



# GRACE NOTES

JULY 2026 ISSUE 84-07

Dear Friends,

Change of plans. Growing up, I wasn't a big fan of those words. I liked tradition and knowing what to expect. To be honest, that hasn't changed a whole lot. If I had a choice, I'd love for most things, the good things, to go on and stay the same. No major alterations to my daily routine or the plans I've laid.

A little over a year ago, I had plans for a vacation to Greece, only to experience something entirely different. Circumstances reshaped the trip I took from one curated through months of careful planning to one created from impromptu and hurried decisions. That trip provided rare opportunities. I took chances, traveled alone, and let go of my expectations and control. While I had always imagined going on a trip like the one I took to Ireland, I don't think I would have ever chosen to do so on my own.

When I reflect on the story in Acts 16:6-15, where Paul and some apostles are traveling and spreading the Good News, it lands a little different than even a few years ago. They went from town to town, only to find one path blocked. Change of plans; they kept going, adapting and listening to the Spirit. Then came a vision of a man in Macedonia; off they went to find him only to run into Lydia. Change of plans; they work with her and her household,

establishing a new worshiping community with Lydia. They didn't always end up where they expected, but found they landed where God needed them to be.

Nearly five years ago, Grace's council and the congregation reflected on this text. At the time we were exploring how we could work with St. Mark in certain areas of ministry. That path didn't pan out quite how we expected, but those conversations also led to the creation of the Director of Outreach and Youth Ministry position. Since then, we've grown in certain ministries and seen change in others.

The tough reality is that despite the desire for all good things to remain the same or for our plans to go through as we expect, we know that there will always be change. Sometimes those changes are good and life giving. Sometimes they are inevitable and difficult to accept. I see it in a little girl who isn't a big fan of becoming a big sister. I've heard it in friends who are deciding to change jobs or careers; people who are navigating retirement or limiting their activities due to health.

While your day-to-day lives may look roughly the same as before, I'm guessing you too can also spot the paths where you've had to change your plans. Where perhaps God and life intervened, taking you on an adventure you never expected.

Five years after our initial reflection on Acts 16, it's time to return. To

reflect on who we are today and where God is calling us tomorrow. We've taken the first step, getting to know one another better and hearing some of your thoughts through our Listening Campaign (**read more about it on page two**). Now we are inviting you to join us on July 26, to continue the conversation. Pastor LeAnn Stubbs from the Southeastern Iowa Synod will be facilitating a conversation based on what we heard through the campaign and helping us to go deeper. We hope you will join us and help us discover together where God is calling us today.

God's Peace  
Pastor Stephanie



Southeastern Iowa  
— SYNOD —  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

## Grace Talks

Sunday, July 26

Joint Worship 9:30am  
Conversation 10:40am  
Catered Lunch 12:00pm

We listened and now we want to invite everyone to a larger conversation. On Sunday July 26, we've invited the Synod to facilitate a conversation that follows up on our listening campaign. Focusing on the major themes we heard from our members, we want to discuss what comes next. \*Childcare will be provided\*

**We listened to 43 over nine weeks! In that time, we invited 61 people to chat, some weren't available, and a few declined. Regardless of the information gathered, the listeners and listenees greatly appreciated the time to connect and get to know one another.**

## WHAT YOU TOLD US

- Your feedback was overwhelmingly positive. One of the most common descriptors you had for Grace was home and family. Here, you feel safe, welcomed, connected, and supported.
- You also told us how Grace is deeply service-oriented. You value the ways we care for our neighborhood. Not only do you believe in our mission and ministry, but you know the person next to you does as well.
- Children's ministry was another bright spot. Even though it is still growing, you see meaningful progress and hope to see that momentum continue.

## CHALLENGES IN DAILY LIFE

We shared the different pressures and challenges many our members face in their daily lives. Some of which impact their ability to stay engaged at Grace.

- **Health and Aging** Many members are experiencing changes in health, ability, and energy.
- **Travel and Availability** Snowbirds, retirees, and those visiting family often have less availability to participate and serve or join planning teams.
- **Caregiving Responsibilities** Some are balancing care for parents, spouses, or friends alongside their own daily responsibilities. Families with kids are managing work, parenting, and activities. All of which can limit their time and flexibility.

## THRIVING AND GROWING

Looking beyond individual preferences, we reflected on larger themes among all those we listened to. What do we find most meaningful to us at Grace? What would make Grace stronger, more vibrant? A few overlapping themes emerged:

VALUES	WHAT THIS MEANS
Relationships	Grace feels like home. We value our relationships and we want to expand upon the ways we connect with one another and offer mutual support.
Worship	We find meaning in the sermons, music and the ways we worship. Together, might we discover a way to increase regular engagement.
Community Outreach	Continuing to love our neighbors through service and investment in this ministry is a significant priority among our community.
Children's Ministry	We want to build upon the growth we've seen over the past few years. We serve both the children we meet on Sunday and the ones we only encounter through programs like Pray and Play.

**Thank you for sharing your thoughts! Join us on July 26 for Grace Talks as we explore these topics further. Along with the Spirit, we will listen to where God is calling us next.**



THANK YOU to the following ladies that have helped with the Safer lunches on May 19, 28; June 2 and 9: **Gloria Lange, Karen Jewel, Vicki Liebbe, Kathy Higgins, Ruth McAndrews, Dr. Becky Wiese, and Marilyn Schreiber.**

Grace Lutheran Church is the only church who continues to provide a hot lunch for four weeks a class for the youth at Safer. Safer has had held six groups in their calendar year. I am so appreciative of the dedication these ladies and all the others that have helped during the year! If you are interested in helping, please contact Hollie Swain (563-514-4022).



Dearest Grace Family & Friends, We were so touched to have so many of you at our 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary party on May 30. It meant a lot to us to share the day with all of you, and we so much enjoyed all of the visits and shared memories. ~Shirley & Ken Wellnitz

## Save the Date!

Join us on Sunday, **August 9**, for our annual Jazz Worship Joint Service at 9:30am with the Manny Lopez Big Band.



## FALL BLOCK PARTY

**Sunday, September 20**

Joint Outdoor Worship: 10:30am

Food & Fun: 11:30am-1:30pm

Sloppy Joes • Bouncy House

Games & Fellowship with Neighbors

Grace Lutheran Church  
1140 E High St  
Davenport, IA

## BONFIRE CHURCH

**JULY 29 | 6-8PM**

**DEVIL'S GLEN PARK**

1101 Devils Glen Rd, Bettendorf

Grace members in their second quarter of life (20s, 30s, 40s) are invited to join other members from local Quad Cities ELCA churches for a bonfire. We will have snacks and great conversation. Feel free to bring a friend!

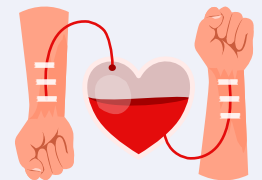
### QUESTIONS?

Pastor Stephanie  
563-322-0769  
pastorstephanie@gracewelcomesyou.org



## Blood Drive Updates

Grace members made five blood donations during June. The year-to-date total is 65. Those that donated at the Grace in-house drive in May are eligible to give from July 14 to July 21. They will be eligible to donate again at Grace's drive on Tuesday, September 15.





## Pie & Ice Cream

Friday, July 31 | 7:30pm

Pie, Ice Cream, and Great Music! Join our Grace WELCA for pie and ice cream and enjoy the Bettendorf Community Band at **Veterans Memorial Park** (1645 ~ 23rd Street, Bettendorf) as they perform their favorite songs from this 58<sup>th</sup> season! Come have a good time and support both WELCA and the Bettendorf Community Band. Free-will Donation

## LWR School Kits, Fabric Kits, & Personal Care Kits

We can't control when disasters strike and we can't end poverty overnight, but there are things we can do to help people around the world reach their full potential. Once again the members of Grace are invited to contribute to the **Lutheran World Relief** School Kits, Fabric Kits, and Personal Care Kits.

School supplies will soon be on sale! Empty school bags will be in the narthex with a school supply list inside. There are also lists of items needed to complete Personal Care Kits and Fabric Kits (separate from the school bags). The filled bags and completed kits should be returned to Grace by September 13.



The Grace Church Council has established a Special Projects Fund with revenue from Grace's Endowment, and **we're looking to YOU for ideas and to lead projects** that foster innovation and creativity in ministry and further the on-going mission of Grace.

Proposals may be submitted by staff, church council, committees, on-going or adhoc groups, or individual Grace members. No grant may exceed \$2500 in a calendar year. Application forms are available at church or can be emailed to you. Questions? Contact: Paul Lewellan, plewellan@mac.com



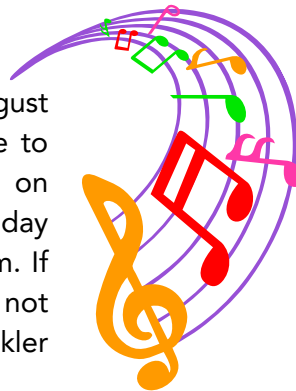
## Coffee w/ Luther Properties

Sunday, July 19 | Between Services

Gather between services to learn more about Luther Properties. Meet with current residents, and past and present board representatives. What do the many Luther Properties offer? How might you become involved?

## Men's Vocal Ensemble

A men's vocal ensemble will sing an anthem on Sun, August 2 at 8:30am worship. The music will be a familiar tune to which parts can be sung. There will be one rehearsal on Wed, July 29 at 7pm at Grace in the choir loft with Sunday morning warmup at 8:15am in the music rehearsal room. If you have already contacted Russ Finkler, thank you. If not and you're willing and available, please contact Russ Finkler [russfinkler@gmail.com](mailto:russfinkler@gmail.com) or 563-726-8891.



## Women's Ensemble

Calling all Women! Please join us for our annual Women's Ensemble. We will be singing "This Little Light of Mine" and it will be fun! Please bring any and all of your friends. All women are welcome.

- **1 rehearsal** Wed. 8/19 @ 7pm
- **1 performance** Sun. 8/23 @ 8:30am

See you then! Questions? Call or text Jane Rock (563) 340-8022

## Grief Support

**Next Meeting: August 5**

The Grief Support Group meets the first Wednesday in June, July, and August **5:30pm** in Pat Bell Hall. Please join us! Anyone is welcome at anytime, and please be assured our conversations are kept in confidence. **Questions?** Cindy Lee 563-370-5386.

## Centering Prayer

**Mondays 4:30pm via Zoom**  
(excluding holidays)

In the Christian tradition, Contemplative Prayer is considered to be the pure gift of God. It is the opening of mind and heart--our whole being to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words, and emotions. With grace we open our awareness to God whom we know by faith is within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than choosing; closer than consciousness itself.

Centering Prayer is a method designed to facilitate the development of Contemplative Prayer by preparing our faculties to receive this gift.

Cheryl Kritsch is the facilitator. Periodically the group will meet in person in the Grace Church Choir Room providing the ZOOM option, as well. Please contact Cheryl 563-343-0135 with any questions and to verify the location (zoom or in person).

Click [HERE](#) to enter Zoom for Centering Prayer.  
Meeting ID: 392 407 7028  
Passcode: 2020

## Host Sunday Coffee Hour

You can make/serve coffee (and heat up water for tea), bring treats, or bring healthy snacks, or even all three if you wish. Anyone is welcome to help out - and we can show you how the coffee pots work, where the supplies are kept, etc. Sign up on the clipboard in narthex.



## Service Day Quilters

**Next Meeting Dates: July 14 & 15** The quilters meet the second Tuesday & second Wednesday **9am-Noon**

each month. The quilts made are donated to the community and Lutheran World Relief. In recent years we have made LWR school bags. Anyone can join to help at church or at home cutting squares, sewing, finishing, etc. **Questions?** Contact Gloria Lange 563-271-1542 or langejg1@msn.com or Kathy Miller kathyk1679@aol.com or 563-676-0914.



## Page Turners

Saturday, July 18, 8:30am



Come join the Saturday Morning Page Turner's Club!

We meet at 8:30am the third Saturday each month at different locations for breakfast, book discussion, and great fellowship. (Haven't read the book? No worries, Join us anyways!) **July Book:** *Beer Money: A Tale of the Iowa City Beer Mafia* by S.C. Sherman **Host:** Carol Keller 563-340-9013  
**Location:** Valley Country Cafe (24487 Valley Dr, Bettendorf)

## Men's Lunch & Conversation



Men's "Lunch & Conversation" meets every Wednesday at Noon at VanderVeer Park. (In case of rain or cold, we'll meet at church.) You can bring a lunch from home or pick something up from a local restaurant. **Questions?** Contact Dennis Boehme at 563-320-2661 or boehmed@aol.com.



Women  
of the  
EVANGELICAL  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH  
IN AMERICA

## Naomi Circle

**Next Meeting: September 15, 9:30am**

Naomi Circle meets the third Tuesday of the month September through May for refreshments, fellowship, devotions, and Bible study - this year we are studying the parables. All are welcome to join us! Contact: Nancy Boehme 563-320-6203

## SUMMER Junior Bible Study!

During the summer months, Pastor Kirsten will lead a short JBS for children between services. There will be a short lesson, fun craft, and a snack. **The next dates for these are July 12 and August 9.**

## THANK YOU

### Thank you for your support of Lutheran Summer Camp 2026!

During the week of June 15th-19th, we had 20 children participating in a collaborative Lutheran Summer Camp with Zion Lutheran, Davenport, Saint James Lutheran, Bettendorf, and Trinity Lutheran Pleasant Valley. Combined, we had nearly 70 children participating!

Our theme for the week was wearing God's love. Each day the kids explored how we wear God's love through kindness, humility, calmness, steadfastness, and forgiveness. Our mornings were spent singing silly and meaningful camp songs about God, hearing a Bible story, and then playing games and creating crafts based on the Bible story. Each afternoon was different, with fun water games, nature exploration, tie-dying and face painting, and bounce houses.

Thank you to all who contributed to this week of camp! It could not have happened without the support of those who purchased food, donated financially, volunteered, or sent children and grandchildren. We fed almost 100 people each day! Because of your generosity, we purchased very little for lunch. Most of the food came from your donations.

Combining with three other churches allowed us to welcome more campers and allow the campers to have a unique experience. The children who attended through Grace claimed Grace as their church even if they never came to a worship service. The adults of these children had another positive experience with our children's ministry. Their relationship with Grace grew stronger as their children experienced compassionate, attentive, and fun volunteers.



# JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>Office Hours</b> Monday-Thursday 8:30am-3:00pm			1 Office Hours 10am-2pm 12pm Men's Lunch Group 5:30pm Grief Support Grp	2 Office Hours 10am-2pm	3	4 1pm Praise Band Practice
			Pastor Kirsten Vacation			
			Annie Vacation			
5 <b>Food Pantry Sunday</b> 9:30am Joint Worship 10:30am Coffee with Council	6 10:30am Staff Meeting 1:30pm Personnel Mtg 4:30pm Centering Prayer	7 10am Pastor's Text Study	8 12pm Men's Lunch Group	9	10	11 1pm Praise Band Practice
			Pastor Stephanie Vacation			
12 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:30am Summer JBS 9:30am Coffee Hour 10:30am Contemp. Worship	13 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer	14 9am Quilters 10am Pastor's Text Study 1:30pm Social Ministry Mtg 2:30pm Outreach Mtg	15 9am Quilters 12pm Men's Lunch Group	16	17	18 8:30am Page Turners 1pm Praise Band Practice
19 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:30am Coffee with Luther Properties 10:30am Contemp. Worship	20 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer 6pm Sweet Arts Club	21 10am Pastor's Text Study	22 12pm Men's Lunch Group	23 Noon Council Reports Due	24	25 1pm Praise Band Practice
			Pastor Kirsten Continuing Education			
26 9:30am Joint Worship 10:30am Synod Conversation 12pm Catered Luncheon	27 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer 7pm Council Meeting	28 10am Pastor's Text Study	29 12pm Men's Lunch Group 6pm Bonfire Church	30	31 5pm Dinner at Hope at the Brickhouse  7:30pm Pie & Ice Cream with WELCA	

*in loving memory*

Please keep in your prayers the family of Grace member Berniece Asplund who died June 23. We will share service and obituary information as it becomes available.

Please keep in your prayers Christine Giorgio-Cahalan and family on the passing of her father, Tony, who died June 25.

Online condolences may be shared at:

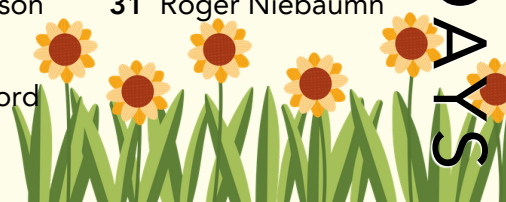
[hmdfuneralhome.com/obituaries/anthony-giorgio](http://hmdfuneralhome.com/obituaries/anthony-giorgio)

*Bless those who mourn, eternal God, with the comfort of your love that they may face each new day with hope and the certainty that nothing can destroy the good that has been given. May their memories become joyful, their days enriched with friendship, and their lives encircled by your love.*



- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Pam Druger        | 20 Ruth McAndrews     |
| 2 Jim Bayles        | 21 Joel Lorentzen     |
| 7 Matt Levsen       | 22 Melissa Kanwischer |
| LeMar Lucas         | Doug Miller           |
| 8 Brittany Harmon   | Jane Rock             |
| 9 Sandy Hoelzen     | 24 Luke Haugen        |
| 10 Taurean Carter   | Kate Turner           |
| 12 Curtis Johnson   | 26 Jill Colton        |
| 13 Kathy Higgins    | 27 Janice Gibbs       |
| Dawn Matthews       | 28 Karen Lucas        |
| 14 Judy Niebaum     | 30 Chuck Lehman       |
| 16 Kelsey Patterson | 31 Roger Niebaum      |
| 17 Chris Tee        |                       |
| 18 Hailey Montford  |                       |
| 19 Gail Carber      |                       |

JULY BIRTHDAYS



## ADMIN STAFF

**Pastor Stephanie Wood**  
pastorstephanie@gracewelcomesyou.org

**Pastor Kirsten Lee**  
Director of Outreach & Youth Ministries  
pastorkirsten@gracewelcomesyou.org

**Annie Nau, Office Administrator**  
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**Jason Halkias, Custodian**  
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**Dawn Matthews, Treasurer**  
treasurer@gracewelcomesyou.org

**Vey Rodriguez, Worship Tech**  
worshiptech@gracewelcomesyou.org

## MUSIC STAFF

**Sally Meier** - Adult Choir Director  
**Kathi Parrish** - Accompanist  
**Susan Senn** - Organist  
**Vey Rodriguez** - Praise Band Leader

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

**Paul Lewellan** President  
**Deb Gustafson** Vice-President  
**Gail Walton** Secretary  
**Dawn Matthews** Treasurer  
**Jackie Cain**  
**Dan Carney**  
**Lori Haugen**  
**Becky Kelly**  
**Laura Toland**

Grace Notes is published monthly by Grace Lutheran Church, Davenport, IA 52803 A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America



## Hope at the Brick House

### Dinner Service Friday, July 31

5:15pm arrive | 5:30pm Serve | 6:30pm Clean Up

We will once again be providing breakfast for dinner! We usually serve 20-30 adults and children. Please look for the sign up sheet in the Narthex. If you have any questions please contact Karen Jewel at 563-323-0322 or kcjewel21@gmail.com.



## Council Corner

- Treasurer Dawn Matthews reported that Revenue Year to Date was \$160,361.85. We have received 45.26% of budgeted revenue and spent 41.29% of budgeted. For the year through May, we had a surplus of \$2,490.26.
- Council will host a Conversation with the Synod on July 26. There will be single service at 9:30, followed by a meeting with the Synod representative, and a catered meal.
- Council approved the date for the next Block Party, September 20.
- Grace Listeners are nearing their goal of 50 by the end of June. Responses are being gathered so they can be shared with the congregation and synod staff.
- The next Coffee with Council is June 28.
- The next council meeting will be July 27.



## Food Pantry Weekend

**Our next Food Pantry Collection is Sunday, August 2** Bring your non-perishable food donations in a bag, and leave at the altar before the service.

**Donations Especially Needed:** canned fruits and vegetables, canned/dry beans, canned meats, pasta, pasta sauce, rice, breakfast items

**Always Appreciated:** peanut butter, jelly/jam, canned chili, boxed potatoes, protein bars, whole grain bread, items for baking (flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, etc.)

**Consider:** simple spices (salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, etc.), broths, neutral cooking oils, vinegars, powdered milk, powdered eggs, wooden spoons, hand-held can openers, aluminum foil pans, cake mixes for special occasions

