

Grace Matters

*the radio ministry of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

Summer 2006

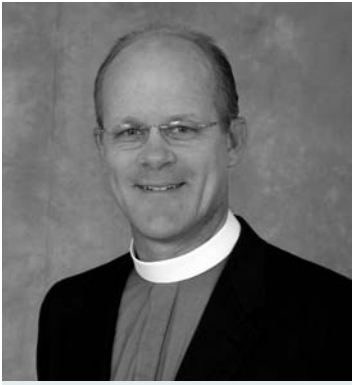
**God's grace provides a resting
place for us, no matter
how busy our lives!**



Living in God's amazing grace

 www.gracematters.org





The Rev. Peter W. Marty

Host of *Grace Matters*
www.gracematters.org

From the Host

Cool It!

If you go to a fine restaurant, you may be served a small ball of sorbet after certain courses. What is this all about? It's about clearing the palate, freshening up the tongue, and giving your mouth a break. If you've just put down some hot and spicy Thai sauce, sorbet will give you the perfect break you need before you get to taste something totally different.

The rest that I seek for my life, and that you seek for yours, may be a bit like this spoonful of sorbet that we swish into our mouths after a fiery meal. It's an interlude between some potentially very different obligations. We all need these breaks from the sometimes rigorous pace of life. We need something that

simply says, "Cool it." The biblical word for "Cool it" is *sabbath*. There is nothing intrinsically holy or devout about the actual word *sabbath*, any more than there is about the words *cool it*, *quit*, or *stop*. But *sabbath* is a most down-to-earth concept that is full of holiness. According to the Old Testament, even

grapes need rest. The soil needs rest. Slaves need rest. *Sabbath* is simply God's way of trying to get us to take seriously the idea that rest is as important as adrenaline, multi-tasking, and the horn in the center of our steering wheel.

Rest does not come easy to most of us. We are productive creatures who enjoy accomplishing significant things. It turns out, however, that the way to get a lot done has as much to do with inner character and peace as it does with outer skills and dogged determination. When Mother Teresa decided that the only way her Order could honor God appropriately was by taking a full day off from hard work, she said this: "The work will always be here. But if we do not rest and pray, we will not have the presence to do our work." This is a line worth taping to your freezer door! And inside that door? Well, that's where you can keep that carton of lemon sorbet to remind you of a different pace than the frantic one you may be setting for yourself.

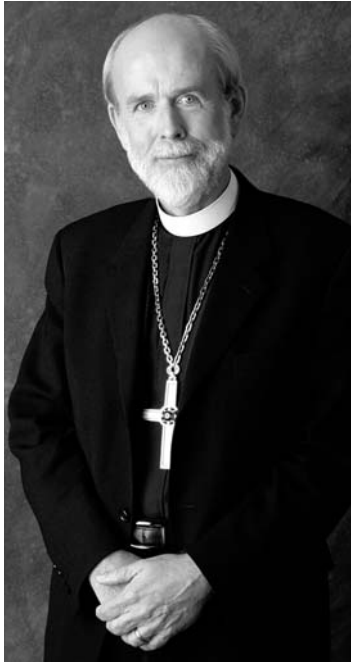
Wishing you some precious *sabbath* rest this summer. Thank you for your delight in, and support of, the *Grace Matters* radio and Web ministry.

PETER

The biblical word for "Cool it" is *sabbath*.

“It was good, and God rested.”

hello, this is Mark Hanson, ELCA presiding bishop.



Hopefully, summer provides more opportunity to stop and reflect upon the rhythms of our lives. I find helpful those who are encouraging us more intentionally to have sabbath rhythms to our days and weeks. It is always fascinating to contrast God’s response to creation with ours.

In Genesis, God saw what God had made. It was good, and God rested. Rest becomes for God a benediction — a blessing on creation. God rested — had no regrets, no need to go on creating a still better world. God, enjoying the fruits of God’s labors. We recognize rest as being one of life’s necessities. But I wonder if we receive rest as a gift of God’s grace — a way of beholding, blessing, being in God’s creation. Or is rest

simply a time to renew our energies for an exhaustive pace of living?

In Deuteronomy, observing sabbath means remembering the years of slavery when there were no days for rest. Sabbath rest is God’s gift of freedom. It reflects God’s intention for a just world, in which all will have work and all will have respite from their labors. Yet for us Christians sabbath is centered in the celebration of Christ’s death and resurrection: Sunday, the eighth day of creation.

The essence of such sabbath rhythms is not doing but being — being in the presence of God, letting our lives lie fallow so that the Spirit through the Word may dwell in us richly. For each of us I pray that this summer will provide such opportunity for sabbath rest and re-creation, and the establishment of sabbath rhythms in our lives. For such rhythms may bring new meaning to our lives as we become aware each day of how much God desires to dwell within us.

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Listening to *Grace Matters* helps me clear my mind, focus on spiritual things, and be at peace.

– **Barbara**



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Resting in C



“Surely there are at least a thousand ways to draw a picture of our life that includes the proper borders and frames.... If the margins are too wide, we get bored.... If the margins are too narrow, we become frantic, overdone, and do not even enjoy good things. Sabbath... gives us the time to ask questions of God. ‘What do you want from me today, God? What must I do? What can I let go? What is the true shape of my life — not the distortion, but the true shape?’”

(Donna Schaper, *Sabbath Keeping*, pp. 78-79)

As you seek the true shape of your own life, we hope the following meditations will help you along the way.

The ACTS of Prayer

A – Adoration – praise God for who God is

C – Confession – tell God your sins, your wrongs, and ask forgiveness

T – Thanksgiving – for all that you are, and have, give thanks to God

S – Supplication – ask God for help for yourself and for others

Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.

– *Psalms 46:10, NRSV*

But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

– *Isaiah 40:31, NRSV*

From The Rev. Peter W. Marty’s Bible study at the 2005 ELCA Churchwide assembly:

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

– *Matthew 11:28-30, NRSV*

“Are you tired... worn out or burned out? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest.” (The

God's Grace

Message) Jesus is admonishing all those who would follow him to get a fresh perspective on their life. Rethink what it is you're after, what you're trying to achieve. Carry your burdens in a different way. For goodness sake, Jesus seems to say, learn the unforced rhythms of grace, where you can get away with me and I can help you recover your life.... The good news for each and every one of us, and for this dear church that we love so much, is that God sends us Jesus Christ — this one who is lowly and gentle in heart. And God says, "There, live like that. Learn from his gentleness. Keep company with him."



Your radio ministry is so very much appreciated by this senior citizen. I am usually able to "will" myself awake by 5:30 each Sunday morning — the time that it is aired over WHO (Des Moines, IA). It's a great way to begin my Sunday. I am no longer getting out to my own church on a regular basis, so that fact makes my appreciation of *Grace Matters* even more significant. The benediction, with which each program is ended, is especially inspiring. Its melody seems to stay with me throughout the week, and I often find myself silently "singing" the words. I was so pleased to receive the ribbon bookmark with the printed words.

— *Lucile in Iowa*

"Think what a better world it would be if we all, the whole world, had cookies and milk about three o'clock every afternoon and then lay down on our blankets for a nap."

— *Barbara Jordan,*

First Black woman elected to the US House of Representatives

Dear God,

I stopped today and put my load of worldly-woe down. I closed my eyes in prayer, and I rested in you. I just rested, trusting in the power of your love for me. As I rested a feeling of peace washed over me as refreshing as a gentle rain. Renewed, I bent to pick up my woes, but they were gone, gone as if they had never been. Thank you, God. Amen

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

— *Genesis 2:1-3, NRSV*



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From the Editor

*Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28*

Don't you just love summer? I love every part of summer (except the bugs!), and I especially love the softness of new grass, velvety purple pansies, blue skies with fluffy white clouds, and iced tea on the patio.

But, when we grow up we have to work in the summer; in fact, last year I missed summer altogether. Before I knew it the leaves were turning and I was carving pumpkins. I'm sad about that. I think God wants us to have rest in our lives — physical rest, and rest from the burdens on our hearts. We are told to turn to God for rest — *For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

This summer I have promised myself that it will be different. How about you? Do you think we could take time to just sit and be without doing something? We can drink in the blessings all around us — like children, flowers, neighbors, puppies, music, lemonade, and sugar cookies. No guilt, just enjoyment of simple things. Take off your shoes — do you remember how grass feels in your toes? How about an ice cream cone and a walk? Or, and this is radical, abandon all work, housework, everything, for just one day and (heaven forbid) frolic! Do young people ever get to see their elders having fun? Do they ever see you just rest?

It's summer! Step back from the schedule, and give it a rest.

On our way rejoicing...

Isn't it funny how a trek through life changes your mind about a lot of things? I mean, I'm *old*, but I'm not **OLD**! Well, maybe chronologically I'm getting *older*, but I don't feel much different than I did at 20, or so, not counting the creaky bones, of course. And, I certainly won't mention the fact that sometimes I can't find the milk (it's in the cupboard), or the dish towel (it's in the refrigerator), and who cares if I go downstairs to get something, and then don't have a clue what I wanted. Old? Nah!

And so, it's time for me to begin a new phase in my life — retirement, including a move across country to Arizona.

I'm going to miss my work with *Grace Matters* and my dear colleagues. This is God's work — we just help out, and we love it.

My abiding prayer is that God will continue to bless this radio ministry, and that God will bless you. Adieu *Brenda*

Memorials That Live to Serve & Bless Others

IN MEMORY OF:

A gift to Grace Matters is a special way to remember a loved one who has gone to be with the Lord. Your memorial gift will help carry the gospel to thousands!

(Gifts received through March 20, 2006)

Emil Anderson

Allen Anderson

Rev. Norman & Catherine Prestbye

Arletta & Roger Anderson

Fergus & Jane Prestbye

Adaline Garling

Ruth Anderson

Arvid Froiseth

Mr. & Mrs. Gerhard Birkelo

Marie P. Braaten

Ellen Bratlien

Roger Ostroy

Pastor Earl Drayer

Pastor Myron & Florence Grams

Arlene Severtson

Rev. Leslie & Wanda Hernes

Alice Meade

Esther Johnson

Willis Witty

Rev. & Mrs. Robert Maland

Lyda Ericson

Diane Rozell

Richard Rozell

Lucile Mitchem

Donald Olsen

Alice Ellestad

Leland Pederson

Mabel Lokken

Rebecca Circle, Stanford Lutheran Church, Rice Lake, WI

Florence Talbot

Janis Richert

Kathleen Gardner (mom)

Khristine Rogers

Arlette Stole

Conrad & Mary Rolland

John O. Schepeler

Marie Schepeler

Rev. David & Ann Rath

Alwin & Frieda Schowalter

Rev. & Mrs. Quintin Schowalter

Darlene Heiret

Mr. & Mrs. Glen Stulen

Rev. Conrad Thompson

Mark & Marjore Thompson

Rev. Cecil M. Johnson

Mr. & Mrs. Abner Thoreson

Betty Mattson

Richard Swenson

WELCA Spring Lake Lutheran Church, Elmwood, WI

Betty Nelson

Paul A. Benson

Stella Campbell

Helen Werner

Rev. Dr. Erich H. Wildgrube

Orma Wildgrube

IN HONOR OF:

Spreading the gospel through a gift to Grace Matters is also a wonderful way to remember a birthday, anniversary, or other special occasion!

(Gifts received through March 20, 2006)

Rev. Martin Marty

Paul & Donna Campbell

Mrs. L. Davis

Robb Davis

Maury

Michele Deaver

Pastor Walt Wangerin

Margaret Gary

50th Wedding Anniversary of Donald & Ardis Grotta

Rev. David & Jeanne Hoyme

Grace Matters Staff

Dr. & Mrs. Paul Edison-Swift

Kristi Bangert

Brenda Engelby

Rev. Ronald W. McCallum

Randy Sensmeier

Rev. Linda Lee Nelson

50th Birthday

Gary & Jeanne Setterlund

Peter & Kirsten Stenoien

Daniel & Eleanor Stenoien

Linda Von Vett

Joyce & Peter Von Vett

Grace Matters

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Is a Charitable Gift Annuity Right for You?

Part of finding true rest is feeling confident about our financial decisions, and secure in the way we've planned for the distribution of our estate.

A Charitable Gift Annuity with *Grace Matters* as the beneficiary will provide you with income for life, and then go on to benefit the ministry of *Grace Matters*. At age 68, the gift annuity has a rate of 6.3% for life. For a couple at age 68, it is 5.8% for your two lives, guaranteed.

For more information on estate planning, call (800) 638-3522 ext. 2970 or use the enclosed response form. We would be honored to help you find rest in your financial decisions, and share the message of God's grace through *Grace Matters* for years to come.

Remember the Sabbath day...

Finding rest in a busy world

Please call us or visit our Web site, www.gracematters.org for updated Titles, Texts, Topics, and other listings!

We welcome the following new stations to the *Grace Matters* family!

WEW – AM 770
6:30 a.m. Sunday
St. Louis, MO

KFJB – AM 1230
10:05 a.m. Sunday
Marshalltown, IA

WLBE – AM 790
9:34 a.m. Sunday
Leesburg, FL

God left us a beautiful commandment that says, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” The problem is: The commandment is buried more in the book of Exodus than in our hearts. So, we easily lose track of it. And, every time we see the word *Sabbath* we automatically think *Sunday*.

But what if sabbath was not a day of the week, but a way of living? What if sabbath was a practice we engage to live more simply, more beautifully? The good news is — it is precisely this. According to the Bible, it is especially this!

“Sabbath is a way of living,” Donna Schaper says in her book, *Sabbath Keeping*, “not a thing to have or a list to complete. By observing it, we become people who both work and rest and who know why, when, and how to do either. We know how to pray, how to be still, how to do nothing.”

Last winter, we offered this little book to friends like you who give to support the ministry of *Grace Matters*. It proved so popular that we wanted to offer it to you again, in case you missed it or wanted an additional copy for a friend.

If you would enjoy a fresh re-evaluation of the thoughts and the things that fill up your life every day, we know this book will be a blessing to you, just as you are a blessing to us through your prayerful support.

To receive your copy of *Sabbath Keeping*, simply check the box on the enclosed reply form when you send your gift of support today. Your generosity is so important to this ministry, and we thank God every day for your partnership!

