



GRACE  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH

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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

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

## Seeking

March is a month where I am often looking backward. Honestly, I get quite sentimental. It was March 1<sup>st</sup> that I began my time here at Grace Lutheran Church. March 6<sup>th</sup> that I was installed as your pastor. It is a time of year where I look back at all that has taken place here. There have been some joyous moments, and there have been some difficult ones. Through the peaks and valleys, I am filled with gratitude, and humbled with the honor of serving here.

This year is a little bitter-sweet. While I look back at the last 12 years of ministry together, I cannot help but pause as we head into the last quarter of the 12 months we will spend with Vicar Bunny. Time flies when you are having fun. It has been a joy to work together, and to see the community of faith through her eyes...and energy. There are many things that we have been able to teach Vicar Bunny, and many things that she has taught us.

These experiences are a lot like life. Whether through life changes or death, some are granted an abundance of time while others are not. Some can weather storms and journey through all the peaks and valleys. With others, the time spent together is limited. We do not often have control over how much time we have. We can seek to live life to the fullest.

As you (hopefully) already know, we are spending our Season of Lent in the theme of "Seeking." At the heart of this theme is the desire to live life to the fullest. Sometimes things inside of us, or outside of us, impact the way that we live. As we dove in last Sunday, Vicar Bunny, and the poem by the Rev. Sarah Speed, centered on the question "Who will you listen to?" The day highlighted these other "voices" we hear and the need to listen for the Spirit. In the weeks to come, we will go through a series of questions designed to serve as a guide for the internal work of peace and wholeness.

Every day is a gift from God. How we approach this gift is important. Sometimes that is difficult. We invite into this time of seeking together. As Lent approached, I was struck by a handwritten note by the late Dick Johansen. He had handwritten several texts, prayers, and devotions. One of the notes included this prayer, – "Every day is a gift from God. I can make this a good day or a bad day. I want to make it a good day for my sake, for others, and above all, for God. Amen."

In Christ,  
Pastor Mike

### Happy March Birthday

- 1 - Kristen Bockenstedt
- 2 - Donald York
- 3 - Victoria Meillier
- 4 - Deanna Johnson McDanel
- 5 - Brent Culp
- 8 - Jack Chenoweth
- 10 - Patty (Flannery) Gallup
- 12 - Rachael Bigg
- 13 - Lathrop Preston  
Hilary Woodhouse  
Kyler Andersen
- 15 - Lydia McCleary  
Rachel Miller  
Phoebe Volious
- 17 - Kathy Bowermaster  
Beth Flannery  
Lisa Friesth  
Benjamin Honsey  
Melissa Swanson  
Tayah Traver
- 18 - Emma Ashton  
Tom Selander
- 19 - Haley Turner Bluto  
Diane Westercamp
- 20 - Karen Taylor
- 21 - Angela Allen
- 22 - Louie Anderson
- 23 - Caroline Vander Plaats
- 24 - Mary Jo McCleary
- 26 - Ryan Nordeen
- 27 - Sierra Carney  
Zara Preston
- 28 - Alexson Calahan
- 28 - Charles Reynolds
- 29 - Sharon Schwemler
- 30 - Curtis Chenoweth  
Kristin Medhurst



### MARCH BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

### Happy March Anniversary

20 – Edward and Jane Ridnour

### Prayers and Sympathies

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

**Martha Mertens**  
**Jeanette Best**  
**Jack Turner - father of Hal Turner**  
**Leanne Davis**



### Wednesdays in Lent

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  
After worship:  
Choir Rehearsal in the music room



### Lydia/Martha Circle

Lydia/Martha Circle will meet on March 23 at 9:30 a.m.  
Meet in Grace Hall

### Cleanup Project

The “Clean Out” phase of our project culminated in an amazing Giveaway Day on February 25<sup>th</sup>. We now move on to phase two of our project, the “Clean Up!” Helpers are needed to tape and then paint classrooms to get them ready for prime time! Bunny has a list of rooms – would you take charge of one or two rooms to help this project come to completion? Grab your paint brush and a roller – we can do this!



### Sponsor a Lily for Easter Worship

We invite you to sponsor an Easter lily for the altar this year. You can include a special message in the bulletin, and the flowers are yours to take home after the Easter worship service. Paper forms can be found in the pews, and entry way. Or you can find a direct link in the news section of our website, or [click here to go directly to the signup!](#) Please put your first AND last name(s) in the first name field and type a special message (optional) in the last name field (in memory of ... in honor of).

The cost is \$15 and you can pay through Grace's online giving site (<https://gracedm.org/give-to-grace/>) or by check or cash to the office. The order deadline is Sunday, March 26.

## Greetings, Friends!

What a wonderful time to be at Grace! From the excitement of Christmas to the inquisitive time of Lent, the seasons of the church calendar change. Each offers a different lens that forms our Christian identity. Each comes with its own set of questions. Transfiguration? That sounds like a spell in Harry Potter rather than the miracle of Jesus transforming on the mountaintop as one of the major milestones in the life of Jesus Christ. (The others of course being his baptism, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.)



As a young adult not attending church and living in Louisiana (before I moved to Texas) I always found Lent fascinating. All the drive through restaurants suddenly offered fish sandwiches or shrimp po' boys. Crawfish boils every Friday. "This is penance?" I questioned to myself. "The poor, sad church people must eat crawfish every week?" "How is that punishment?" Wow – did I have a long way to go in my faith journey! (And the Cajun people just happen to be a fortunate bunch to have crawfish season each year at almost the exact same time as Lent.)

More importantly, I learned that Lent isn't about punishment. It's a time of preparation as we look forward to the three days of Holy Week and Easter. Historically, it has been a time to give something up as a faith practice of spiritual discipline. More recently, some have found growth in adding a spiritual practice to their daily lives. This Lent, you are invited to look at Lent a different way – a time of intentionality in asking hard questions and pausing our busy lives as we search for answers we may never find.

During the season of Lent, Pastor Mike and I will dive off deep into a set of questions.

Ash Wednesday: Is This the Fast That I Choose? Isaiah 58:1-12

February 26: Who Will You Listen To? Matthew 4:1-11

March 5: How Do We Begin Again? John 3:1-17

March 12: Will You Give Me a Drink? John 4:5-42

March 19: Who Sinned? John 9:1-7

March 26: Can These Bones Live? John 11:1-45

April 2: Where Are You Headed? Matthew 21:1-11

Each Wednesday, we'll lift our voices with Holden Evening Prayer and allow space for diving into contemplative questions sourced from the weekly theme. We hope it will be a fruitful time to ponder possibilities, to wonder together, and to be curious about our lives of faith.

I look forward to the journey and pray you will join as we "Seek honest questions for deeper faith."

Peace,

Vicar Bunny Stoutes

## March Education Hour – Leadership Q&A!

For the first three Sundays in March during the education hour, we will offer roundtable sessions with three different leadership teams!

March 5: Meet with Council

March 12: Meet with Pastor Mike and Vicar Bunny

March 19: Meet with Staff



Join us for these three informal question & answer sessions. Let's dream together with our doors wide open in a fun and friendly format.

## Lutheran Day on the Hill 2023 – March 14

Lutheran Day on the Hill is LSI's biggest advocacy event of the year. Over 200 participants gather at St. John's Lutheran 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. **To register, go to <https://lsiowa.org/ldh/> scroll down and click the button that says Register Here.**

### 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.



## Women's Basketball NCAA Fundraiser 2023

The Annual NCAA Basketball Tournament is back, with an exciting change this year!

### We will be following the WOMEN'S Bracket for our fundraiser this year.

Selection happens on Sunday, March 12th. Are you feeling lucky? Local and regional charities hope so! We will hold the church pool again this year. There will be a \$5 entry fee and the winner will choose which charity will receive the pool monies. Last year, Brenda Mann won and was able to give the \$140 pool to the Urbandale Food Pantry. So far, we have given away a total of over \$2000 with this annual charity!

To enter simply fill out a bracket and turn it in to the church office between Sunday, March 12th and 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 16th with the \$5 entry fee. You should also note your chosen charity when you turn in the bracket. Brackets will be available in the church office or you can print your own. Please either include cash, or make the check payable to Grace Lutheran Church with NCAA in the memo field. You could also scan your bracket and send it to [mike@gracedm.org](mailto:mike@gracedm.org)

With no clear favorite to win this year, we will again use a scoring system with added points for the Final Four to keep things exciting. The "First Four" games will not be included. Those correctly predicting that a First Four team wins in the round of 64, even if the wrong First Four team, will receive the point. Then the round of 64 teams will be worth 1 point each with bonus points for upsets (difference between seeds). Round of 32 will be worth 2 points, round of 16 will be worth 4 points each. The following rounds will be worth 6 points, 10 points, and then 15 points for the correct Champion.



## Notes from Rich



Often, when attending social gatherings where school teachers were present, I have observed that a plurality, if not a majority, of the minutes spent in conversations were consumed by complaints about the schools, the students, the parents, and the administrators. Similarly, at social gatherings with other organists, I am often part of conversations that spend time commenting on music directors, pastors, and parishioners' comments/complaints. Those communications from parishioners usually involved at least one of four points. 1) Why play hymn introductions all the way through? We all know the tune. 2) Why play an involved or extended introduction? It just makes the service longer. 3) Why do we sing fewer than all of the verses? The lyricist wrote them for a reason. 4) Why is the organ so loud? Why is it so soft? Why was it played so fast? Or played so slow? Responses to these questions are not straightforward, i.e. they depend on the context. It is also easily noted that addressing one concern will necessarily bring that solution into conflict with another concern. For instance, playing all of the hymns a bit faster to accommodate the concern over slow tempos will automatically offend those who believe that the hymns need to move at slower tempos.

This issue of Notes from Rich will present a discussion of some reasoning organists use when deciding how to introduce hymns and how to accompany the singing of those hymns. To begin, there are some rules that must be followed in order to have corporate singing. The rules are straightforward and understood by virtually all musicians. Key signatures, meters (duple or triple), lyrical phrasings, breaths, and word meanings are defined, and the musician is not generally going to change them. For example, E major has four sharps; take breaths at commas and periods; and all quarter notes in a piece get the same amount of time are rules universally understood.

Second, music is an art, and as such there are principles which guide decisions, but there is also latitude within those principles. Principles are less rigid than rules and are subject to interpretation and context. For instance, should a hymn tune be introduced by playing the entire hymn? In principle, yes, because there might be a visitor in the congregation who would not be familiar with the hymn. But the hymn might be new and unfamiliar to almost all of the members. So, if the hymn is exceedingly familiar, then only a short section need be played to remind the congregation of the tune, set the tempo, and establish the harmony (key).

Should extended introductions be used in order to add interest and anticipation to the singing of the hymn? In practice, there should be limits to this principle because cheesecake at every dinner is a bad idea. Not every hymn is inherently exciting enough to warrant an extended musical introduction. Not every potential extended introduction announces the tune clearly enough for all members of the congregation to recognize it. Organists must balance these issues when deciding whether an alternate introduction is useful.

Should every hymn be sung at roughly the same tempo so the congregation is used to one tempo? That depends on the context. Processional hymns should have a tempo that matches a deliberate pace to help the choir maintain a unified pace so there are no rear-end collisions when they reach the choir loft. Hymns with intricate harmonies or dense lyrics must be sung more slowly to allow all of the words to be voiced and heard. A larger space within a sanctuary requires a slower tempo in order that all singers stay together. The singers furthest from the organ hear the music a split second later than the ones nearer; a tempo too up-beat will result in a mish-mash of sound and a lack of unified singing. Finally, the words of the hymn must be used as a guide to the tempo; "Beautiful Savior" and "Jesus Shall Reign" are sung at differing tempos.

Multiple subjective decisions based on established principles are made weekly by those leading hymn singing. When a hymn is not played as one would prefer, ask the musician for the logic behind the decisions that were made. There is a good chance that both will gain from this discussion.



## March is National Professional Social Work Month

March is National Professional Social Work Month! Take time this month to recognize social workers in your life and thank them for all they do. At Lutheran Services in Iowa, we want to give thanks to all our social workers who do such important work every single day. Without you, LSI wouldn't be able to provide the essential services that Iowa families need.



Our social workers provide a variety of services to families in Iowa, such as crisis child care, in-home programs and classes for parents. These services provide families the support and education they need to care for their young children.

For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at [Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org](mailto: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](http://LSIowa.org) and [facebook.com/LSI.iowa](https://facebook.com/LSI.iowa).*

## Social Work is Rewarding Work

A child saying "mom" for the first time at 3 years old, a parent getting a job that brings them joy – these are successes that are important to Mallory Berkenpas, Service Coordinator in LSI's Early Childhood department in Sioux City.

Mallory has been an employee of LSI for more than a decade, and has held many different roles in supporting children and families. "My heart lies in working with children and families and prevention work, because I've seen the value in it. I see how important it is. I wish more people knew and understood and valued the work that is done in the early childhood period because it is so crucial," said Mallory.

She expressed that one of the most rewarding parts of her job is being able to see, experience and walk this journey alongside these families, who along the way, make these small or big strides – whatever that means for them.

"Maybe the child says 'mom' for the first time at 3 years old, which is something that has happened in our program. That's a big win for this child that didn't speak from zero to three years old, and did because of the interventions we helped that family find," said Mallory. "All of those successes are so important to me and also my staff – being able to see them grow, build their skill set and feel good about their work."

"Social work can be so hard... so I think being able to see those small and big wins along the way is important," said Mallory.

## New Member Classes with Pastor Mike

New member classes meet 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](mailto:Mike@gracedm.org) or 515/276-6873.

## Epic Journeying with Lutheran World Relief

As we embark on our Spring Drive for Lutheran World Relief, we celebrate our **75 year joint history**. No, that is not a typo! Lutheran World Relief was founded in 1946 to help rebuild lives of those who were devastated during World War II, and Grace Lutheran Church responded for the first time in 1948, by sending kits and used clothing. Since then, nearly every year, Grace Lutheran Church has contributed aid through LWR to help people in need around the world by sending over 10,000 kits and 1700 quilts! A display in the Gathering Hall celebrates our impact and offers a closer look at the work of LWR. We are collecting donations to make more kits and quilts for disaster relief, and to contribute toward the many needs that LWR addresses. Here is how you can help:

- Sponsor one or more kits or quilts by selecting an envelope packet from the display. Enclose your gift in the envelope and return to an offering plate or the church office. Or donate at Grace's online site. Please make checks out to Grace Lutheran Church and write LWR on the comment line.
- Join us on Thursday mornings at 9:30 for quilting.
- Pray for the people who receive our gifts, and for those who transport and distribute them. A kit and quilt blessing is planned for Sunday, March 19.
- Give directly to LWR at [lwr.org](http://lwr.org) You can also direct your Thrivent Dollars to LWR.
- Become a LWR Faithful Neighbor, contributing a sustaining monthly gift. Pick up a brochure at the display or go online to [lwr.org/givemonthly](http://lwr.org/givemonthly)

Thank you for your generosity!



## Mission Action Fund

The Mission Action Fund is live and available for use! We are working on creating a page on the website, with an easy online application form. In the meantime, you can email the committee using the information at the bottom of this page!

**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.

## Grace Lutheran Church Mission Action Fund Application

**Grace Member Applicant:**

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Cell Phone or Best Way to Contact:

Date Completed:

**Please complete this form. When completed, application should be emailed for approval to:**  
[mission@gracedm.org](mailto:mission@gracedm.org)

**Applicant Organization Name:**

**Name of Project or Need:**

**Brief Description of Project or Need:**

**Number of People Impacted:**

**Date Funds Needed:**

**Grace Member Involvement:**

**Amount of Funds Requested:**



## Grace Council Minutes Highlights February 21, 2022

1. Call to order – Meeting called to order at 6:01 P.M. following dinner. Thanks Aaron!
2. Devotions – Vicar Bunny – Psalm 33:22
3. Adoption of Agenda – Aaron moved, Carter seconded, motion approved.
4. Approval of Minutes from Jan 17 Meeting – Carter moved, Mike seconded, motion approved.
5. Election of Officers
  - a. President – 1 nominee Carter Woodruff, approved by absence of objection.
  - b. Vice-President – 1 nominee Dean Watson, approved by absence of objection.
  - c. Secretary – 1 nominee Jenny Rehder, approved by absence of objection.
  - d. Executive At Large member – 1 nominee Mike Hilsabeck, approved by absence of objection.
6. Finance Report – reviewed and no comments.
7. Old Business
  - a. New Council orientation information. Carter will send out the Constitution and Bylaws.
8. Questions/General Discussion
  - a. Issues with the roof. Roofing company has been out several times in recent weeks to determine what needs to be done.
  - b. Kevin suggested we set aside some time in council meetings to “brainstorm” and have some free thinking and creative time.
9. Adjournment – Carter adjourned the meeting at 6:52 P.M.
10. Next meeting – March, 2023 6:00 P.M. Kevin has graciously agreed to provide the meal.

## Finance Report – January Results



Financial results for January YTD are as follows:

- Income – Actual \$21,067, Budget \$30,417
- Expenses – Actual \$47,038, Budget \$41,508
- Net activity – Actual (\$23,174), Budget (\$5,954)

After a strong finish in 2022, activity for January was below budget by \$17K. Offerings were below budget and expenses were over budget due to needed work on the furnace. The committee appreciates the congregation interest in the financial status of the church by attending the recent budget forum and annual meeting.



## Worship & Fellowship volunteers

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

Contact Emma to volunteer [emma@gracedm.org](mailto: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.**

### 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, Joie Gronert, Gail Peterson, Jane Ridnour, or Mary Helt.

### Worship, online access, 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, and Wednesday nights in March, during Lent.

To find the worship player on our website, [www.gracedm.org](http://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 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? Watch at your convenience.

- 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](#).
- Worship videos are usually posted on the [website Videos Resources page](#) within 24 hours.

**Bulletins, Announcements**, and other written materials 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 direct link <https://gracedm.org/resources/>

**Sunday Fellowship** The Gathering Hall is available for fellowship before and after worship, with coffee, juice and donuts available after worship. This and other spaces in the building are also available at other times during the week for your gathering or meeting.

**Weekday Prayers** are 9:30 a.m. Tuesday and Friday on Facebook. If you are not on Facebook, you can still access them by typing @GraceLutheranDM into your browser, or through this link <https://www.facebook.com/Grace-Lutheran-Church-626637384050683/>