



GRACE
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

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www.gracedm.org

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Inside This Issue...

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- 3... Book Drive Results
- 4... Easter Breakfast, Holy Week,
Silent Listening Saturday
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- 9... Join the Tech Crew, Finance update
Martha/Lydia Circle, volunteers
- 10.. Easter Lily Order Form

Sunday Schedule

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

Holy week schedule page 4

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

Traveling far

There is an African proverb which says "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." I find myself thinking a lot about this lately. There have been several articles over the years that describe the work of a parish pastor as the "Loneliest Profession." In many ways it is true. There are professional boundaries, and at other times, necessary boundaries. It is difficult to make close friendships because there are other times when you need to function in a professional capacity.

The truth is it can be lonely. This has been my experience through much of my time as a parish pastor. Honestly, the system is set up this way. When I began my time here on March 1st, 2011, there was such excitement about all the things that the "new pastor" would be able to accomplish. There were goals placed before me, and with it, several expectations, both spoken and unspoken. That happens everywhere.

With such expectations, you start out trying to travel alone. It is easier to do it yourself than try to explain the "how" and "why." It is easier to plan things yourself. You feel this incredible pressure to accomplish all of these things, and you go as fast as you can for as long as you can.

In 2020, the global pandemic made this attitude even more prevalent. Most pastors which whom I have spoken felt more like "content machines." There was a need to produce content, continuously, through video and written means. The things we were trained to do fell off to the side, and the pace hastened. We had to travel fast, and much of that was done while being physically distanced from others.

Eventually, you learn the truth of the proverb: "if you want to go far, go together." In recent years, I have learned a lot about what it is to be a pastor. This growth was only possible when I learned that it is important to go together. It is not about how fast we can accomplish things. It is far more important to be present with others. Last year at this time, I could feel burnout approaching. I was not sure if I had much more to give. I felt empty.

I opened up to the Council and others about this. Where I expected judgement and feeling like I was letting people down, instead, I gained travel partners on this journey. In the months since, I have felt

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Happy March Birthday

- 1 - Kristen Bockenstedt
- 2 - Sara Hilsabeck
Donald York
- 3 - Victoria Meillier
- 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
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
- 27 - Sierra Carney
Zara Preston
- 28 - Alexson Calahan
- 28 - Charles Reynolds
- 29 - Sharon Schwemler
- 30 - Curtis Chenoweth
Kristin Medhurst



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:



Kathy Bowermaster and Jenny Rehder
on the loss of their aunt Judy Filean

The family of Connie Heuton

Eric Weber and family on the loss of his father, Elmer Weber

Wednesdays in Lent – March 6, 13, 20

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



Spring Forward!

Move your clocks forward one hour on
Sunday, March 10, 2024

Sponsor a Lily for Easter Worship The order deadline is Sunday, March 17

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 worship on April 7. Paper forms can be found on page 10 of this newsletter, in the pews and the Gathering Hall. If you are reading this electronically, simply [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 (name) or in honor of (name)).

Please return this form to the church office (mail slot by the office door), mail it in, or drop it in the offering plate. You may pay using Grace's online giving site <https://gracedm.org/give-to-grace/>.

Please write Easter Lily in the comments section of your check, or if paying online, choose "Easter Lily" from the drop-down member so we can properly track who has paid.

Travelling Far, continued from page 1

supported by the community within Grace. It is truly a blessing to be able to make this journey with all of you. It is hard to believe that I have been here for 13 years. It is only possible because we are on this journey together.

Thank you.
Pastor Mike

Book Drive follow-up

1138 books were collected!

Information was shared about the Little Free Library program and how it impacts literacy and community. Books were counted and perused, bookmarks were created and stacks of books were taken to be distributed in Little Free Libraries around town. About 1/3 of the books were kept to stock our Little Free Library at Grace. The remaining books are in the Gathering Hall for anyone to distribute in the near future. Please take a stack for your neighborhood.



Easter Sunday Prayer Breakfast

Easter Morning April 21, 2019
Serving from 7:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Proceeds from the Breakfast help support
Grace Lutheran Church Member Care Ministry



Menu

Pancakes, Eggs, Sausage or Bacon, Fruit, Milk, Juice, Tea and Coffee
Easter Morning March 31, 2024
Serving from 7:00 to 10:30 a.m.

Help is needed for the breakfast to be successful. All members of Grace (men, women and youth) are encouraged to participate. For more information or if you would be willing to help before, during or after the breakfast, please contact the office at 515-276-6873 or Ross Peeler at rosspeeler@aol.com



Maundy Thursday:

11 a.m. worship – Sanctuary only
6:30 p.m. worship – Sanctuary and online

Good Friday:

6:30 p.m. worship – Sanctuary and online

Saturday – Silent Listening – see article at right

Easter

Sunrise 6:30 a.m. – Sanctuary
7 a.m. - 10 a.m. – Easter Breakfast, Grace Hall.
Worship 8:15 a.m. – Sanctuary and online
Worship 10:00 a.m. – Sanctuary only *

The 8:15 worship will be live on our website www.gracedm.org. This service will be recorded and uploaded to our Facebook page and available to watch at any time later in the day. The 10 a.m. worship will **only be live/recorded if there is an issue with the early service.*

*Silent Listening
Holy Saturday
March 30, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.*



*A day of silent listening.
Come for the day, or come for a 90-minute block of silence.*

-9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
-Grace Lutheran Church, 5201 Urbandale Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50310

-Silent blocks:

9:00-10:15
10:30-11:45
12:00-1:15
1:30-2:45

-Options in the blocks are Centering Prayer time, lectio divina, chanting, reading, and mandala coloring (bring your knitting, crocheting or other contemplative art activity).

-Register for all day or a 90-minute block: [honsey.julie@gmail.com](mailto:honsev.julie@gmail.com)

-Free offerings will be welcomed

Silence speaks when words can't.

The Mission Action Fund was used to support several local entities during All-ages service project opportunities 2023. This year that has continued with the Little Free Pantry Book Drive held last month (see details on page 3)

End of year gifts were also given to several agencies at the end of 2023. One of those gifts was \$ for Dorothy House:

“Dorothy’s House was once a rundown house and a beautiful goal to help survivors of human trafficking in Iowa. Led by our founder, the community helped transform the house into a safe, supportive space for survivors. We opened our doors to residents in January 2016.

Now, we offer a safe place for survivors to live, have their basic needs met and get help removing barriers to their individual healing journeys. Our programming options have evolved to enable us to also help survivors who can’t live in our home because of gender, age and other circumstances.

We focus on the unique needs and personal goals of each person who passes through our doors. We find most of our participants are at risk or vulnerable, and likely to continue negative patterns without intervention.

Our assessment tools help identify each participant’s support needs. Then they begin our curriculum, Practice Makes Purpose; Turning Your Wounds Into Wisdom, which incorporates foundational lessons around self-care, emotion regulation, beliefs, values, relationships, identity and more.”

Mission Action Fund

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.

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.

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

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

March is National Professional Social Work Month

March is National Professional Social Work Month, a time to recognize social workers and thank them for all they do. At Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI), we are grateful for the many social workers who have dedicated their lives to serving our communities across the state!



At LSI, we believe every Iowan deserves the independence they need to thrive. LSI's Host Homes is an innovative way LSI is serving adults with disabilities. Through this program, an individual moves from Supported Community Living into a private family home with a carefully selected mentor. This program is built entirely around an individual's goals and interests, and LSI's extensive matching process ensures the mentor and mentee are a great fit.

Take a moment to read the following story from a Host Homes mentee:

"My journey with LSI's Host Homes started in early 2023. I've known my mentor for a few years while he provided hourly services to me. We learned about Host Homes and thought it would be a good fit for us. I moved into my mentor's home where he helps me maintain a daily routine with schoolwork, household tasks, daily living skills, improving independence, and more.

I attend a college nearby and go to classes a few days a week. I am able to navigate the local bus system to access my community to attend classes and visit friends. My mentor is always available to transport me into the community as needed.

This summer, I went on a trip across the country with one of my classes. While on this trip, I was able to maintain my independence with limited support, but I knew my mentor would be available by phone to assist me with my coping skills and problem solving. This trip was a big success for me knowing I had support only a phone call away.

I like LSI's Host Homes Program because my mentor supports me in the way I want to be supported, assists me with some daily tasks I struggle with, and understands me."

If you are interested in becoming a Host Homes mentor and helping a fellow Iowan achieve independence, please visit LSIowa.org/HostHomes for more information.

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

New Member Classes with Pastor Mike

New member classes typically meet after worship on the last Sunday of each month. Since the last Sunday of March is Easter, the next class will be held on Sunday, 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

Women's Basketball NCAA Fundraiser 2024

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

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

Selection happens on Sunday, March 17th. 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, Carol Woodruff won and was able to give Brenda Mann won and was able to give the \$120 pool to the ALS Association of Iowa in honor of Connie Heuton. So far, we have given away a total of over \$2000 through this annual charity!

To enter simply fill out a bracket and turn it in to the church office between Sunday, March 17th and 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 21st 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

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.



Hello Grace Lutheran Church - Des Moines:

I wanted to thank you for your generous contributions in 2023. Thanks to gifts like yours, our ministry was able to make a big impact with youth, families, individuals, and congregations that we serve. Here are some of the exciting things we were able to accomplish.

- Camp served **543 campers**, 26 church leaders, 40 staff, 4 mission trips, and over 100 individual volunteers. 51% of our campers did not have a home church.
- Our hospitality ministry welcomed over 6,000 guest groups, 16 weddings, **1,800 field trip students**, 4-disc golf tournaments, and hundreds on our trails for walking and cross-country skiing.
- Onsite we were able to **renovate the main campfire**, put in new basketball hoops, add new pumps to the pool, make the **shower houses private**, paint the entrance signs, and add a mural to the rec shed. We planted 35 mature trees, sealed dozens of picnic tables and benches, painted Jerusalem, got a new 6 passenger golf cart, added sand and picnic tables to the waterfront for a beach, and added **new elements to our playground**.

Please keep Lakeside in your thoughts and prayers this year. We are truly grateful for your generosity and continued support.

Peace and blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Britney Swans". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Executive Director
Lutheran Lakeside Camp
2491 170th Street
Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360
712-336-2109

www.lutheranlakeside.com

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MINUTES February 27 6:00 P.M.

1. Call to order following dinner provided by Jenny and dessert by Val.
2. Devotions – Pastor Mike – Romans 12
3. Presentation by Mike H. and Cathy W. from the “Being New” Team – studied the book *The God who is Here* by Peter Haas. What might “being new” look like at Grace?
 - a. Add more contemplative opportunities; train others to assist with centering prayer groups.
 - b. Start a “spirituality center” – retreats, classes, online programs.
 - c. “Wisdom School”
 - d. Partner with COCI – Contemplative Outreach of Central Iowa
4. Adoption of Agenda – Carter moved, Stuart seconded, agenda approved.
5. Approval of Minutes – N/A for this month
6. “Ideas that will get you fired”
 - a. Propose switching over the current financial software system which is outdated to a cloud-based application that has additional features that would benefit Grace.
 - b. Investigate moving to online payments for vendors instead of hard copy checks.
7. Staff Reports
8. Finance Report – Positive balance coming out of January.
 - a. Revenue Task Force (moved to next meeting)
 - b. LSI – more discussions coming with LSI
9. New Business
 - a. Review “Being New” information. (See above discussion.)
 - i. <https://www.livinglutheran.org/2022/01/contemplating-the-new-year/>
 - b. Reconciling In Christ (RIC) process and next steps. Some members of the Being New team are interested in participating in this process and can run parallel with the Being New team activities. Next step is building the core team, which will get trained in the RIC process and then start planning.
 - c. Council will review the website and make recommendation for updates. Will work with Happy Medium for more structural updates and digital footprint issues.
 - d. Management of the Columbarium – need to review the official paperwork and legalities of the contracts.
 - e. Medical Debt Relief – Mission Action Fund initiative within Grace to combine personal donations with MAF money to purchase medical debt that meets specific requirements. Can use to match with other central IA Lutheran churches. Stuart moved; Mike seconded. Fundraiser will be managed by the MAF, and donations can be made via online with a specific category. Motion approved.
10. Unfinished Business
 - a. Constitution and Bylaws – Bylaws team will do a final review and then add the updates to the Constitution. Will send Brian and Stuart the current Constitution and Bylaws.
 - b. Facility Maintenance (Roofing, etc.) – Mike will reach out to Wood Roofing to revisit the roof maintenance etc.
11. Adjournment

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

Consider joining... The Tech Team!

The Tech Team provides assistance for everything from the slides on the screens to the sound system to operating the livestream for Sunday Worship and we're looking for people ages 14 and up to join us.

There is also no need to be there more than 15 minutes before the service starts and when the service is done you can head for the donuts. This is the perfect volunteer opportunity for anyone who wants to be involved but stay behind the scenes. No previous experience required. We can teach you!

Tech Team members change the slides during the service, operate the livestream on a computer, and run the audio board and robotic cameras. We can teach you as much or as little as you want to know about any of those positions.

If you'd like more information, stop and chat with us some Sunday morning. We'd love for you to join the Tech Team!

Lydia/Martha Circle

Lydia/Martha Circle will meet for the first time in 2024 on Thursday, March 28th at 9:30am in Grace Hall.

We will be making plans for constructing May Baskets at our April meeting and reviewing plans for the year. Please bring an item for the Food Pantry if possible.

Finance Report – January Results

Financial results for January YTD are as follows:

- Income – Actual \$37,696, Budget \$34,138, Prior year \$21,067
- Expenses – Actual \$41,099, Budget \$39,833, Prior year \$47,038
- Net activity – Actual (\$3,403), Budget (\$5,696), Prior year (\$23,174)



After a strong finish in 2023, activity for January was also strong and finished \$2K ahead of budget despite overages in insurance and maintenance. 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.

During Lent, we also need additional volunteers for:

- Wednesday Lenten services
- Maundy Thursday and Good Friday
- All 3 Easter Morning Services

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.

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>

SPONSOR AN EASTER LILY

We invite you to purchase an Easter lily to decorate the sanctuary Easter. The cost is **\$15.00**, and you will be able to pick up your lily after worship on April 7. You can include a message to honor or remember loved ones if you choose (optional).

Please return this form to the church office (mail slot by the office door), mail it in or drop it in the offering plate. You may pay using Grace's online giving site, mail a check to church or drop off your check/cash when the church office is open.

Order deadline: Sunday, March 17

Your name: _____

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____

Payment: ☐ Enclosed
☐ Online
☐ Mailed/dropped off separately

Please fill this out exactly the way you'd like it printed in the bulletin insert:

Given by:

In memory of: (optional)

OR

In honor of: (optional)

Thank you!