



GRACE  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH

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#### **Inside This Issue...**

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- 9... Lutheran World Relief Drive, Finance Updates, Car Show and Plant Sale
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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

#### **Connections**

Like many others, I dove into the world of Wordle during the pandemic. It is a simple game: guess the word within 6 tries. I started playing Wordle every day, and plan to continue until I guess the word on the first try. I watched as Samantha landed all five green squares on the first try and I may be a little jealous. But I digress...

Wordle is one of three puzzle games that I play every day, along with the daily Solitaire and another New York Times game called Connections. The puzzle consists of 16 random words that you must correctly split into 4 groups of 4. There is something that connects each group of 4 words. It may be characters from "The Muppets" or words where you can add a letter and they become the name of a fruit.

I find this daily puzzle to be captivating. At first glance, it looks like the most random collection of words. There are often tricks in there too, where you see different connections with three of the words, but not a fourth. Sometimes the answers are regional, as words used to describe some things are different. For example, think soda/pop/coke. Whether you can see the connection or not, it is there. If you make four mistakes, the answer will be revealed to you.

As I think about the puzzle game, I cannot help but think about Grace Lutheran Church. We are all different. We have differing skills and abilities, different temperaments, different appearances, neighborhoods, etc. We are all different, yet there is a connection between us all. We are connected through the love of God. We are a community of faith, centered in worship, held in grace, strengthened in love, and sent forth in mission.

If you took four of us randomly and placed us alongside 12 others, the connection may be difficult to see. That is the beauty of it. This community is not one based on outside appearances, or any other marker. It is a connection made possible through the love of God, and the community that has been built. We become a people. It may not be easily seen by others from the outside, yet we are connected.

In Christ,  
Pastor Mike

## Happy April Birthday

- 2 - Rev. Bill Kallestad
- 3 - Ellen Batten  
Dolores Johnson  
Colleen McKinney
- 6 - Roy Hanson
- 7 - Carolyn Andersen  
Bradley Moon  
Ben Nelson  
Maya Uehling Lint  
Emily Woodruff
- 8 - Jennie Wonderlin
- 9 - Kelley Brown
- 10 - Jared Nelson  
Cherie Rissman  
Mark Stumme  
DeVee Trickle
- 11 - Mira Voelker
- 12 - Alex Davik  
Kyler Medhurst
- 13 - Mary McCann
- 14 - Denise Friesth
- 15 - Michael Flannery  
Matt Speck
- 16 - Ernest Weatherington
- 17 - Alton Calahan  
Cynthia Gronert
- 18 - Justin Fenimore
- 19 - Jill Boeschen  
Emma Stammer
- 20 - Kevin French  
Jenny Rehder
- 24 - Charla Preston
- 25 - Amy Wonderlin
- 26 - Aden Artzer  
Mike Carney  
Howard Kulzer
- 27 - Bill Jensen  
Fletcher Reynolds  
Cathy Watson
- 28 - David Gronert  
Anna Shea
- 29 - Kathy Piltingsrud
- 30 - Alysse Adams  
Kylie Radermacher



## Prayers and Sympathies

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

The family of **Connie Heuton**

the family of **Elmer Weber**

The family of **Angela Pavik** - daughter of **Linda Moravec**

The family of **Betty Fibikar** – mother of **Bonnie Swanson**



## Happy April Anniversary

- 7 – Kathy Piltingsrud  
and Paul Nelson
- 10 – Deanna and Eric Weber
- 12 – Sandra and Barry Briggs
- 29 – Curt and Kathy Johansen



## Holy Week Schedule



### Maundy Thursday:

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

### Good Friday:

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

### Easter

Sunrise 6:30 a.m. – Sanctuary

7 a.m. - 10 a.m. – Easter Breakfast in Grace Hall.

More information on page 4!

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. This service will be recorded and uploaded to our Facebook page and available to watch at any time during the day. The 10 a.m. worship will **only** be live/recorded if there is an issue with the early service.*

## Important Schedule Changes for April 1-3

- The Church Office will be closed on Monday, April 1
- No Bible Study on Tuesday April 2
- No Choir rehearsal on Wednesday, April 3. Choir will resume on April 10 at 6:30 p.m.



## Vicar's Voice

“Communication is the key to a healthy relationship!” It’s a bit of a cliché, but that makes the statement no less true. When it comes to maintaining healthy relationships, open, honest, and clear communication is important. This is true for any form of relationship, be they professional or personal. In the business world, communication and coordinating with your coworkers helps to keep the business running smoothly. For friends and family, poor communication and triangulation can lead to hurt feelings if not dysfunctional relationships.



As someone who is now preparing to get married, my fiancé, Britany and I have had to have a few discussions over the details of the ceremony from the people we want involved and the location of the ceremony, to the color palate of the decorations and the type of flowers in the bouquet. We have had to be open and honest about what we want, what is practical, and what changes need to be made to our plans as new situations arise.

Just as communication is beneficial for our relationships with one another, our relationship with God also benefits from good communication. I once asked a professor why we should pray if God knows what we need or what we might ask for before we do. The answer he gave was that it is because of who God is and what God wants. God wants to be in relationship with us. Though God may know what we need before we do, but it is more meaningful that we ask. Prayer and worship are ways we reciprocate God’s love for us.

Let us pray:

Loving God, you gave us your son so that we can be brought into your loving embrace. Help us to be in right relationship with one another just as you desire to be in right relationship with us. Remind us of your constant presence in our lives. In Jesus’ holy name we pray, Amen

Vicar Adam Barden

## Medical Debt Relief Campaign

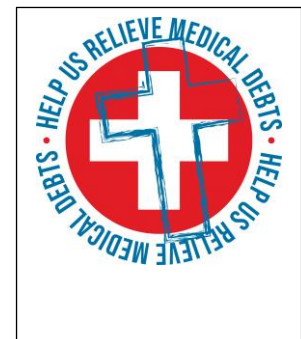
The Mission Action Fund Team is partnering with RIP Medical Debt to relieve lowans of the burden of medical debt. Our goal is to lead the way on a campaign with other ELCA congregations in the Southeastern Iowa Synod. More than 100 million U.S. adults struggle with healthcare debt. There is more than \$195 billion owed nationwide. RIP Medical Debt has access to \$16 million of medical debt within the state of Iowa.

The Mission Action Fund has already allocated \$10,000 for this campaign. This will relieve \$1,000,000 worth of debt within Iowa.

### How can I help?

We are raising money through the end of March. Any money raised in that time will be added to the \$10,000. We will use the funds raised as a challenge to other congregations within the Southeastern Iowa Synod. Starting on April 1<sup>st</sup>, the campaign will go live on [ripmedicaldebt.org](http://ripmedicaldebt.org) and will continue until May 31<sup>st</sup>.

Please consider contributing. Donations can be made online, mailed to the church office, or placed with worship offerings. Please write checks to Grace Lutheran Church and include “Medical Debt Relief” in the memo field. Together, we can make a lasting impact for lowans struggling with medical debt.





### Annual Easter Prayer Breakfast

Breakfast will be served in Grace Hall for a freewill offering with eggs, bacon, pancakes & syrup, fruit, juice, milk, and coffee!

All proceeds after costs will be used to support the Grace Member Care Team.

Breakfast will be available after the sunrise service, from 7:00 a.m. and 10 a.m., so you can stop for a relaxed meal any time between the end of the Easter Sunrise service, and before the 10 a.m. worship begins.

Volunteers: we have a really good crew on board, THANK YOU to everyone who has stepped in to make this possible! Thank you to Ross Peeler for Coordinating the volunteers, grill rental, donations of drinks, pancake mix, and syrup. Thank you to Brian Gerling for coordinating the Bacon donation, and to Kami Chicas for ordering the Fruit & Eggs – and Pastor Mike for picking those up as well!

### Adult Education Schedule for April & May

K-5 Sunday School Students meet in the Sunday School room by the elevators.

6-12 Grade Sunday School meets in the High School Room upstairs by the gym.

Adult Education meets in Grace Hall:

**April 7:** The study on Mark concludes with Mark 15:22-39 “Were You there When They Crucified My Lord?”

**April 14:** Deacon Jodi Schuman will be with us during worship and adult education.

**April 21:** Being New Committee

**April 28:** All – Ages Service Project: No K-12 Sunday school – we will all meet in Grace Hall to work together!

May 5 – TBA

May 12 – TBA

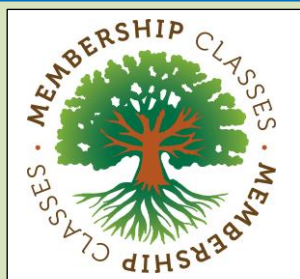
**May 19** – Potluck Celebrating Vicar Adam



### April Little Free Pantry Request of the Month:

This month, we would like to request personal hygiene items for the Little Free Pantry: soap, toothpaste, deodorant, and shampoo.

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.



### 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 Sunday, April 28

If you are interested, call the office to R.S.V.P, or find Pastor Mike after worship on the dates noted! If you would like to schedule a different time, please contact Pastor Mike [Mike@gracedm.org](mailto:Mike@gracedm.org) or 515/276-6873.

## Endowment Committee Update

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

The Endowment Committee approved the following distributions of 2023 income, which was distributed in February.

- \$2,700 to **Grace Lutheran Church** for outdoor security cameras and to upgrade the interior security cameras and recording system.
- \$939.80 to **Lutheran Services in Iowa** for soundproof wall panels and sound machines to upgrade LSI's Polk County therapy rooms to help maintain client confidentiality and provide an atmosphere of comfort, warmth, and safety.
- \$1,998 to **Urban Bicycle Food Ministry** to purchase sleeping bags and/or crank radios for their homeless friends on the street.
- \$1,000 to **Mentor Iowa** to sponsor the group's glow bowling event for at risk youth and their mentees in November.
- \$2,000 to **Des Moines Refugee Support** to fund transportation costs for sending 100 children to Camp Hantesa and the YMCA camp.

A total of \$8,637.80 was awarded. Requests for grants totaled \$24,780. Since inception, the Endowment fund has awarded a total of **\$376,955.80** to **203** projects.

## 2024 Women's Basketball NCAA Fundraiser Update

Here is the top 10 after round 2. Heading into the Sweet 16 it is a tight race, with Kayleigh Medhurst (Project Heal) in the lead, and several others within a few points. Make sure you check out the charities championed by these and other participants! Every year we learn of a new organization that could use our support:



	Name	Champion	Charity
1	Kayleigh Medhurst	S. Carolina	Project Heal
2	Allison Olson	Iowa	Hope Ministries Women's Shelter
3	Todd Haugen 1	U Conn	Arthritis Foundation
4	Michelle Voelker 2	Iowa	Des Moines Refugee Support
5	Rich Voelker	S. Carolina	Engineers Without Borders
6	Dave Gronert 1	Texas	Lions Club Foundation
7	Carter Woodruff 2	S. Carolina	Food Bank of Iowa
8	Carol Woodruff 2	S. Carolina	Grace Food Pantry
9	Dave Gronert 2	Stanford	Lions Club Foundation
10	Kate Schaller and Mike	Iowa	Lutheran World Relief



## From Sheep to Shepherd: An LSI Early Childhood Services Story

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a mother, recently released from treatment, found herself in her new empty apartment with her son. She felt lost and needed a shepherd to guide her. So, Hali contacted LSI's Early Childhood Services, and Gretchen O'Brien, a Family Support Worker, answered the call. Gretchen began virtual home visits using the Healthy Family America home-visiting model.



For the next three years, Gretchen connected Hali and her son to community resources, served as a support system and a shoulder to cry on, and celebrated Hali's sobriety milestones with her. Even when Hali doubted herself, Gretchen guided and believed in her.

"I just remember sitting in that empty apartment crying, but I had Gretchen on the phone. You guys believed in me when nobody else did," shared Hali.

Today, Hali serves on the Healthy Family America (HFA) National Parent Advisory Committee, the first of its kind. The group is composed of 10-12 parents from around the country who have graduated from their local HFA program, each participant with their own story to share. Hali needed a shepherd in her time of trouble and self-doubt, and Gretchen answered that call. Now, Hali serves as a shepherd to thousands of parents through the National Parent Advisory Committee. The LSI Early Childhood team couldn't be more proud of Hali and Gretchen.

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).*

## Lydia/Martha Circle

**Lydia/Martha Circle meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month (taking January and February off).  
Come to Grace Hall at 9:30 a.m. for fellowship**

On Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup> the group enjoyed a lovely Spring Brunch – Staff appreciated the extra plates served during a busy holy Week! The group also collected items for the Food Pantry, made plans for constructing May Baskets at our April meeting and reviewed plans for the year. They would love to see you at their April meeting! For details, contact Martha Mitchell or Marilyn Nizzi.



## Worship Volunteers April & May

Each week we are looking for a greeter, lector, communion assistant, and someone to start the coffee and set out the donuts, cups and napkins.

<https://volunteersignup.org/3TKR7?classic>

## The Whisper of God

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “Let us be silent, that we may hear the whisper of God.” Have you heard that whisper during the silence we’ve been sharing in worship? There seems to be something profound in holding moments of silence together, and when we do so with the intention of opening ourselves to the Presence of the Holy One we rightly call it prayer.



Yes, silence can be prayer, and an especially intimate way to be with God. Have you noticed how, when you are with someone you don't know well, silence can feel awkward and we may try to fill it with conversation? On the other hand, when we are with someone we know and trust we can be comfortable just being together. Simple presence can take on a depth of meaning that makes words unnecessary. It's that way with God too.

It is interesting to note that 'silent' and 'listen' contain the same letters. Howard Thurman, spiritual mentor to Martin Luther King Jr. and other Civil Rights leaders, wrote of the importance of 'centering down' and learning to listen in order to swing open the doors of our being to an experience of God. (<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/alive-for-a-reason/>)

The Being New team has been practicing this silent Centering Prayer together when we meet and we've appreciated your willingness to be with this practice during worship. If you are interested in exploring it further, opportunities abound.

**Local groups:** Grace has been home to a vibrant Centering Prayer group for many years, meeting Tuesdays from 10:30-11:30 on Zoom. Contact Julie Honsey ([honsey.julie@gmail.com](mailto:honsey.julie@gmail.com)) for the link. There are a number of other local Centering Prayer groups, some virtual, others in person (<https://www.centeriowa.org/index.php/en/prayer-groups/meeting-times>). These groups include both 20 minutes of silence as well as discussion.

**Wisdom Waypoints groups:** ([wisdomwaypoints.org/event/wisdom-meditation-online-and-ongoing/](https://wisdomwaypoints.org/event/wisdom-meditation-online-and-ongoing/)) These larger groups meet for 30 minutes, with 20 minutes of silence. If you are getting started and think 20 minutes is just too much you can quietly leave the meeting early!

The Being New team will be hosting the **Adult Forum on April 21**. Come and meet us, hear our plans and ideas around Centering Prayer as well as other ways we can open ourselves to a closer, more personal relationship with God. And bring your questions...like the one everyone has starting out...'What do I do with all these thoughts!!??'



### Wandering Heart Devotion Cards:

The devotion cards shared this Lenten season continue to run through April 13 – you may pick up a set in the Sanctuary. Each contains a Centering Practice suggestion for each new week, a question or two to ponder, and a prayer on the reverse side.

We have also posted related daily content on our Facebook page, and have included the daily questions there if you prefer to follow along or even comment

**The Mission Action Fund** was used to support several local entities during All-ages service project opportunities 2023. The All services projects have continued, beginning with the Book Drive for Little Free Libraries in January and February 2024, and the current Medical Debt Relief Campaign and challenge which can be found on page 3 of this publication.

End of year gifts were also given to several agencies at the end of 2023. One of those gifts was for **Lutheran Services in Iowa:**

Lutheran Services in Iowa is one of Iowa's largest Non-profit Human Services Agencies. In 2021 alone LSI provided 11,120 home visits for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, 13,278 therapy sessions for children, families and adults, 6,144 behavioral health sessions with Iowa children and families, and empowered 603 Iowans through LSI services for people with disabilities.

More than 100 staff in the LSI Immigrant and Refugee Services has helped settle those displaced from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

LSI Global Greens program reconnects former refugee farmers with the land as they build their new life in the U.S. Through Global Greens, farmers access space to grow food, learn more about U.S. agriculture, and start their own business by selling produce at our Farmers' Market and in our CSA.

Other services include assisting with Foster Care, Adoption, Mental Health Services, Child Care, Education, and others. Explore LSI at [www.lsiowa.org](http://www.lsiowa.org)

### **Mission Action Fund**

**The Fund will also Accept Donations.**

**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 instances where a Grace member is involved in direct or indirect service to others by being engaged in a community or service activity, OR in instances where a need exists outside of the Grace community. The intent here is to get Grace members actively involved in Grace's mission and to live a life differently through Christ.



### **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](mailto: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.

Grace Member Applicant Name, Member Mailing Address, Cell Phone or best way to contact you, Date of request, Funds Requested, Date Funds are Needed, Name of Organization: (if applicable), Project Name, Brief Description of Project or Need



## Lutheran World Relief Spring Drive

We will be accepting donations to support kit and quilt making through Sunday, April 7 - find yellow envelopes in the Sanctuary as you enter. Those can be placed in the offering plate during any of the upcoming worship services, or in the secure office mailbox at any time during the next several weeks. You may also utilize our secure online giving site if you prefer.

There will be a LWR kit and quilt blessing on April 7th in worship. Join us as we continue to minister to our neighbors around the world who are experiencing deep poverty, hunger, conflict, and displacement.

Thank you to all who helped on Palm Sunday to make personal care kits, baby care kits and tie quilts to send around the world to people in need.

## Coming soon!



Annual Youth Plant Sale Fundraiser  
May, 2024 – exact dates and shopping location to be announced  
Watch for coupons in the entryway, May newsletter, weekly announcements and Tuesday enews!



Grace Annual Car Show  
June 26, 2024, evening  
Details to come!

## The March Council Highlights will be published in the May Issue of the Friendly Visitor

### 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



### Finance Report – February Results

Financial results for February YTD are as follows:

- Income – Actual \$69,162, Budget \$68,125, Prior year \$51,778
- Expenses – Actual \$70,580, Budget \$71,767, Prior year \$85,804
- Net activity – Actual (\$1,418), Budget (\$3,642), Prior year (\$34,026)

Activity was \$2,223 ahead of budget. Activity is much better than the previous year.

## **Please consider joining... Grace Quilters and Lutheran World Relief Teams**

### **Grace Quilters**

Welcome to the Quilters Fellowship Group at Grace Lutheran Church. Join us weekly to connect with one another and share our faith while carrying out one of our favorite activities — quilting! There is room for every skill level – from expert quilters, to those who prefer to iron, sew straight lines, or match fabrics and blocks, every job is important. We meet most Thursdays at 9 a.m. in the Quilt Room. Contact the office for more information.

### **Lutheran World Relief Team**

Building Lutheran World Relief Kits of Care is one way that we gather together at Grace to turn ordinary items into extraordinary gifts. Twice a year we make school kits, personal care kits, baby care kits and others to help people dealing with some of life's most difficult situations around the world. There are so many people in dire need – in the aftermath of earthquakes and floods, fleeing home to escape violence, and living in extreme poverty.

We can't control when disasters strike and we can't end poverty overnight. But this is one hands-on thing that we do regularly to help people around the world reach their full potential. Please use this link to view kit-making information:

<https://lwr.org/get-involved/build-kits-of-care>

Many of our LWR team members are also part of the quilting team – that is a great place to catch up with them!

Worship, online access, written materials, and other resources.

### **Sundays:**

**9:00 a.m. in-person worship - also livestreamed**

**10:00 a.m. coffeetime and fellowship in the Gathering Hall**

**10:15 a.m. Education Hour, Options for Grades K-5 in the Sunday School room, Grades 6-12 in the youth room, and adults in Grace Hall.**

### **You can also find us online:**

- **On our website** [livestream page](#) **every Sunday at 9.**
  - From the home page at [www.gracedm.org](http://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](#).

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

[Worship Volunteer Signup](#)

[Weekly Announcements](#)

[Weekly Bulletins](#)

[Online Giving](#)

[Monthly Newsletters](#)