

The Friendly Visitor October 2025

Newsletter of Grace Lutheran Church and Community



Grace Lutheran Church:

- A community of faith, centered in worship, held in Grace, strengthened in love, sent forth in mission, in Jesus' name.
- Home of the Being New Spirituality Center.

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Submission deadline for the November newsletter: October 22

Office & Open Building Hours
9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Monday – Thursday
Or by appointment

Sunday Schedule
9:00 a.m. Worship: In-person & Online
10:00 a.m. Fellowship & Coffee

Morning Prayer on Facebook
Mondays & Fridays at 9:30 a.m.
Search for Grace Lutheran Des Moines

Grace Lutheran Church
5201 Urbandale Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50310
515-276-6873
gracedm.org

Life Lessons

In his commencement speech for the University of Western Australia on September 17th, 2013, comedian Tim Minchin spoke of “9 Life Lessons.” During his portion about Lesson 5. Be Hard on Your Opinions, he stated the following:

“We must think critically, and not just about the ideas of others. Be hard on your beliefs. Take them out onto the verandah and beat them with a cricket bat. Be intellectually rigorous. Identify your biases, your prejudices, your privilege. Most of society's arguments are kept alive by a failure to acknowledge nuance. We tend to generate false dichotomies, then try to argue one point using two entirely different sets of assumptions, like two tennis players trying to win a match by hitting beautifully executed shots from either end of separate tennis courts.”

I had never heard of Tim Minchin before seeing a portion of this speech. As I look at the arguments happening in our society these days, his words ring true. There seems to be an unwillingness to put our beliefs to the test. There seems to be a fear that if we start to examine things too closely, it will be seen as weakness. So, people keep reciting the same things in the hopes that it wins the point. The truth is that they are hitting beautifully crafted shots on different tennis courts.

We followers of Christ are called to a different point of view. We are reminded to look at the “log in our own eye” before criticizing the speck in another's eye, or that only those without sin can cast the first stone. We are called to reconciliation and the work of building, or re-building, community. This is not easy work, but it is extremely important work.

Siblings in Christ, don't take the bait. Don't dive into abusive rhetoric. Don't demonize those who may think differently than you.

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With Deepest Sympathy

We hold these families
in our hearts and prayers:

Carrie Schall
Daughter of Rita Stackhouse

Doug Gullickson
Stepfather of Laura Irwin



- 5 Donald and Margaret York
- 6 John and Tracy Justice
- 7 Chris and Jeryl Janson
- 12 Burke and Shirley Shiffler
- Louie and Sue Anderson
- 21 Delmar and Linda Vernia
- 22 Joel and Stacie Holst
- 23 Karri and Aaron Brandsfield
- 27 Hal and Michele Turner
- 28 Michael and Marilyn Nizzi

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Custodian Todd Haugen
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- 1 Zeppelin Brown
Katharine Radermacher
- 2 Margaret York
Andy Roat
Eric Barks
Ivy Lawson
- 5 Paul Nelson
- 6 Amanda Jensen
- 7 Adam Bergman
- 8 Nelda Sampel
Harlan Mortenson
- 9 Riley Mortenson
- 11 Christopher Kallenbach
Fred Hofferber
- 12 Greg Boesch
Benjamin Wonderlin
Lucas Radermacher
- 13 Theresa Gerling
Deanna Hummel
Lt. Col. David Peterson
Victoria Janson
Sheryl Sauerman
- 14 Jane Ridnour
James Fenimore
- 15 Chris Lawson
Eryn Lenhart
Kyra Lenhart
Maya Lenhart
Vincent Meillier
- 16 Kara Jordahl
- 17 Roberto Ruiz
- 19 Isaac Justice
- 20 Patricia Schouten
Stuart Turner
James Briggs
- 21 Sage Speck
Owen Chenoweth
- 23 Ronald Vernia
- 24 Melissa Kallenbach
- 25 Joyce Lewis
Tina Meadows
- 27 Ilah Ocken
Wilder Voelker
- 28 Marla Gowdy
- 29 Jessica Russell – Alsted
- 31 Graham Jordahl
Monte Wilner
Tanner Peeler

Life Lessons, continued from page 1

There may be some who speak of hating their opponent. May we put our beliefs to the test, and if we find we are hating others, may we see our sin and fault. We are called to love others, even those who stand against us. All of humankind put Jesus on the cross. There, the love of God through Christ was proclaimed to all the world. All means all.

In Christ,

Pastor Mike



Grace in Every Moment

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. September has been another wonderful and spirit-filled month! I continue to witness the hand of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, at work in my life and throughout the Grace community. His love and grace have been evident through the prayers, generosity, and fellowship of His people.

Preaching the Good News: On **September 14th**, I had the privilege of preaching from **Luke 15**, focusing on the parables of **The Lost Sheep and The**

Lost Coin. In both stories, Jesus highlights the relentless love of God, a love that seeks the lost until they are found.

We were all once lost, but by His grace, we are now found. Jesus now calls us to do the same: to seek out those in need of hope and bring them the Good News. May we continue to live out this calling with passion and purpose, wherever the Spirit leads.

This month also marked my **first internship committee meeting**, an important step in this season of ministry formation.

A Special Birthday Blessing: God blessed our family with the joy of celebrating **three birthdays** this month:

- **My wife** – September 14, **my daughter** – September 17, and **mine**– September 20

I am deeply grateful for another year of life and for the love and support from the Grace family. Thank you for your kind birthday wishes, prayers, and encouragement. It meant so much to us!

A Generous Gift: I am blessed this month by a generous **gift of chairs** from **Dean and Cathy Watson**. Their kindness is a beautiful reminder of how God uses His people to meet the needs of others. I pray God continues to bless them abundantly so they may remain a blessing to many.

Looking Ahead: As we prepare for October, I'm looking forward to the **Tri-Synod Fall Gathering (Sept 29–30)** with Pastor Mike and my **second internship committee meeting on October 2nd**. Bible study has also begun, and I'm excited to see how the Holy Spirit continues to guide and reveal God's truth to us.

Let us move forward in faith, rooted in love and unity, keeping our eyes on **Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith**. *Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Psalm 100:1-2.*

Please feel free to stop by the office to say hi or email me at lotegeluaki@gracedm.org.

With gratitude and blessings.

Vicar Lotegeluaki Ole L. Lengai.



I came into Grace a few times this summer. I've moved away for another job just as quickly as I came, but I wanted to reach out and thank you for being so welcoming! You have a special community and ministry, and I truly enjoyed each time I came to worship. You should be very proud of your congregation and staff.

Thanks for the warm welcome.

*Best in all things!
Julia*

To Mission Action Fund,

The Greater Greenfield Community Foundation thanks you for the kind and generous gift to the community. I was contacted by Jennifer Garside who stated it would be used for tornado relief which might include help with some relief of related medical bills. I know how many projects they have in the works and how much this meant to them.

Thank you again!
Marilyn Nizzi

Dear Pastor Mike and friends at Grace Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your gift of \$2,000.00 You're an integral part of Joppa, and together, we are lifting families and individuals off our streets every week of the year. On behalf of those we serve, we deeply appreciate your support and generosity.

***Blessings,
Jackie Stevens, Joppa Cofounder and Donor relations***

Dear Friends at Grace Lutheran Church,

On behalf of the Trevor Project, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to you for the generous donation of \$2,000.00 received on 08/19/2025. Your generous gift directly supports life-saving work for LGBTQ+ youth in crisis. Thank you for helping us save lives and create a brighter future for those in need.

Funds raised are essential to realizing our mission and serving LGBTQ young people 24/7/365. Because of your generosity, Trevor can continue to deepen our efforts to protect, affirm and celebrate LGBTQ young people through our advocacy and education initiatives, ground-breaking research, crisis-intervention services, and TrevorSpace – a safe space social networking platform.

Your contribution is vital to all that we do at Trevor. Together, with your help, we know we can build a brighter, safer future for all LGBTQ young people. Thank you for your invaluable support – we look forward to updating you on our progress in the coming year!

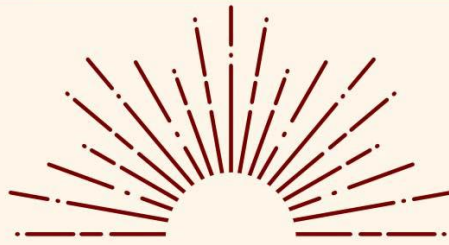
With much appreciation,
Jaymes Black, Chief Executive Officer

See the office bulletin boards – this letter contains a QR code you can scan for a special message.

Dear Grace Lutheran Church/Mission Action Fund,

Thank you so much for the generous donation to the University of Iowa Mobile Clinic! We deeply appreciate your support in helping to provide equitable care to the communities who need it the most.

See the office bulletin boards for the many staff signatures on this particular card.



BY THE GRACE OF GOD &
THE CALL OF THE CHURCH

Jesse Marie Hershberger

WILL BE ORDAINED TO THE
MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT
IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH, 2025
ONE O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
DES MOINES, IOWA

BISHOP AMY CURRENT PRESIDING
REV. MICHAEL SCHMIDT PREACHING

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW
THE SERVICE WILL BE LIVE STREAMED

ROSTERED MINISTERS ARE INVITED TO VEST AND PROCESS
THE COLOR OF THE DAY IS RED

*Jesse has been called to serve as the Associate Pastor at
Bethesda Lutheran Church in Ames, Iowa*



Reconciling in Christ

Each month, TeamGRACE members will be sharing what drew them to the work of guiding Grace through the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) process. Members of TeamGRACE include Amy Batten, Kelley Brown, Jessye Flannery, Mary Freimuth Helt, Isaac McCleary, Jenny Rehder, and Amy Schmelzer. If you have questions about the RIC process, please reach out to any of the team members. This month's essay is from team member Amy Batten.

Why I felt called to be on the committee:

At the age of five, I tried on my sister's dress. It felt right, but I knew I had to keep it to myself. In 1950's America, this was considered crazy and just not done. When I reached adolescence, I started shoplifting items of girls' clothing and felt ashamed. Later, I bought things and hid them in my room. Before I married my wife, I told her about me but said I could stop.

I don't know for sure, but my denial and anxiety probably contributed to my alcoholism. I drank for almost twenty years. My last drink was on April 8, 1995. I have been a member of AA for more than thirty years now.

Over the years, my wife and I have struggled to accept my authentic self. Since 2023, I have progressed to coming out as Amy to people in my life. Most people have been good about it. When I came out at Grace, I felt embraced in love. I think it would be good if other people like me, who fall into the LGBTQIA group, could feel the warmth that I did, from members of our church. My pronouns are she and her.

Amy Batten

Grace Interns!

The interns gathered at the Tri-Synod Fall Theological conference, which took place in Des Moines on September 29 & 30. Many thanks to Grace for continuing to support emerging leaders in ministry!

From left: Pastor Bunny Dillard, Lotegeluaki Ole L. Lengai, Jessie Hershberger



Grace Lutheran Ladies Group



Grace Lutheran Ladies Group will meet on Thursday, October 23rd at 9:30 am in Grace Hall.

After light refreshments, we will be working on our Christmas project for our church member's Christmas bags.

Hope to see you there!

**Fall Back Date 2025:
Sunday, November 2**





Fall Education

Elementary Sunday School at 10:15 a.m.

K-5 students will meet in the Sunday School room, across from the elevator just up the stairs from the Gathering Hall. Thank you to volunteers Rich Snyder, Val Culp, Courtney Brandsfield, Deanna Weber, and Jenie Schmidt.

On the last Sunday of most months, instead of meeting in the classroom, students and their families meet in Grace Hall as we all come together to work on a service project for the community.

Adult Education - middle and high school are welcome and encouraged to participate too!

We meet in Grace Hall at 10:15, after worship and coffeetime. Upcoming topics are:

- **October 5:** Who Are We — Really? 1 John 2:29-3:34
- **October 12:** How Can We Love — Really? 1 John 4:1-21
- **October 19:** Allison Olson and Pastor Mike, Churchwide Assembly Discussion
- **October 26:** Congregational Service Project, tying fleece blankets and purchasing hygiene supplies for YSS – a youth emergency shelter in Des Moines
- **November 2:** How Can We Live — Really? 1 John 5:1-13

Confirmation Classes

Meets with other middle schoolers on Wednesday evenings, with occasional service projects through the year. Wednesdays, 6:45 p.m. in room 102.

Weekday Bible Study with a Focus on Exodus

Led by Pastor Mike and Vicar Lotegeluaki. Anyone and everyone is welcome — friends, neighbors, members, drop-ins. You do not have to be there at the beginning or at every meeting to be welcome and find meaning. We offer two options:

- Tuesday mornings at 9 a.m. Meet in Grace Hall.
- Thursday evenings in Room 102 on the lower level.

Exploring Grace With Pastor Mike

A warm invitation to learn about our community, faith, and life together.

Welcome! **Exploring Grace** is an opportunity for you to get answers about us and find out about what being a part of Grace might look like for you.

HEY!
We're so glad
YOU'RE
HERE!

October 26, after worship

Enjoy coffee and a donut hole after worship; then at 10:15 a.m., meet in the office on the main floor: just up the stairs and to the left from the main entry. **Questions? Contact the office at 515-276-6873 or by emailing Pastor Mike Mike@gracedm.org.** If this date doesn't work for you, there will be another opportunity on the last Sunday in November. Or, just call the office to make an appointment at a time that works for you!



Adult Choir Rehearsals

The Grace Chancel Choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. in the downstairs music room. Whether you're new to choir, a returning singer or someone who hasn't sung in choir for a while but would like to come back, you are welcome!

Choir sings about once a month (more during the Advent/Christmas season) and we enjoy low-key rehearsals and lots of fellowship. For more information, contact Kathy Bowermaster at

kathybowermaster17@gmail.com or 515-971-6360.



Prayer Journaling by Pam Palmer

Dear Diary... it's what instantly comes to mind when I think of Prayer Journaling. As a young girl, I longed for a diary for my birthday. My first one had a pink and white gingham cover with a pretty gold tone lock and key. Oh, the secrets and heart-felt emotions I shared! Prayer journaling really isn't any different if you think about it. Instead of "Dear Diary", it's "Dear God".

Why journal? Why not? Journaling helps me feel closer to God. By taking the time to write down my prayer requests and thanking Him for my many blessings, I can also see how He's working in my life over time. He wants and longs to hear from me—from the joy in seeing a sunset to the lament in finding a new job to the reflection while reading a Bible verse. Journaling also helps record the details of my prayer experience. Lord knows how easy it is to forget the little things! Even in the tough times, documenting and reflecting on the specifics of my prayers keeps me moving towards God.

A fancy bound book isn't required for prayer journaling (unless you want one). Anything can work—a spiral bound notebook, scrap paper in a 3-ring binder. Nor do all of your journals need to match. Black or red ink. Scribbled penmanship or neat block letters. Use stickers or draw if you want. God doesn't mind.

I don't write in my journal every day nor at the same time of day. It's a habit I need to work on. I've noticed the more I do write in it, however, the better focused I tend to be throughout my week. I feel more calm and ready to tackle whatever lies ahead. My best suggestion is to keep it in a place where you'll see it and USE it—on a nightstand, on the kitchen counter, in the car before you head into work or wait in the pick-up line at school.

Some days I fill a couple pages. Other days, I can only muster a sentence or two. No matter how much time is spent, writing helps "get out" whatever is on my mind, laying it at His feet. Writing also helps me to stop and focus on God, taking the time to truly pray. My mind can easily wander otherwise—worrying about a leaky faucet or what to add to the grocery list. I always try to mention something I'm thankful for too. Find one thing, anything to be grateful each time you write.

Much like the diary I used to have, God is a trusted confidante, always available with a listening ear. I can share ANYTHING with Him—the good, the bad, the ugly. He doesn't care how much I've written, how often or whether my grammar is perfect. God meets me wherever I am, just as I am. Every.Single.Time. Now go find some paper and write!

Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you.
Jeremiah 30:2 NRSV

Labyrinth Progress!

Remember when we said that Phase Two - adding a hardscape surround to provide accessibility - was planned for completion this fall? It's happening! Stop by the labyrinth and take a peek!





Pet Blessing
Saturday, October 4, 2025, 10 a.m.
Grace Lutheran Church, on the lawn

You are invited to bring your furry, fuzzy, fishy or feathered friends to our Annual Community Pet Blessing on Saturday, October 4.

The service will begin at 10:00 a.m. on the lawn at Grace. Everyone is welcome so invite your friends and neighbors to attend. If you prefer you may bring a photo of your pet, or one of their toys or other belongings to be blessed.

Pop can tabs from Kristen Bockenstedt - Thank You!

The box Kristen delivered was 5 inches deep, and filled these two 2.5 gallon bags!

Ronald McDonald House Charities collects pop tabs from cans (soda, soup, pet food, etc.) to raise money for programs that support sick children. The collected tabs are taken to a recycling

center where they are weighed and sold for their aluminum value. It takes approximately 1000 tabs to equal a pound. 1 pound sells for approximately 50 cents. That doesn't sound like much *unless* many participate.

Joie Gronert delivers the baggies to the Ronald McDonald House when nearby - just leave your bags of pop can tabs by the sink near the pop machine at Grace and she'll pick them up.



Little Free Pantry Request: canned fruits, vegetables, tomato or pasta sauce

We are collecting canned fruits, vegetables, tomato or pasta sauce (no glass, please) for the Little Free Pantry in October. This could also include individual sized cups of fruit, applesauce, or pudding. You can also provide donations online through the [GIVE](#) page or provide a check payable to Grace Lutheran Church with "Little Free Pantry" in the memo.

There is also a [Grace LFP Amazon Wish List](#) available where items will be shipped directly to the church. Thank you for your donations.



Worship Volunteer Needs

Every Sunday we are need of several volunteers: Greeters, Lectors, Communion Assistants and Coffee/Donut Servers. Anyone can help — if you have questions about what is involved, just ask, and we'll be happy to show you what is needed for each position. Then you can decide what you are comfortable with. Directions for making coffee (no measuring involved!), finding supplies, and setting out the donut holes are posted by the coffeemaker.

Sign up using the clipboard found on a Gathering Hall table, or go to gracedm.org and click on the word "Volunteer" in the upper right corner of your screen; then follow directions on the page. If reading this online, just click here: [Online Worship Volunteer Signup](#).



A Look at Little Free Pantries - written by Kari Dostalík

Little Free Pantries (LFP) – a mainstay in neighborhoods across the Des Moines metro, the state of Iowa, the United States and beyond – provide a grassroots solution to local food insecurity needs.

Jessica McClard launched the grassroots mini pantry movement in May 2016 in Fayetteville, AR, when she planted the *Little Free Pantry Pilot*, a wooden box on a post containing food, personal care, and paper items accessible to everyone all the time, no questions asked. She hoped her spin on the Little Free Library® concept would pique local awareness of food insecurity while creating a space for neighbors to help meet neighborhood food needs. In just three months, the movement had gone global.

How do LFP differ from other food pantries?

- LFP are small, limiting the quantity and variety of items on hand. While brick-and-mortar food pantries are better at meeting pervasive needs, sometimes things may fall through the cracks. LFP are a safety net. For example, many brick-and-mortar food pantries require an application and most have hours of operation. Anyone may access LFP at any time.
- Additionally, brick-and-mortar food pantries are considered service providers, and those who use them, “clients.” LFP help dissolve that professional boundary. Whether giving or taking, everyone approaches LFP the same way, mediating the shame that sometimes accompanies need.
- Ultimately, LFP are a centrally located reminder of our neighbors’ need that creates a neighborhood space for exercising compassion, trust, and mutual aid.

Who are LFP for?

LFP are for those who want to give. LFP are for those not easily able to meet everyday food and personal needs. LFP are for a hungry kid after school or a home cook who forgot to buy an onion. LFP are for **everyone**.

Need for LFP in Iowa

According to Feeding America’s annual “Map the Meal Gap” study (May 2025), food insecurity in Iowa remains a significant problem, with 12% of Iowans (1 in 8) and 16.6% of Iowa children (1 in 6) facing food insecurity. This means that 385,130 Iowans (including 120,220 children) do not know where they will find their next meal.

All 99 Iowa counties saw an increase in food insecurity in the latest report. Polk County’s overall food insecurity rate is 11.5%. Among children, it’s 16%. The 56,970 people affected by hunger in Polk County (including nearly 20,000 children) comprise nearly 15% of the state’s overall food insecure population.

In 2021, the Kids Count Data Center reported that 41.8% of Iowa students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Des Moines Public Schools reported 75.1% of its students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch during the 2024-25 school year.

Food pantries continue to experience record-breaking demand, with thousands more people seeking assistance than the previous year. Contributing factors include:

- **Decline in Federal Aid:** The discontinuation of pandemic-era programs, like the Child Tax Credit and summer EBT, has put more strain on food-insecure families.
- **Increased Demand on Food Pantries:** The Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) provided food to over 70,000 people in 2024, a significant increase from the previous year.
- **Demographics of Need:** Food pantries are now seeing a high demand from working adults and disabled individuals, not just the unemployed.

Continued on page 11

A Look at Little Free Pantries, continued from page 10

Grace's Little Free Pantry

In 2019, Grace Lutheran Church established its Little Free Pantry, located outside on 52nd Street near the garden, to help meet growing food insecurity in our neighborhood. Today, the LFP Team at Grace stocks the Little Free Pantry with approximately 50 items eight times a week. We maintain this service to the community thanks to donations, which include money, food, and personal care items.

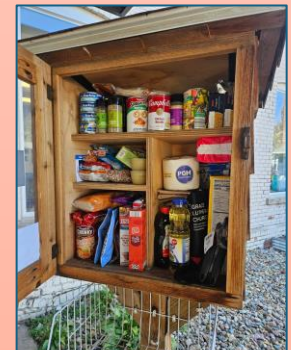
Each month, an average of \$700 is spent to restock the backstock room with toilet paper, soap, and feminine products, in addition to shelf-stable food. This translates to 500-600 packaged items a month, some of which are multi-pack items that can be distributed individually, such as Ramen noodles, oatmeal, bar soap, etc.

Fill the Pantry Event

Thanks to everyone who made the "God's Work. Our Hands." Fill the Pantry event a success! Members worked together to bag more than 1,500 items for 21 pantries throughout the Des Moines metro (see locations below). Five teams then traveled across the metro to stock each pantry with 74 food/personal care items (including Grace's Little Free Pantry). Photos of the event can be found on the next page.

List of pantries visited:

Grace LFP	5201 Urbandale Ave, Des Moines Iowa
St Andrews Episcopal comm fridge	5720 Urbandale Ave, Des Moines Iowa
Immanuel Methodist LFP	2900 49th Street, Des Moines Iowa
Westminster Pres LFP	4114 Allison Ave, Des Moines Iowa
DM Mennonite LFP	4001 56th Street, Des Moines Iowa
Dogpatch Urban Gardens LFP	4600 NW 51st Street, Des Moines Iowa
LFP 515	3111 Hickman Road, Des Moines Iowa
Comm Youth Concepts Comm fridge	1446 MLK Pkwy, DM
Perkins Academy LFP	4301 College Ave, Des Moines Iowa
St George Greek Orthodox church	35th Street and Cottage Grove Ave
Unity church LFP	414 31st Street, Des Moines Iowa
Franklin Library Community Fridge	5000 Franklin Ave, Des Moines Iowa
Drake Olmsted center LFP	29th and University, Des Moines Iowa
St Catherine of Siena church LFP	28th and University Ave near Drake U
Cottage Grove church LFP	24th St at Cottage Grove near Drake U
Windsor Presbyterian Church LFP	63rd and University Ave, Windsor Heights
6424 University Ave LFP	6424 University Ave, Windsor Heights
New Beginnings Church Comm Fridge	8631 Hickman Road, Urbandale (on frontage road)
Creekside Church LFP	2743 82nd Pl, Urbandale
St Mark's Luth Church Comm Fridge	1105 Grand Ave, WDM
Grace U Methodist Church Free Fridge	3700 Cottage Grove Ave, Des Moines Iowa



GRACE CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL – August 26th Meeting Minutes

Meeting came to order August 26, 2025, at 6:05 pm

- **Members in attendance** – Greg Boeschen, Tom McCleary, Pam Palmer, Linda Moravec, Val Culp, Vicar Lotegeluaki Lengai, Brian Gerling, Pastor Mike Schmidt, Mike Hilsabeck
- **Meal** – Greg B
- **Call to order**
- **Adoption of agenda** – approved
- **Devotions** – Brian G
- **Approval of previous meeting's minutes** – Brian moved, Val seconded, Approved
- **"Ideas that will get you fired"**
- **Staff Reports** – Staff reports accepted. Pastor shared highlights from the recent church wide assembly.
- **Review/Approval of Finance report** – Tom moved, Brian seconded, Motion Approved

Unfinished business

- **Boiler Replacement Update** – all the piping being completed; flushing of the system will be the next step. Excel is currently expecting to wrap up in the 2nd week of September.
- **Property Manager Update** – Nichole Aubert joined staff last week as our new property manager. Nichole has been working with Brian G in the transition of duties.
- **Discussion about handling large memorials/bequests** – group has been formed to discuss options. Mike H will work to find a mutually acceptable date/time for 1st meeting. Participants will be Pastor Mike, Mike Hilsabeck, Pam Palmer, Linda Moravec, and Kevin Krause.
- **Capital Campaign Update** – The planning team held their 1st meeting. They will divide into 2 groups. The Marketing Group is Pastor Mike, Kevin Drury, and Jamie Thompson. The Project Group (which will coordinate the many property projects – help prioritize, get estimates, etc.) includes Eric Weber, Aaron Brandsfield, Brian Gerling, and Nichole Aubert
- **Prayer Labyrinth Update** – Labyrinth has been installed. We are getting bids for the ADA compliant concrete walkway and pad. We have had several donations as well as applied for grants to help with funding.

New business

- Stuart is stepping away from council effective this month. We now have 7 council members, plus the Pastor.
- **Debrief Church Cancellation on August 3rd** – (see text at end of the minutes)
- **Estimates for Relocating the Columbarium to Prayer Garden** – this would allow easier access for families (versus needing to always coordinate church building access). There are also several neighborhood and ordinance issues that need investigating. This is being discussed with the Prayer Garden team.
- \$25,000 donation "to be used at discretion of council" – • motion to move funds into the capital campaign reserve for the time being. Brian moved, Pam seconded, Motion Approved. • Motion to move Larsen memorial bequest (approx. 73,000) into capital campaign reserve. Pam moved, Brian seconded, Motion Approved. Council agreed to move November and December meetings to 3rd Tuesday (11/18, 12/16).

Adjournment – Linda moved, Tom seconded, motion approved

Next meeting is 9/23/25... Meal – Linda, Devotions – Tom

From August 5th Weekly Church e-Newsletter: August 3rd Worship Cancellation - Multiple people have expressed disappointment in the cancellation of the August 3rd worship service. Allison and I were scheduled to return at 11:59 p.m. on Saturday. Because of this, I had tried nearly a dozen pastors from the pulpit supply list over the last three months and none were available. I tried the options that were on the synod pulpit supply list. Not all retired pastors choose to make themselves available on that list. I was informed of the canceled flight as we were on the taxiway, waiting to depart Phoenix. With only minutes to communicate I tried another potential option. I am sorry to hear of your disappointment and anger at worship being canceled. It was not because of a lack of trying. If you would like to talk further about this, please reach out. I can be reached at the church office, or email mike@gracedm.org. Pastor Mike

GRACE CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Members can always request a copy of the minutes from a member of council.

Your 2025 Grace Lutheran Church Council members are:

Valerie Culp, Linda Moravec, Pam Hellman-Palmer

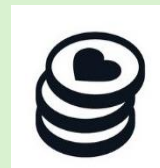
Exec. Team

Greg Boeschon – President; Tom McCleary – Vice President; Mike Hilsabeck – Secretary;
Brian Gerling – Member at Large

Finance Report – August Results

Financial results for August YTD are as follows:

- Income – Actual \$269,805, Budget \$291,383, Prior Year \$287,730
- Expenses – Actual \$283,655, Budget \$292,225, Prior Year \$296,071
- Net activity – Actual (\$13,850), Budget (\$842), Prior Year (\$8,341)



Activity was \$13,008 below budget compared to \$4,411 below budget last month.

The variance is primarily due to lower pledged offering than budgeted. Lack of Vicar and Property Manager positions during the summer caused expenses to be below budget.

During the year significant expense has occurred for repairs of the boiler and the elevator. Additionally, Capital Campaign monies were used to fund \$11,200 for gutter replacement and \$42,400 for tuck pointing of brickwork.

Bulletins, announcements, and sermons are all online!

For those of you who look for Grace worship materials online, we've now moved everything onto the Bulletins Resource Page. Go to the website www.gracedm.org.

- Find the word [Resources](#) — On a laptop or desktop screen it is in the upper right-hand corner. If on your phone, click the 3 lines in the upper right corner, then find Resources, Give, and Volunteer at the bottom of the drop-down menu that appears.
- Once on the Resources page, look for the red bubble that says Bulletins, Announcements, Sermons. Click to open that page.
- Once you have the [Bulletins](#) page open, locate the date of the worship you are looking for. You can now open any of the bulleted links related to that date. You may read these online, download to your device, or print as you wish.

Videos currently remain available on a separate page in the Resources section here: [Worship Videos](#). Sermons and Worship videos are posted approximately 24 hours after each worship. We tend to only keep six months' worth of worship material and video links on our pages.

Other helpful links:

[Altar Flower Signup](#) — Sign up to sponsor flowers for the Sunday altar at <https://volunteersignup.org/ADMHD>

[Online Giving](#) — Use our secure site and decide where you want to donate: the general church budget, the Little Free Pantry, the Mission Action Fund, youth, etc. Make a one-time donation or set up a recurring gift.