

The Friendly Visitor September 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.*

In This Issue ...

- 1 Ministry Fair
- 2 Sympathies, Staff Contacts, Celebrations,
- 3 Vicar's Voice, Office Closure
- 4 Fall Schedule and offerings, Pet Blessing
- 5 God's Work Our Hands Sept 13
Exploring Grace dates
- 6 Team Grace, Little Free Pantry requests
- 7 Contemplative Corner, Being New Library
- 8 Being New Spirituality Center Offerings
- 9 Grace Council Minutes
- 10 Finance Report, Altar Flowers, Online
Giving, and other links

Submission deadline for the October newsletter: Monday, September 21

Office & Open Building Hours

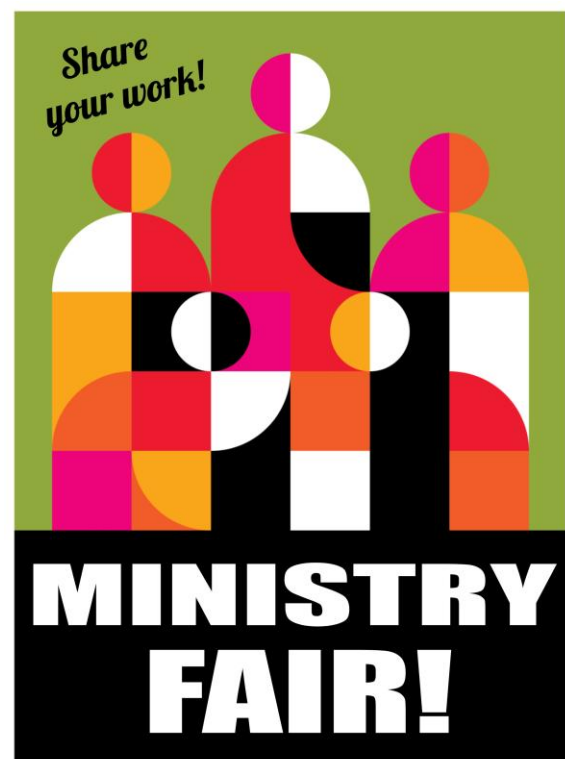
9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Monday – Thursday
Or by appointment
The office will be closed on Monday,
September 7 for Labor Day

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

Ministry Fair Invitation
Sunday, September 20
Grace Hall after worship



We invite you to share a little bit about your team/committee, whether the work you do serves the building, membership, those in the community, or those in the greater world.

We also want to acknowledge and thank you for the work that you do. If you aren't a part of a team, please stop by to see what fantastic work is being done at Grace.

Please contact the office to let us know who will be representing your group - we suspect you will want to take shifts so you can go see others – and how much space you need.



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

The Family of Elizabeth Schaller
The Family of Tom Haugen - father of
Todd Haugen and Kari Dostalík



- 3 Brent and Val Culp
Todd and Elizabeth Prescott
- 4 Donald and Gail Peterson
- 5 Charles and Tammy Denton
Lon and Denise Friesth
- 6 Aaron and Martha Page
- 7 Tom and Ashley Ocken
- 13 Larry and Janice Nordeen
- 27 Tom and Mary Jo McCleary
- 28 Lenny and Pam Palmer

Grace Lutheran Church Staff
5201 Urbandale Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50310
515-276-6873

Pastor Michael Schmidt
mike@gracedm.org
Ext. 203

Vicar Apou Aderbuk
Apou@gracedm.org
Ext. 206

Bookkeeper Mike Hilsabeck
mike.h@gracedm.org
Ext. 200

Organist Richard Snyder
rich@gracedm.org

Custodian Todd Haugen
1-515-520-4450



Property Manager Brian Gerling
brian@gracedm.org
Ext. 205

Minister for Communications
Michelle Voelker
michelle@gracedm.org
Ext. 201

Office Assistant for Worship
Jessye Flannery
Jessica@gracedm.org

**Piano Accompanist and
Music Ensemble Coordinator**
Kathy Bowermaster
kathybowermaster17@gmail.com

- 1 Cindy Peeler
- 2 Michelle Voelker
Heather Burgett
- 5 Richard Snyder
Kiley Brandsfield
- 6 Nely Ruiz
- 8 Ethan Meadows
- 9 Joie Gronert
- 11 Ian Galle
- 13 John Trickle
Rhonda Jensen
Robert Briggs
- 14 Katelyn Jessen
- 15 Richard Voelker
- 18 Rev. Michael Schmidt
- 19 Sarah Helt
- 21 Gabe Brown
- 22 Jeanine Rutter
Finnegan Holst
Kylan Appenzeller
- 24 Michael Meadows
Thomas Rutter
- 25 Karen Bandy
- 26 Bruce Mumm
- 27 Gregory Honnold
Joshua Curry
Jeryl Janson
Bill Kallestad
- 28 Ross Peeler
- 29 Aaron Page
Robbie Rissman



Vicar's Voice

Warm greetings to you, family of Grace!

As I enter my second month at Grace, I am grateful for the many ways the Holy Spirit continues to open unexpected doors for ministry, learning, and relationship. This internship is teaching me that ministry is not simply about what we do; it is about recognizing where God is already at work and joining in God's mission. Recently, a colleague shared a paper with our members at Grace (Julie & Joan) and me on **Constructive Quantum Theology**. In quantum physics, particles are understood through their relationships and interactions. When one part of a system moves, it can affect the larger network. This image reminded me of Paul's teaching that we are the Body of Christ. We are deeply connected to one another and to the *Missio Dei*, the mission of God. I experienced this interconnectedness in many ways this past month.

On August 2, I had the privilege of preaching my second sermon at Grace. Each opportunity to preach continues to stretch and form me, and I am grateful for your encouragement as I grow in depth and confidence in proclaiming God's Word.

The **Grace Garage Sale** on July 31 became more than an event. It created opportunities for conversations with neighbors, volunteers, and members of our congregation. It reminded me that ministry often happens through ordinary moments of welcome, listening, and relationship.

On August 6, I was grateful to be included in a **Des Moines Register** feature exploring how international religious leaders serve congregations while navigating the challenges of immigration. Sharing this experience reminded me how our individual stories connect with larger stories of faith, vocation, community, and belonging.

I also enjoyed participating in the **Quilting Room photography** session with the women of Grace. As I watched the beautiful quilts and the women who created them, I was reminded of the Church itself: many different pieces, stories, gifts, and experiences brought together to create something beautiful. Every piece matters.

I was also invited to join the planning team for the **Being New Spirituality Center**, an opportunity I look forward to as I learn from different spiritual traditions and explore connections across denominational communities.

Finally, our **Staff Retreat** on August 11 gave us time to step away from our normal routines, pray, reflect on the upcoming ministry season, and strengthen our relationships as a staff. It reminded me that faithful ministry requires not only work but also prayer, trust, community, and rest. As I reflect on this month, I keep returning to one simple truth:

We are connected. Connected to Christ. Connected to one another. Connected to our neighbors. And connected to God's mission in the world. Thank you, Grace, for welcoming me, encouraging me, challenging me, and allowing me to walk alongside you during this season of formation. I look forward to discovering together where the Holy Spirit will lead us next.

Vicar Apou



The church office will be closed

Thursday, September 3 and Friday, September 4 as staff takes time away with their families.
Monday, September 7 in observance of Labor Day.

Fall 2026 Schedule

God's Work Our Hands – Sunday, September 13

Kit-making and Quilt-tying for Lutheran World Relief with Mosaic of Central Iowa, and a community Lunch – see page 5 for details.

Bible Study – “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 expect this study to take about 7 weeks. *We are offering multiple days and times:*

1. The Tuesday Morning Bible Study will begin on Tuesday, September 15 at 9 a.m.
2. Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. in Room 102
3. Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. in Room 102

Chancel Choir Rehearsals

Beginning on September 16, we'll meet in the music room below Grace Hall at 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays. All singers are welcome to join us! See page 11.

Elementary Sunday School

Begins on September 27 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.

Sunday Morning Adult Education – Women of the New Testament

Middle and high schoolers are considered as adults for Sunday education!

Starting on September 27, we will meet in Grace Hall at 10:15, after worship and coffeetime.

Confirmation Classes

Orientation is Wednesday, September 30 at 6:30 p.m. in room 102. Classes begin Wednesday, October 7, at 6:30 p.m.

100th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, May 22, 2027: Building Tours during the day. Banquet in the evening.

Sunday, May 23, 2027: Worship in the Sanctuary at Grace!

Pet Blessing

October 3, 10:30 a.m. with Pastor Mike

You are invited to bring your furry, fuzzy, fishy or feathered friends to our Annual Community Pet Blessing on Saturday, October 3.

The service will begin at 10:30 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.



God's Work Our Hands
Sunday, September 13
with Mosaic of Central Iowa, and Lutheran World Relief



We are partnering with Mosaic in Central Iowa, looking to build relationships and community as well as offering others a chance to contribute to helping others around the world through Lutheran World Relief. On this morning, we will:

- have an abbreviated Service of the Word together in the Sanctuary. We are looking for additional greeters to help guide visitors to the Sanctuary, and/or find a shirt if desired.
- Coffee and donuts will be in Grace Hall. We know Grace members will help our guests find the elevators and closest stairs.
- Our activity for the morning will be led by Cathy Watson and Jill Boesch. We will focus on Lutheran World Relief kit making and quilt tying - our guests will be able to choose activities suited to their abilities, with help as needed by their caregivers and members of Grace.
- After the activity, we will enjoy a community meal together (catered sandwiches, chips, lemonade, water, and desserts) which will serve as our Communion together.
- We are looking for a few people to bring a dessert as well – we've added signups to the worship volunteer sheet in the gathering Hall and online.

From the Mosaic website:

Mosaic recognizes that people with intellectual disabilities desire and deserve greater independence and closer ties to the community. By developing and expanding community connections, we create new social, volunteer and employment opportunities. Mosaic empowers people in their unique pursuit of happiness. Providing truly personalized services, we help people achieve their goals and dreams.

Mosaic stands alongside people with intellectual disabilities to bring awareness to issues that affect their lives. We actively advocate for disability rights, encourage self-advocacy and promote public policy that positively impacts the people we serve.



few bright yellow teeshirts!

you need a tee shirt for next week, we have plenty available in all sizes from youth small to adult 5x. They can be found in the Gathering Hall near the coat closet.



Exploring Grace With Pastor Mike Sundays September 27, October 25, November 29

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. We welcome you!

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+.

Old Testament: Isaiah 48:6-8

From this time forward I make you hear new things, hidden things that you have not known. They are created now, not long ago; before today you have never heard of them, so you could not say, "I already knew them." You have never heard, you have never known, from of old your ear has not been opened.

Isaiah 56:2-7

Happy is the mortal who does this, the one who holds it fast, who keeps the sabbath, not profaning it, and refrains from doing any evil. Do not let the foreigner joined to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from his people;" and do not let the eunuch say, "I am just a dry tree." For thus says the LORD: to the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants...my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

New Testament: 1Corinthians 14:26, 33

What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. For God is a God not of disorder, but of peace.

Takeaway: Originally, eunuchs and "unclean" or sick or imperfect people were excluded from the community; Isaiah makes it clear all are accepted if they have faith; this acceptance is greater than previously, it is a change of acceptance to those who try to follow God's laws. New ideas and questioning are a part of the deepening process of exploring a relationship with God. We need to listen with our hearts to one another in peace to grow and learn. Each person is a precious child of God with different talents and gifts.

Little Free Pantry Request:

We are collecting canned tuna, chicken, and beans for the Little Free Pantry in September. We are focusing on food that provides a good source of protein for the Little Free Pantry this month. Providing protein for food insecurity and hunger is essential for several reasons. It is crucial for growth, development, and maintenance of body tissues, as well as for numerous physiological processes. Protein helps promote fullness by reducing the feelings of hunger.



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.

What is a spiritual practice?

Julie Honsey

I am the vine; you are the branches.
-John 15: 5a

We don't practice perfectly, but faithfully.
-Father Thomas Keating



Do you engage in certain habits or rituals that soften your heart or quiet your mind, and bring you into touch with something that feels sacred, right, or loving? Do you call your mother, father, son, or daughter regularly simply to check in? Do you garden, relishing being outside with your hands in the soil? Do you listen to music, knit, quilt, build, bake, run, take walks, record your thoughts in a journal, sing in a choir or in the shower, or paint walls or pictures? Do you have deep conversations with particular people? Do you set aside a certain time each day to pray, or read scripture or poetry? Do you light a candle? Do you pause in awe when sunlight filters through the canopy of trees, dragonflies dance over the lawn, or a soft breeze blows across your face?

The defining answer to the question of what a spiritual practice is not so much *what*, but the extent to which what you do awakens a subtle awareness of the sacred. At any given time, you likely have several practices that draw you into that quiet awareness of abiding in something sacred. As life unfolds, new practices may emerge as your needs and circumstances change, while practices that have accompanied you for years may gently fall away.

Through experience, you discover that remaining faithful to these simple practices enhances the quality of your days and deepens your awareness of a connection to God's presence. Over time, awareness of your connection grows.

Finding your spiritual practice, then, is not a single event but an ongoing invitation. Each time you are granted even the slightest experience of the sacredness of the present moment, you are invited to respond with faithfulness. Through such simple, repeated acts, and without your knowing how, God leads you more deeply into a relationship and into the inexhaustible grace that gradually becomes manifest in your daily living.

Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.
-Galatians 6: 9

A New Library at Being New!

We are delighted to invite you to explore what is likely the most extensive spirituality library in central Iowa. Whether you're searching for a specific title or simply following your curiosity, you'll find a wealth of contemplative wisdom awaiting you.

Browse our online catalog at [LibraryThing](#), or stop by and let a book find you. Spend time reading in this quiet, welcoming space, or check out a book to enjoy at home.

The library is open whenever Grace Lutheran Church is open—typically Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, and on Sunday mornings—and is located in the lower level.

We are deeply grateful to Joyce Rupp and the Servite Sisters for their extraordinary generosity. Through Joyce's personal gift and the donation of the library from the Omaha Servite Motherhouse, this remarkable collection has found a new home where it can continue to inspire and nourish the wider community.

Upcoming Offerings from the Being New Spirituality Center

Fall Wisdom School

We are excited to announce a 10 week Wisdom School, [Rebuilding Trust](#). We'll meet Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. in person at the Center starting September 9 or Thursday evenings on Zoom at 6:30 p.m. starting September 10. The sessions will generally run 1.5 hours. Interested? You are welcome to attend the first session to see if this is for you. Contact [Joan Fumetti](#), [Julie Honsey](#) or [Sarah Ryan](#) for details or to register.

To our usual way of looking at things, trust must be earned; it is called forth in response to demonstrated trustworthiness. But there is another way of approaching trust, which has always been the way of the great saints and mystics: trust is not earned so much as bestowed—from a fathomless strength and freedom which lies latent in every human soul, flowing like a wellspring from the heart of God. Anchored in strength rather than gullibility, and impervious to manipulation, this trust is itself a transformative force, flowing into a broken world to bring courage, healing, and reconnection.

At a time when the trust level in our world has fallen to a catastrophic low, Cynthia Bourgeault provides a deep immersion into another way of working with trust. An established meditation practice will help support this teaching and the necessary willingness to offer oneself on this pathway of conscious service to the whole.

What Do Women Do with Christianity?

September 11 Noon -1:30 p.m. Being New Center

Join us for a live conversation hosted by the Center for Action and Contemplation for an essential conversation on gender, faith, and embodied spirituality.

Prayer for Peace

Monday, September 21, 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.

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

MINUTES –Grace Congregational Council – July 22, 2026

Meeting came to order July 22nd, 2026, at 6:10pm

Members present – Chuck Denton, Carol Woodruff, Pam Palmer, Tom McCleary, Pastor Mike Schmidt, Mike Hilsabeck, Vicar Apou, Jessye Flannery, Brian Gerling

Meal – Chuck

Call to Order

Adoption of Agenda – Pam moved, Brian seconded, agenda adopted

Devotions – Chuck

Approval of previous meeting's minutes – Carol moved, Chuck seconded, minutes approved

"Ideas that will get you fired" – discussed 2 ideas... Idea#1 Ditch the volunteer sheet, instead ask for volunteers prior to service. Or, possibly, have the signup sheet set out as folks arrive for service. Idea#2 Once a month have a potluck Saturday diner service.

Review/Approval of Staff Reports – discussed a couple of questions/clarifications. Carol moved for approval, Mike H seconded, reports approved

Review/Acceptance of Finance report – noted, it was a good month for the budget. Jessye moved to accept the report, Chuck seconded, report accepted

Capital Campaign Update – Current pledges are \$636,067. Current available funds are \$211,503 (as of 7/22). This includes the payment of the \$48,778 Excel Mechanical invoice for installation of the HVAC Mini-Splits

Unfinished Business

Church 100th Anniversary Update – May 22-23, 2027. On Saturday afternoon, we will have a meeting with prior church leaders, along with tours of the church (open to the public). Saturday night will be an offsite catered dinner. The committee has narrowed the location search to 2 venues and will soon be deciding on which one. We will need to put a deposit down this year (possibly out of Thrivent Choice reserve) and will budget the remaining cost for next year.

Update on Church Finance Audit – as part of the final tasks of the audit, Larry Nordeen has been provided information on 2025 Endowment Fund activity. Not much progress was made in June as Larry is working on a priority project for the state.

Recovery Café Facility-Use Update – RC is looking at an alternative site for a home location. The evaluation is now between Grace and the alternative site. We will be meeting with Patrick to discuss this further.

Staff Support Committee – the council reviewed draft documents concerning the volunteer role. We also discussed finding someone to fill the role.

Consideration of engaging a lawn mowing service – no update

Revision/Rewrite of the Church Facility Use Policy – Mike H and Brian will get started on a draft for this.

Re-zoning of Prayer Garden Area – no update

Being New Spirituality Center items – the BNSC will use of some of the reserve funds for building projects that have direct benefit for the center – we are looking at 2 possible projects.

Replacement of 3 Skylights in the Gathering Hall – we are coordinating an installation date with ForSure Roofing.

New Business

Tree removal at 52nd st house – we have 3 bids and are getting one more.

Pastor Evaluation – tabled until next meeting

Des Moines Public Schools has started to charge for spouses on the DMPS health and dental insurance (Pastor is on Jenie's plan). That cost is \$75 per month. The Pastor requests this amount be added to his compensation. This amount will likely continue to rise.

- Carol motioned we reimburse the Pastor for his DMPS health ins cost. We will add \$37.50 per pay period (2 per month). Jessye seconded. Motion approved.

Minutes, continued on page 10

Minutes, continued from page 9

The Pastor is eligible for a sabbatical and would like to begin preparations for one during the summer of 2028. We could form a planning committee to work on grant funding through the Lily Foundation. This might cover all expenses for both the Pastor and GLC.

- Chuck motioned that GLC approve the summer 2028 sabbatical. Pam seconded. Motion approved. Tim Barrick, photographer, was here in June and shot new staff (and other) portraits. He performs this work on a free will offering basis. The photographs are wonderful and Michelle is preparing them to be used on the website and in other ways.

- Carol motioned we give Tim Barrick \$1,500 for his service. Tom seconded. Motion carried.

Adjournment – Chuck moved, Brian seconded, motion carried - the council adjourned at 8:00pm. Our next meeting is on Tuesday, August 25th. Meal – Mike H, Devotions – Brian

Finance Report – July Results

Financial results for July YTD are as follows:

- Income – Actual \$236,983, Budget \$240,833, Prior Year \$237,981
- Expenses – Actual \$252,307, Budget \$256,250, Prior Year \$255,288
- Net activity – Actual (\$15,324), Budget (\$15,417), Prior Year (\$17,307)



Activity was breakeven with 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 \$217,285. Monies were used to fund \$201,472 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. 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.