

The Friendly Visitor July 2026

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 August newsletter: Monday, July 20

Office & Open Building Hours

9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Monday – Thursday
Or by appointment

Staff office CLOSED Thursday July 2

Sunday Worship Schedule - Summer

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

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

Reflection on Pools and Algae

For several years now, we have had an above-ground pool in our backyard. It is a modest-sized round pool that is 15 feet in diameter and 4 feet deep. Currently, the water is clear, near perfect. I have learned from experience that can change very quickly. It takes constant attentiveness. I have learned many lessons over the years.

One such lesson is that warm water feels comfortable, but it also takes far more care to maintain. Algae love warmer water, especially when the water is sitting still. Once the pool gets over 80 degrees, it becomes key to keep circulating the water as much as possible and making sure the water is chemically balanced. All it takes is a little down time with a small number of algae and the algae grows along the bottom of the pool. The only way to clean it is to stir it all up to the point where the pool looks like split pea soup and wait for the chemicals and filter to finish the work. That means you go out twice a day and stir things until it all looks green and keep the filter running.

The world has talked a lot about algae and pools lately, as the world watches the current struggles with the Reflecting Pool. I find the struggles to be far more of a reflection than we would like to admit. This is not the first time the reflecting pool has turned green with algae. It will not be the last time either. It does seem to happen at times when the country is dealing with division. This happened during the renovations to the pool during the Obama Administration. It is happening again now.

When the pool is drained for renovations and refilled, it creates an environment in which algae grow best. The water warms in the sun as it is filled, and the healthy bacteria have not had a chance to grow yet. Once algae start to spread, it takes time and intentionality to clean the water. There is no quick fix. It simply takes time to create a healthy environment.

Reflection continues on page 3

Summer Office Closures

July 2 - July 3

The church office will be closed for the Fourth of July. All other meetings and activities will occur as scheduled. The office is always closed on Fridays.



Summer Office Hours

Office hours are posted for 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Monday – Thursday. Occasionally, when there is only 1 person in the office due to staff vacation/time off, the building or office will be locked for safety. We will do our best to communicate closures in advance, but we welcome you to call before stopping in. We are always happy to hear from you and/or meet you at the door!



The Roses on the Altar in June were placed in honor of:

Roman Peeler, born to parents Tanner and Laurie Peeler.

Henry Allen Thompson, born to parents Patrick and Jamie Thompson, and big sister Ashton.

If there is a new life in your family that you want to recognize, please contact the office at your convenience. We need to give the florist several days' notice, however, you can also choose a specific Sunday if you wish to be present or to pick up the rose in the week after worship.

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kathybowermaster17@gmail.com



Happy Birthday

- 4 Sawyer Shiffler
- 5 Levi Wilner
- 8 Donna Trickel
- 9 Carleigh Ridnour
Henry Jordahl
- 10 Michael Nizzi
- 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
- 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



Happy Anniversary

- 13 Cheryl and Monte Wilner
- 15 Jenie and Michael Schmidt
Rhonda and Bill Jensen
- 21 Loree and Tim Nelson
- 22 Cathy and Dean Watson

Reflection continued from page 1

It does seem to reflect a lot about the culture in the US. We have allowed the political temperature to continue to rise and then we seem surprised when unhealthy behavior erupts. People look for an enemy and point fingers. People look for a quick fix. There is no easy fix. We the people are divided and look to much of the world like a pool overcome by algae. Christ calls us to do better. We are called to go about the work of cleaning the pool, working toward healing and a return to treating others with respect.

The only way to clean the pool is by stirring the algae...or by owning our own faults. It is done by turning the metaphorical pool green, truly seeing our brokenness and division, and then working to heal. It is not easy work, but it is the work Christ has called us to do.

Peace,

Pastor Mike



Meet our 2026-2027 Vicar

My name is Apou Aderbuk, and I am a seminarian at Wartburg Theological Seminary. I am originally from South Sudan, and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as an intern at Grace Lutheran Church.

I am passionate about pastoral care, multicultural ministry, chaplaincy, and walking alongside people in their everyday lives of faith. As someone shaped by different cultures and communities, I care deeply about creating spaces where people feel welcomed, valued, and connected, and I continue to learn how God works through relationships, listening, and shared community.

My family is also part of this journey, and together we are excited to become part of the Grace Lutheran family. We look forward to getting to know the congregation, sharing in worship and fellowship, and growing together in faith and community.

One Bible verse that continues to guide me is Romans 12:12: "Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer." I look forward to learning, serving, and walking alongside you all during this season of ministry together.

Gift Cards for Vicar Apou's Pantry!

The Internship committee is asking for gift cards to help Vicar Apou fill her pantry with basic food staples before her first paycheck arrives. She will also have a teenage cousin living with her this summer, until college dorms open for fall semester.



Cards to local stores, such as Price Chopper, Hy-Vee, and Wal Mart would be ideal. A few to local restaurants and fast food spots would also be a welcome addition.

These can be mailed to the church, or dropped off at the office. Thank you!



Grace Lutheran Church



Saturday, August 1 | 8:00 am to noon

Freewill Donation | All proceeds go toward the Grace Little Free Pantry

DONATE

Drop off donations at Grace Hall on Friday, July 31 from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm

Items not accepted: children's car seats, Christmas trees, console TV's, mattresses, strollers, highchairs, play pens, used window blinds, humidifiers, major appliances & air conditioners.

VOLUNTEER

Sort and set-up donations; checkout or assist shoppers; or help with clean-up.

Scan here or follow link
to signup:



<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F49A5A62BA1FF2-64541380-garage>

TeamGrace

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we all have stories that give meaning to our lives and decisions. If you have a story you would like to share, please let us know. We, in the Team, have shared how our experiences led us to our understandings and beliefs.



Several members of Grace requested Bible verses to support acceptance of LGBTQ+. We will be sharing information from Biblical scholars throughout 2026.

Deuteronomy 22:5

A woman shall not wear a man's apparel, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment;...

Discussion/interpretation: People wore similar robes, so it could be confusing; however, there was concern about men who avoided duty of being soldiers by disguising themselves as women and non-soldiers who wore armor to gain privileges.

Deuteronomy dictates many rules for all areas of life, but some appear to be cultural expectations, as opposed to God's laws, which means they are less important or change or are designed specifically to demonstrate cultural differences. Examples: do not charge interest on loans, do not combine threads from different sources—flax, cotton, wool, silk, do not eat pork, a man can divorce, women are property of father or husband, etc. Other religions had temple prostitutes and business on their grounds, which Hebrew laws strictly forbid; someone born of an illicit union—to the tenth generation—could not be admitted to the temple; Ammonites and Moabites did not give food and water on the journey out of Egypt and are undeserving of hospitality; you can eat your fill of grapes from your neighbor's vineyard, but not put any in a container to take with you; when a field is harvested, some should be left for the aliens, widows, and orphans; you can't put a muzzle on an ox when it is treading on grain; there are many others which are illegal or inappropriate in our culture. If you don't follow the laws, you will be cursed, but later, Jesus stated we were to live in the spirit of the law, with forgiveness, grace, and generosity, not strictly by the law.

1Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells within you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy and you are that temple.

Discussion/interpretation: Clothe yourself in what is right and love God's creations.

Dear Grace Lutheran Church,

We at ReconcilingWorks wish to invite you and your community to the ReconcilingWorks monthly Bible Study. Please share this invitation with your community!

When: Every third Thursday of the month:

July 16, August 20, September 17, October 15, November 19, December 17

NOTE: June Bible Study materials are already available on the [ReconcilingWorks Bible Study](https://www.reconcilingworks.org/bible-study/) webpage <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/bible-study/>. Once there, click on the image next to "Sermon Notes" or [Register here for the Bible Study](#) to receive an email.



Re-keying Grace – Who needs access to the building?

We are still exploring options so nothing has been scheduled yet. We just want to give everyone a heads up that this is something we are working on in 2026.

Staff are aware of most of the committees and team members who need access on a regular basis, however we want to be absolutely certain we are not leaving anyone out, and would like you (or your team/committee) to reach out to the office (via phone or email) to:

1. Tell us when you or your committee needs access – *list all current members*,
2. make sure we have your current and *updated contact information* so we can contact you directly when we do have a schedule.

Once everything is scheduled, we will reach out to all the teams, committees, and groups that use our space. We will also make sure to publicize dates in the announcements, weekly enews, and on the website.

Worship Volunteer Needs

We have some amazing volunteers, but we'd love to increase our volunteer pool!

- **Greeter:** Stand by the doors, smile, say "Good Morning" or "Welcome!" Hold the door if needed.
- **Lector:** Are you comfortable reading in front of people? Bulletins are published in advance so you have time to practice the readings for the week.
- **Communion Assistant:** Enter the Chancel from the "hidden side door", receive the bread and wine from Pastor before assisting with the wine or juice. Say, "The Blood of Christ, shed for you" as you pour.
- **Coffee/Donut set-up:** All the directions and supplies are in the little kitchenette in the Gathering Hall.



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](#).



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. Pastor Mike offers this opportunity through the year, and we will resume in the fall. **However, that doesn't mean you must wait until September! If you are interested in learning more about Grace and how you fit in, please contact the office at 515-276-6873, or email Pastor Mike Mike@gracedm.org.** We welcome you!

July LFP Request

We are collecting pasta and mac & cheese during the month of July.

The [Grace LFP Amazon Wish List](#) is also available to have items shipped to the church. Donations can also be made online through the [GIVE](#) page or send a check payable to Grace Lutheran Church with "Little Free Pantry" in the memo. Your donations are greatly appreciated.



Beaverdale Bluegrass Festival July 11, 2026, Tower Park

Grace is once again a sponsor for this free community celebration filled with live bluegrass music, cold drinks, local vendors and food trucks, and good neighbors. It's a laid-back summer tradition built around the kind of community spirit that makes Beaverdale feel like home. Music begins at 2:30 p.m. Go and look for our logo and banner! Learn more at the link: <https://www.beaverdalebluegrass.com/>

Thank You, Vicar Lotegeluaki!

On Sunday, June 14 we celebrated our year with Vicar Lotegeluaki Lengai. During worship there was a "Rite of Sending", along with a sending hymn "God Be with You Till We Meet Again" with the first two verses sung by Lotegeluaki and his family, followed by the congregation joining in for the third verse.

After worship, along with coffee and donuts, we shared in a wonderful congregational dessert potluck, a presentation of appreciation for Vicar Lotegeluaki Lengai's journey with us at Grace Lutheran Church, and plenty of socializing. Part of the presentation included a quilt, pictured below. Lotegeluaki spent several Thursday mornings with the quilters this past spring, assisting in the process of creating quilts for Lutheran World Relief. For this particular quilt, he chose quite a bit of his favorite color (red), had a hand in choosing complementary fabrics for the squares, creating the layout, and tying the quilt. The quilters did a good job of keeping the secret – that he was helping to make his



Church of the Wild: Returning to Nature as Spiritual Practice

When you are in nature do you feel like you have come home? More and more of us are responding to a call from deep within to change the way we relate to the natural world. We are remembering our sacred place in the web of life and returning to a spirituality connected with the soil, trees, waters, and creatures of all kinds, human and more-than-human. Our neighbors.



We come in a spirit of humility, remembering that 'humility', 'human' and humus, the dark rich organic matter in soil, all share the same root. We are, literally, people of the Earth, and we are part of Creation's ever-springing-forth communion.

Wild Church is not a new religion, but a call to remember and remind ourselves of our place within the web of life, within and beyond any spiritual tradition. We seek to restore soulful relationship with our place as holy ground. Each community is unique to their place and their particular people, united in their yearning to restore the "Great Conversation" between humans and the rest of life, practicing a spirituality of radical belonging that honors the Earth as beloved community.

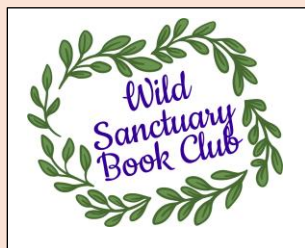
A group has formed locally that is called **Wild Sanctuary**, gathering outdoors to deepen our relationship with the living world, with one another, and with the Sacred Mystery present in all things.

The word sanctuary speaks to what we hope to cultivate—a place of refuge, reverence, and welcome. Like a wildlife sanctuary, it is a place where life is honored and protected. Like a sacred sanctuary, it is a place where we become more aware of the Holy presence that surrounds and sustains us.

Our gatherings may include poetry and reflection, and are grounded in time spent wandering, listening, observing, and simply being present to the land. Rather than rushing toward answers, we seek to cultivate attention, wonder, gratitude, and kinship.

We hope participants leave with a deeper sense of belonging—to the Earth, to one another, and to the great community of life.

Wild Sanctuary will meet monthly throughout the year on the second Sunday of the month at 4:00. The location will be announced each month. Let Lynn Heuss (lheuss@gmail.com) know if you would like to be included in the email list. All are welcome.



Wild Sanctuary Book Group **July 1, 6:30 p.m., Being New Spirituality Center** **Every other Wednesday**

For those who would like to explore, learn more and dialogue about Wild Church and spirituality connected to nature, please join us for a new book group that will read and discuss the book, *Church of the Wild: How Nature Invites Us Into the Sacred*. We will meet every other week, Beginning

Wednesday, July 1, at the Being New Spirituality Center, at 6:30 p.m. In favorable weather bring a chair, we will meet on the labyrinth.

If you're interested in attending, you can RSVP to Mary Ann Koch (maryann2014@gmail.com) or just show up. We will discuss the first chapter on July 1, so please have it read prior to our meeting.

Upcoming Offerings from the Being New Spirituality Center

Prayer for Peace

Monday, July 20, 10:00-11:00 a.m. [Zoom](#) only

Contemplation is not withdrawal from action, but the source of it. —Thomas Merton

Following a 20-minute sit in Centering Prayer or other silent meditation we will watch and discuss a video strengthening our compassionate presence in action. All are welcome. Bring your prayers, your grief, your hope, your wisdom. This is a collaboration of Being New and COCI.

First Friday Summer of Love!

9-11 a.m. in Grace Hall Co-sponsored by Contemplative Outreach of Central Iowa and Being New Do you remember the '60s and The Summer of Love? It's back in a brand-new incarnation as the theme of **First Fridays in June, July, August, and September.**

Spiritual maturity offers an invitation to move beyond the societal understanding of love as something reserved for romantic relationships or family and those close to us. Instead, what does it mean to love in an expansive, more inclusive way - humankind, creation, the marginalized, our country, the cosmos, God? [Details here!](#)

Summer School at the Center, 9-11 a.m. in Grace Hall, dates listed below

Kathy Reardon, spiritual seeker and spiritual director, will be offering **Summer School at the Center!**

- **Thursday July 9 and 23, Session II: The Wisdom of Not Knowing**, based on the [book](#), will consider the difficulty of the unknowns, uncertainties, and uncontrollables of life and how releasing our tight hold on our "need" to know can usher in a refreshing freedom.
- **Thursday August 20, Session III: A Spiritual Potpourri.** Participants will decide what wants to be talked about.

While registration is not necessary, you might text Kathy at 515-776-0439 if you know you'll be attending.

SoulCollage®

1st & 3rd Mondays in the Center | 6:30-8:30 p.m. | \$15

Join facilitator Cindy Schloss Calhoun and learn to create your own SoulCollage deck with images: a story deck that is yours. It is a powerful way to discover your inner wisdom and find answers to life's questions from within. Email [Cindy](#) or text 515-238-8828 to find out what it is all about.

Also available at the Center

- **Enneagram Coaching**, Contact [Julie Honsey](#), Certified in the Narrative Enneagram.
- **Spiritual Direction**, Contact [Deb Richards](#) or [Julie Good](#)
- **Massage and Reiki** with [Julie Good](#), 6077 Bradford Lane, Johnston. Contact her for an appointment, 515-306-4864.
- **Massage Therapy, Reflexology & Reiki** by appointment for those seeking relaxation and balancing. Aromatherapy and guided meditation are included in all session work. Contact [Hannah Whetston](#) 515-505-1878.

Additional details at www.beingnew.org

June Council Minutes

Due to timing of the meeting and publication dates, the June minutes will be provided in the August newsletter. If you would like a copy before then, you can contact a member of council or the church office.

Your 2026 Grace Lutheran Church Council:

Exec. Team: Tom McCleary – President, Carol Woodruff – Vice President, Mike Hilsabeck – Secretary
Brian Gerling – Member at Large

Linda Moravec, Pam Hellman Palmer, Chuck Denton, Jessica Flannery

Finance Report – May Results

Financial results for May YTD are as follows:

- Income – Actual \$172,365, Budget \$172,767, Prior Year \$171,514
- Expenses – Actual \$182,427, Budget \$182,775, Prior Year \$181,949
- Net activity – Actual (\$10,062), Budget (\$10,008), Prior Year (\$10,435)

Activity was \$53 behind budget. The full year budget is a \$12,500 deficit and the goal is to break even for the year.

Bulletins, announcements, and sermons are all online!

For those of you who look for Grace worship materials online, you can find everything on the Bulletins Resource Page. Here's how:

- 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](#) — <https://volunteersignup.org/7RXMJ> We invite you to sponsor a bouquet of flowers for the altar. You can include a special message in the bulletin, and the flowers are yours to take home after the worship service on Sunday.

[Online Giving](#) — Use our secure site at <https://gracedm.org/give-to-grace> 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.