

**GRACE
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

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www.gracedm.org

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Sunday Schedule

9:00 a.m. Worship, in-person and Online
10:00 a.m. Fellowship & Coffee
10:15 a.m. Adult & Youth Education

Morning Prayer Tues & Fridays at 9:30 a.m.
[@Gracelutherandm](https://www.instagram.com/Gracelutherandm)

Office & Open Building Hours
9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Monday - Thursday

Better

As I was listening to a podcast the other day, the interviewee talked about a critical downfall of most companies, they try to market what they have instead of focus on “getting better.” This path almost always leads to a decline in the business. The interviewee then moved to the need for evaluation and the pursuit of “better” instead of simply pursuing bigger.

After I heard these remarks, I pulled over and took a moment to just soak that truth in. This path of trying to market and grow what you have without consistent evaluation sums up my experience with the Church over the last two decades, not just the congregations I have served. It sums up the experiences of nearly every congregation that I know. We focus on how to grow, mainly in worship attendance, instead of focusing on getting better.

As we approach our Annual Meeting, it is a great time to think about how we become better as a community of faith. It is a good time to reflect on the last year and what went well, and how we improve on these. It is a good time to evaluate what has not gone well, and whether we need to seek to improve, or to move in a different direction. This is communal work as we explore this evaluation together.

The truth is we are doing a good job at a lot of things. There is also truth in the realization that doing a good job has kept us from doing a great job. It is also true that if we do not understand what we are doing well and why, we are one poor decision away from undoing all that we have achieved.

This year, I invite your patience and participation as we discern together how to improve as a community of faith. Let's explore what we are doing well and seek to understand why. Let us also look at those areas where we are lacking and try to understand why. Let us seek to improve, and “get better.”

I am also working with Council to establish mechanisms for my evaluation as pastor and Head of Staff. This direct evaluation has been lacking in recent years and it will be good to establish healthy channels for evaluation and input so that I can be a better leader here at Grace Lutheran Church. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve here. May this year find us on the path toward “better.”

In Christ,
Pastor Mike

Happy February Birthday

- 1 - Larry Cramer
- 2 - Katy Roat
- 5 - Todd Ringgenberg
Andrew Trentmann
- 6 - Karri Brandsfield
James Hoffman
Larry Nordeen
- 10 - Nancy Robbins
Carol Rudisill
Bonnie Swanson
- 12 - Lenora Iverson
Tyler Peeler
- 13 - Timothy Hummel
- 14 - Theodora Brown
- 15 - Isaac McCleary
- 16 - Heather Ashton
- 17 - Gail Peterson
- 18 - Max Palmer
- 19 - Ellen Mumm
- 20 - Jessica Flannery
Max Ringgenberg
- 21 - Allison Olson-Schmidt
- 22 - Julie Stuckle
- 23 - Barry Briggs
Jenie Schmidt
- 24 - Jonathan Rudisill
- 25 - Shane Artzer
Melissa Young
- 27 - Jerry Westercamp
- 28 - Dana Johnson



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Happy February Anniversary!

- 14 – Virginia and Jay Wangerin
- 17 – Deanna and Michael Hummel
- 19 – Linda and Jim Rundle
- 20 – Janet and Norman Trentmann
- 24 – Sally and Paul Thielking

Prayers and Sympathies

We hold the families and loved ones of the following people in our hearts and prayers:

Gladys Peterson

Dick Johansen



We give thanks for the birth of Ember Mae, born in December to Kelley and Gabe Brown, and proud siblings Zeppelin and Theodora.

Ash Wednesday, February 22

Help wanted with Imposition of Ashes



Vicar Bunny is looking for people interested in serving with her on Ash Wednesday during the day. You would help with the imposition of ashes for those who appreciate the drive-up/curbside option.

If you are interested and know which time of day you would like to help, or are curious about what this would entail, please contact Vicar Bunny Bunny@gracedm.org

Ash Wednesday Schedule

Curbside Imposition of Ashes during the day – times to be announced. Watch the website and street sign.

Evening Worship 6:30 p.m.
In person and Online

Wednesdays in Lent

Ash Wednesday

- 5:00 p.m. Soup Supper in Grace Hall
- 6:30 p.m. Worship in the Sanctuary
- 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal in the music room



Beginning Wednesday March 1

- 5:00 p.m. Soup Supper in Grace Hall
- 6:15 p.m. Hymn Sing in the Sanctuary
- 6:30 p.m. Holden Evening Prayer Worship
- 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal in the music room

Greetings Friends!

How is Advent and Christmas over already? I'm still pumped from Advent – not to mention the excitement of Christmas! I adore the "What Can't Wait" series that we spend our time and where we give our attention. Hope you can't wait. God can't wait.



As we move forward with Lent in mind, we are seeking many things: clarity, connection, wonder, justice, balance. We are seeking our calling, the sacred, and how to live as a disciple. Throughout the turbulence of the past few years, many of us are asking big questions about our lives and our faith. We hope this series will help us unpack some of those big questions in ways that are honest and faithful. Throughout this upcoming season, we hope you will continually ask yourself: what am I seeking? What is God seeking?

This Lent, we invite you to engage in the spiritual practice of seeking. We encourage you to stay curious, open, and nimble. We hope you will soften your assumptions and expand your perspectives. We pray that these questions will create a safe space to explore—to be drawn more deeply into the fullness of life and in the heart of God.

Our next big project is to clean out and clean up rooms in the basement to prepare them for new opportunities. Kristen and Kari are the leads of the clean out portion of this event. We could use some help moving items to the fellowship hall for giveaway day.

Peace, today and always,

Vicar Bunny

Soup Supper signup

We're asking that you bring in one crockpot of soup on the day you [sign up](#) and then stay after a few minutes to help cleanup. There will be a hymn sing between the soup supper (6:15 p.m.) and the evening worship (6:30 p.m.).

The dinner will begin each Wednesday at 5pm. If you prefer to drop it off in advance, please make arrangements with Vicar Bunny so we know when to take your soup out of the fridge and plug it in and to be sure you have access to the building. Please feel free to [sign up](#) on multiple dates if you wish!

We will provide crackers, bowls, napkins, silverware, and drinks. If there's a side you wish to share as an addition to your soup, please bring it on in! Finally – a few of you said that you were able to bring soup but not able to clean. If this is still the case, please let me know. We have a few people that said they couldn't bring soup, but could help clean. We thought that one [sign up sheet](#) would make things easiest!

If you have trouble signing up, please email Vicar Bunny Bunny@gracedm.org with the Wednesday(s) you prefer and we'll get you signed up!





Worship volunteers

Each week we need a Greeter, Usher, Lector, Communion Server, and someone for Fellowship Coffee service.

Contact Emma to volunteer emma@gracedm.org, 515-276-6873, or sign up at the link below. <https://www.volunteersignup.org/3YPK9?classic>

This link is always available live on our website menu – look for the word Volunteer in the pull down menu if using your phone, or in the upper right hand corner of your screen if on a laptop or desktop computer.

There is also a signup sheet for coffee service available in the Gathering Hall.

New Member Classes with Pastor Mike

New member classes will resume in February after worship on the last Sunday of each month through May. They can be held in-person or by Zoom – please R.S.V.P. by calling the office!

If you are interested in becoming a member of Grace, please contact Pastor Mike Mike@gracedm.org or 515/276-6873.

Worship, written materials, and other resources.

We are worshipping in-person and online at 9 a.m. every Sunday on our [website livestream page](#). This is the place where we go live on Sundays.

To find the worship player on our website, www.gracedm.org, click on our logo to go to the home page. Scroll down to the "Welcome to Grace" section and click on the red "Online Worship" button to go to our Live Stream page. When you see a video player with our logo, know you are in the right place and worship will begin shortly.

Many use this time to prepare yourself for worship by gathering a form of bread and & drink for communion, read the announcements and the bulletin margin notes, and prepare quietly for worship when the prelude begins.

Missed a worship service?

- Worship is uploaded to our Facebook page on Sunday after worship, and remains available to watch at your convenience. Please allow our amazing tech team a little time to wrap up worship and upload the video. Find us on Facebook [@GraceLutherandm](https://www.facebook.com/GraceLutherandm).
- Worship videos are usually posted on the [website Videos Resources page](#) within 24 hours.

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/>

Notes from Rich



Among the roughly 60 worship services in a year (52 Sundays plus special observances), most people would probably select Easter and Christmas Eve as being the most enjoyed, anticipated, festive, important, and beloved times to attend. Those two services present an organist with opposite challenges. On Easter, the organ is expected to lift the hearts of the worshipers through bright, energetic, and thrilling sounds. (Dare I include loud?) Christmas Eve presents quite contrasting expectations. With the exception of “Joy to the World” and “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” the organ is expected to provide subdued, intimate, peaceful, and calm sounds. (Dare I include soft?) So, how can one organ satisfy both expectations?

The answer is not blowing in the wind; the answer is found in the variety of sounds that a well-designed organ produces. Selecting from the available sounds to produce a desired and appropriate resulting sound is called registering the organ. First a quick review from previous Notes articles is needed. The pipes of the organ are divided into groups called ranks. Each rank produces an innate sound governed by its construction and wind flow. Each rank of 61 pipes, if it is played by one of the two manuals (keyboards), or 32 pipes, if it is played by the pedal board, has a timbre and volume of sound unique to itself. Some of the ranks allow a low volume of air through the pipes resulting in a soft sound. Some of the ranks allow a higher volume of air, and produce a louder sound. Some pipes are constructed with a wide diameter to length ratio (called the scale), and they produce strong fundamental sounds with less emphasis on the overtones. Think of tubas as an example of an instrument with a wide scale. Some ranks have a higher scale, and these produce more overtones which the listener perceives as bright. Consider the family of saxophones (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass); the instruments go from a narrower scale to a wide scale, and the sounds go from bright to deep and broad. On Christmas Eve, most of the registrations will use combinations of the softer ranks and fewer of them at one time to provide more intimate and peaceful sounds. When Easter comes around, the registrations will use the louder ranks in combinations so that the inherent loudness of each rank will be added to the others and produce full, bright, and brilliant sounds.

There is an additional challenge an organist faces when deciding on registrations at Christmas Eve. The softer pipes tend to have wider scales, and as such, their pitch is not easily heard. Those who are singing will be less likely to sing out because they do not hear the pitches and because they generally do not want to be heard by others around them. The solution to this challenge is to add ranks to the registration which sound one or two octaves above the base pitch. The human ear is more sensitive to those higher pitches which then results in more confident singing but without adding much to the overall volume of the sound.

Another option that an organist can use in controlling the volume of some of the ranks in the organ is to close the shades (louvers) that cover the openings of the box that contains some of the ranks. By closing the shades, the sound will be trapped within the box and a lower volume of sound will be heard outside the box in the sanctuary.

With a variety of ranks at her disposal, an organist can select those that will produce the desired sound for the occasion, everything from two or three soft ranks inside the swell box with the shades closed on Christmas Eve to a full organ sound with the shades open and many ranks selected.

MISSION ACTION FUND

- A. Fund Goal:** The goal of the Mission Action Fund is to be able to respond quickly to needs in the immediate neighborhood and beyond (statewide, nationally, and internationally), and not to be used for the Congregational Budget. This fund is ideally meant to be used in one of two ways.
- 1) Instances where a Grace member is involved in direct or indirect service to others by being engaged in a community or service activity. The intent here is to get Grace members actively involved in Grace's mission and to live a life differently through Christ.
 - 2) Instances where a need exists outside of the Grace community. An example may be any time the Lutheran Disaster Response is mobilized for an emergency (statewide or nationally).

Finally, this fund is meant to be spent, not "saved for a rainy day".

B. Eligibility for Funds:

- Local service organizations. Grace members may or may not be directly active in the organization. Organizations that serve the Merle Hay neighborhood would be ideal but not restricted to this geography.
- Service organizations (statewide, nationally or internationally) that service/help others in times of need or crisis.

C. Process to Apply: All electronic with application available on the Grace website. Group correspondence will be primarily via email to minimize number of meetings and to respond quickly to applications.

D. Support Determination: The goal with this fund is to be able to respond quickly to acute needs. An application needs to be approved by a majority of the Quick Response Team to be funded.

Name: Grace Quick Response Team. The group should consist of:

- Pastor Mike
- One Grace Council Member (Aaron Brandsfield)
- Two congregational members (Kristin Medhurst, Don Schouten)

E. Oversight: The Grace Finance Committee will review fund receipts and expenditures annually.

Star Tree 2022 Results

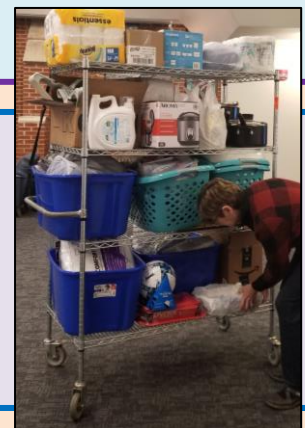
We were able to give LSI 31 \$25 Walmart gift cards for children in their Early Childhood program. We had gifts for 23 adults in Mosaic's group homes.

All monies donated through the Grace Secure Giving portal above and beyond the requested gifts was also given to Mosaic.

We brightened the lives for many children and adults! Thanks so much for your participation!!!

Thank You Grace!

The Collection of new household items for LSI refugees was a success! The table of goods donated was overflowing by last Sunday and Dean and Cathy delivered those this past week. Grace also received some donations through the website, and we'll be sharing that information with you as soon as those totals are available. (Photo: Cathy Watson arranging donated items for transport.)





Amplifying the Voices of Iowa Children and Families

Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) works to provide services to Iowa children and families and to share their stories with the community. As a way of amplifying our communities' voices, we invite you to be a part of the annual Lutheran Day on the Hill event.

Join Lutheran Services in Iowa and the three Iowa synods of the ELCA for Lutheran Day on the Hill in Des Moines on March 14, 2023! This day is essential for amplifying the voices of those who are not heard, for seeking social justice and for empowering people to exercise their right and responsibility to be part of the legislative process.

If you are interested in joining LSI for Lutheran Day on the Hill, visit our website at <https://lsiowa.org/ldh/>. For 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.

A Journey of Overwhelming Joy

After going through fertility treatments and being told they weren't able to have any more kids, Dani and her husband pursued their foster care license in 2015 and have cared for 13 kids since.

"Throughout our journey of being foster parents, we've had many great placements," said Dani. "Our shortest placement lasted five days when we cared for a girl, whose mother was incapable of watching her while she recovered in the hospital, and our longest lasted 18 months."

Dani shared that one of their biggest blessings was having the opportunity to adopt some of the children they fostered. The family adopted their first child at age one, and they had plans to adopt another when the child turned 18 years old.

"Every time our family adopts another child, I get the same feeling of overwhelming joy," said Dani. "I feel like any expectant mom –not being able to contain my joy when their adoption comes up, and telling everyone I know about it."

Dani shared that it is hard to explain the full impact fostering – and the lows and highs it brings – has had on her family. "We've cried, stressed and lost a lot of sleep. We loved, laughed and had so many firsts," said Dani. "But I still tell everyone who is considering being a foster parent to do it. It's a roller coaster, but so worth it."

AED/CPR Inservice

It's that time to look at a few of our emergency procedures and learn a few skills to be able to assist our friends, neighbors, and loved ones!

During this one-hour info session, you will learn when to use the AED, its location, practical ways to assist in case of a medical emergency, and hands-only CPR. This session is not for a certification. Instead, it is contextual to our AED unit in our location. Attendance is limited to 8 people per class. Sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4AA8AD23ABF85-aedinservice>

Mary and Alice hosted an AED/CPR inservice on Saturday, February 4th!

You can still sign up for Tuesday's Inservice February 7th at 11 a.m. If you are interested but cannot attend at this time, please contact Bunny and we'll start a waiting list.

Clean-Up Project Update!

Kari Dostalick and Kristin Medhurst have been hard at work sorting and grouping items that need to be stored or be rehomed.

The Murals in rooms 101 and 102 have been repaired, and a refreshing paint color has been chosen for the rest of the rooms on the lower level that will need repainting.



Sign-ups

Signups are coming along, thank you! However, we still need more people at each short shift to make this easy!

So if you were on the fence but were worried you'd be the only one working – don't be! Enjoy a little fellowship while we get our wonderful, under-utilized spaces cleared out and ready for others in the community to use. Vicar Bunny

reminds us since we are making the space welcoming for others, it's a great opportunity to wear our gold **God's Work Our Hands** shirts! Bunny even has extra shirts if you need one! Check out the tasks & [sign-up](#)!

Gather: February 21 6 - 8 p.m. 7 February 22 11 - 1p.m. Gather all the stuff in the building that needs to be rehomed, and place it in Grace Hall 2.

Make presentable: February 23 6 - 8 p.m. & February 24 11 - 1 p.m. we will spread items around Grace Hall and make it look presentable

Giveaway Day! Saturday February 25 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. will be the Giveaway Day Giveaway day! (Note: the giveaway day is NOT a garage sale. We will not be accepting outside items to giveaway, we will only be giving away those things gathered during the Grace cleanup).

Get Rid of The Stuff (also known as The Dumpster Toss): Sign up to toss stuff in the dumpster for an hour, beginning at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday.

[Sign up here.](#)



Do you prefer to paint?

As mentioned above, we have the paint color picked out and ready to go to REALLY refresh these spaces after we've emptied them! Contact Bunny to sign up to paint after the clean up, if that's your thing! (Need a paint shirt? We have extra God's Work Our Hands tees for that too!)

Lutheran Day of the Hill 2023 – March 14

Lutheran Day on the Hill is LSI's biggest advocacy event of the year. Over 200 participants gather at a local downtown church to learn about critical issues Iowa children, adults and families are facing. After learning about advocacy and LSI's mission in action, the group heads to the Iowa State Capitol to talk directly with legislators.

Join us at St. John's Lutheran Church in Des Moines on March 14.

The morning kicks off with a keynote speaker, a welcome from LSI's CEO, John Twardos, and a brief message from one of Iowa's three bishops. Following the welcome, participants will break into groups to learn how different service lines at LSI are supporting the most vulnerable Iowans. After learning how to advocate from LSI's lobbyist, everyone will head to the Iowa State Capitol for lunch and an afternoon of advocacy.



Highlights of the Grace Lutheran Church Annual Congregational Meeting January 29, 2023

1. Call to Order –Alex called the meeting to order at 10:27 AM.
2. Devotions by Pastor Mike Hebrews 13:16. Opening Liturgy
3. Rich Snyder appointed Parliamentarian.
4. Adoption of Agenda approved by absence of objection.
5. Statistical Information provided in the written report.
6. Minutes from 2022 Annual Meeting approved by absence of objection.
7. Council President's Report, Pastor's Report, Staff Reports, and Committee Reports were approved by absence of objection.
8. Election of voting members for 2023 SE IA Synod Assembly May 15-16; format is virtual, no travel required. Nominees Carter Woodruff and Jenny Rehder. Approved by absence of objection.
9. Election of Council Members & Endowment Committee Members
 - a. Nominees for council (3-yr terms): Greg Boeschen and Val Culp (second term). Approved by absence of objection. Council will have 10 members for 2023. Jenny moved that the next iteration of council discuss the reduction of council members that requires a change to the Constitution and Bylaws. Motion approved by absence of objection.
 - b. Endowment committee nominees Bruce Bergman and Kari Dostalík, approved by absence of objection.
10. Balance Sheet and Income Statement Review – Kevin Krause presented balance sheet and financials.
 - a. Noted the \$71K unrealized gain (loss) in the Endowment Fund due to the volatile stock market.
 - b. Ended 2022 with a surplus mostly due to increase in unpledged money and decrease in expenses. However, insurance costs are increasing so will continue to monitor this cost.
 - c. Clarifying question about the Mission Action Fund; restricted fund with its own account. More information coming in the next newsletter.
 - d. Largest increases for 2023; funding intern for full 12 months, property expenses, staff.
11. Budget Adoption – Kevin Krause presented the proposed budget as recommended by the Congregational Council. Motion made to approve the budget as presented, seconded, and passed by voice vote.
12. Presentation about Service Project for LSI. Collected household items for new LSI clients in the Refugee Resettlement Project. Blessing Prayer.
13. Adjournment at 11:22 AM.
14. Lord's Prayer
15. Lunch and Fellowship

Respectfully submitted,
Jenny Rehder
Congregational Council Secretary



Kevin Krause starts his budget presentation with a joke – and got a pretty good laugh!

Consider joining Grace's Member Care Team!

Grace's Member Care Team continues our ministry of assisting Grace members in time of need, illness/surgery, or loss of a family member. This may include providing meals, transportation, visits, cards and/or phone calls. Depending on the situation, this may be a one-time contact or one that extends for a period of time. We cover expenses for cards, stamps, Grub Hub cards, etc.



The MCT also reaches out to those on the Prayer List, the homebound, and Grace's treasured senior members. Holiday cards are sent at Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and Thanksgiving. We send "Thinking of You" cards at other times.

Each team member takes a month—with the rest of us on standby to help. Cards are divided among all of us. As Grace's membership ages (including those of us on the MCT) there is a need for additional members on the team. Please consider joining us. We'd love to have you!!! Thanks for your prayerful consideration.

Contact Denise—at church, Joie Gronert, Gail Peterson, Jane Ridnour, or Mary Helt.

World Day of Prayer 2023 – I Have Heard About Your Faith March 3, 2023, 12:00 p.m. Lunch, Worship, Prayer

The Greater Des Moines Chapter of Church Women United invite you to join them on March 3, 2023 at noon for lunch, worship and prayer. We will be meeting at Grace Lutheran Church, 5201 Urbandale Avenue

The theme of the World Day of Prayer is based on Ephesians 1:15-19, the letter sent to a faith community to express gratitude. Paul gives thanks to God for the Ephesians living out their love and faith and prayed that they could see these three truths: THE HOPE to which God has called the disciples, the RICHES of God's glorious inheritance among the saints, and the immeasurable GREATNESS of God's power.

If you wish to attend, please call Lila Roe at 515-265-4714.

Thank you,
Greater Des Moines Church Women United

Thank You!

I want to thank the members of Grace for reaching out to me during the holidays with visits, cards and thoughtful gifts. I often think back fondly on our church community and miss seeing the many friends I've had since 1961! I will continue to lift up Grace Lutheran in my prayers.

Gloria Moon

Introduce others to Grace and the work we do in the community! Share kindness and a smile, and see what happens!

Most of you are already aware of the Grace logo pens in the entry-way. If not – stop by and pick up a handful of our lovely new light Blue and White pens. With smooth black ink, printed with our logo and our website address, they are perfect for handing to a stranger looking for a pen, or to leave behind for someone else to pick up. wherever you are for someone else to pick up (and hopefully accidentally walk off with).