

# The Friendly Visitor August 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 September newsletter:** Monday, August 20

## Office & Open Building Hours

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

The office will be closed on August 11 for Staff Retreat

## 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](http://gracedm.org)

## "Why do they think that way?"

If you have ever thought that about someone else, the upcoming discussion series on "Beyond Bumper Sticker Ethics" is for you. These discussions will begin in Mid-September. We are going to be using that book as an entry point into discussions on ethics. Often, our arguments are about varying moral decisions. These morals are based in each person's view of the world, or system of ethics. Through that view, their answer is "right". This series will dive into the various ways people view the world and talk about how to find common ground with family, friends, and neighbors.

We plan to offer multiple days and times. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Mike at [mike@gracedm.org](mailto:mike@gracedm.org) and also give options for weekly availability.

## Conscience & Conversation Zoom Study with Bishop Current

All are invited to take part in a two-session study led by Bishop Current as part of the ELCA's Social Statement reconsideration process. "Conscience and Conversation: A Study During the Reconsideration of Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" will meet via Zoom on Wednesday, August 12, and Wednesday, August 19, from 6:30–8:00 PM.

Participants will have the chance to study, learn, pray, and share their own voices in this important churchwide conversation. Click below to learn more about the study from Bishop Current or to join the Zoom session. [An Invitation from Bishop Current — Southeastern Iowa Synod ELCA](#)



**We hold these families in our hearts and prayers.**

**The Family of Rev Stephen Ullestad, son of Norman Ullestad**

**The Family of Ernest Dostalík, father of Marty Dostalík**

## AUGUST



## ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Stuart and Martha Mitchell
- 4 Paul and Melissa Kallenbach  
Howard and Alice Kulzer
- 11 Donald and Bonnie Jo Swanson
- 12 John and Sharon Schwemler
- 13 Gary and Marion Nehmer
- 14 Lathrop and Sally Preston  
Ralf and Inga Hoifeldt
- 19 Kenneth and Eleanor Carlson
- 21 Ernest and Cheryl Weatherington
- 25 Bruce Mumm and Christie Rosheim  
Scott and Julie Honsey  
Courtney and Hans Vander Plaats
- 26 Jerry and Diane Westercamp
- 31 Martin and Kari Dostalík  
Kurt and Kathy Bowermaster



- 2 Kevin Drury  
Deborah Helt
- 4 Matthew Trickle
- 5 Rev. Ro Zimany  
Donald Swanson  
Jolee Feeney  
Kayleigh Medhurst
- 6 Riannon Brown
- 7 Layne Weber
- 8 Teri Koch
- 9 Ross Lewis  
Katherine Lenhart
- 12 Brian Gerling
- 13 Josefina Ruiz
- 15 Adam Dostalík
- 16 Cheryl Weatherington
- 18 Jeanne Drury  
Beverly Russell
- 20 Patrick Thompson  
Brent Ridnour  
Cooper Mortenson
- 21 Tom McCleary
- 23 Jason Galle  
Janice Nordeen
- 24 Grace Schroeder  
Janet Trentmann  
Linda Gronert  
Brady Bogue  
Cris Hidalgo
- 25 Scott Honsey
- 27 Tim Nelson
- 28 Philip Snyder
- 29 Joan Fumetti  
Todd Prescott
- 30 Leonard Ringgenberg
- 31 Eleanor Carlson  
Gary Nehmer

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### Vicar's Voice

*"I thank my God every time I remember you." Philippians 1:3*

It is hard to believe that I am already in my third week at Grace Lutheran Church and settling into the beautiful Beaverdale community of Des Moines. These first weeks have been filled with gratitude as I have experienced such incredible warmth, kindness, and hospitality from all of you.

Thank you for the welcome cards, encouraging conversations, grocery gift cards, and every thoughtful gesture that has helped me feel at home. I am especially grateful to Marla for helping prepare my new home with furniture, bedding, and so many welcoming touches, and to Howard and Alice for generously lending me their grandson's vehicle while I get settled. Your generosity has been a beautiful expression of Christ's love.

I am also deeply thankful for Pastor Mike's patience, wisdom, and guidance as I begin this internship. I look forward to my first Internship Committee meeting this week and to learning from those who will walk alongside me throughout this journey. I come with an open heart, eager to learn, to listen, and to grow in ministry together with you.

My family and friends from the United States and around the world, including South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Nigeria, Madagascar, Canada, Australia, and Europe, send their heartfelt greetings and gratitude. They have been praying for this new chapter and are overjoyed that God has led me to such a caring congregation. I also ask you to keep my cousin, Gordon (G), in your prayers as he prepares to begin college in Tennessee.

As I begin this year of learning and serving, I hold onto the words of Jeremiah 29:11: *"For surely I know the plans I have for you... to give you a future with hope."* I trust that the Holy Spirit has brought us together for a purpose, and I am excited to discover how God will continue to shape us through our shared ministry. Thank you for welcoming me into your church family with such grace and love. I look forward to worshiping, learning, serving, and growing alongside each of you in the months ahead.

Vicar Apou

### Mission Action Update



The Mission Action Fund is pleased to announce two donations that were approved during the July meeting. The first is a \$2,000 donation to the Eating Disorder Coalition of Iowa. EDCI is a non-profit founded in 2010 by a group of passionate volunteers with a mission to provide inclusive education about disordered eating and to change cultural narratives regarding food, bodies, weight, and health. More information can be found at [edciowa.org](http://edciowa.org).

The second donation is \$5,000 to Lutheran World Relief in response to the earthquake in Venezuela. We ask your continued prayers for the families impacted by the earthquake and those responding to their needs.

The Mission Action Fund was established with the goal to respond quickly to needs in the immediate neighborhood and beyond (statewide, nationally, and internationally), and not to be used for the Congregational Budget.



### Backpack Blessing In Worship, Sunday, August 16.

Students of all ages, teachers, school employees, and parents: bring your backpacks with you — or just yourselves if you prefer — as we prepare to bless those headed off to a new school year.



### Gods Work. Our Hands. Sunday, September 13

“God’s work. Our hands.” is the ELCA’s annual day of service, taking place Sept. 13, 2026. It is a blessed opportunity to celebrate who we are as a church, engaging in projects and activities that explore our convictions as Lutherans: that all life in Jesus flows from a living, daring confidence in God’s grace. The ELCA is one church, freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbor every day.

This Sunday will be our kickoff for Fall programming. Shirts have been ordered, if you would like one, let the office know. We will make them available when they arrive.



### 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 September – watch this newsletter, and our website calendar for updates.

**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](mailto:Mike@gracedm.org). We welcome you!

### 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](http://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](#).

## 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.



We are sharing information from Biblical scholars throughout 2026 as several members of Grace requested Bible verses to support acceptance of LGBTQ+.

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### **Old Testament: Isaiah 44:22.**

*I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like mist, return to me, for I have redeemed you.*

### **New Testament: 1Corinthians 13:4-7**

*Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrong-doing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

**Takeaway:** We are not judge and jury. We need to live by doing good works, forgiving others and ourselves.



### **August LFP Request: School supplies!**

Notebooks, pens, pencils, colored pencils, pencil sharpeners, crayons, markers, folders, scissors, backpacks.

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.



### **Is your garden overflowing?**

Are contemplating leaving zucchini on neighbors porches or in their cars? Bring your extra produce to the Little Free Pantry at Grace or to one of the pantries in front of any of several local schools.

Leaving on a vacation and have bread products, produce, unopened milk or yogurt, or other unopened/unexpired groceries? Shelf stable items such as bread can be left in the Little Free Pantry too!

Items that require refrigeration, or that may wilt in hot weather (lettuce, herbs), consider donating to one of the nearby Community Fridges:

- 5720 Urbandale Ave (St Andrew's Church)
- Franklin Library, 5000 Franklin Avenue, just inside the main entrance.





## Office Closed

The office will be closed on Tuesday, August 11 for a staff planning retreat. All other events and meetings at Grace will happen as scheduled.

## Libraries update!

The Willing Workers and Saturday Project Groups have been making progress in updating the former Grace Library into a comfortable, medium-sized meeting space. Fresh paint, including a lovely accent wall and new baseboards have been added. Still to come: updated lighting and a counter for beverages in the wall recess. Users will be able to run video to a larger screen as well.

The display case has been moved to the open area in the office, which has also been rearranged. Some of the empty bookshelves were moved to the Being New Spirituality Center (BNSC) this past spring. Other shelves were moved to the former Café area between the classrooms and Music room.

The Being New Spirituality Center recently received a second large donation of books, these from the personal collection of Joyce Rupp. With the bookshelves (safely anchored to the wall by the Willing Workers), one of the older round tables, a donated rug, and two comfy chairs relocated from other areas in the building, the former Café is turning into a lovely resource library and quiet space for reading or waiting for events/appointments at the BNSC or music room. A BNSC patron who happens to be a librarian has offered to help organize the books.

Wander down to peek at these spaces as they come together, and watch for notice of an official Open House in early Fall!



## Lament as Prayer

- “Dad’s health is not improving. We need to discuss what steps to take next.”
- “Dear applicant: Thank you for your interest in our company, but ...”
- “Ugh! I just got the car repair bill paid off. Now the bathtub is leaking!”



Do any of the above statements resonate with you? Any of these situations can be immensely stressful and draining, pushing you to wit’s end, leading to sobbing, screaming or punching a pillow. This, my friend, is LAMENT.

Merriam-Webster defines lament as “to mourn aloud” or “to express sorrow, mourning or regret for, often demonstratively.” In times of extreme anxiety and agony, you may find yourself crying out to God:

*Why God? Why me?  
God, why is there such division and hatred in the world?  
Where are you, God? Why aren’t you fixing this?*

God is not shocked nor surprised by your periods of lament. He sees your heart and welcomes what is there...so don’t be shy! Although it may be uncomfortable to “let loose with God”, lament is still prayer. Releasing your pain and sorrow (and even anger!) to God turns control over to Him, where it belongs. It frees you. It heals you. We may not know the whys behind our times of lament, but God is a God of hope and love.

In his song “Call Your Name,” Christian artist Dan Bremnes sings of calling on God as a youth and as he navigated adulthood. The most poignant part of the song, however, references losing his mother unexpectedly in a car accident. His anguishing vocals in this part are a powerful expression of lament.

*I called your name, I called your name  
‘Cause sometimes there’s just nothing left to say.*

Whether your lament is vocal or voiceless, share it with God. He is right there beside you...where He’s always been, ready to meet you where you’re at with open arms. Let Him bring you peace and comfort.

“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.” The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. Lamentations 3:24-25 (NRSVUE)

## The Way of the Rose: Our Lady of Guadalupe Rosary

2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 6:30 pm, Room 108 (lower level, across from the Center).

We are an open-hearted, inclusive community dedicated to the forgotten Earth wisdom of the rosary, not affiliated with any religious institution. This circle will be praying 5 decades of the rosary centered on the story of the Mexican mother Tonantzin, the miracle attributed to her, and how she became known as Our Lady of Guadalupe. Traditional and non-traditional prayer, chant, and song forms welcome and no prior knowledge of the rosary is needed. Each meeting is a stand-alone circle that makes space for prayer, reflection and connection. Join us in the calming support available to all in the garden of prayer. Use the main entrance of the building. **Contact:** [Hannah Whetston hannahwhetson@gmail.com](mailto:hannahwhetson@gmail.com) for more information

## Upcoming Offerings from the Being New Spirituality Center

### Prayer for Peace

**Monday, August 17, 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 remaining in 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 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](http://www.beingnew.org)



## **MINUTES – Grace Congregational Council – June 23, 2026**

**Meeting came to order** June 23rd, 2026, at 6:10 pm

**Members present** – Chuck Denton, Carol WoodruA, Pam Palmer, Linda Moravec, Tom McCleary, Pastor Mike Schmidt, Mike Hilsabeck, Jessye Flannery, Brian Gerling Meal – Tom

**Call to Order** Adoption of Agenda – Carol moved, Pam seconded, agenda adopted Devotions – Pam

**Approval of previous meeting's minutes** – Brian moved, Mike H seconded, minutes approved.

**"Ideas that will get you fired"**

**Review/Approval of Staff Reports** – Jessye moved, Carol seconded, reports accepted Review/Acceptance of Finance report – Chuck moved, Brian seconded, report accepted

**Capital Campaign Update** – Current pledges are \$636,067. Current available funds are \$209,363 (as of 6/23).

### **Unfinished Business**

- Church 100th Anniversary Update – May 22-23, 2027. The following folks will help prepare and coordinate activities: Kevin Drury, Carol Woodruff, Jenny Rehder, Kathy Bowermaster, Jane Ridnour and Sue Anderson.
- Church Finance Audit – prior to completing the audit, Larry Nordeen will be back to review the Endowment fund. This has been delayed due to Larry's other commitments. We will complete the audit in July.
- Recovery Café Facility-Use Update – the bid review group met 5/21 (Chuck, Jon R, Eric W, John Trickle, Nichole, Mike H, and Patrick Dahlen). The issue was raised: do we need to first find an architecture firm (from 3 bids); create a conceptual design; then use the design to obtain 3 bids from building/contracting firms. The coordinating group (Patrick, Mike H, Mike S and Nichole) then met on 6/17. We felt the process needed to be simplified, and that we should look for one firm to contract the entire process. We currently have one bid from Breiholz. Patrick will reach out to Snyder about getting a bid. We need to get one more.
- Re-zoning of Prayer Garden Area – re-zoning approved by the city. We now need to turn in plans for concrete work.
- Staff Support Committee – no update
- Upcoming Internship – Vicar Apou Aderbuk will be moving in on July 5th. The Kulzers have offered to provide a car for our new Vicar. Because of tax law, this would cause the value of the car to be considered income. Motion: Carol moved to increase the stipend for the new vicar to compensate for this increased tax amount, not to exceed \$500 for the entire year. Linda seconded, motion carried.

### **New Business**

- Revision/Rewrite of the Church Facility Use Policy – we will create a task-group to redo policy document. Nichole A, Brain G, Mike H & Tom M will participate. We will have Nichole lead the effort (schedule meetings, etc.).
- Consideration of engaging a lawn mowing service – currently getting bids.
- Replacement of 3 Skylights in the Gathering Hall – the 27-year-old skylights have started leaking. ForSure Roofing is providing a quote. Brian will get an update.
- Replacement of tables for Grace Hall – we agreed it was time to replace most of the current (25-year-old) tables. Pastor Mike & Mike H will bring cost options to our next meeting. We will then need to identify the funding source.
- Being New Spirituality Center items: 1) filed with state and with our bank setting BNSC as a "Doing Business As..." name for GLC. This will allow us to cash checks made out to the center. 2) Being New group has suggested using some of the reserve funds for BNSC-related building projects (e.g. magnetizing the fire doors in the BNSC area, prayer garden, new furniture). We will work with them to identify specifics.

***Minutes, continued on page 10***

- Pastor & Council Evaluation – we discussed the process we will use for the evaluation. Pastor provided an example form from the ELCA. The council will use the form as a guide to prepare for a discussion at our next meeting.

Adjournment – Linda moved, Carol seconded. The council adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday, July 22nd. Meal – Chuck, Devotions – Chuck

### Your 2026 Grace Lutheran Church Council:

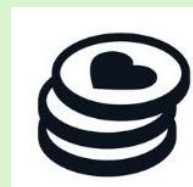
**Exec. Team:** Tom McCleary – President, Carol Woodruff – Vice President, Mike Hilsabeck – Secretary  
Brian Gerling – Member at Large

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

### Finance Report – June Results

Financial results for June YTD are as follows:

- Income – Actual \$211,871, Budget \$206,800, Prior Year \$202,785
- Expenses – Actual \$208,638, Budget \$214,625, Prior Year \$221,760
- Net activity – Actual \$3,233, Budget (\$7,825), Prior Year (\$18,975)



Activity was \$11,058 ahead of budget. The full year budget is a \$12,500 deficit and the goal is to break even for the year.

Additionally, the Capital Campaign had receipts during the year of \$214,945. Monies were used to fund \$66,533 for roof replacement and \$48,778 for a new HVAC split system.

### 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](http://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.