

Live worship online
Palm Sunday and Easter parking lot worship
See page 4 for Holy Week details

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

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

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www.gracedm.org

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Inserts: color page, plant sale forms

Love

Spring is officially here, and some would say that means that love is in the air. There is even science behind this phenomenon. The weather is getting warmer. Plants are growing. The grass is turning green. It is a time for new growth and new possibilities. The brain responds to such things, making this a season for new possibilities, or as some would say, "Spring is the Season of Love."

Spring is the season of love in the church as well. You may not think of it that way at first, but it is. The word "Lent" means "Springtime." It becomes a season of new possibilities and new life. As we journey through the season of Lent, that is what we find, new life and possibilities. Lent becomes a time in the church year that is partly about us. As we journey with Christ through the season of Lent, we focus on the disciples of faith, self-examination, fasting, giving, and prayer. We focus on the minimizing the things that draw us away from God, and also on the things that bring us closer to God.

This journey in the season of Lent/Love has brought us through the Dialogues on Race. This study has also opened eyes to the ways that we as individuals, and as church, have fallen short of the love of God that is for all people. There are ways that we have allowed our own privilege to keep us on the sideline, observing as others face discrimination, anger, hate, and the explicit and implicit realities of white supremacy. This time together in study points us to a better way to be church, listening to the lived experience of others, and leaning into ways to respond in appropriate ways. This is difficult work, yes, but this is also what love looks like.

This season of Lent/Love shows us the pathway to love like Christ. It is a love that knows no bounds. It is a love that would be proclaimed from the cross and see to it that no one would ever again be left out. It is a love that reaches out to the lost and least and offering rest. This love of God is not dependent on us. It is given simply because God love you, and God loves all.

I hope and pray that we, as church and as individuals, can truly lean into this season of Love. I hope and pray that we can follow Christ's lead. Starting with the observances of Holy Week, as we remember the journey from the Triumphal Entry to the foot washing and meal, to the cross, and to the tomb. But we know this is not the end. Love could not be bound, even by death. Love has come. Love has given all. Love has risen again.

God loves us, unconditionally, and makes only two requests,

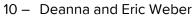
Love, continued on page 4

Happy April Birthday

- 1 Easton Ziska
- 2 Michael Heid Rev. Bill Kallestad
- 3 Ellen Batten Dolores Johnson Colleen McKinney
- 6 Roy Hanson
- 7 Carolyn Andersen Bradley Moon Ben Nelson Maya Uehling Lint Emily Woodruff
- 8 Jennie Wonderlin
- 9 Kelley Brown
- 10 Brett Brindley
 Matt Hagerty
 Lanette Kennebeck
 Jared Nelson
 Cherie Rissman
 Mark Stumme
 DeVee Trickel
- 11 Mira Voelker
- 12 Alex Davik Kyler Medhurst
- 13 Mary McCann Mark Meyer
- 14 Denise Friesth
- 15 Michael Flannery Matt Speck Erin Warren
- 16 Ernest Weatherington
- 17 Alton Calahan Cynthia Gronert
- 18 Justin Fenimore
- 19 Jill Boeschen Kerrie Gutmann Emma Stammer
- 20 Kevin French Cody Gebauer Jenny Rehder
- 24 Eric Nelson Charla Preston
- 25 Amy Wonderlin
- 26 Aden Artzer Mike Carney Howard Kulzer Nathan Scholl

Happy April Anniversary

7 – Kathy Piltingsrud and Paul Nelson



12 - Sandra and Barry Briggs

24 - Andrea and Matthew Harbaugh

29 - Curt and Kathy Johansen



Our Sympathies and prayers are with

The Family of Eleanor Uehling Mother of Kathleen

Notes

Dear friends of Grace,

Thank you for the Valentine, very nice picture. Member Care, thank you also for the Valentine. I really appreciate you remembering me. Take care and stay safe.

Love, Bonnie Swanson

Grace Friends.

Thank you for the caring thoughts and prayers for my husband Bill. He is getting stronger and working on being independent again. Miss church and all my friends, but things are now moving in the right direction. Take care & continue to be safe.

Bill and Linda Biegger

April Birthdays continued

- 27 Cathy Watson Bill Jensen Gladys Peterson Fletcher Reynolds
- 28 David Gronert Anna Shea
- 29 Kathy Piltingsrud
- 30 Alysse Adams Kylie Radmermacher



Health and Safety Update

When is the right time to "Open Up?" This is a popular question these days, and there is no easy answer. Each business, school district, community of faith, education center, social, or service group will have to process a series of variables to determine when it is safe to open up to the public. In each case, the decision is a difficult one, weighing the needs and wants of those involved with risk management.

Grace Lutheran Church continues to be on the more conservative side of risk management out of love and care for those involved in the community of faith as well as the safety of those involved with Grace Kids Care. With a significant percentage of the people of Grace Lutheran Church at heightened risk of serious complications from Covid, it is important to maintain the safety of all. With the number of children and staff within the building throughout the work week, it is important to limit other use of the building until the time the pandemic is under control.

We are excited to offer in person worship in the parking lot this Spring. Polk and Dallas Counties are still solidly in the Risk Level Orange, but the science would back these outdoor gatherings as a low-risk opportunity to share in community. If Polk and Dallas Counties see a sustained period in the Risk Level Yellow or Green, we will consider other indoor opportunities. In the meantime, we look forward to gathering outside.

Thank you for your continued patience.

Pastor Mike, on behalf of the Health and Safety Task Force Dr. Scott Honsey, Rich Snyder, Emma Stammer, Dr. Virginia Wangerin, and Mary Weaverling

Are you fully vaccinated? Consider letting us know.

According to the CDC, a person is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after the second dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, or two weeks following the single dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

The CDC has updated safety recommendations for those considered fully vaccinated. Although these safety protocols become less strict in private settings such as a home, masks and physical distance are still strongly recommended in public settings and will remain required at Grace Lutheran Church.

In order to make the most informed decisions possible, we are asking for your help. Might you consider letting us know when you are considered fully vaccinated? If so, please contact Denise Friesth at denise@gracedm.org, Pastor Mike at mike@gracedm.org, or call the church office. This would be a private list used only to calculate percentage of the membership vaccinated, and names will not be shared beyond the staff involved.

Why are we compiling a list:

- To gain a sense of how many are vaccinated. This could help us resume some programs due to vaccinations.
- To determine safety with visits as pastoral needs arise, so we can focus on your needs in the moment. If you wish not to share, we will respect that and will remain masked.

What we will NOT do:

- Share this information publicly.
- Require vaccination for participation.

What you can ask:

Staff members are in the process of becoming vaccinated as is medically appropriate. We value staff privacy as much as we value yours and will not share their status. However, you are welcome to ask a staff member directly about their status prior to an in-person meeting with that person.

Love, continued from page 1

that we love God and love one another. It all centers around love. It is said that "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." I can see the truth and the beauty in that. My care and concern, yes, my love, for this community of faith has grown significantly in this time of physical distancing.

I do not know what the future holds for the church. I do not know what this "post pandemic church" looks like. Some have theories. I have an open mind and a desire to see where love leads us.

In Christ, Pastor Mike

Holy Week Worship Livestream Dates and Times



Palm Sunday, March 28, 9:00 a.m.

Palm Sunday will also be an outdoor worship, weather permitting!
We will share in Holy Communion together, with each household supplying their own.
You do not need to remain in your car or keep the windows rolled up! Wear a mask and bring a lawnchair for your comfort!



Palm Sunday Weather Forecast! Currently looks cool but nice.

But what if... it is rainy, or too windy for the equipment and we need to move to online only? We will make a decision by 8:00 a.m. Sunday morning, and will send an e-news, and post to Facebook and our website news if we need to cancel the in-person portion of worship. Livestream worship will happen no matter what!



Maundy Thursday, April 1, 6:30 p.m. - livestream only



Good Friday, April 2, 6:30 p.m. - livestream only



Easter Prayer Vigil

On Saturday, April 3 there will be an opportunity for members to hold vigil virtually from 1 to 4 pm. A Zoom meeting will be opened with a view of the Upper Room. Meditative music will be playing and a space for prayer and reflection will be held. Participants will be muted upon entry but if you wish to communicate with others in the "room" the chat function will be enabled. Join the vigil for any amount of time in that 3 hour span.

Join the Easter Prayer Vigil via Zoom

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83714293928?pwd=Yk1oNGV1bjErVEdrNnhkUDRsUjByUT09

Meeting ID: 837 1429 3928

Passcode: 550714



Sunrise Worship, Easter Sunday, April 4 at 6:30 a.m. - outdoor worship, not livestreamed

Easter Sunday, April 4, 9:00 a.m. - livestream only

In person Worship after Easter?

YES! We will meet outdoors, weather permitting of course. Our Health and Safety Committee is excited to say we no longer need to remain in our cars, so bring a lawn chair (and a mask) with you! We will also share in Holy Communion with each household bringing their own. We are looking at starting a weekly outdoor service that would start after April 18. Please let us know if you are interested.

Dates for outdoor worship are currently scheduled for:

Sunday, April 18 at 9:00 a.m. (This service will also be livestreamed)

Sunday Morning Zoom Virtual Coffee Hour will be on Hiatus for Palm Sunday, and Easter morning, and will return on April 11.

Tentative Plans for In-person worship (see page 4) will determine whether zoom coffee hour is feasible on April 18 & April 25. Stay tuned to our website news for updates!

Accessing Online Worship

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. The logo and a message letting you know you are in the right place will be visible (without sound) for a few minutes before 9:00 a.m.

In the "Welcome to Grace" section on the <u>www.gracedm.org</u> homepage, you will see a red button "Online Worship". Click on that button to be taken to our permanent Live Player page.



This service will not appear as a scheduled live feed on Facebook. The service will appear as live shortly before 9:00 a.m. as the stream begins. There may be a couple of minutes where you see the logo without sound. If you see that, know that you are in the right place and the service will begin shortly. Thank you for your patience.

<u>Weekday Morning Prayer on Facebook</u> 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/

Watch or rewatch Worship at any time.

We'll post a link to the most recent worship service within 24 hours – and often faster than that.

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.

Stations of the Cross Devotional Guide and Holy Week Toolkit

We will be following the Stations of the Cross during worship on Good Friday. To prepare your heart and mind for this worship experience we have sent you a devotional guide for your reflection in the weeks leading up to Holy Week. If you haven't yet pulled your envelope out of the mail pile, there's still time to read through the guide.

The Holy Week Tool Kit will be mailed prior to Palm Sunday, look for a 5" x 7" white envelope to arrive just after Palm Sunday. This kit includes a sheet to help you prepare for Maundy Thursday, the Good Friday worship booklet (which will also be available on our website if you want to follow along from there), and a surprise for Easter.

ABOUT THE DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Whether you're familiar with the Stations of the Cross or not, we are excited to offer you our Stations of the Cross Devotional Guide. It is written to be accessible for all ages, as there are questions and reflections written for both children and adults. We hope that this devotional will be a powerful resource for you and your congregation/community as you follow the footsteps of Christ while coloring and immersing yourself in the biblical account of the last days and hours of Jesus' life.

Plant Sale Fundraiser - YES! Garage Sale - no.

We are sorry to say that we just don't see a way to safely hold our annual Garage Sale this year. But we are super excited about the plant sale! We are going to do our Plant Sale a bit differently this Spring. The greenhouse we have been using is not doing fundraisers this year (due to damage from last year's Derecho) and so we have had to find another way.

We have decided to partner with Goode Greenhouse the week of May 3-9. During that week we will receive 10% of purchases made by anyone who brings the form (found as an insert in this newsletter, and on our website at this link) with them when they shop for plants at Goode. They can shop in person, 1050 NE 50th Ave, Des Moines, IA 50313, or on the Goode Greenhouse website.

If there are members who wish to order plants but are not comfortable shopping or picking up in person, I would like to offer delivery service. I have an e-mail in to my contact at Goode to work out the details of that, but for now please pencil in time for that on Saturday, May 8.

Share this form widely! Friends, family, neighbors, strangers!!!! We have included two in the newsletter – one for you, one to share! Call the office for additional copies.

If you have questions, contact Ellen@gracedm.org

March Madness list of charities

Our Annual Bracket Fundraiser is underway, and while there can be only one winner, all of the Charities supported by our members deserve recognition and support! (If we had to guess? We'd say The Food Bank of Iowa has the odds, with almost half the participants listing them as their charity of choice!) Check them out – all do amazing work.

Animal Rescue League
Food Bank of Iowa
Food Bank of Iowa School Pantry Program
Urbandale Food Pantry
Des Moines Host Lions Club
Zero Prostate Cancer
The Trevor Project
The Arthritis Foundation
Engineers Without Borders
The Alzheimers Association



Endowment Fund Report

The purpose of the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church Endowment Fund is to promote faithful Christian stewardship by providing a congregational plan to receive grants, gifts or bequest of money to be used to enhance the total program and mission of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church beyond that supported through regular giving and apart from the general operation of the congregation. The Endowment Fund Committee acts as custodian of the Fund.

The Endowment Committee, (McKenzie Carney, chair, Kari Dostalik, Stacie Holst, John Justice, Gary Nehmer) approved the following distributions of 2020 income:

Awards to Grace Lutheran Church:

• \$2,500 for landscaping for the Free Little Pantry & Library

Other Awards:

- \$1,470 to Grace Kids Care for emergency evacuation strollers
- \$500 to Grace Kids Care for racks and storage materials for the Grace Kids Closet
- \$7,000 to Lutheran Lakeside Camp for the Event Center Deck Repair
- \$1,500 to Another Child Foundation for Noemi's Closet project

A total of \$12,970 was awarded. Requests for grants totaled \$20,970.

Since inception, the Endowment fund has awarded a total of \$350,810 to 191 projects.

Lutheran World Relief Spring Drive and Tag-Team Quilting Update!So far this year you've donated \$1675 for the Lutheran World Relief Spring Drive!

\$500 will go directly to LWR to provide masks, clean water for drinking and handwashing, and emergency food assistance to our brothers and sisters around the world who don't have clean water and basic healthcare. Also to equip clinics to receive and store the vaccine and train healthcare workers to deliver the doses to people in their communities.

Grace has a number of quilts ready to be tied!

The additional donations (we're still collecting through Lent) are being used to purchase supplies for disaster relief kits. The kit and quilt shelves have become empty at the LWR warehouses during the pandemic. **To fill this need, we are working on tag-team quilting within our homes.** Earlier in the month we had twenty two quilts ready to be tied (ties already in), and over 300 squares ready to be designed into quilts!

Thank you to our tag-team quilters, who will welcome whatever skills you have!

Cathy Watson, Gail Peterson, Allison, Beth Flannery, Mary Weaverling, Helen Ringgenberg, Jill Boeschen, Kathy Piltingsrud. If you would like to help quilt (we quilt all year long!), please contact Kathy Piltingsrud. If you would like to make a donation, please send your check made out to Grace to the church office, or use the online giving app on our website. Please designate LWR on the comment line. Thank you for your care and generosity! From your LWR Team









National Child Abuse Prevention Month

According to the most recent Iowa Department of Human Services data, 9,532 Iowa children were subject to abuse or neglect. The most common forms of abuse included denial of critical care, physical injury, exposure to illegal drugs or dangerous substance, and sexual abuse. Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) helps combat child abuse through prevention, safety,

and stability services, as well as mental and behavioral health care.

Through regular in-home visits to families, LSI Early Childhood Services prevent child abuse by giving parents the support, education, and resources they need to build a healthy, stable home for their children. In 2020, our Early Childhood programs provided more than 18,000 in-home and virtual visits to families.

LSI Family Centered Services help children and families already involved in a crisis or abuse situation to become safer and more stable, and LSI's Bremwood and Beloit Residential Treatment Centers serve many children and youth who have experienced trauma from past abuse or neglect. You can make a direct impact on these children and families through your support of LSI. For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSlowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the Iove 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.

Empowering Iowa Families

Gaylene was overwhelmed raising three young boys. Finances were strained and she and her partner, José, worked hard to make ends meet. Suddenly, well into her second trimester, Gaylene learned she was pregnant with her daughter, Julieanna. Left with less time to prepare her home for a fourth child, Gaylene was stressed at the thought of welcoming a little girl into a house with three energetic older brothers. And once Julieanna was born, Gaylene began experiencing postpartum depression.

Gaylene enrolled in LSI Early Childhood Services for help, and she and José began meeting with their LSI worker, Kellie. She provided the family with age-appropriate ideas and developmental activities for the kids, and served as a shoulder to lean on whenever Gaylene or José needed guidance or advice. Gaylene recently graduated from college with a degree in early childhood education, and her family is thriving. Gaylene also graduated out of LSI services last year. The family still keeps in touch with Kellie, and Gaylene says she will forever be grateful for the support she received when times were difficult.

"We got so used to Kellie coming to our home for five years, it's going to be different. But now I know where to turn and how to help my family down the road," Gaylene says. "I feel like Kellie and LSI actually care about people and parents."

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. https://www.dmarcunited.org/donate/food/

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

Friday 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

At the March 16th, 2021 Church Council Meeting:

The Council met utilizing the Zoom teleconferencing application. Attending were Bruce Bergman, Aaron Brandsfield, Nancy Crowfoot, Val Culp, Alex Davik, Dave Gronert, Tom McCleary, John Roehrick, Pastor Mike, and Dean Watson.

The Council received and reviewed the financial and staff reports. The Daycare is still in the black despite the challenges of the pandemic. The church financials show that pledged and other offerings have fallen behind. While this is not yet a concern it will bear watching.

Property Committee Report: Aaron Brandsfield reported that Don Peterson is moving ahead with the reorganization of the committee. They hope to be able to do some work outside in small groups soon (masked and distanced).

Health and Safety Update: There seems to be lower risk for conducting outdoor in-person worship, provided that masks and distancing procedures are followed. Numbers are still too high for worship in the building, however the committee is looking at the **possibility** of some small group gatherings and ministries.

The Council discussed taking some sort of poll (totally voluntary) of the congregation to determine how many members have been vaccinated against Covid. This information would assist with Pastoral caregiving and other small ministries. Also, much discussion took place about how to locate and assist members who have been unable to make appointments or who need transportation to and from vaccination sites. Information about how to do this is being compiled prior to formation of a group of volunteers to assist these folks.

The Council is appointing a committee to review and update our church constitution and by-laws. Anyone interested in serving on this committee is welcome and should contact President John Roehrick or Pastor Mike.

The Council received an update on the Dialogue on Race study taking place (via zoom) that several members are enjoying. About 30 persons are participating and many report that it is very informative and eye-opening.

Next scheduled Council meeting will be April 20th, 2021, via zoom.

Respectfully submitted, David F. Gronert Council Secretary

Finance Report – February Results

Financial results for February YTD are as follows:

- Pledged Offerings Actual \$49,089, Budget \$66,263
- Other Income Actual \$3,843, Budget \$3,717
- Expenses Actual \$77,045, Budget \$77,258
- Net activity Actual (\$24,113), Budget (\$7,258)

Actual net activity was unfavorable to budget primarily due offerings below budget, continued giving during these uncertain times is appreciated.



Love your Neighbor: Growing in understanding

This column is place for facts and resources about racial disparities, definitions of terms, and information about current events. We invite you to use this as a starting point to examine your own biases, knowledge, research, and discussion.

We have been gathering information from the current Lenten study Dialogs on Race, a Sparkhouse publication, and recommendations from our members which we will share in future newsletters. Given the recent and unfortunately ongoing attacks on the AAPI community, this month we wanted to highlight the ELCA's Asian and Pacific Islander Associations Statements.

ELCA Asian and Pacific Islander Association issues anti-Asian racism statement - Living Lutheran
The Asian and Pacific Islander Association of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), has
issued a statement addressing the increase in violence directed toward Asian American and Pacific
Islander communities. The ELCA Conference of Bishops affirmed the statement during their virtual
meeting. The statement follows:

The COVID-related surge in anti-Asian violence is physically and spiritually assaulting Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. This violence re-emerged from America's historical and pervasive sin of racism. Asian American and Pacific Islander children and adults are facing assaults with racial slurs, bullying, spitting, physical injury, and even death. These are not new in communities where Peoples of Color live. These violent acts of racism have and are happening in cities and towns across the United States. The virus of racism cannot be allowed to run rampant.

We the Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders-ELCA call on our church to once again unequivocally denounce racism by taking immediate actions to defend, protect, and uphold the safety and lives of Asian Americans. 1 Corinthians 12 tells us that we are one body with many members. This member of the body is suffering. Let us bear this suffering together as one body. We call on our church:

- to model the example of Jesus whose compassion was made visible by acts of love, culminating in embracing bodily harm to save us;
- to undergird and measurably advance its fight against racism and apathy, in all expressions of the church;
- to model how to tap into Jesus's deep empathy as our collective power to stand against violence and promote the way of Jesus instead;
- to urge, facilitate, and invite all people in the ELCA's sphere of influence, both within the church and beyond it, to unite in this crucial battle;
- to declare a Sunday during this Lenten season to lament in order to express solidarity, help in healing, and support the victims of violence against Asian Americans;
- to show how the ELCA will oppose racism, its death-dealing manifestations, and proclaim ways to move forward as a church and society where all God's people of color can be free to build a world of true peace, equality, justice, and kindness with others.

Also, read Bishop Eatons statement addressing anti-Asian racism - ELCA

Learn and support: No matter what group is experiencing the latest hate or racially motivated crimes, there are ways for you to be a support. Your friends and local businesses want to hear that you stand with them, that you denounce what happened. Listen without comparing, or minimizing what they have gone through – just listen if they want to talk or vent. If they do not want to talk, knowing you support them helps. But don't stop there. Support local businesses, educate yourself about the groups being targeted, take action, or donate. A few places to start learning are:

- The Supply Hive, Des Moines: https://www.thesupplyhivedsm.org/about_us
- Hate is a Virus: https://hateisavirus.org/
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice: https://www.advancingjustice-aajc.org/
- Iowa Department of Human Rights: https://humanrights.iowa.gov/cas/capi/Resources-for-Asian-Pacific-Islanders-in-Iowa

