship area is not large enough to accommodate the needs of your congregation.

The Roman Catholic Church has a TV commercial that asks Catholics to come back to the Catholic Church. That commercial is more about the institution than faith. If you are worshiping in a congregation that is meeting your faith needs, God bless you. If you are not, then give Grace Lutheran Church a chance to serve you and engage you in the mission of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Since retiring, I have lead worship in several congregations. Some of them have no life and no future. Such is not the case with Grace. To be as strong as you are, when you look at the size of your community and your location, is most impressive.

I keep you in my prayers, and will do the best I can for you with the ability God enables me. If I am helping, give God the credit; if I mess up, it is my fault.

God's Blessing,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John E. Jackson". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

John E. Jackson, Pastor  
Chaplain, US Army Reserves, Retired

PS: And remember, the scripture says, it is impossible for all to agree; however, you can work together in harmony. Whatever you do, have a positive attitude about the Gospel and your church. A negative attitude will get you nowhere.