

**GRACE
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

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

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Des Moines, Iowa 50310
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www.gracedm.org

Pastor Michael Schmidt
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Bookkeeper
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Custodian
Todd Haugen 1-515-520-4450

Inside This Issue...

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Wandering Heart

As we journey through the Lenten Season, the theme of "Wandering Heart" will be our guide. These words are part of the hymn "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing." In fact, each week will focus on a different phrase from this hymn. We will journey from "Tune My Heart" all the way to "Here's My Heart" with times of searching and longing in between. It will be a season that invites all of us to explore our relationship with God, the ways that we live out our faith and values, and our sense of call. All of this will be guided through the journey Peter takes from being a fisherman to the "Rock" upon which the church is to be built.

The phrase in this hymn that has always resonated the most with me is "let grace now like a fetter bind my wandering heart to thee." There are two profound thoughts in these two lines within the third stanza. The first is the through of grace being bound to us. The second is that of the "wandering heart."

A fetter is the band of metal that was around a prisoner's ankle to keep them from escaping. That is the image used. It is not the law that binds us, but the grace of God. The grace that we receive from God is the very bond that cannot be broken, connecting us with God, forever. As the Apostle Paul would say, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." That is such a beautiful and liberating image.

When one thinks of "Wandering Heart" it is easy to think of it as wandering away from God. That is not what wander means. When visiting an area, you might wander around just to explore. To wander is to simply explore at a leisurely pace. I find that to be a beautiful way of describing the journey of faith. The text in this hymn describes the act of exploring life, faith, and boundaries, while highlighting that grace always connects you with God. Sometimes the modern church gets a bad name. There is an image that you must have your life in good order in order to go to a church. Nothing could be further. The only qualification to go to church is that you must be imperfect. In fact, the church is a great and safe place to wander and explore.

Continued on page 2

Happy February Birthday!

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

FEBRUARY



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:

John Schall
son-in-law of Rita Stackworth,

Lou Grotheer – mother of Carla Peterman

Lynn Niemuth



Ash Wednesday, February 14

Morning Worship 11 a.m.

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



Wednesdays in Lent

Ash Wednesday, February 14

5:00 p.m. Soup Supper in Grace Hall*
6:30 p.m. Worship in the Sanctuary
NO Choir Rehearsal



Beginning Wednesday February 21

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

**Soup Supper signup information on page 3*

Wandering Heart, continued from page 1

We invite you to be intentional during this Lenten Season. As we journey through the theme of “Wandering Heart” I pray that we can all explore our relationship with God, the ways that we live out our faith and values, and our sense of call. We will spend time in conversation and reflection. We encourage time each day in silence and in prayer. We all wander at times. We are all held in grace.

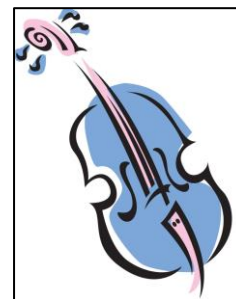
In Christ,
Pastor Mike

Lutheran Lakeside Summer Camp! www.lutheranlakeside.com

Day Camps, Leader Camp, Trailblazer Camp, Family Camp. PRIDE Camp, Rainbow Family Camp, Celebration Camp, Mission Trips and SO much more. Check it out! Scholarships available.

Vicar's Voice - Call Stories

Not too long ago, I gave a sermon in which I stated that we all have a call story. I asked how God guided and accompanied you to where you are now and where you're going. I figure it is only fair that I share my own story of how I came to be called to ministry as a pastor in the church.



I was baptized and raised in the Lutheran Church. My home congregation, Faith Lutheran in Bismarck, ND, was a center of many of the activities I was a part of growing up. I attended church and Sunday school there and my scout troop was based there. Faith was an environment where I could be myself. I was comfortable and felt welcome there. In middle school, my enjoyment of being at church mixed with my desire to help and serve. I started participating in youth group and assisting with teaching Sunday school. Around this time, I also started to participate in worship as an Acolyte. I lit the altar candles and assisted with communion. With how much I enjoyed assisting with worship and participating in the different ministries of church, I began to wonder if I should be in church full time. I talked about it with my pastor at the time, and he encouraged me to not rush into deciding to be a pastor. So, I continued to participate as I had been: helping in worship where I could, teaching Sunday school, participating in youth activities, and getting my feet wet with planning and leading worship services as my Scout troop's Chaplain when not serving in other leadership positions.

As I entered high school, that feeling of call didn't go away. We had called a new assistant minister, and after talking about my sense of call with him, he encouraged me to explore it. He signed me up to help with worship more often, found events for me to attend that explored my call, and events that introduced me to wider aspects of the church. At one of these events, I was recruited to join the staff of Camp of the Cross, a bible camp I attended a couple of times. I took it as a sign and went for it. It was in those seven summers of working at camp that I truly felt called to ministry. I remember walking down one of the trails after a day of work. I had this feeling of contentment as I thought about doing God's work at camp.

When I wasn't working at camp, I attended college at Minot State University. I was told of the campus ministry there and began attending. Campus Ministry was a God send, I had a group that supported me while I struggled with school and faced challenges to my faith. During my third year, a program was started by our campus pastor to place students in congregations and explore how we could use our gifts to be leaders in a congregation. Since I knew I was going into ministry, it became a time of preparation for pastoral ministry.

I graduated school in 2020 after the COVID pandemic began. I wanted a break from school for a while and wasn't sure I was ready to start seminary. I found work at a Lutheran nursing home in activities. It was good practice in pastoral care as I accompanied the residents through that difficult time. It was in the middle of my time there I decided I was ready to begin my candidacy journey and start seminary. I applied to Wartburg Seminary because of its focus on community and worship.

So, what is your call story? Where do your gifts meet God's mission in the world?

Peace and Blessings,
Vicar Adam



Worship volunteers

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

During Lent, we also need additional volunteers for:

- Ash Wednesday
- Wednesday Lenten services
- Maundy Thursday and Good Friday

Sign up at the link : <https://volunteersignup.org/3TKR7?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

If you are interested in becoming a member of Grace, the next new member classes will be held on Sundays February 25 and April 28. Meet in the Innovation Lab at 10:15 after coffee and fellowship. From the entryway, go through the doors to the left and up the first flight of stairs. From there, turn right into the mailroom, the one more right into the Innovation Lab!



You don't need to RSVP, but you can by contacting the office at 515/279-9283 or by emailing Pastor Mike Mike@gracedm.org

Worship schedule and Important links

Sundays we worship in-person at 9 a.m.

Fellowship and coffeetime in the Gathering Hall at 10 a.m.

Education Hour at 10:15 a.m.

K-5 in the Sunday School Room

6-12 upstairs in the Youth Room

Adults in Grace Hall – current schedule of topics can be found on page 9.

You can also find us online:

- On our website [livestream page](https://gracedm.org/volunteer/) every Sunday at 9.
 - From the home page at www.gracedm.org,
 - scroll to the "Welcome to Grace" section,
 - click on the red "Online Worship" button. If you see a player with our logo, know you are in the right place and worship will begin shortly.
- **Facebook:** Worship is uploaded to Facebook on Sunday after worship. Find us on Facebook @GraceLutherandm
- **Watch archived** worship services (uploaded after 24 hours) on the [Resources/Worship Videos page](https://gracedm.org/resources/worship-videos/).

Worship materials are always posted on our website prior to worship. Find those and other communications at the following links.

Worship Volunteer Signup <https://gracedm.org/volunteer/>

Weekly Announcements <https://gracedm.org/resources/seasonal-announcements/>

Weekly Bulletins <https://gracedm.org/resources/bulletins/>

Online Giving <https://gracedm.org/give-to-grace/>

Monthly Newsletters <https://gracedm.org/resources/newsletters/>

Soup Supper signup

Dates are still available (as of February 1):
Ash Wednesday (February 14), March 6, March 20



Call the office to choose your date, or stop by the hallway bulletin board to add your name to the list. You can sign up with several people, a group/committee, friends!

The dinner begins each Wednesday at 5 p.m., so in addition to bringing a crockpot of your chosen soup you'll need a little time beforehand to make coffee, set out bowls, cups, tableware, etc. Bowls, napkins, silverware, cups are all available in the kitchen, as is the dishwasher should you prefer to use the porcelain bowls, mugs, and glasses. The Coffeemaker in Grace Hall is always on and ready to brew. If there is a beverage, side, or bread/crackers/rolls you also wish to share, please bring it on in!

Help serve as needed - guests can also self-serve - and then stay after a few minutes to clean up. There will be a hymn sing between the end of the soup supper (6:15 p.m.) and the beginning of worship (6:30 p.m.) giving you time to clean without missing worship.

Book Drive!

Join us for the February 25 All Ages Service Project and help stock our Little Free Library.

Please bring books in good condition and place them on the library cart in the Gathering Hall. Books can range from baby board books to adult, and anything in between. Hopefully we will gather enough books to share with other nearby Little Free Libraries, so be on the lookout in your neighborhood!

On February 25 after worship, we will have a quick refresher on Little Free Libraries, learn how to find additional locations or how to start your own Little Free Library, sort the books, and make bookmarks. For a sneak peek, please visit their website: littlefreelibrary.org. If you'd like to contribute but aren't a shopper, you can order book bundles through their website and have them shipped directly to Grace or contact Jill Boeschen or Cathy Watson and we'd be happy to shop for you.



February Little Free Pantry Request of the Month:

National Canned Food Month is recognized during February. Canned foods provide a convenient and nutritious meal option. Consider picking up an extra can or two during your next grocery shopping trip to donate to the Little Free Pantry this month. Soups, fruits, vegetables, or tuna are all appreciated.

You can also order items from the Grace Wish List on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), which will be shipped directly to the church, or you can donate through our secure [GIVE](#) page where these funds will be used to purchase items to stock the pantry. Thank you for your donations.

The Mission Action Fund was used to support several service project opportunities here at Grace in 2023:

Neighborhood Food Pantry Fill-Up, Kindness Bags for the YMCA Supportive Housing
Personal Pantry for Moore Elementary families, Lutheran World Relief

End of year gifts were also given to several agencies at the end of 2023. One of those gifts was \$15,000 for the Des Moines Register 23-24 Embrace Iowa campaign. This joint project with the Iowa Community Action Association works to share real life stories of those struggling to meet basic needs, with the purpose of educating the people of Iowa about the real barriers and struggles families are facing. Eligible applicants have an income of 200% BELOW the Federal Poverty Level. They can receive up to \$750 for the purchase of appliances, car repairs, dental service, medication, eyeglasses, furniture, home repairs, household items, beds, and other essential needs. These funds assist individual Iowans and their families in removing a barrier that would otherwise prevent them from improving their life.

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: Copy these questions into an email, along with your answers and send to mike@gracedm.org

1. Grace Member Applicant Name
2. Member Mailing Address
3. Cell Phone or best way to contact you
4. Date of request
5. Funds Requested
6. Date Funds are Needed
7. Name of Organization: (if applicable)
8. Project Name
9. Brief Description of Project or Need

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. The Mission Action Fund Quick Response team consists of Aaron Brandsfield, Kristin Medhurst, Don Schouten, and Pastor Mike.

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



Happy Valentine's Day from LSI!

"We love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19

The idea behind Lutheran Services in Iowa's (LSI) mission is centered around love: responding to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service.

We give thanks to all our ministry partners, both individuals and congregations, who help share this love for Iowa children, adults, and families.

At LSI, we see this love in newly adopted children and their families, in teens who are overcoming years of trauma and building brighter futures, in Iowans with disabilities who are growing their independence and confidence, in new parents who are raising strong and healthy families, and in so many other joyous moments.

You can help carry out LSI's mission of hope and healing by giving a gift and showing love to the Iowa families we serve.

Thank you for the love you share and create through LSI. Happy Valentine's Day!

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.

Council Highlights & Finance Updates:

The latest updates are available in the 2023 Annual Report, available for pickup in the office or mailed by request. The report is available for download from the website, minus financial information. As always, if you have any questions or suggestions, please reach out, the council will be happy to answer your questions!

2024 Congregational Council Members

Term ends 2025: Carter Woodruff, Mike Hilsabeck, Kevin Drury, Jenny Rehder

Term Ends 2026: Valerie Culp, Greg Boeschen

Term Ends 2027: Tom McCleary, Linda Moravec, Brian Gerling, Stuart Mitchell

Exec Team:

President: Greg Boeschen Vice President: Tom McCleary

Secretary: Jenny Rehder At-Large Member: Kevin Drury

Iowa Wolves Faith and Family Day Sunday, March 17, 3 p.m.

Come join the Iowa Wolves as they host the Mexico City Capitanes at Wells Fargo Arena! Every ticket includes a meal and attendance to the post game concert, Jordan St. Cyr. Purchase your tickets at the link, go with friends! <https://fevo-enterprise.com/event/Gracelutheran7>

Meet the newest Grace Council and Endowment Members
Thank you for your willingness to serve Grace!

New on Council:

Brian Gerling

I'm Brian Gerling. I have been a member at Grace Lutheran for a year. I have been married for 35 years to Theresa and we have one daughter, Whitney that lives in Urbandale with her husband Matt. Theresa and I live in Des Moines.

I was born and raised in North Dakota. After graduating, I joined the U.S. Army. In my 20 year career in the military, I was stationed at Ft. Knox, KY, Ft. Hood, TX, Ft. Riley, KS, three different places in Germany, and Camp Casey South Korea. I served in the war in Desert Storm. The different jobs I had while in the military: I was a crew member on the M1 series tank, Tank Commander, Drill Instructor, Senior Instructor, and test administrator.

After retiring from the military, I took a job with Hormel starting as a team leader in Osceola, IA. I was promoted as a Divisional Team Leader then to Planner Scheduler then to Superintendent. After 16 yrs in Osceola, I was promoted to Grocery Products Superintendent in Fremont, NE. While in Fremont NE, Hormel sold the plant to WholeStone Farm. I then became the Superintendent of trim and ham boning production. After 4 years with WholeStone Farms, Theresa and I decided to retire and move closer to our daughter in Iowa.

Stuart Mitchell

Very happily married to my wonderful wife, Martha Mitchell, for 42 years. Reside in Windsor Heights. A member of Grace Lutheran Church for 35 years. Enjoy travel, continuing education, movies, leisure time at home, and time with friends.

A lifelong student, observing family physician, consulting clinical psychologist, consulting veterinarian, consulting entomologist, public health and pest management professional, and others. Serving the public health and pest management industry for over 40 years as a technical director, consultant, expert-witness, columnist, author, lecturer, and speaker.

New on the Endowment Committee

Jill Boeschen

I have been a member of Grace Lutheran with my husband, Greg, since 2019 and am a lifelong Lutheran. At Grace, I enjoy participating in quilting, LWR projects, helping to organize the monthly all-ages service projects, playing bells, cooking for Member Care, and have recently joined Altar Guild. I work at the Johnston school's district office, primarily in Enrollment. My hobbies include reading, crocheting, cooking, volunteering with LSI, playing board or card games, and going for a walk or bike ride. Greg and I volunteer for the Civic Center, love to travel, and are looking forward to our first grandchild this summer. I am be honored to participate in the important work of the Endowment Committee.



Grace Annual Easter Pancake Breakfast

Last year we successfully brought back the Annual Easter Breakfast, a freewill offering meal served from 7 a.m. –10:00 a.m. on Easter Sunday.

Proceeds from the freewill offering meal support one of the Grace service teams, most recently Member Care. We're looking for those interested in helping to make this year another success! Ross Peeler has already agreed to contact iHop for pancake mix as well as the Dairy, and to help serve on Easter morning. If you are interested and able to help procure other needed items, set up, cook, or clean for an hour or two, please contact the office.

Lutheran Day of the Hill 2024 – February 19, 2024, 8:30 – 2:30 P.M.

Join LSI and the three Iowa synods of the ELCA for Lutheran Day On The Hill in Des Moines on February 19!

Lutheran Day on the Hill is LSI's biggest advocacy event of the year. Over 150 participants gather at Capitol Hill 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.

This years priorities are: Investing in a Strong Human Services Workforce, Support for Iowa's Mental Health System, and Support for Services that Empower Refugees and Immigrants.

To register and learn more, go to <https://lsiowa.org/ldh>



Sunday Continuing Education – upcoming topics

Meet us in Grace Hall at 10:15 a.m.

Bring your coffee and donuts with if you wish!

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|---------------|---|
| February 4 – | The study on Mark begins |
| February 11 – | Adult Education will focus on Centering Prayer in preparation for Lent. Watch for more information on the website, in announcements and the weekly enews. |
| February 18 – | The study on Mark |
| February 25 – | All Ages Service Project – see page 2 for details. |
| March 3-24 – | The study on Mark |
| March 31 – | Easter morning and Breakfast |
| April 7 – | The study on Mark |
| April 14 – | Tentative: Deacon Jodi Schuman's rescheduled visit and forum |



Thank you for the gift bag in December. The little pictures from the Sunday school were so cute! Ewe enjoyed all the goodies.

Jerry and Diane Westercamp

Dear members of Grace Lutheran Church,

It was with great anticipation that I opened the bag of enclosures from Grace Lutheran Church. I enjoyed the colorful pictures made by the children, the calendar and the Christmas card. It is a lovely feeling to be remembered at Christmas and I keep the members – the grownups and the children – who sent the contributions in my mind and heart. I pray for all of you and give thanks for your ongoing love.

Joanne Johnson

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. Cards are sent at holidays, as well as "Thinking of You" cards at other times of year.

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 Joie Gronert, Gail Peterson, Jane Ridnour, Jill Boesch, Sally Thielking, or Mary Helt.

Consider joining... Altar Guild!

Altar Guild handles the care and maintenance of the paraments, linens, banners, and candles as needed for worship services, as well as prepare and decorate the Sanctuary for Easter and Christmas. A smaller group is designated for handling funerals. These are volunteers who help to prepare for the services as needed to meet the requests of the families for the worship space. During monthly fellowship meetings we discuss the group's duties for the coming month.



Altar Guild grew by three members in 2023 for a total of 11 servants, more would be welcome! If you're interested in joining Altar Guild, please reach out to any current member for info! Sue Anderson, Jill Boesch, Kathy Bowermaster, Gail Peterson, Jenny Rehder, Jane Ridnour, Amy Schmelzer, Rita Stackhouse, Emily Stowell, Hilary Woodhouse and Carol Woodruff

Consider Joining... Grace Gardeners!

The Food Pantry Garden is starting to plan for the summer, and we need you! We had extra help last year, however two of our long time members have retired from gardening.



We purchase plants or seeds, plant, and tend the garden through the year. We often have a Spring planting day and a Fall cleanup together and end the season with a potluck. During the rest of the year each person takes a week (about 1 out of 4) to water, harvest, and deliver the harvest to a food pantry of their choice. Sometimes we pair up to share the duties, especially during the heavier harvest weeks in August. We are planning a lighter load of green beans and tomatoes to make those harvest weeks easier. Watering has been made easier as there is now a water spigot in the garden itself. If you can help for a certain month, or just want to take on watering duties or another task, please let us know – all help is appreciated.

Please contact any of the recent team to ask questions, or to volunteer: Michelle Voelker, Julie Honsey, Loree Nelson, Rich Snyder, Linda Gronert, Tammy Denton, Ashley Ocken

Marilyn Nizzi tends the Flower Gardens

Marilyn does a beautiful job planning, planting, and caring for the containers and gardens at the South and West entrances of Grace. If this is more your type of gardening, let her know!