

**GRACE
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

**Live worship online until further notice
See page 5 for how to access**

**Sunday Worship: 9:00 a.m.
Weekday morning Prayers 9:30 a.m.**

The building is closed – reach us at 515-276-6873

5201 Urbandale Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50310
515-276-6873
www.gracedm.org

Pastor Michael Schmidt
mike@gracedm.org

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There is still Joy

Last year at this time, started a sermon series titled “Living with Joy.” Looking back, it was probably every bit as obnoxious as it sounds. There were catchy videos that promoted the series, and smiles all around as we spent the month talking about different aspects of joy. Fast forward a year, and joy seems trickier to find. I received a photo earlier this year from someone at Grace highlighting that their Joy dish soap had run out; they were, literally, out of Joy.

When delivering “Cheer Bags” earlier this month, I had someone ask if I had heard from a lot of people who were struggling and weary, because I had spoken about that so much in sermons and morning prayer lately. That question was a wake-up call for me. Although others have expressed weariness and exhaustion from the realities of Covid, I knew that I was also preaching the very sermons and devotions that I needed to hear. It was a good reminder that we are never without joy. No matter how great the struggle, we still have to take a pause, and celebrate the gifts around us.

Christmas brings such joy and love that it cannot be contained in a single day, or even weekend. Christmas lasts the full 12 days from Christmas Day until January 6th, when we celebrate the Epiphany of Our Lord. So, instead of something heavy or serious at the start of the year of Our Lord, 2021, I will share something a little more playful, and filled with joy. We have all heard the song, The Twelve Days of Christmas. Some have tried to argue that it has a coded Christian origin, but most historians agree that it was simply a memory game. Anyone who has had to sing it without props knows that it does indeed challenge your memory. Instead of the gifts given by a loved one, I am going to share joys within Grace Lutheran Church. I dare you try and read it without at least humming the song. :-)

*On the First Day of Christmas, I find my joy to be
an awesome congregation*

*On the Second Day of Christmas, I find my joy to be
two streaming sites*

*On the Third Day of Christmas, I find my joy to be
three top rate techies*

*On the Fourth Day of Christmas, I find my joy to be
four singers singing*

*On the Fifth Day of Christmas, I find my joy to be
five candles lit*

Joy, continued on page 4

Happy January Birthday

- 1- Elizabeth Dungan
Bob Gweah
Gumarito Marquez
Mable Moran
Tana Friesth Perry
Adilyne Reyes
- 2 - Penny Hansen
Andrew Allen
Nicholas Jessen
- 3 - Conrad Thompson
Jay Wangerin
Eric Weber
- 4 - Lynn Niemuth
- 6 - Julie Honsey
Tammy Denton
Amy Schmelzer
Paul Calahan
- 8 - Rita Davis
Kathy Roat
Catherine Lewis
- 9 - Rev. Gregory Nelson Davis
Sandra Briggs
Michael Friesth
- 10 - Caden Mendez
- 11 - Kareyna Holmes
- 13 - Jacqueline Villela
- 14 - Tessa Fenimore
- 15 - Laria Preston
- 16 - Daniel Robbins
- 17 - Barbara DeBolt
McKenzie Carney
- 18 - Lon Friesth
Lonnie Jessen
Stephen Kallenbach
Cooper Bigg
- 19 - Arnold Johansen
Becky Selander
- 20 - Jason Fry
Tammi Simet
Samuel Speck
- 21 - Mary Helt
Cheryl Wilner
- 22- Andrea Harbaugh
- 23- Donald Peterson
Alice Kulzer
- 24 - Garry Lenhart
- 26- Patricia Allen
Valerie Culp
Amber Davik
Haley Honnold

JANUARY



BIRTHDAYS

Happy January Anniversary

- 4 – Elizabeth and Mark Dungan
- 6 – Heather and Eric Nelson
- 9 – Joie and David Gronert

JANUARY



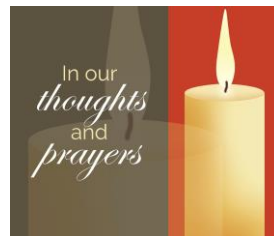
ANNIVERSARIES

Our prayers and sympathies are with the families of:



Ruth Carney – Mother of Mike Carney

Sally Niffenegger



Immediate prayer needs

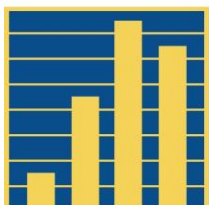
Tom Haugen (Todd Haugen and Kari Dostalick's Dad),
Louie Anderson, LaRue Buihner,
Mo Grotheer, Lorna Johns,
Pastor Don Rothweiler,
Marlene Schossow (mother of
Beverly Russell), Vivian Swanson, Larry Weaverling

Ongoing Prayer Needs

Marilyn Anderson, Joy Averill, Jim Carlson (son of Ken and Eleanor Carlson), Sharon Curry, Leanne Davis, Rosella Dingman, Helen Fanning, Johnny Gronert, Arnold Johansen, Jennifer Johansen (Granddaughter of Dick Johansen), Joanne Johnson, Gene Krauss, Lucy Krauss, Barry Moon, Eva Moravec (mother of Linda Moravec), Barbara Pasman (mother of Julie Honsey), Dana Roby, Tony (son of Linda Rundle), Barb Tussing, Elaine Westvold

January Birthdays Continued

- 28- Elaine Westvold
Charles Smith
James Kaleewoun
- 29- Norman Trentmann
Cherlyn Lewis
- 30- Elizabeth Prescott
Nayeli Rodriguez
- 31 - Maryena Petty-Lee



Finance Forum & Annual Meeting Details

January 2021 Forum and Gathering Dates

Post-worship online gatherings will resume on Sunday, January 10, at 10:15 a.m. Grab your annual report, a cup of coffee, tea, or hot chocolate, and join us!

Annual Report:

Denise is working hard to pull together the Annual Report with a goal of mailing on January 12th so that you will have ample time to review it and ask any questions before the annual meeting. If you are still working on your year-end report, please send them ASAP! We will also make the report available:

- On the website (minus some financial information)
- By email ONLY to those who we send the newsletter to. Unfortunately our enews program does not allow for attachments, and a 20" page document is too long to send in an enews. If you do NOT receive the newsletter and want an emailed copy, please send you email address to michelle@gracedm.org

January Forum Schedule, links and call-in information below.

January 10 – Q&A with Staff – what questions do you have? About anything! *(note – the annual report will not be available for this Q&A)*

January 17 – Budget and Finance Forum with the Finance Committee

January 24 – Annual Congregational Meeting.

January 31 – To be determined, reserved in case of technical difficulties,

Michael Schmidt is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: January Meetings

Time: Jan 10, 2021 10:15 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Sun, 4 occurrence(s)

Jan 10, 2021 10:15 AM

Jan 17, 2021 10:15 AM

Jan 24, 2021 10:15 AM

Jan 31, 2021 10:15 AM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system. Weekly:

https://us02web.zoom.us/join/tZcodO6gqTMvG9LRjcLaz_0WCO1nB4FQ0q0K/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGrqzgtEtOdtRiBRpwqGYjCKPzwtlxYjfpXrhXmLwFJXVPBFc0TPJArNumA

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83537878516?pwd=bmxUNzZOdmINVG1mNHkwbE5wWitNZz09>

Meeting ID: 835 3787 8516

Passcode: 808954

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,83537878516#,,,,*808954# US (New York)

+13017158592,,83537878516#,,,,*808954# US (Washington D.C)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 835 3787 8516

Passcode: 808954

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83537878516>

Joy, continued from page 1

*On the Sixth Day of Christmas, I find my joy to be six door Free Pantry
On the Seventh Day of Christmas, I find my joy to be seven Christmas Trees
On the Eighth Day of Christmas, I find my joy to be eight great coworkers
On the Ninth Day of Christmas, I find my joy to be nine o'clock worship
On the Tenth Day of Christmas, I find my joy to be ten months of Morning Prayer
On the Eleventh Day of Christmas, I find my joy to be eleven Grace Kids Teachers
On the Twelfth Day of Christmas, I find my joy to be twelve Council Members*

There is still joy. That is a good reminder for all of us. If you have better lyrics, or want to write your own, feel free to share them with us. It would be great to hear about the many ways joy abounds in the world around us.

In Christ,
Pastor Mike

Dear Grace Family,
Dean and I want to extend our gratefulness to you all, Pastor Mike, and member care for your prayers, messages, calls, and cards during my illness. It has meant so much to rest in the support of our community of faith. This Covid-19 virus can be such a hard taskmaster for anyone who encounters it. I pray that you will all stay safe from it.
Sincerely, Cathy Watson

Thank You!

We want to thank members of Grace for their prayers, cards and phone calls at time of Lorna's surgery, for our 70th anniversary and Christmas remembrances. We miss you all and wish you a Blessed New Year,
Marvin and Lorna Johns

A grateful thank you to the church and everyone for the cares package and cards, and to the Lydia and Martha circles for the beautiful nativity Christmas card. I appreciate it so much.

Virgil Olson

Thank you for the beautiful gift bag, I'm saving it to open on Christmas. We're so locked in here, it really means a lot to receive this gift and hear from you. I also really love the beautiful pop-up nativity card from the Circles.
Karen Crooks

Thank you to all my friends for remembering me with the lovely gift bag. I miss seeing you,
Elaine Westvold

Grace 2021 Endowment Applications

Now available on the website <https://gracedm.org/resources/forms-and-applications/>

Applications are due January 31, 2021. Awards will be announced by March 31, 2021. Requests for specific, finite projects are preferred. The Endowment does not fund operational expenses.

Submit proposal with detailed breakdown of project expenses. If the entire request is not granted this will allow for possible partial funding. A final written report is required to be submitted to the Endowment Fund Committee no later than December 1st of the year of the grant. The report shall include documentation of the expenditures and completion status of the project.

Accessing Online Worship

We will continue to adapt worship to best be a place where we become centered in our faith.

Written materials and Announcements can be found in the Resources section of the website. Click on the word Resources at the top right of any page of the website and go from there! Or, follow this link <https://gracedm.org/resources/> For those who are not using social media, computers, or smart phones, please call the office and we will happily mail you a copy of the worship materials to use at home.

Worship will be broadcast live at 9:00 a.m. through Facebook and our website.

Worship will broadcast live on Sunday at 9:00 a.m. on Facebook Live and on the permanent Live Player on our website. In the "Welcome to Grace" section on the www.gracedm.org homepage, you will now see a red button "Online Worship". Click on that button to be taken to our Permanent Live Player page. This page shows a countdown to worship, and will start playing when worship goes live. There will also be a link for Facebook Live posted in the "Recent News" section on the www.gracedm.org homepage.

Weekday Morning Prayer on Facebook Pastor Mike will go live weekday mornings at 9:30 a.m. If you are not on Facebook, you can still access the videos at this link:
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Religious-Organization/626637384050683/>

Sunday Morning Zoom Virtual Coffee Hour begins at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings in January. Dates, topics, and Links can be found on page 3, and in the Thursday afternoon enews.

What if you aren't on Facebook, and you missed the service?

Simply go to the Resources Page on our website <https://gracedm.org/resources/> Look for the bubble labeled "Recent Worship Videos" – click on that bubble.

You will be presented with a list of recent service dates - click the date of worship you wish to watch, and it will load for you.

If you are already on the Online Worship Live Stream page, you will see a link that will take you directly to the archive.

Check out the new, easy way to watch worship on our website!

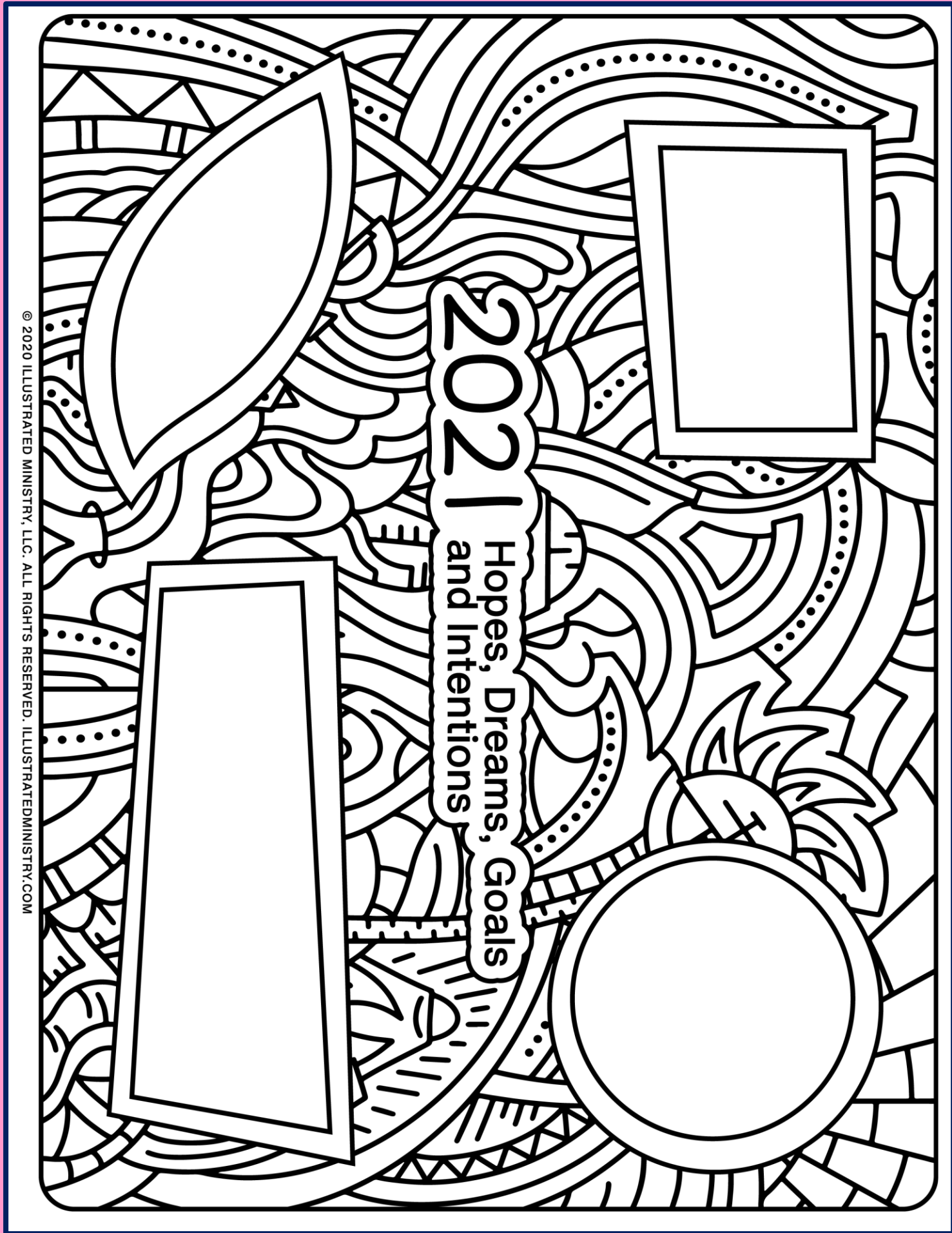
On the front page of our website you will see the following section. If you click on the Stream Worship! During the week, the player will show a countdown to Sunday Worship. On Sundays when we go live the player will show the livestream in progress.

Welcome to Grace

Grace Lutheran Church is a neighborhood church with a place for you, wherever you live, whoever you are. We invite you to get to know us. You can also join us for worship online at the link below.

LEARN MORE ABOUT GRACE

ONLINE WORSHIP



Synod Connections

As a congregation, we are part of the Southeastern Iowa Synod of the E.L.C.A. Perhaps you are already connected in some way to our synod. If you aren't, but would like to be, one way is to visit their website. My favorite feature is the weekly E-news. The E-news shares news and updates from the Synod Office and Churchwide.

I particularly enjoy

- Ministry Stories
- Prayers
- Service Projects
- Devotionals
- Opportunities for service

It is easy to sign up for the weekly e-news from the synod:

Visit their website at www.seiasynod.org

Two options on signing up for the weekly e-news:

1. Narrow bar at the very top of the home page
 - a. Third link from left "Subscribe to E-News"
2. Wider bar, also, near the top of the home page
 - a. Area toward right side; click on "News" and then "Newsletters & Publications"

Check it out and let me know what you think!

Denise Friesth

From the Companion Congregation Committee

We are pleased to announce the publication of a book written by our dear friend, Pastor Ombeni Mbagi, "The Secret of Success" through the university and synod. They, and we are proud of his accomplishment.

Mary Freimuth Helt

Coping as we remain isolated.

Ask for help

Hope is in sight with vaccines, but the winter cold and snow are making it more difficult for some of us to meet. PLEASE call us if you need assistance or someone to talk to. 515-276-6873.

- Call a neighbor or a friend – discuss a recently read book, a TV show, share recipes, or just check in. Scheduling regular check-ins gives people something to look forward to.
- Contact NAMI for help https://www.namigdm.org/en/get_help/crisis_information/
- Contact Eyerly Ball/United Way for resources, counselling, or crisis help. To get connected, dial 211, text your ZIP code to 898211, use the [online chat system](#) to interact with a live person, or visit their website at 211iowa.org

Give yourself permission to rest

The closure of sports, schools, and even work from is saving some people time and energy, but for others this has created other ways to be busy and stressed. Taking time to rest is just as important as staying connected.

- Take time away, just for you, in a separate space. 10 minutes or an hour: set a time for others who might disturb you, then read a book, take a bath, stare out the window. Simply breathing deeply and not thinking about all the to-dos can give you a much needed re-charge.
- Give yourself permission to NOT be helpful. Being helpful can increase feelings of joy and connection, but not if it is one more thing added to your mile-long list.
- Do something 'unproductive'. How many of us say we'll start a hobby, fun project, or a new book when our list is checked off, but never quite get there? Put that thing at the top of your list – doing something you enjoy is productive in that it decreases stress levels and raises our feeling of well-being. You deserve it!
- Find a way to connect with nature or art.



Raising Our Voice for Iowa Children and Families

Families struggling without access to mental healthcare.
Human services providers overworked and underpaid.
Former refugees and immigrants striving to build new lives.

These are all issues faced by Iowans. Help us ensure their voices are heard at the Iowa State Capitol.

This legislative session may look different from past years. But now more than ever, Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) will be advocating for our community members who are so often overlooked in our society.

You can join us in this important work. Visit LSIowa.org/advocacy and sign up for our Advocacy Alerts. Learn more about the legislative process, the issues impacting your neighbors, and your role as a citizen in helping to amplify their voices. If you would like more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Compassion During Crisis

Across the state, LSI team members work with families at risk of child abuse or neglect, connecting them to the tools and resources they need to keep their children in their homes whenever safely possible.

One of the critical programs available to parents is the Strengthening Families program. The program typically provides 14 weeks of in-person parent group work, family activities, and a family meal to enhance child development, help parents create their own support network, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse or neglect.

When COVID-19 created challenges to this in-person model, LSI did not give up on the families who relied on this important service. Instead, LSI's Behavioral Health Intervention Services team has gone virtual.

Maria, a program supervisor with LSI, has been leading a virtual version of the program this year, where families join a Zoom meeting and use "breakout rooms" for individual sessions. Meals are purchased from Hy-Vee and delivered the night of the session, so families are still able to celebrate their tradition of eating together each week.

This year has created several challenges for all of us, but LSI continues to answer the call and provide the high-quality care and services Iowa children and families deserve.

DMARC Requested Donations: Cash

DMARC is able to purchase more per dollar in bulk than we can in person, and is both easier and safer for many at this time. Checks may be mailed to the address below, and food donations may be dropped off at the DMARC Food Pantry Network Warehouse, located at 1435 Mulberry Street in downtown Des Moines.

Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Friday 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Minutes of the November 24th, 2020 Congregational Council Meeting Grace Lutheran Church

The meeting was called to order by President Tammy Denton at 6:06 PM, utilizing the Zoom remote meeting application. Attending were Tammy Denton, Bruce Bergman, Aaron Brandsfield, Valerie Culp, Alex Davik, Dave Gronert, Carter Woodruff, Dean Watson, Nancy Crowfoot, John Roehrick, and Pastor Mike. Also attending were Don Peterson and Kevin Krause.

Pastor Mike opened the meeting with a reading from Bread for the Journey. Advent season is upon us. We are waiting for Christ. Now is not the time to get distracted by all the goings on and lose our connectivity, ignoring God.

The agenda was adopted as corrected (date discrepancy).

The minutes of the October meeting were approved as written.

The Council received and discussed the financial report and staff reports.

- A draft budget for 2021 was presented to the Council by Kevin Krause. As the year winds down we will have a better view of what income and expenses will look like for 2021. Kevin will provide an updated version at the December Council meeting.
- It was noted that pledged offerings are slipping a bit.
- There were no staff reports.

Property Committee

- Don Peterson presented a draft proposal for Property Committee reorganization. The draft breaks down the physical plant into several maintenance areas, such as the gymnasium, parking lot, and various rooms throughout the building. The idea is to recruit members and staff to be “point persons” for these various areas, reducing the strain on the committee by spreading out the responsibility. The Council gave approval of the draft. Don Peterson will proceed by setting up a zoom meeting to further refine the draft.
- The Committee continues to research possible maintenance agreements for the HVAC systems.

Fire Panel Replacement: The necessary parts are in except for new batteries. Installation will take place after the new batteries are purchased, possibly next week.

The Health and Safety Task Force noted that pandemic statistics continue to increase at an alarming rate, making a return to in-person worship unlikely for a few months yet. The Task Force continues to work on details such as seating, traffic flow, modifications to the worship service, etc. looking ahead to the future.

Personnel Policy/Employee Handbook: It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the updated version of Sections X through XVI of the Grace Lutheran Church Employee Handbook, thus concluding the update. Many thanks to the staff and Committee members who put in so much time to update this handbook!

Congregational Assessment Project: The assessment continues. Several on the Council shared their experiences contacting members for the Assessment Project. Many of the members contacted stated that they really miss the fellowship we enjoyed prior to the pandemic.

Annual Meeting: The Council set the date for the Annual Meeting as January 24th, 2021. By necessity it will be a virtual meeting. The time is yet to be determined, but will likely be around 10:30 AM. A small group will be working on the logistics of setting the meeting up for maximum participation and convenience.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 PM.

Next meeting via Zoom invitation December 15th, 2020, at 6 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
David F. Gronert
Council Secretary

At the December, 2020 Church Council Meeting:

The Council met utilizing the Zoom teleconferencing application.

The Council received and discussed the financial report. A proposed budget for 2021 was presented to the Council by Kevin Krause. **It was moved, seconded, and passed** to adopt this budget and present it to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the proposed 2021 budget for Grace Kids Care and present it to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting.

Fire Panel Replacement: The necessary parts have arrived and the fire panel was installed. During testing it was discovered that some of the horns are not functioning. Property Committee is awaiting a proposal from Johnson Controls to replace these units.

Because of a high number of unused staff vacation days due to the pandemic, the Council voted to approve a one-time carryover. **It was moved, seconded, and passed** to authorize staff to carry over five additional days of vacation into FY 2021. This is a one-time occurrence and is due to the work load caused by the pandemic.

The Congregational Assessment Project update: The Council heard a brief summary of the data collected to date from the Congregational Assessment project. Some Council members shared their experiences interacting with members on their calling lists.

The Council received an update from the Nominating Committee.

Annual Meeting: The Council set the date for the Annual Meeting as January 24th, 2021. By necessity it will be a virtual meeting. The time is yet to be determined, but will likely be around 10:30 AM. A small group will be working on the logistics of setting the meeting up for maximum participation and convenience. There was some discussion about how to handle voting. Also, the Council reviewed guidelines from the Southeastern Synod regarding Electronic Congregational meetings

Next scheduled Council meeting will be January 19th, 2021, via zoom.

**Respectfully submitted,
David F. Gronert
Council Secretary**

Finance Report – November Results

Financial results for November YTD are as follows:

- Pledged Offerings – Actual \$368,719, Budget \$380,992
- Other Income – Actual \$17,970, Budget \$26,625
- Expenses – Actual \$402,559, Budget \$414,971
- Net activity – Actual (\$15,870), Budget (\$7,354)



Actual net activity was unfavorable to budget. However, with strong October and November giving activity, the deficit has been cut in half since the end of September. Pledged and unpledged offering are both below budget for the year. Continued giving during these uncertain times is appreciated. Maintenance was over budget due to work on the flushing the HVAC systems. Utility activity was under budget due to lack of occupancy.

Contributions to the Capital Campaign of \$60,825 and related HVAC replacement cost of \$59,320 are not included in the above results.

Reminder to turn in your pledge card so that budget for 2021 can be completed.