

grace notes

November, 2020

Hopeful Expectations!

Hopeful Expectations!

*For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what is seen?
But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Romans 8:24-25*

This is one of my favorite verses in scripture because I find it to be so true. When people in my churches have endured terrible obstacles, this is the verse that will come into my head during my prayers. I hear God whispering to me, "You just can't see it yet, but you can have hope. Remember, we hope for what we do not see!" I need this reminder, because often I want to wrap hope up in a basket and hand it out to people who are suffering. Don't you wish we could just buy hope and share it? Of course, this isn't how hope works. It is unseen; something longed for; something we turn to God for; something that only comes with time.

When we envisioned 2020, this is NOT what we envisioned for our church. We had different expectations about what our faith community and our world would look like. I know that I am not alone in feeling grief about all that has transpired this year. And yet, I have hope in what is ahead because I trust that God is leading us. Our theme for our Stewardship Appeal is **Hopeful Expectations!** As a stewardship team and vision board, as we prayed and reflected about the future of Grace and where God is leading us in 2021, we needed to tell the truth about the present reality. There is suffering. There is groaning, and we live as people of hope.

Everything I know about faith tells me that when things get hard and we start to give up, this is when God shows up. When Abraham and Sarah lost hope in the promised child, God showed up and Isaac was born. When Jesus went to the cross and died, God showed up. God is showing up for us too.

God has heard our groaning and the cries of our community and God is leading us to respond. As we look to 2021, God is calling us to strengthen and grow the ministry here at Grace Lutheran Church. One of our initiatives is to provide for the basic needs of our church and the greater community. We plan to do this by eliminating registration costs for Sunday School and Catechism and by expanding our ability to respond to people in need by providing emergency resources through our food shelf and other local partnerships.

As difficult as this year has been, I am so grateful for you. Your generosity has allowed our ministry to continue and thrive during a year where we have been physically distanced from each other. Every time there is a need in the community, and we have asked for help, you show up to give of your time and your finan-

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Administration

Continued from Page1

cial resources. Thank you! We are so grateful! Your generosity makes a difference.

Thank you for your support of Grace Lutheran Church. Financially we have done pretty well through this pandemic, although in the last two months, our giving has decreased and is falling behind our projected current offerings. If you are able, please make a gift to support the ongoing ministry of Grace.

Please be on the look out for our Stewardship mailers which outline all our ministry initiatives for 2021. I also want to invite you to come to an informational session to gain more information on our appeal. You can attend a meeting in-person in our sanctuary at 9:30am on November 8th or attend a Zoom Meeting on November 10th at 7pm.

Ted Bowman, a grief counselor stated: “each of us holds a small seed of hope, and our job is to share that seed with each other, and when we do, that hope will grow.” People of Grace, you all hold a seed of hope today, a seed that has the ability to transform lives, a seed that is meant to be shared, a seed that has so much potential that it will fill us with an abundant hope-filled future.

Pastor Joanna Mitchell



Finances

By Marie Kolar

Thanks be to GOD and to YOU for giving of your financial resources during this continuing adversity.

Below is a snapshot of our offerings through Oct. 27, 2020. Expenses are shown through the end of September 2020.

Mortgage:

YTD Mortgage Principal paid = \$71,477.27

Remaining Principal = \$503,951.03

	2020	2019
General Offerings YTD	\$538,371.58	\$529,988.01
Capital Offerings YTD	\$83,654.72	\$75,342.50
Jan.-Oct. Expenses	\$622,472.09	\$644,920.19

Building Committee

Temporary Portable Classrooms Do Not Last Forever!

By Charlie Wold

Covid-19, never ending elections, civil unrest... None of these overwhelming issues will derail this congregation from moving ahead in our next big decision/mission. The current permit for our portables expires late 2023 which will require the temporary portables that have served us so well to be removed. The city of Andover has made it clear that they will not renew our permit for the portables. The big decision is to determine what direction the church should take to deal with this situation.

Looking forward with faith, a committee has been formed to lead us on a journey that will be inclusive and transparent. Pastor Joanna, Frances Fernandez, Dennis Grabowski, Jackie Glockner, Greg Ackerson, Neil Hawkinson, Sandy Schmoll, and Charlie Wold have agreed to serve on the committee. Our committee welcomes any and all input from the congregation.

The options before us include:

- Stay at our present location without adding space to replace space lost from the removal of the portables. This choice mandates adding ADA compliant restrooms to replace those lost in the portables. We must also perform maintenance to roofs and our parking lot plus other needed improvements.
- Add floorspace to our current location and include the items mentioned in number 1 above.
- Build a new church on the Nightingale property. (Located just off Crosstown Boulevard 3.5 miles north of Grace)

Each of these options poses financial questions?? Do we sell the Nightingale property to fund options 1) or 2)? Do we sell the current church to help fund a new church? Can we raise sufficient funds to do option 1) without selling Nightingale?

The committee is now investigating property values of each of the two sites, incorporating staff inputs regarding needs, identifying architects and or design/build contractors that can help move the process along, building code changes, and assessing general trends in growth within our larger community.

Before we get too far along, we will request input from our congregation as to what you believe we will need for the next 10 years. Are we looking for larger gathering spaces or more convertible classroom space or do we need any more space, simply better utilization? Anticipate polling and gatherings, either in person or virtual, in the next few months as we continue this journey God has placed before us.

As we assemble the pieces identified above, budgets will be assigned to the various options allowing decisions and directions to be determined. Throughout this journey, our objective is to be inclusive, transparent, and honest. With God's help, we will together generate the best path for our congregation.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6

Community Outreach



American Red Cross Blood Drive Grace Lutheran Church Monday, November 9th 1:00-6:00 pm

By Kris Miller

Blood is currently in short supply and your donations are desperately needed to save lives. To register to give blood at Grace on Monday, November 9th, go to www.redcrossblood.org/give or call the Red Cross at 1-800-RED CROSS.

Family Promise Needs Crockpots

By Gayle Pacholl



Family Promise is looking for donations of gently used crock pots to give to our families who are living in hotels. If you have one you'd like to donate, please let me know or call the Church Office.

Family Promise Large Bag Kits

By Low Jackson



Can you sew a straight line and zig zag? The homeless families that our congregation hosts are in need of large cloth bags as they are being housed in hotels due to COVID-19.

Kits have been made to sew these much needed bags. Students looking for community service can make these with an adult. You will find the kits with sewing directions in the narthex. Please pick one up, sign the sheet, and return when completed to the same place you picked it up by January 3. Thank you.



NOISY
OFFERING

NOVEMBER NOISY OFFERINGS

Grace 4 Rakai and Feed My Starving Children

By Debbie Jorgens

Grace 4 Rakai: Malaria is a leading cause of death in Uganda, and because the Ugandan government has been primarily focused on containing COVID-19 since earlier this year, malaria medication is in dangerously limited supply. Ugandans across the country are at risk - including the vulnerable women and children in Rakai. But we can help! For the first two weeks in November, Noisy Offerings will be directed to Grace 4 Rakai to be used toward the purchase and distribution of malaria medication that can literally mean the difference between life and death.

FMSC: Noisy Offerings for the 2nd half of November will benefit Feed My Starving Children (FMSC). Hunger causes nearly half of deaths in children under age 5 around the world, and tragically, an estimated 6,200 die each day from causes related to undernutrition. As a Christian nonprofit, Feed My Starving Children is dedicated to seeing every child whole in body and spirit, and to that end, the organization works with food distribution partners within communities to effect lasting change. Please give generously.



Community Outreach



PACK MEALS AT FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

Saturday, November 21 - 9:00-11:00 AM

By Debbie Jorgens

One of the things the pandemic *hasn't* changed is the need to feed hungry children around the world. So get your friends and family together and join others from Grace as we pack meals together at 9:00 AM on Saturday, November 21st at FMSC in Coon Rapids! FMSC has worked diligently to ensure that COVID-19 precautions are in place, including limiting each volunteer group to five people per station. You will **not** be socially distanced from the other four people at your table, but you **will** be socially distanced from other groups in the packing room. And of course, masks are required. To read more about FMSC's COVID-19 precautions, visit fmsc.org. You can register for the November 21st session directly on the FMSC website (look for the Grace Lutheran group on 11/21). Or simply contact the church office or Debbie Jorgens, and we'll get you registered!

you a "heads up" that Grace will again be providing Christmas gifts to the residents of Stepping Stone Emergency Housing in Anoka. But you won't see any red Target bags at church this year! Instead of filling bags with personal care items, we're asking that you consider donating Target or Walmart gift cards (\$25 value). The gift cards will be inserted into Christmas cards that will be distributed to each of Stepping Stone's 66 residents a few days before Christmas. We'll be collecting gift cards (or monetary donations for purchasing the cards) during the first three weeks of December. Thank you for making Christmas a little brighter for those without a home of their own.



The Grace "May All Be Fed" Food Pantry is in need of the following items:

cream and chunky soup
boxed mac and cheese
boxed potatoes
crackers/snacks
jelly/jam
boxed pasta
pasta sauce
canned tomato products
canned stew or beefaroni

If you are able to donate any of these items, please drop off in the Church Office or contact Kris Miller or Michelle Behnke-Nead. Thank you!



CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR STEPPING STONE By Debbie Jorgens

Yes, we know that Halloween is barely over and Thanksgiving isn't here yet! But we want to give



Adult Ministry



<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Racial-Justice-Ministries>

People of Grace,

The Minneapolis Area Synod, of which Grace is a part, has asked all of its congregations to think about racial justice in their contexts. They have invited us to create a racial justice statement that explores and describes our commitment to the work of racial justice in our own communities.

Here, at Grace, we have already begun this work, some of us individually, and some together through our weekly or now monthly Conversations on Race. As a team, SALT (Seek, Abide, Love, Trust: Grace's Adult Education and Prayer Ministry Team), has also begun thinking about racial justice in our community and beyond. Below you will find the ELCA Church-wide Racial Justice Ministries statement. SALT is excited to start exploring this statement through conversations with all members at Grace. In light of the gospel of Jesus Christ and recent events in our state and nation, we feel anti-racism work is holy and necessary.

Might Grace adopt this statement or one like it? Please join us in reading, studying, and discerning where God calls us to be neighbors to people whose experiences are different than our own.

Our plan each week is to release different reflections, some written and some video recordings of our own discernment with the ELCA statement below. In good "Lutheran" fashion we will follow the example Martin Luther laid out in his small catechism. After each petition we will ask: What does this mean? How do we see these words already in action at Grace? Where could Grace step up and meet God's call for justice and mercy? As you listen and read along, we hope you too will join the conversation!

If you are interested in sharing your own thoughts or in the next phases, drafting a statement of our own, etc. email mariam@graceandover.org

Justice and Peace,

Pastor Maria and the SALT team: John Anderson, Scott Lien, Leoma Sparer, Nancy Jenkins, Stephen Hirt, Chrissy Gast, Frances Fernandez, and Bekah Hirt

ELCA Racial Justice Ministries Statement

We believe that Christ's church is for all people. God calls each of us by name, and it is not our job to sort, divide, categorize or exclude. But as "saints and sinners," we know and experience God's work of healing and restoring as well as the persistent human pain and injustices of racism in the world. This is where God has put us, in the thick of life, where we participate in what God is doing by insisting on justice and upholding human dignity for the inclusion of all people in the life of the church and society.

We are called to be a church that embraces each person and confronts racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, age, gender, familial, sexual orientation, physical, personal and class barriers that often manifest themselves in unjust treatment, inequalities, exclusion and violence.

When we confront racism and move toward fairness and justice in the church and society, we all benefit. We begin to understand that each of us has a unique story, and we are all part of a larger, rich story that makes up the ELCA.

You can always find this statement and our reflections as they are released on the SALT page on Grace's website



New!

By Bekah Hirt

It has been a while since we have had a ministry specific for young adults. This is something I

have always wanted to participate in and have needed that connection with other students my age or near my age. It is a place where we feel connected, loved, and ultimately, accepted for who we are in our lives and our faith. This group allows us to come together and talk through different ideas that we may not be comfortable with in other groups. This group has given me a chance to share my faith through meaningful conversations, deep connections, and find truths to questions we have. I hope that other young adults will find this desire to connect and converse with others as we do. Thank you for your consideration.

Bekah Hirt

This fall, Young Adults of Grace are gathering to read and study *Unqualified: How God uses Broken People to do Big Things* by Steven Furtick. If you or someone you know is a young adult (ages 16-30) and would like to join our book study or upcoming young adult events please email mariam@graceandover.org

Adult Ministry

Children's Ministry



Responses from this season's Adult Small Groups

By Maria Markman

Note we are looking to offer more small group offerings like these in the future. So if you are interested in leading a group please reach out at mariam@graceandover.org!

Here are some of the responses we have received from the first round of Adult Small Groups:

"...thank you for being brave and bold and leading a group and learning alongside of the group. I think this act alone is a role model of what churches need to increase involvement. If we wait until we are experts or perfect to lead, the church would not have small groups... During this time of COVID and its challenges, I have been seeking easy paths, and this class is not it. However, I also believe the Lord provides what you need, not necessarily what you want. So, I am doubling down and self-reflecting and really inhaling the messages this book [*Non-Violent Communication*] provides. And, I am keeping that deep breath inside before I exhale and rush into action. And, this isolating time of COVID is an opportunity to slow down to do that." - "Non-Violent Communication Study" participant

"The book has been extremely powerful for me. The discussion has been engaging and I feel that everyone has been able to share/chime in at some point throughout the study so far." - "Non-Violent Communication Study" participant

"Although we have a small group for memoir writing, we are having expansive discussions about those life moments that draw us together. We have discovered so many experiences that we have in common. Sharing stories allows us to explore our feelings, and to realize the impact that others have had on shaping the people we have become. Memoirs, as opposed to autobiographies, are more narrowly focused and relate single moments in our lives. Only when we zero in on certain incidents or certain relationships that we've encountered do we get a better sense of who we are. After all, we all have a story to tell; that's why it's called *history* or *herstory*. Come explore your own story." -Jan Anderson, "Life Moments Through Memoir" Leader.

"Our Sunday evening contemporary worship music in the parking lot is being cut short by this sudden change in the weather. While the weather cooperated, we had a great time and had good attendance." -Greg Ackerson, "Worship Music in the Parking Lot" Leader.

"We are doing a "Mental Health Moment" each week at the start of our meeting. The objective is to actually practice strategies that help improve our mental health. During this time, group members mentally set aside the activities and busy-ness of their days and become more relaxed and present. We have had multiple people lead these exercises which typically focus on paying attention to our breathing. Some of the leading mental health organizations in the US are incorporating similar mindfulness exercises into their meetings, and we thought this was a great "practice" for us to do." -Nancy Jenkins, "Mental Illness and the Church" Co-Leader.

Children's Ministry Calendar

By Maria Markman

November 1 - Worship and Play Sunday School

November 8 - Worship and Play Sunday School

November 15 - Worship and Play Sunday School

November 22 - Worship and Play Sunday School

November 29 - FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOOL, everyone is invited to come and learn about ADVENT. We will also be making Advent Wreaths. Families are encouraged to come together.

ALL December - Weekly Family Devotions online

December 12/13- GraceKids and families present "Do Not Be Afraid" Christmas program during worship.

Sunday School will be virtual during the month of December, watch out for video lessons weekly! If you are not currently getting GraceKids emails and would like to, please email mariam@graceandover.org You can also find online devotions on the Grace Website under Children's Ministry.



ADVENT WREATH MAKING EVENT

Family Sunday School

November 29 9:20-10:20 AM

By Maria Markman

All families and individuals at Grace are invited to attend. Please sign up on GraceLink to ensure we have enough supplies for you.

Come as a family and learn about the season of Advent, make an advent wreath for your home, receive family advent devotions, and enjoy some fellowship together.

Children's Ministry



A Virtual Christmas Program

By Maria Markman

We are excited to announce this year we will be creating a virtual Christmas Program! Our program is called: *Do Not Be Afraid!* And centers around Jesus' birth stories found in Matthew and in Luke. Children's Ministry and Grace's Music Ministry are combining forces to tackle this year's virtual program. We need as many children, families, and individuals involved as possible! There are roles for adults and for kids. Opportunities for special music too! If you would like to participate in this year's program please sign up on GraceLink under Christmas Program (Virtual) 2020. The registration will include instructions on how we will cast parts, record scenes, and use your musical gifts all to make this program come to life! If you are a part of the Grace Choir or Praise Band, look for emails with more information on your parts. Emails may go to your spam, so make sure you are checking for this email and reach out if you haven't received anything.

Program will air in worship on December 12/13. Invite your friends and family to attend Grace Virtual Worship that weekend. We plan to host a watch party as well via zoom!



Worship

Worship SCHEDULE

We have several options available for you to participate in Worship at Grace. We have indoor services and virtual services.

Indoor Services

We have indoor worship at 5:00pm on Saturdays, 8:45am and 10:30am on Sundays. To participate in these in-person services, reservations for your family will need to be made via signup genius which you can access through the Grace Lutheran Web Site at www.grace-andover.org.

Other Items of Importance for Indoor Services

- We will be having Communion on 1st and 3rd Sundays of the Month.
- Each week, we are trying new things and experimenting to improve our worshiping experience. We recognize that there will be things that go well and parts that need to be changed. Thank you for your input and patience.
- All of the worship formats are dependent on current and trending COVID-19 levels.
- All Indoor services will continue to be on a reservations basis and seating is limited to 40 people or less. ***Reserve you spot, before Noon on Fridays, on Sign Up Genius, call the church office at 763-421-6520 or e-mail Kris Miller at krism@graceandover.org.**
- If you are unable to attend your designated service please cancel your reservation to allow others to attend. You can cancel by going to Grace Lutheran's web site, and clicking on the link you used to reserve your spot.
- ***Please wear masks and abide by social distancing recommendations.***
- ***Please NO outside food or beverages in the worship center.***

Virtual Services

Throughout everything we will continue to provide worship online. We will begin streaming worship this week through Grace's YouTube account. Worship will be live at 5:00 pm on Saturday night and at 8:45 am on Sunday morning. It will also be saved so if you are not able to join us at that time, you can worship later through Grace's YouTube channel. You can access our YouTube channel through the web site at www.grace-andover.org



Grace Lutheran Church

13655 Round Lake Blvd NW, Andover, MN 55304

(763) 421-6520

A Ministry of Grace in the heart of Andover and beyond!

www.graceandover.org

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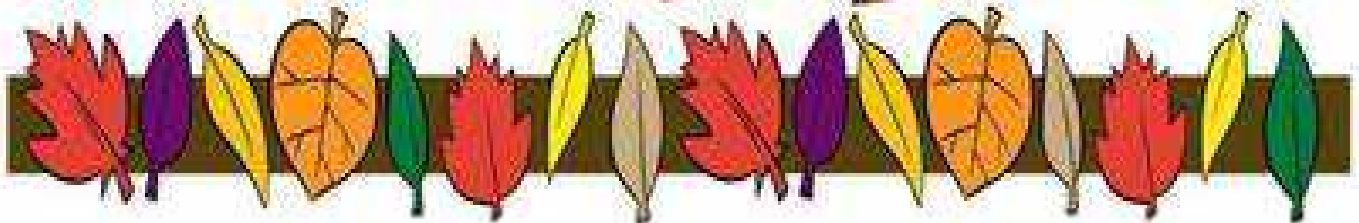
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November



Virtual Thanksgiving Worship

November 25th at 7 pm on Grace Lutheran's
YouTube Channel