



GRACE  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH

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**Inside This Issue...**

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**Sunday Schedule**

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

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

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

**Psalms**

When I dive into the Psalms, I find myself mesmerized by the scope of topics. At a recent Bible Study led by Bob Merkley, we dove into Psalms 136 and 137. The first of this is an example of a repetitive mantra speaking of the steadfastness of God's love and mercy. Then, Psalm 137 voices the worst of humanity, wishing the children of their enemies be put to death. It is not a comfortable text. In fact, it often makes me physically nauseous when reading it. Yet, it is there for us to read.

As we discussed the texts, Vicar Jesse pointed out that nothing is beyond the scope of what God can handle. What she said is true. God asks us to be authentic, to be true to ourselves. God does not ask us to act like a follower of Christ. God asks us to bring ourselves into the presence of God, hurts and all. Our journey is not about achieving perfection. It is about being present.

The Psalms cover the whole of the human experience. There is nothing that is off limits. They range from unbridled praise to the depths of 137, and everything in between. There are Psalms of personal lament, or communal lament. There are Psalms for the teaching of theology, and others of praise. It is all in there. That is part of what makes the Book of Psalms so powerful. It is all in there.

We will be diving into the Psalms together during worship starting on July 28<sup>th</sup>. This is part of a shift to the Narrative Lectionary for the upcoming year. We will spend 6 weeks in the Psalms and then we will journey through the whole of the Bible from September until mid-June. This will start in Genesis and continue through the whole of the Bible, using one text each week.

As we prepare for the journey through Scripture, it seems wise to start with the Psalms. These Psalms are split into three categories based on the work of Dr. Walter Brueggemann; Psalms of Orientation, Psalms of Disorientation, and Psalms of Reorientation. These categories tell the tale of the people of God throughout the Bible and beyond. There are times when we feel connected to God, where we feel like we have the right orientation. There are times when we become more disconnected with God and start to lose our orientation. There are also times when we find our way back to God.

*Continued on page 2*

## Happy July Birthday

- 1 - Michael Nizzi
- 4 - Sawyer Shiffler
- 5 - Levi Wilner
- 8 - Donna Trickel
- 9 - Carleigh Ridnour  
Henry Jordahl
- 11 - Wren Lewis
- 12 - Melissa Petty
- 14 - Amador Medina-Ruiz  
Eric Selander  
Heather Honnold  
Bailey Woodruff
- 15 - Hannah Jensen
- 16 - Tracy Justice
- 17 - Jayne Mortenson  
Christie Rosheim
- 18 - Anders Nelson  
Adam Friesth  
Eric Friesth
- 19 - Deanna Snyder
- 20 - Krista Nelson  
Martha Kaleewoun
- 21 - Christian Culp
- 22 - Kathryn Schaller
- 23 - Linda Biegger
- 24 - Declan Holst
- 25 - Justin Anderson
- 26 - Morgan Mortenson
- 27 - Jeff Robbins
- 29 - Genaro Ruiz
- 30 - Gary Denton



## Prayers and Sympathies

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



**The family of Luana Friesth,  
mother of Lon Friesth**

## Happy July Anniversary

- 8 – Ashley and Josh Lund
- 15 – Jenie and Michael Schmidt  
Rhonda and Bill Jensen
- 21 – Loree and Tim Nelson
- 22– Cathy and Dean Watson



## *Psalms, continued from page 1*

No matter where you are on the journey, there are Psalms that speak to your experiences, past and present.

If you want to look ahead, there are the Psalms we will use in worship. July 28 – Psalm 1. August 4 – Psalm 113. August 11 – Psalm 69:1-16. August 18 – Psalm 27. August 25 – Psalm 40:1-10. September 1 – Psalm 146.

In Christ,  
Pastor Mike



**Lydia/Martha Circle** will meet Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am in Grace Hall.

Don't forget your Little Free Pantry item.  
Hope to see you there!

## Summer Office Closures

### Thursday, July 4<sup>th</sup>

The church office will be closed in observance of the National Holiday.



### Friday, July 5<sup>th</sup>

For those new to Grace or this newsletter, the office is always closed on Fridays. Office hours are posted for 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Monday - Thursday so we may be available for you. If you are in the building outside of those hours, you may see staff working. Similarly, if you find the doors locked during posted hours.

### Monday – Friday, July 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

The office will be closed as many of our staff will be enjoying vacation these dates.



**July Little Free Pantry Request of the Month:  
Cereal, Pancake, or Muffin mixes**

Donate cereal, pancake or muffin mixes this month or give to the Little Free Pantry through the [GIVE](#) page where funds will be used to purchase items to stock the pantry.

You can also order items from the [Amazon Grace Wish List](#), which will be shipped directly to the church. Thank you for your donations.

**Our Little Free Pantry** has been a much-needed resource for many families in our community. Each week, we have volunteers who place items in the pantry every day of the week, and twice on Mondays and Tuesdays. They pull 40 - 50 items from our pantry backstock room during each visit to place in the Little Free Pantry, located outside on 52nd Street, near the garden. Our funding for this mission has been supported through congregational member dollar contributions and a grant from the Immanuel Vision Foundation (for the past two years). This year, we received \$7,400 in grant money. Through all of these contributions, we have been able to have a monthly budget of \$937 to go shopping with to fill the backstock room. How much does this buy? Here is a recap of a recent shopping trip:

48 jars of peanut butter	72 cans of tomato sauce	36 quarts of Almond milk
35 boxes of cereal	36 cans of pasta meals	48 packages of Pop Tarts
100 packets of instant oatmeal	48 boxes of dry pasta	36 NutriGrain bars
48 packets of instant grits	24 bags of rice	60 snack size boxes of raisins
70 cans of tuna	24 boxes of rice mixes	594 diapers (multiple sizes)
108 cans of beans (Kidney, Garbanzo, Black)	36 packages of instant mashed potatoes	288 tampons
12 bags of dry Pinto beans	72 boxes of macaroni & cheese	45 rolls of toilet paper
120 cans of vegetables (green beans, corn, peas)	120 packages of ramen noodles	40 bars of soap

In addition to these items, we are grateful to receive food donations from our [Amazon Grace Wish List](#) and items placed in the wagon located in the entryway.

Thank you for your support, it truly means a lot. If you have any questions or would like to help, you can contact Kari Dostalick or Tammy Denton.





### **Being New Open House** **What is the Being New Spirituality Center at Grace Lutheran Church?**

The Being New Spirituality Center offers a place to experience more deeply the work and presence of God in community . . . a place to respond to the invitation of Spirit to explore sacred conversation, deep listening, connection, renewal, and healing. The Spirituality Center will serve the entire central Iowa community.

We invite you to learn more by attending an Open House on Sunday, July 14th at 10:15 a.m. or Wednesday, July 17th at 6:30 p.m. We hope you will come and dream with us and assist us in helping Being New Spirituality Center to take shape. Plan to bring your ideas and invite others to participate!

With deep gratitude to Pastor Mike, Grace Lutheran Church Council, and our Being New circle for support and guidance, and also to the Willing Workers for assistance with this work.

You will find the Spirituality Center on the lower level. Follow the signs starting in the either of the two entries on the west side of the church off the parking lot.



### **Summer New Member Classes with Pastor Mike**

If you are interested in becoming a member of Grace, the next new member class will be held on Sunday, July 28.

If you are interested, call the office to R.S.V.P, or speak to Pastor Mike after worship on the 28<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to schedule a different time, please contact Pastor Mike [Mike@gracedm.org](mailto:Mike@gracedm.org) or 515/276-6873.

### **Summer Bible Study on Psalms with Bob Merkley**

The first two sessions met in June and were well attended. Please join us for the last summer session, Each session is different – you don't need to be at one to come to the next, which will be held on Tuesday, July 18, Psalm 22 & 23. Meet in Grace Hall, 9:00 a.m.

Bob is a regular attendee of the Tuesday Bible study with Pastor Mike.



### **Worship Volunteers**

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>



### **Finance Report – May Results**

Financial results for May YTD are as follows:

- Income – Actual \$182,447, Budget \$174,088, Prior Year \$153,083
- Expenses – Actual \$168,614, Budget \$176,275, Prior Year \$200,824
- Net activity – Actual \$13,834, Budget (\$2,188), Prior Year \$(47,742)

Activity was \$16,021 ahead of budget. Activity is much better than the previous year.



**Welcome!**

Vicar Jesse Hershberger was installed on Sunday, June 23, 2024.

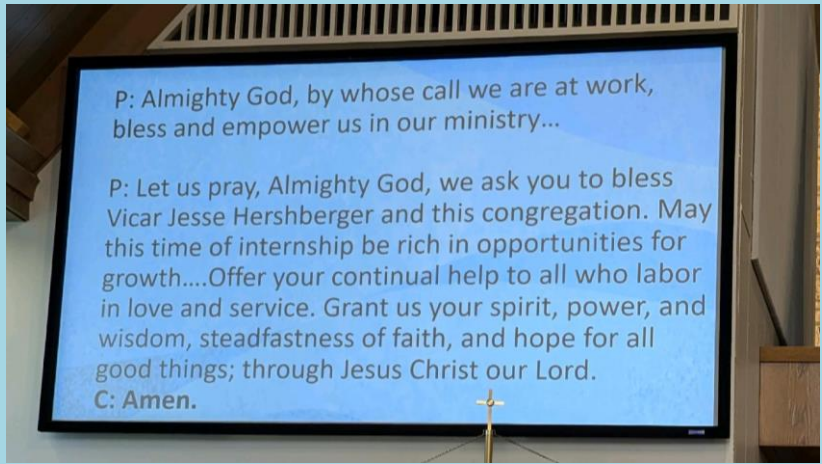


Photo credit: Martha Mitchell

**Dear Grace brothers and sisters,**

I want to thank you all for your prayers and support during the last six months. My granddaughter, Charlotte Grayce Lenhart (daughter of Katie and Garry Lenhart), is her beautiful, wonderful four-year -old self again, after several surgeries and a stroke in January. It has been a long recovery, including lots of therapy, love, and prayers. I am convinced she is with us due to your kind prayers. I am aware of how miracles work now; we thank God and you.

Char still has some weaknesses, but her heart and body are stronger and her lungs are healing---and she will be five years old in August! Thank you so much!

Mary Freimuth Helt and family---Katie and Garry Lenhart (Eryn, Maya, Kyra , Carly, Jocelyn, Charlotte.); Grandma Cheryl Lenhart; Bio-grandma Christina and Scott Ihle (Alice); and all the cousins, aunts, uncles and friends!! Love makes us strong!!



## July 2024 – God’s Work, Our Hands

It’s nearly that time of year again – God’s Work, Our Hands! Though the official day is in September, it’s not too late to plan how your congregation can engage with GWOH Day.



One of the best ways to practice GWOH is through volunteering. At LSI, we have volunteer opportunities for individuals of nearly every age, ability, and schedule. Additionally, we offer group volunteer projects – the perfect opportunity for this upcoming day of service.

If you are interested in volunteering with LSI for God’s Work, Our Hands, talk to your pastor and have them contact [philanthropy@LSIowa.org](mailto:philanthropy@LSIowa.org).

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).*

## Medical Debt Relief Campaign Update

**Between the match Mission Action Fund Match and donations from Grace members, we raised a total of \$15,983.10 !** This amount will relieve approximately 1.5 MILLION dollars in medical debt for Iowans. Thank you to all who were able to contribute. You’ve made a difference in the lives of many Iowans.

To learn more about UnDue and how they operate, you can search their website <https://unduemedicaldebt.org/> for all sorts of information. For instance, from their website:

*How did my donation abolish so much debt? We acquire debt in large bundles from providers like hospitals and physician groups, as well as from collection agencies and debt buyers, millions of dollars at a time for a fraction of the face value. This means your donation relieves about 100x its value in medical debt. Due to industry standard debt prices anyone can be an impactful philanthropist.*

## Visits with Pastor Mike

Please call the office at 515-276-6873, or Pastor Mike directly (extension 203) to set up a time. You may also directly email [mike@gracedm.org](mailto:mike@gracedm.org)

**Prayer List Praying for one another is an important part of the life of a community of faith.** Share your prayer needs or update your personal contact information with us by using the white Prayer Cards in your pew. Place the folded card in the offering plate or the locked office mailbox. These cards will be placed in a private envelope for the pastor to go through on Monday mornings.

Information that is not confidential will be passed to the appropriate people. You may also choose to simply call 515-276-6873, or email Pastor Mike [mike@gracedm.org](mailto:mike@gracedm.org) directly.



## Listening to Scripture with the “Ear of your heart”

A recurring aspect of a contemplative rhythm is moving from an ‘either/or’ to a ‘both/and’ approach to any number of things, including the way we engage with scripture. We’re familiar with the important discipline of studying a text to search out the historical context, the meaning of the words in the original language, and the author’s intention. This puts our intellect to good, challenging, fruitful, work.



And there is an ancient Christian practice which seeks to engage scripture in a personal and immediate way, letting it be a portal for a closer relationship with God. We could call it reflective reading or listening with the ‘ear of our hearts’. It’s ‘official’ name is *Lectio Divina* (‘divine reading’), though I do better with simpler words that sound like something ordinary people like me can do. This practice benefits from a basic understanding of the text, but is not dependent on it or limited by it. It brings our heart online as we attend to our own inner stirrings.

We listen for a word or phrase which resonates in us in this present moment. We may read a favorite passage and find ourself drawn not so much to what we have loved over the years, but to something hiding there that we’ve not noticed before! Let the word or phrase that ‘speaks to you’ draw you into communion with the Holy One, exactly as you are in the present moment.

Contemplative Outreach offers these steps (<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/lectio-divina-contemplation/>)

1. Read a passage listening with the “ear of your heart.” What word or phrase captures your attention? Repeat it gently.
2. Reflect on and relish the words. Be attentive to what speaks to your heart.
3. As listening deepens, allow responses to arise spontaneously—praise, thanksgiving, questions, petitions
4. Simply “be with” God’s presence as you open to deeper meanings of the Word of God for you.

This is one piece of the Preparation for Worship gathering at 8:30 on Sunday mornings. We read one of the scripture passages we will hear or a stanza of a hymn we will sing, with the intention of being more fully present to the movement of God’s Spirit within and among us as we gather. In this way we seek to hold our whole worshipping community in prayer.

Even if you can’t join us at 8:30, you can use the minutes before worship to reflectively read the texts for the day. May we all be blessed as we bring more and more of ourselves to our time together!



### Preparation for Worship - A new Sunday opportunity

We have begun offering a new prayerful opportunity for members of the congregation to center and prepare for worship.

**When:** Sunday mornings, 8:30 a.m.

**Where:** The Upper Room.

**What to expect:** A prayer, a short Centering-Prayer sit, and a reflective reading of the lyrics for one of the day's hymns. The practice will end with the chanting of a Psalm before heading down to the Sanctuary for worship.



## 2024 Grace Car Show “Thank You”

A big “THANK YOU” to everyone that participated and helped with the 2024 Grace Car Show. First of all to the car show participants...we had everything from a hoverboard (thanks, Samantha!) to several electric vehicles to sports cars and 4-wheelers. To Michelle and Mike H. in the office for their help and support. To Carter Woodruff for food purchasing, preparation and manning the grill. It was a great team effort! Through the generosity of car show exhibitors and attendees, \$530 was raised for Grace Member Care! Thanks again to all that participated in some fashion!

*Let's not forget Kevin Drury who organizes this event every year, yet left himself off the thank you list! – Grace Staff.*

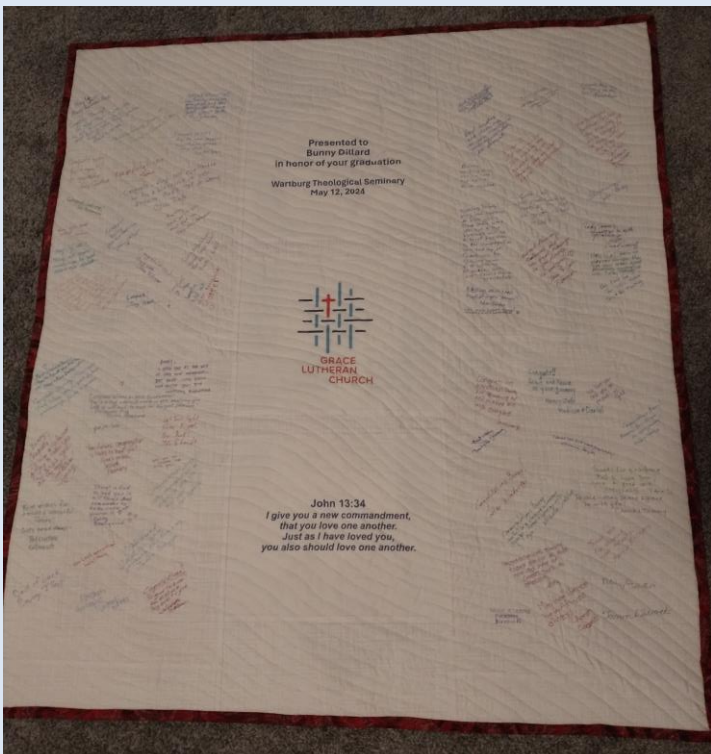
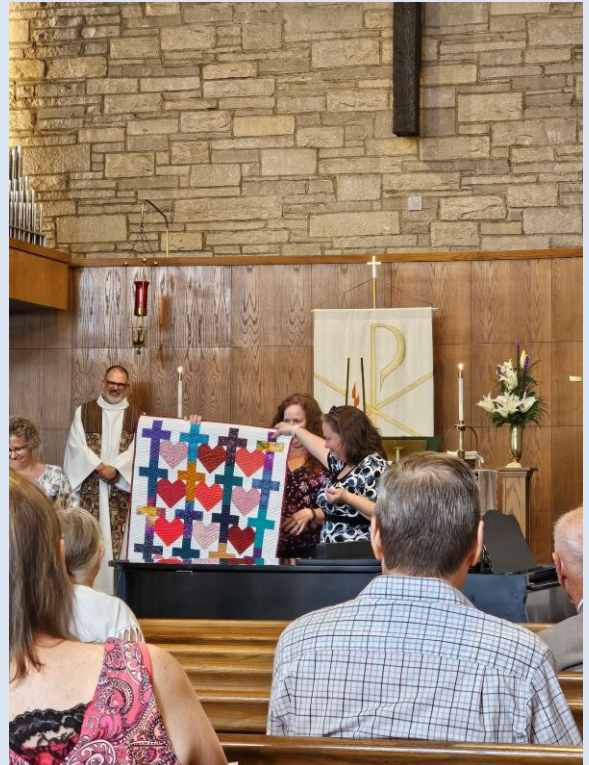




## Graduation Gift Presented to Vicar Bunny on Sunday, June 23, 2024

As many of you will remember from the 'secret messages' and signing events, Grace was invited to participate in the Wartburg tradition of congregations and ministry sites creating a banner - or other item from the congregation - of meaning that celebrates your student's graduation and call to serve. These banners or items of meaning express the love and support we have for the graduating student, and are often used at the student's ordination and installation worship services, then displayed in their home or office. As Bunny is a quilter herself, we knew we needed to make a quilt.

This beautiful 5' x 4' quilt made by a group of our quilters and signed by many of those who knew her, was presented to her by Tammy Denton and Jill Boesch during worship on Sunday, June 23, 2024.



Photos by Martha Mitchell, Michelle Voelker, Jill Boesch, Cathy Watson



## Scenes from making the quilt



Nearly every design considered included hearts in the design.



Choosing the perfect colors for the hearts.



More deliberations!



Cathy made a test square



**The back panels were made available for members to sign, including on Easter Sunday, then joined with the center panel, which was printed with the Grace Logo, Bunny's Graduation Date, and her class verse.**



A little bit of special fabric to tuck here and there



## Grace Congregational Council Meeting June 25 6:00 P.M.

1. Call to order. Dinner provided by Greg Boeschen
2. Introductions
3. Devotions – The God Who is Here, Chapter 3
4. Adoption of Agenda - Carter moved, Jenny seconded, agenda approved.
5. Approval of Minutes - Carter moved, Brian seconded, minutes approved.
6. “Ideas that will get you fired:” what about selling the church property or “right-sizing” the space to focus on mission?
7. Staff Reports – office staff working on reviewing and organizing files. Files will be removed from the storage room downstairs and divided into “keep” or “shred” using extra classrooms for staging. Also still working on updating the website.
8. Finance Report – reviewed financial report. Favorable budget for May, but roof repair costs will drive us into the red.
9. Unfinished Business
  - a. Status of flat roof repairs – completed.
  - b. Concrete flooring work done on 6/5. One section was wet so it couldn’t be done but will be finished when dry.
  - c. Appraisal of church property status – reviewed research on comparable appraisals for church buildings. Finance team will review balance sheet.
  - d. Amp and Sound System Updates – new amp was installed. Fine tuning the webcast parameters.
  - e. Status of water issues – more water in the quilt room. Need to have a plumber locate the cleanout and the sewer company can do the cleaning to help prevent reoccurrence.
  - f. Investing reserves, start with CDs, need to set up guidelines and responsible persons in a policy for the finance committee.
  - g. Communication of sex offender accountability policy and disclosure letter. Final versions were reviewed and will be mailed out later this week.
  - h. Constitution & Bylaws update – finalizing last updates. Goal to have Synod review by the end of summer.
  - i. HVAC quotes for Todd’s house reviewed. Kevin moved to proceed with Dayton Quote for replacement systems for \$11,706 coming from capital fund. Carter seconded. Motion approved.
10. New Business
  - a. Masonry repairs – Several areas on roof need masonry repairs that Wood Roofing cannot do. Contacting companies and waiting on quotes etc.
  - b. Conditional travel expenses for Bunny’s ordination in August. Pastor is part of the ordination service so will be traveling to Houston. Greg moved that lodging expenses be covered by professional education expense line item. Tom seconded. Motion approved.
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



## 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 the following 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

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

### Sundays:

8:30 a.m. Preparation for Worship, Upper Room

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 will return in fall after a summer break, with options for ages 5 and up!

### 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](#)