



GRACE NOTES

SEPTEMBER 2026 ISSUE 84-09

Dear Friends,

"What difference does it make being a Christian?" I asked this question in a Bible Study years ago. One of the common responses was, "it means you are a good person; you have good morals." I wonder, would the people who responded then say the same today. I personally know of many generous, good people who are not people of faith. I also know of people who have done terrible things and they identify as religious.

What difference does it make to be a Christian when over time, the world around us has become more secular? The mysteries of nature that fueled awe and fear of the divine now have a scientific explanation, or it is thought that in time the answers will be discovered. Church affiliation or religiosity are rarely used to measure someone's character as an employee, businessperson, or citizen. Distrust has grown toward institutions, like churches, who have caused harm. It is more acceptable or common to not believe in God.

This means there are a growing number of people who do not share

common heritage, stories, language, and traditions. Liturgy, hymns, the narthex or VBS, are likely unfamiliar terms. Their experience in worship might be like mine at my first Minnesota State Hockey game. I was a fish out of water. I didn't know the colors of the team, the chants, and was only vaguely familiar with the game's rules.

Perhaps you have friends or family members who grew up in the church or once participated in a faith community but no longer engage. Have you ever asked, from a place of curiosity rather than judgment, why they no longer attend or why they feel no desire or need for God or a church community? Over the years, some people have trusted me with their answers. In return, they have asked how I can believe and why I remain part of a church community.

What difference does it make being a Christian? How is your life different because you are a part of a religious community? What makes a church distinct from other groups you participate in? In the words of Jesus

to Peter, *"Who do you say that I am?"* (Matt 16:15)

Seriously, take some time to ponder these questions. Pray about them. Discuss them with friends. Journal about them. You don't have to have it all figured out; nor does your response need to remain static or read like a PHD theological thesis. My own answers have changed over the years.

Here's the thing: your answers matter. They shape the way you live, the way we work together as a community, the way others learn about and understand God. When we listen with open hearts and curiosity, we can share our truth without expecting others to compromise theirs. Because believing in God is part of who you are. *"You are a light to the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deed and glorify your Father in heaven."* (Matt 5:14-16)

God's Peace
Pastor Stephanie



September 6 Joint Worship 9:30am

On Sunday, Sept 6, we will have a joint worship service at 9:30am and the church offices will be closed Monday, Sept 7, for Labor Day.

Grace Lutheran Church
1140 E High St, Davenport, IA

FALL BLOCK PARTY

Sunday, September 20

10:30am Joint Outdoor Worship

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

Sloppy Joes 🍁 Bingo 🍁 Games
Great Fellowship 🍁 Music

Join us at our 5th annual Neighborhood Block Party hosted by our Outreach & Welcome Team. Enjoy outdoor worship followed by food, games, music, & fun!

Questions? Call 563-322-0769 or email office@gracewelcomesyou.org.

CHOIR

YOU ARE INVITED TO SING!

This year, choir season starts Wednesday, Sept 9, at 7:00pm.
We hope to see you there! **Contact:** Sally Meier, Choir Director
309-292-0281 or tonalworkout@gmail.com

THREE WAYS YOU CAN JOIN THE CHOIR

Join choir for the entire season. Come to rehearsals Wednesday nights from 7-8pm, and sing on scheduled Sundays. Can't commit to EVERY Wednesday and Sunday? That's okay! Nobody can. Come as OFTEN as you can. We rehearse several Sunday anthems at once, so you will always be prepared.

Join choir for the Advent and Christmas season. This includes Candles and Carols, a beautiful service of scripture, prose, and song. This is a seasonal commitment that involves only three to four rehearsals, the Candles and Carols service, and the option of Advent and Christmas Eve services.

Join Choir for Easter. Easter Sunday is always a big and joyful service! Singing along with others in the balcony on Easter Sunday lifts our hearts and spirits even more as we praise God for God's glorious gift of salvation! This seasonal commitment involves two to three rehearsals, Easter Sunday, and the option of singing anthems on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

THREE REASONS TO JOIN THE CHOIR

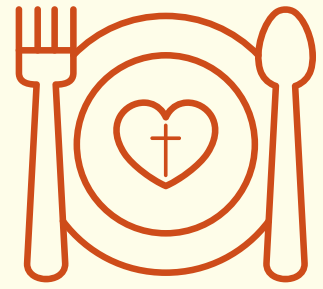
Joining choir adds a **new dimension to your faith-based life**. Here, we become a new family of friends supporting each other with a common goal of making music to and for our Lord.

Wednesday rehearsals provide a reprieve from the weekly grind, a **breath of spiritual air** and a mid-week recharge. Sunday services allow us to service Sunday worship, leading the congregation in worship and reflection.

The words and music we rehearse over and over, and sing in a Sunday offering mingle in our hearts throughout the weeks to form a **spiritual devotion** to our Lord.

Let's Celebrate Annie!

Did you know that as of September 1, Annie has been our Office Manager for five years? We are grateful for all she does for Grace! It wouldn't be the same without her. Please share your appreciation with Annie this month.



Grace2Dine

Friday, Sept 11 | Noon

Where: Home of the Boehme's
2632 W 34th St, Davenport

Dennis & Nancy Boehme are our hosts, and they are going to provide the taco meat and we are to bring the extras. Talk with the Boehme's or Hollie Swain to RSVP and to let us know what item you will be bringing.

All are welcome!



Christmas Dinner @ Grace, Dec 25

You are invited to join our Grace family for Christmas Day Dinner.

A dinner that will indeed be celebrated and catered on Christmas evening. Though the details are still coming together, we expect the meal will be \$15 or less per person. Invite a plus one or two. As we plan, it would be helpful to know how many people may be interested. Please contact the office or sign-up [HERE](#) if you are interested. If you'd like to help, you may reach out to Ruth McAndrews or Carol Keller.



Pet Blessing & Pet Food Collection

Sunday, September 27

You are invited to bring your furry and scaly friends to church for a Blessing of the Animals! You can also bring a photo of your pet or kids may want to bring a stuffed animal. As we remember St. Francis of Assisi (patron saint of animals and the environment) we give thanks for God's creation and our furry companions.

That same Sunday, Social Ministry is asking for donations of pet food & supplies for **Rescued** in Silvis. They will also take treats, cat litter, toys, and donations! Questions? Hollie Swain at 563-650-3213

Sunday Morning Hospitality



Sign up to serve Sunday coffee (and heat up water for tea), bring treats, bring healthy snacks, or even all three if you wish. **Clipboard in narthex - sign ups are available now through November.**

Brainstorm – Relationships



One thing we learned from the Listening Campaign was how we valued the relationships formed within this community. The group came up with a variety of ideas, and we need your help in brainstorming a bit more.

Some ideas mentioned: seasonal events like riding bikes, and a helpers' network for members as they age. I've also heard folks mention going to CASI events together or organizing a day trip somewhere. **Join on September 13, between services** and bring any other ideas you might have. Together we will brainstorm which ideas we want to pursue further and how we might make them a reality.

Grace Announcement

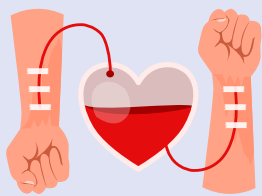
In August we announced that the Council was able to identify a way to make the budget more sustainable. As a result, there will be several changes to the 2027 budget. This includes a hold on staff raises and the adjustment of four staff positions. Even with these adjustments, we will need to increase our giving by \$15,000 in 2027 to sustain our ministry with as little disruption as possible.

In John, Jesus says, that the gardener trims the branches that bear fruit so they can be more fruitful. Grace is bearing so much fruit, and careful pruning will ensure Grace's ministry continues for many years to come.

The following staff positions will be restructured or reduced beginning in October. These adjustments will help decrease this year's deficit and prepare us for 2027:

- **Worship Tech** – We will leave this position unfilled and share streaming responsibilities among staff and volunteers, including a member familiar with the technology who has already offered to help.
- **Choir Director and Accompanist** – From September through May, the choir will sing at two Sunday services each month, in addition to our special holiday worship services. We hope this might even strengthen participation, as the schedule may be more manageable.
- **Director of Outreach and Youth Ministry** – The Listening Campaign affirmed how important this position and its ministries are to Grace. To sustain the position for the long term, we are reducing it from 40 to 32 hours per week while retaining benefits.

We are thankful that each staff member serving in these roles has agreed to continue in their positions. As we navigate these changes together, we ask for your patience and understanding. You may contact Pastor Stephanie or the Council with questions.



Blood Drive

Tuesday, Sept 15 | 2:00-5:30pm

Grace Fellowship Hall (Downstairs)

Become a blood donor! Less than 10% of the population gives blood, so donors that give on a regular basis are important to meet these needs. Grace members donated blood nine times during July. The year-to-date total is 74. **Questions?** Mark Jepson majepson55@netscape.net or 563-508-9091. **Go to bloodcenter.org to register to donate.**

Updates from Grace Talks

The ideas shared at our Grace Talks gathering in July was collected and brought back to the different committees focused on these ministries. While there are still ideas under consideration, below are some action steps we expect to take this fall.

Worship

- When we have joint services with contemporary music, we will print off a few copies of the full music with the music notes.
- For Advent, we will add more contemplative time to our 8:30am service where we will have announcements, followed by the ringing of the bells and prelude music.

Children Youth and Family

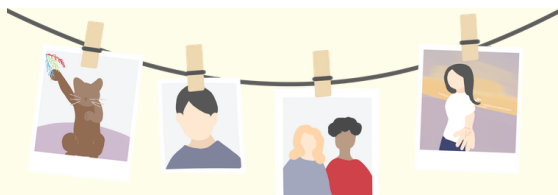
- We will increase the number of kids' parties in the school year.
- We will provide opportunities for families to casually meet up at a playground.

Outreach

- We will include greeting cards from Children in JBS and adults, as well as providing more opportunities for members to participate in the packing of the bags and delivery.
- We will continue to explore the possibility of different people and organizations who may want to use our building.

Relationships

- We will be having a Christmas Day Dinner that members and their family or friends could attend.
- We will be continuing this conversation between services on Sept 13.



Pictures Into Memories

Join Joel Lorentzen and Paul Lewellan on September 27, for the Fall Edition. Think campfires, garden harvests, back to school moments, and corn mazes. Bring your favorite photo to share even if you have not attended prior sessions. There are so many stories to tell, so little time.



IGNITE Youth Event

Wednesday, October 14 | 6pm

@ Faith Lutheran Church
500 W. LeClaire Road, Eldridge

Join youth from around the Quad Cities for a fun night of games, snacks, and friends! Questions? Talk with Pr. Kirsten

BONFIRE CHURCH

THURSDAY, SEPT 24

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. Enjoy snacks and great conversation. Feel free to bring a friend!

QUESTIONS?

Pastor Stephanie

563-322-0769
pastorstephanie@gracewelcomesyou.org

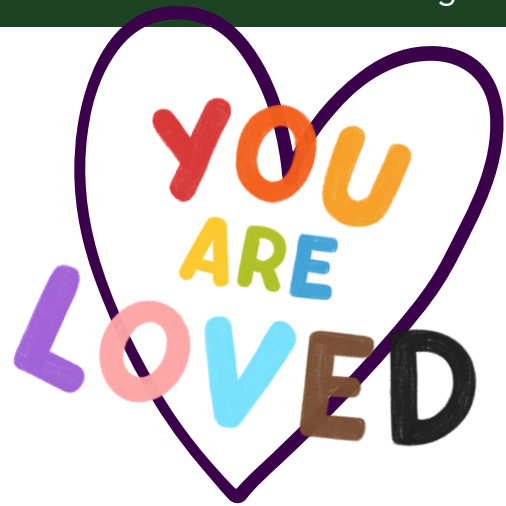


Junior Bible Studies Fall 2026

starts September 13 @ 8:30 + 10:30 worship services

This fall, JBS will be during worship for the first three Sundays of the month. The fourth Sunday will be between worship services. This will allow the children to have a chance to spend time with one another. Having a combined class once a month also invites an opportunity to try something a bit more elaborate since we have a longer session.

This year we are using "Wonder on the Go". It invites children to wonder about the characters in Bible Stories and what we can learn about God. Each session will include a short video, a story from the Spark Children's Bible, and activities. We are particularly excited that it was created by a local Director of Faith Formation at St Stephen Lutheran Church in Urbandale IA.



Kids' Party August 2026

On August 12, we welcomed 19 children to Grace for a few hours of silly games and bonding. We learned how God worked through Moses to save the Israelites by parting the Red Sea and had fun performing a skit of the story. We continued the theme of water by playing water games in the parking lot and ended the night with ice cream treats. **THANK YOU** to Deb Kirby, Debbie Alejo, and Gail Walton for their time and care that evening.



"My kiddos had an absolute blast and were still talking about it this morning! The minute that they got in the car, they asked to come back again. Thank you so much for welcoming them into your space."

"My son loved the water games but also talked about the skit and the different roles they got to play. Thanks again!"

"My kids had a BLAST! I am so glad their little friends were able to join as well. It looked like you had a great turn out. Thank you again!"



PRAY & PLAY

Join us for fun when school is out!

at Grace Lutheran Church | 1140 E High St, Davenport

For kids ages 5-10 | Cost* \$15 per session

8:30am-4:00pm each program day

Lunch and snacks provided. Close supervision provided by screened and qualified staff. Space is limited. **Activities Include:** Games, Playground Time, Arts & Crafts, Music, Dancing, Bible Stories, Educational Programming, and More!

FALL 2026 DATES

September 14 | October 5
November 30

Registration Required

Register Online at: bit.ly/FallIPP26

OR Scan the QR Code

OR request a paper copy from
your school counselor OR email
office@gracewelcomesyou.org



**Scholarships are available upon request; no child will be turned away for financial circumstances.*

Questions? Please feel free to contact
Pastor Kirsten Lee at 563-322-0769 or
pastorkirsten@gracewelcomesyou.org

GRACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
1140 East High Street
Davenport, IA 52803

Prayer Wall



Have you added your prayers to Grace's prayer wall? If you haven't, now is the time. Created by Dave & Elizabeth Linde, the prayer wall is modeled after the famous Western (or Wailing) Wall, in Jerusalem.

As is done at the Western Wall, you are invited to add your handwritten prayers to the prayer wall in the Narthex near the south windows. It's a way to lift your prayers up to God in a unique and special way.

Add your prayers before the Sept 20, service and block party.

On that day we will gather all the written prayers and give them to God in a special burning ceremony. Submit your prayers now so they can be part of this spiritual communal release.



Saturday, October 10

Veteran's Memorial Park (1645 23rd St, Bettendorf)

8:30am Activities Begin | **10:00am** Walk!

Join us for NAMIWalks Greater Mississippi Valley 2026! With your support, we can reduce stigma, increase awareness, and raise funds for NAMI's free education and support programs in the Quad Cities Region. To register to walk and/or donate funds go to the Grace/St. Mark Page: namiwalks.org/teams/86611. If you need a ride, or if you have any questions, please contact Jane Rock at janesingerrock@gmail.com or call/text 563-340-8022.

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 10am Pastor's Text Study 1:30pm Personnel Mtg 5pm Property Mtg 6pm CYF Mtg	2 12pm Men's Lunch Group 5:30pm Grief Support Grp	3	4	5
6 Food Pantry Sunday 9:30am Joint Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	7 Labor Day Church Office Closed	8 9am Quilters 10am Pastor's Text Study 1:30pm Social Ministry Mtg 2:30pm Outreach Mtg 7pm Worship/Music Mtg	9 9am Quilters 12pm Men's Lunch Group 7pm Choir Rehearsal	10	11 12pm Grace2Dine	12 8:30am Page Turners* *Note Date Change
13 First Fall JBS 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:30am Coffee Hour 9:30am Grace Talks 10:30am Contemp. Worship	14 Pray & Play 8:30am-4pm 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer	15 9am Naomi Circle 10am Pastor's Text Study 2pm Blood Drive	16 12pm Men's Lunch Group 5:30pm Grief Support Grp 7pm Choir Rehearsal	17	18	19
20 Block Party! 10:30am Outdoor Worship 11:30am Block Party Festivities 	21 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer 6pm Sweet Arts Club	22 10am Pastor's Text Study 1:30pm Personnel Mtg 3pm Prayer Group	23 12pm Men's Lunch Group 7pm Choir Rehearsal	24 Noon Council Reports Due 6pm Bonfire Church	25 Sudlow Evacuation Drill in parking lot	26
27 Pet Blessing and Pet Food & Supplies Collection 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:30am Coffee Hour 9:30am Pics into Memories 10:30am Contemp. Worship	28 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer 7pm Council Meeting	29 10am Pastor's Text Study	30 12pm Men's Lunch Group 7pm Choir Rehearsal	Office Hours Monday-Thursday 8:30am-3:00pm		

September 6 Food Pantry Sunday
September 6 Joint Worship 9:30am
September 7 Office Closed Labor Day
September 11 Grace2Dine
September 13 LWR Kits Due
September 13 Grace Talks Continued
September 13 First Fall JBS
September 14 Pray & Play
September 15 In-House Blood Drive
September 20 Fall Block Party
September 24 Bonfire Church
September 27 Pet Blessing & Pet Food Collection
September 27 Pictures into Memories
September 27-29 Prs at Theological Conference
October 4 Food Pantry Sunday
October 4 & 11 LWR Quilt Display
October 5 Pray & Play
October 10 NAMI Walk
October 18-21 Pr. Stephanie Continuing Ed
October 25 Reformation Sunday

GOOD
THINGS
AHEAD

1 Cindy Lee	20 Rod Levsen, Sr
Kevin Miller	22 Shirley Wellnitz
3 Lori Haugen	23 Sally Haugen
Mark Janssen	Madlyn Wulgaert
4 Cam Dougherty	25 Ken Krumwiede
Caitlin McCullough	26 Mark Jepson
Marilyn Schreiber	27 Sally Meier
5 Gail McRill	29 Dennis Link
6 Luanne Taylor	
10 Patti Dominacki	
13 Cheryl Kritsch	
15 Rhonda Gillespie	
16 Kathy Eberlein	
18 Colleen Levsen	
19 Bud Johnson	
Fidel Martinez	



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Grief Support September 2 & 16

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

Service Day Quilters September 8 & 9

9am-Noon The quilts made are donated to the community and Lutheran World Relief. Anyone can join to help at church or at home cutting squares, sewing, finishing, etc. **Questions?** Gloria Lange 563-271-1542 or langejg1@msn.com or Kathy Miller kathyk1679@aol.com or 563-676-0914.

Naomi Women's Circle September 15

9-9:30am Snacks & Fellowship, 9:30-11:00am Study & Devotions The Naomi Women's Circle meets the third Tuesday of the month September through May for refreshments, fellowship, devotions, and Bible study. All are welcome to join us! **Contact:** Nancy Boehme 563-320-6203

Page Turners Book Club September 12*

8:30am The Page Turners Book Club meets 8:30am the third Saturday each month at different locations for breakfast, book discussion, and great fellowship. (Haven't read the book? Join us anyways!) **September Book:** [The Great Alone](#) by Kristin Hannah **Contact:** Gloria Lange 563-514-9335 **Location:** Ronneburg Restaurant (4408 220th Trail, Amana)

*Note Date Change

Centering Prayer Mondays via Zoom

4:30pm on Zoom (link below) [Centering Prayer](#) is a Christian method of silent contemplation focused on experiencing God's presence through choosing a sacred word, sitting in quiet, and gently letting go of thoughts. Developed in the 1970s, it modernizes ancient contemplative traditions. 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

Men's Lunch Wednesdays

Noon 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.

ADMIN STAFF

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Dawn Matthews, Treasurer

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Jason Halkias, Custodian

custodian@gracewelcomesyou.org

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Sally Meier - Adult Choir Director

Kathi Parrish - Accompanist

Susan Senn - Organist

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Paul Lewellan President

Deb Gustafson Vice-President

Gail Walton Secretary

Dawn Matthews Treasurer

Jackie Cain

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



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Council Corner

At the Aug 24, Council meeting, Treasurer Dawn Matthews reported that at the end of July we were 58% into the year. We have received 58% of budgeted annual revenue. We have spent 57%. For the year through July, we had a deficit of \$11,054.19.

We received resignations from Vey Rodriguez and from Dawn Matthews.

Council approved the following measures to reduce the budget deficit:

- The Worship Tech position will not be filled, with the streaming responsibilities shared by staff and volunteers.
- Beginning in October, the choir will sing at only two Sunday services each month, in addition to our special holiday worship services.
- The Director of Outreach and Youth Ministry position will be reduced from 40 to 32 hours per week while retaining benefits.

A \$700 Special Projects grant was approved to become a Gold Sponsor for next year's Safer Sack Lunch fundraiser.

Joint worship services were approved for November 22 (Stewardship Celebration with Brunch), December 20 (Children's Program), December 27 (Christmas Hymn Sing), and January 31 (Annual Meeting).

We are Hiring: Church Treasurer

Directs Grace Lutheran Church's financial activities, such as planning, procurement, investments and maintaining all financial records. Serves as a member of the Executive Committee of the Council, and as primary liaison with the Audit Committee. P/T, Exempt – flexible work schedule, Hours 25-35 hours/month; flexible (depending upon seasonal tasks). **Click [HERE](#) to view the full job description** or contact the church office for a paper or digital copy. This position will close September 16. Questions? personnel@gracewelcomesyou.org

Thrivent Shredding Event

Saturday, Sept 19 | 9am-Noon | Redeemer Lutheran Church (1107 Tanglefoot Ln, Bettendorf) For every \$2 donated, Thrivent will add \$1, up to an additional \$1500! Together we will support **[Habitat for Humanity](#)** bringing people together to build homes, communities, and hope.

Food Pantry Weekend

Our next Food Pantry Collections are Sundays September 6, October 4, November 1. Bring your non-perishable food donations in a bag, and leave at the altar before the service.