

grace notes

May and June 2020

Praying and Waiting



Dear Grace Friends,

It was just a year ago that I was seriously contemplating my call to Grace Lutheran Church. I had completed my second interview and while the Call Committee finished up their interviews, I was waiting and praying, and then praying and waiting. My prayer was for God to lead the process and for the best person be selected (not necessarily me). It was on Memorial Day that I received the phone call from the Call Committee informing me that I was the candidate and then my praying and waiting continued in a different way, as I waited to come to Grace, and prayed about the future of ministry and the part I would play in it.

A year later, I am still waiting and praying. But this time, I am waiting for the day when we can be back together, and I am praying for the healing of our world as we face this virus, and all of its complexities. It is such a strange time to be a relatively new pastor to a church. I was just starting to get to know your names and faces, and now I can't see you anymore. This is one of the things I grieve. And yet, I know this is the best thing for all of us right now, to stay connected through technology and safe in our homes. Please know that you are dearly missed by me and our staff!

The church looks nothing like it did even two months ago, but we are moving forward in prayer and hope, knowing that God is leading us. We are taking things one day at a time, while also trying to plan for the future. This is easier said than done. I am so thankful to have a tremendous team of people who are working hard in order to provide meaningful ministry for our community, and care for those in need. Daily, I give thanks for the staff, leadership and members of Grace Lutheran and for all they give of themselves in order to follow God, and to live out your call. Thank you for joining me in the waiting and prayer. It gives me comfort to know that I am not on this journey alone.

As we plan for the future, there are some staff changes that I want you to know about. After 5 years of ministry at Grace Lutheran, serving in a variety of capacities, but most recently as Church Administrator, Kate Morphew is stepping down from her position on staff. Kate is a huge asset to our ministry. She will be missed. I am thankful for her leadership, for her perseverance and for her willingness to learn. While Kate is leaving the staff at Grace Lutheran, she and her family intend to remain members of our church. I am so glad that she will still be a part of the Grace Family. In order to help us with our transition, Kate has agreed to remain on staff until mid- June. We will be posting her position at the end of April and interviewing candidates in mid-May. Please watch for an opportunity for us to celebrate Kate and all of her work.

In January at our financial meeting, I mentioned our plan to call an Associate Pastor. The Associate Pastor will oversee Faith Formation for children and adults. We will not be replacing our children's ministry director, but instead calling an Associate Pastor who will lead this team and provide for the care and education of our children and young families, while also concentrating on education for Adults, outreach and care for young adults, and leading worship. We have been in conversation with the Synod and are currently updating our paperwork. We are looking for three or four individuals to join the Vision Board on a Call Committee. If you are interested in being a part of the Call Committee, please reach out to me and let me know. We have budgeted for this position starting in July.

I hope that you will join me as we pray about the future of Grace. We, as a community, are invited to live one day at a time. I believe that God has important work to do in and through us during our time apart. I hope that you are able to engage in daily devotions (we are providing some through our website and Facebook page). I also hope that you spend time listening to God.

The word quarantine is taken from an Italian word *quaranta giorni* which mean 40 days. In the 14th century Italian sailors would spend 40 days offshore waiting during times of disease, in order to not bring an illness ashore. 40 is a biblical number. For 40 days, Jesus fasted in the desert. For 40 years, the Israelites wandered in desert. The Flood lasted for 40 days. These 40 days are never easy. They are often time spent alone and isolated, wondering and wandering, but God is always there. God is there walking beside us, listening to our prayers and helping us to grow in faith. As we wait and pray together, I hope that you feel held in the promises of God.

Blessings Pastor Joanna Mitchell

Grace Lutheran Church Staff

Senior PastorJoanna Mitchell
Ext. 110.....joannam@graceandover.org

Visitation Pastor.....Delwayne Hahn
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Dir. of Youth Ministry.....Kristi Larson
Ext. 100kristil@graceandover.org

Coord. of Youth Ministries.....Tom Baker
Ext. 123tomb@graceandover.org

Dir. of Outreach Ministries.....Debbie Jorgens
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Dir. of Worship & Music.....Jonathan Orwig
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Dir. of Children/Family Ministries ...Maria Markman
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Bookkeeper/Communications.....Marie Kolar
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Custodians.....Mark Kempenich & Dan Tkachenko
Ext. 117markk@graceandover.org

Dir. Of Golden Rule Child Care Center
Sandy Schmoll...sandys@graceandover.org 421-1996

If you would like to contact any of the Vision Board members, please visit graceandover.org and click on leaders.

Vision Board Members

Johnna Rohmer-Hirt(Pres.)	Alden Riley
Chad Hadler (V.P.)	Carla Renner
Vickie Meade (Secretary)	Ann Lange
Dave Trapp	

Grace Lutheran Church Family:

A heartfelt "thank you" for all the prayers, cards, meals, and for being my "prayer warriors". I have a prayer motto sign "PRAY BIG." This sign is for all of for your diligent prayers for me, Charlie & Julia. Your outpouring of love and support has touched our hearts. We love Grace because of all of you.

God is good and every day we look for His miracles.

Most Sincerely, **Judi, Charlie & Julia Wold**

For with God, all things are possible Mark 10:27



Grace family,

Grace Lutheran Church has given me a place to learn and grow for over 5 years as a member of staff. I am grateful for the opportunities the church family has entrusted to me and the memories we have made.

I will be leaving the Grace staff on June 19th. My family and I will still make Grace our church home. I will still be involved in activities like attending worship and WOW. I have enjoyed seeing the direction Pastor Joanna is leading the church and I look forward to seeing it from the pews.

Blessings,

Kate Morpew,

**Church
Administrator**



Vision Board

Once again I am nearing the end of a three year term on Vision Board, and as in the past I look back to review the happenings of the past three years. To begin, we said good bye to Jeannie and Pastor Mark, the dynamic duo, who shared their talents and passion with us for over twenty years. It was difficult to say good bye to our Shepherd and spiritual leader for over twenty years. Sad to see them leave, but I am happy they were able to take their long deserved rest and to step back from the burdens at Grace Lutheran. The Hellman's definitely left Grace better than they found it.

The Vision Board members were next charged with selection of an Interim Pastor. We were given a choice of two very excellent candidates. The decision was made to call Pastor Bruce Arnevik. Pastor Bruce worked to guide us through some difficult, but necessary changes, a general house cleaning if you will. Not everyone always agreed with these changes, but they were vital to facilitate a smooth transition for our new Senior Pastor. I think you will all agree, it has been a transition well worth the wait.

Our first duty in preparing to call our new Senior Pastor was to select a Call Committee and charge them with the responsibility of selecting a candidate with the ability to lead us and help this congregation grow. May I express my deepest gratitude to the Call Committee for a job well done.

Grace Lutheran, under the excellent guidance of Pastor Joanna will continue to serve the people of Andover and beyond. She will face many challenges along the way, beginning with the current Pandemic crisis. I ask that you continue to support her during this difficult time. Pastor Joanna and staff are doing an outstanding job keeping us connected with each other and God, while overcoming almost insurmountable odds. I hope you all have been taking advantage of the virtual worship and prayer meetings.

Decisions will need to be made about the future

of both properties currently owned by Grace. We were able to obtain a four-year grace period on the portable class rooms, but they will eventually need to be removed and we will need to replace that indoor space. The time has come to make a decision on the Nightingale property, how can it best be used to serve Grace and the community. Whatever we decide, I ask you all to remember this building we call our church home is just a building. You, I and all the other members at Grace Lutheran Church are the Church. This is something I often forgot as the leader of the GRAMPS team, and the main reason I stepped down as their leader. I found myself placing the needs and importance of the building ahead of God.

As my term ends, and I leave the Vision Board, I know I am leaving the unfinished business in the capable hands of those you elect to succeed me. Grace Lutheran is a healthy, living entity that will continue to evolve, as it should. Spring is here just as we see new life beginning with the season. We see a new beginning at Grace, with our wonderful new pastor and new staff members. Get ready and hang on, the next few years will be exciting

"Grace will lead us home."

Alden Riley

Vision Board member retired



Vision Board

What's God's message? Where's the hope?

As all of you, I am reading a lot about COVID-19. I am not a theologian and never will claim to be, but over the last month or so I love seeing the messages of faith being lifted up once again and people coming together to care and help one another.

The pressure of unusual circumstances, sudden changes in our daily routines, and the necessity of developing new skills push us to reflect on the realities around us, and the purposes of the God we serve. We need to seek wisdom and make the very best decisions we can, and through that journey, act generously and selflessly as followers of Christ. However, we must also face our fears that relate to life and death as the virus that plagues the world is real, but ultimately our plight is in His hands.

Our Grace staff has done a tremendous job of bringing our church services, children's messages, devotions, singing, prayer gatherings, and some meetings to us via video taping and Zoom. These things have been wonderful and a lot of work put into them by all the staff, but we all miss being together in person. As we continue in our "temporary" setting, I reflect on one story I read where an unknown woman was sitting outside a church and asked "Can we just pray for my brother who has COVID for a minute?" They stood on the sidewalk and prayed. We must be alert to the strangers among us, and we must love one another and be kind to one another as God has been merciful to us.

Most of us can be thankful that the worst has been averted, at least thus far, but we must be prepared to face the risks as well. We owe it to one another to pay attention to each other, to advise one another, to check on one another, and serve one another. It's what we believe and confess as Christians, and these days test us to live out our faith. In our health fears, financial fears, fears for safety let us remember that fear can promote faith, but there are times when it

challenges faith. Numerous places in Scripture set fear against faith, love, and trust, so we must admit that the fears we have may push us to examine our faith. This is God's world, flawed as it may be, it is still His good creation. To follow Christ is to be people of hope. Our hope is not in vain, God gave His life on behalf of His children. He is worthy of our trust, and He can aid us in conquering our fears. "Be of good cheer," our Lord said, just before his own death on our behalf, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Where else is there hope? I have hope in our church (the church meaning all the people), and gratefulness in our outstanding Grace staff! I feel we the people are all reaching out to others in need, we are supporting in our finances, we are praying for all. The staff is working endless hours on our behalf, giving us support, uplifting our spirits, fulfilling our needs.

- Thank you to our faithful providers of sermons/messages and devotions – Pastor Joanna, Pastor Hahn, Maria, Debbie, Kristi, Jonathan.
- Thank you to our ministry of beautiful music – Jonathan, Maria, Kristi, Melita, Worship Team and band.
- Thank you to Jonathan for all his technical expertise for videotaping, editing the tapings together, linking them to our website and Facebook, etc.
- Thank you to Pastor Joanna, Pastor Hahn and all the staff for making the best decisions possible for our church.
- Thank you to our solid rock in the office Kris who is always there for us and those in need.
- Thank you to our Administrator and Bookkeeper Kate and Marie who keep all our finances in order and communications out.
- Thank you to Debbie for all her outreach



Vision Board

ministries, Food Shelf coordination, never-ending care for others, inside and outside our walls.

- Thank you to Maria, Kristi and Tom who are doing their best to keep in touch and help the youth, both young and teens, with children's messages and virtual youth activities.
- Thank you to Sandy for keeping the Golden Rule Daycare open throughout all this time for the children and their parents.
- Thank you to Mark and Dan for all their janitorial cleaning especially, but also any fixing, and other work being done.
- Thank you to anyone else I may be forgetting. You are all doing an awesome job and you are very much appreciated!

This situation will end at some point. Everything will look different, and hopefully some good lessons learned, that will stay with us forever. God will still be with us, Jesus will be our Savior, and we will be able to come together and be grateful to God that we made it through. And whenever that comes, that's our Easter!

Blessings and Peace to you,

Ann Lange, Vision Board Member



During the current "Stay at Home" orders, Family Promise has been forced to adapt the way we shelter our homeless guests. We are currently serving a total of 4 families and 17 individuals. The Day Center is not designed for the long term housing of families. To insure the safety and provide adequate separation of our guest we are sheltering families off site in hotels. The Minnesota Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control recommend the ability for each family to be isolated from other families. Hosting at the Day Center doesn't allow for this; neither does it allow for separation from staff, who use the same bathrooms, kitchen, tables, doors, and light switches.



With the cancellation of our Out of the Box Breakfast fundraiser, as well as the expected decline in the economy, significant future funding for Family Promise could be lost. Luckily, there are a number of programs and organizations stepping in to fill the gap! In the last week, we have applied for four grants, with another one still to turn in. This funding will help minimize any shortfall in funding and allow our organization to stay strong and stable. In the last few weeks, we have also seen an outpouring of support, both in financial gifts and gifts-in-kind. As our volunteer community has been unable to serve in traditional ways, many have jumped at the chance to continue to serve families.



1. Gifts cards of \$10-25 for Gas, Groceries, Household Essentials (Target/Walmart).
2. One time and ongoing financial gifts to FPAC to maintain our stability to serve families.

Alden Riley

Devotional



Throwing Caution to the Wind

A few nights ago as I was driving to the grocery store, I came upon a woman walking in the median, holding a cell phone to her ear with one hand while pushing a stroller with the other. Close by was a very young child, probably around 2 1/2 years old. They were walking in the same direction as I was traveling, and since I was going about 45 mph and someone was on my tail, I wasn't able to get a good glimpse of them. Trying my best to maintain a safe distance from the car in front of me, I quickly turned my head around to see them better. The little girl was not wearing a jacket, and I noted that my car thermometer registered 28 degrees.

Pulling into the left-hand turn lane, I waited (longer than usual, it seemed!) for the arrow to turn green so that I could make a U-turn. As I finally came up over the hill, I saw that someone had already pulled over to help and was, in fact, loading the stroller into her SUV while the mother, holding the baby in one arm, helped the little girl into the vehicle.

I thanked God for the woman who stopped to help. I thanked God that she didn't allow fears of COVID-19 or the current directives around social distancing and face masks to prevent her from assisting someone in need. In the midst of this pandemic, I am giving thanks for everyone (especially those in healthcare, pub-

lic service, and food-related industries) who are willing to throw caution to the wind for the sake of the other.

As we deal with the very real threat of the Corona-Virus, it's important to be prudent. Sheltering in place is a way that we can show love for our neighbor, while keeping ourselves safe too. But sometimes our neighbor's need requires us to take a risk, and in those times we might have to remind ourselves that no one (including Jesus himself) ever promised that being Jesus's disciples would be safe or easy.

May God give us the courage to follow Jesus no matter the cost, throwing caution to the wind for the sake of our neighbor and trusting in the power of God's transforming love. And may we remember that even when we fail, God's boundless love for us still endures.

Debbie Jorgens
Director of Outreach Ministries



Children's Ministries



Continuing VIRTUAL SONday School

SONday School will continue online until we can meet again in person. Lessons are being sent to family emails as well as being posted on the Grace Lutheran Church Facebook Page. For questions or more on how to access lessons, please contact Maria at mariam@graceandover.org

If your family needs a SPARK Storybook Bible please contact Maria for that as well.



The last day of SONday School is May 17th. This is also the day we would have the 5th grade bridging ceremony. In the event we do not meet in person for worship that day, Maria and the Grace staff will plan to hold the ceremony at a later date. **Maria Markman, Director of Children & Family Ministries**

Continuing Wednesday VIRTUAL Family Devotions

With stay at home orders, continuing now through May, events like Kids Night Out are not only mandated, but essential for the wellbeing and health of our children and families.

But just like the tomb could not hold him and the locked doors of the disciples could not keep him out, Jesus is present with you and with your family wherever you are.

In our baptism class at Grace, Pastor Joanna and I share that faith begins in the home. The statistics are startling, 25% of adults say they remember one of their parents talking about their faith at home. The amount of children who

grew up going to church who continue to attend church into adulthood is also around 25%. Interesting how these numbers reflect one another, isn't it?



All of our VIRTUAL content is designed for families in mind. So that you can complete the lessons with your children at home. You can share elements of your own faith life with your children and as you all work through the lessons together, everyone's faith is deepened.

All of our online programming improves when you interact online. Send pictures and videos so your kids can connect with some of their church friends! **Maria Markman, Director of Children & Family Ministries**

The PRAYground

When we return to worshipping together, remember our newest addition to the Worship Center: Grace Lutheran Church's PRAYground! We are working on moving its location in order that it does not block the emergency exit. This will most likely include the removal of pews on that side of the worship center. We want to surround our children with voices of the church, and love. This will encourage their growth, understanding, and faith which is the promise we have made to these children in the waters of their baptism!

Please follow Grace guidelines for the PRAYground when worshipping there with your children.

**Maria Markman,
Director of Children &
Family Ministries**



Children's Ministries

VBS is Under Construction

It is with a heavy heart, we at Grace must let you know that Luther Crest, our partner in VBS 2020, has decided to close their programming for the summer due to COVID-19. They have offered to support our own programming in many ways in the event we are able to host our own VBS.



We are still hopeful we will be able to provide a VBS experience for the families of Grace. However, it may look different and may happen in a more limited capacity. Understanding the inconvenience this may be for your family planning for summer vacation, we are waiting for more clear reopening plans from the state and COVID-19 authorities to finalize our plans and dates. Please know we are doing everything we can to provide faith formation experiences for your families while also keeping you, your children, our staff, and volunteers safe. Safety is our utmost priority at this point.

Please keep an eye out for a survey. Your answers will help us know what you and your family are expecting and willing to participate in. If you have ideas or questions please contact Maria @ mariam@graceandover.org

Maria Markman,
Director of Children
& Family Ministries



Youth Ministries

A Note Regarding Youth Ministry

Last year I mourned with the children's ministry that we needed to cancel VBS. I remember thinking how disappointing it would be if we needed to cancel a mission trip or Summer Stretch. This year, that is the reality that we live in. Tom Baker and I made some difficult decisions over the past few weeks regarding our summer programming. Confirmation is postponed and moved to the fall, our summer trips are canceled, even Summer Stretch won't be able to happen this summer. They were tough conversations, but



ones that were made with love for our students and our families and their safety.

It is easy to look at this list of postponements and cancellations and be discouraged and sad. Trust me, when I say that I have had my moments too. Students of all ages are grieving lost opportunities and broken expectations. We mourn these losses with them, and we too are disappointed with how our summer is unfolding. Tom and I miss being with all the students at Grace and look forward to when we can gather again.

When we look at the list of updates the question is easily raised, so what ARE we doing this summer? And the easy answer is, as much as we possibly can. We take seriously the advice of the medical community and keeping

Youth Ministries

our students and our community safe. As the summer unfolds and restrictions lift, we plan on creating new opportunities that still reflect our values and goals of our church and our



youth program. We also will continue to gather online and connect in new and different ways. It is my vision that we will be able to create several impromptu events for youth to gather as we move further into summer and will work hard to keep everyone informed of those events.

Our God is bigger than COVID-19; so much so that our God is at work even in this time. We don't know what exactly our summer will look like for our youth and their families, but we know and trust that God will be with us in the midst of it. God will still allow us to serve, worship, learn, listen, lead and be in community even if it looks different than we had planned. Youth Ministry will be alive and well this summer, and I for one am excited to see how God shows up with us.

Kristi Larson
Director of Youth and Family Ministry

YOUTH MINISTRIES



**Red Cross
Blood Drive**
Tuesday, May 12th
1pm - 6pm

One car accident victim can use as many as 100 units of blood. You can help!

Call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org) and enter Grace Andover to schedule an appointment.

**Farmer's
Market**

Tuesdays

**May 5th-
October 27th**



2:00-6:00pm

Come out and support our local farmer's by purchasing their fresh produce, plants and of course the always popular kettle corn.



Annual Congregation Meeting

May 31st at 9:30 am

The purpose of this meeting is to elect new Vision Board members to replace those whose terms are up. The plan is to meet in the worship center between services, however, watch Grace at a Glance and our announcements in worship for information regarding changes because of COVID-19.

Grace4Rakai



An Update on Rakai and COVID-19

The people of Rakai, Uganda are in great need of our prayers. Those of you who sponsor children in Rakai may already be aware of how dire the situation is becoming. This is an effort to update the whole congregation:

- As of April 18, there were 55 cases of COVID-19 in Uganda, concentrated in Kampala (about 4 hours north of Rakai). However, the Ugandan government has closed the borders with Kenya and Tanzania, where there are many more reported cases of the virus.
- The Ugandan government has also closed all markets and prohibited travel. The people in Rakai rely on the market not only to barter for their food and basic supplies, but also to hear news of the day. Now a major food shortage is looming and most people have no information about the coronavirus.
- COVID-19 which has the most significant impact on the elderly which would be devastating in an area where so many grandparents are caring for young children. The number of orphans could increase exponentially.
- African Children Today (ACT) has received a grant to implement measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Rakai. The primary focus is twofold. First, ACT will deliver food, soap, masks and corn & vegetable seeds to the most vulnerable families. Second, ACT is committed to educating as many people as possible about the prevention of COVID-19.

- ACT has purchased 6600 pounds of soap, 24,000 pounds of rice, 22,000 pounds of beans, and 46,000 pounds of maize flour and repackaged these supplies into “care boxes” to sustain an average family for a month. Women who are part of the ACT sewing project are making cloth masks to include in the boxes. They are being distributed throughout the district and will reach 1,000 families in need.
- The supply of Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) meal packets is getting low, so packets are being rationed to ensure those most critically in need can receive them. It will be a long time before their supplies can be re-established due to the temporary closing of FMSC and the situation globally.

What can you do?

First and foremost, please **pray** for the people of Rakai, for the ACT staff, for Richard Mutaawe and Lowondo Johnson as they lead the effort on the ground, and for all those disbursing the care boxes and educating people about COVID-19.

Second, **please consider making a financial contribution** to support the expansion of this current effort. Send a check in any amount to ACT, PO Box 390123, Edina, MN 55439. Be sure to write “COVID Response” in the memo line. Thank you!

Debbie Jorgens

Director of Outreach Ministries



Finances



Finances as of March 31, 2020

God is working in the hearts and hands of the families of Grace. The world is in a COVID-19 crisis and the families of Grace are stepping up to give financially and serving. Masks have been made, food has been distributed to the ACBC food self and our own Grace Food Shelf, phone calls spreading cheer and a blood drive scheduled to name a few. The Spirit is moving in our hearts and our community.

Thanks be to GOD and to you for giving of your financial resources during this crisis. Below is a snapshot of our giving through April 19, 2020. We have shown expenses through the end of March 2020.

Mortgage:

YTD Mortgage Principal paid = \$21,209.50

Remaining Principal = \$554,218.70

	2020	2019
General Offerings	\$231,897.83	\$212,239.75
Capital Offerings	\$30,837.72	\$30,418.50
Jan.-March Expenses	\$216,962.57	\$234,978.96

YTD Offering Comparison and Jan.-March Expenses

*if you would like a copy of the current financial report, please contact Kate
katem@graceandover.org or Marie
mariek@graceandover.org*

Kate Morphew, Church Administrator

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that Amazon will donate 0.05 % of the purchase price on eligible items to a charity of your choosing? You can choose Grace Lutheran Church to be the recipient of those funds. Please consider using Amazon Smile when shopping on Amazon. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com> then choose from one of the amazing charities (Grace Lutheran Church being one of them) to support. The Amazon Smile prices are the same, and you will still have access to Amazon Prime if you are a Prime member.



Marie Kolar, Bookkeeper/Communications



Giving Online at GraceLink helps the church and the congregant. It helps the congregant to give consistently and helps the church with cash flow. If you have been thinking about setting up reoccurring gifts, it is really simple.

1. Create a *Log in to GraceLink* for yourself. Once you have logged in,
2. Click on *Giving* on the tool bar.
3. Have a check or credit card handy.
4. Determine the total amount and how often you want to give that amount.
5. Then select how much you would like to give to each fund.
6. Finish filling out your bank information.
7. Then follow the prompts to finish.

If you have questions, feel free to call the church office 763-421-6520. They would be happy to help you.

Marie Kolar, Bookkeeper/Communications



Grace Lutheran Church

13655 Round Lake Blvd NW, Andover, MN 55304

(763) 421-6520

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Beginning May 24th through September 6th*

*Due to COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions Grace Lutheran worship services may continue on-line/virtually at 8:30am on Sundays.

Saturdays: 5:00 pm

Sundays: 8:30 am & 10:00 am