

# grace notes

October 2020

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## Mental Health Awareness

I served as an on-call chaplain during my ministry in Faribault. The duties of this position involved carrying a police cell phone around for two weeks, and responding to the needs of the emergency services in town if it rang. Thankfully, the phone didn't ring very often, because if it did, it usually meant that I was going to be a part of a very difficult event, like a death notification. However, one evening the phone rang for a different reason. Someone was having a mental health crisis in the ER. There were no beds available in any of the local hospitals and they were out of ideas of how to help her, so they decided to call in the chaplain.

I arrived at the hospital and was quickly escorted into a room with a young woman. She had given up on life and was looking for a way out. Her voice was defeated, desperate and hurting. I felt ill-equipped. I was a new pastor; I wasn't a mental health expert. Who was I to do anything of real merit in helping her get through this crisis? After talking to her for a while, I felt that I really didn't have much more to offer her in terms of help, so I asked her if she wanted me to stay. Yes, she responded. "Stay. Don't leave me alone." We sat in silence for a while as I prayed. Prayed for God to bring her healing. Prayed for God to give me wisdom. Prayed for God to give me words to say. Prayed to God for a bed to open up so she could get real help instead of me. Suddenly I remembered the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 19.

Elijah, one of my favorite prophets of the Old Testament had a mental health crisis too. He ran off into the wilderness, lay under a Boom tree and prayed to God to die. "It is enough Lord, take my life." Elijah declared, laid down and went to sleep. When he wakes up, there on the rock next to him is food, hot cakes and a jar of water. He eats, he drinks and then he goes back to sleep. Elijah wakes up a few days later and then heads to Mount Horeb where he stands looking for God. He can't find God anywhere. God is not in the earthquake or the fires, or the wind, and then suddenly Elijah hears silence. It is in the silence, or the still small voice that Elijah at last hears God, who asks: What are you doing here? And then tells God to go back and get help.

I found this passage in the bible and read it to the young woman. I told her, that God is here with her in the ER, in the still small voice whispering: "You matter. Your life is important. You are not alone." We sat together for a while and I prayed for her again this time asking God to keep that still small voice with her in the days ahead. She calmed down for a while and then finally told me that I could leave.

I don't know what happened to that woman. I pray she got the help she needed. I pray that she found other people to sit with her and care for her. I do believe that God showed up for both of us in that ER that evening. God fed us, not hot cakes and water, but instead with words and promise. Somehow, we both heard the still small voice of God, who reminded me that I actually did have an important message to offer, and that I could be of help in a time of crisis, and God fed her through this powerful story.

October 4th-10th is Mental Illness Awareness Week. At Grace, we have decided to spend time throughout the month of October focused on Mental Health. At our Oktoberfest celebration we will be raising money for Mental Health Connect, a collaboration Grace belongs to. Our children will be learning various mental health exercises in Sunday School. Our Catechism Students will also focus one session on mental health, and as a Congregation, we will pray for people with mental illness and have a worship service designed to raise awareness about Mental Illness on October 10th and 11th.

I hope that you will join me in learning, growing and sharing your own stories of Mental Health. It is in being there for each other, and telling our stories, that we continue to hear God's still small voice who continues to whisper, I love you. You matter. I am with you always.

Pastor Joanna Mitchell

## Happenings

**Grace Lutheran Church**  
13655 Round Lake Blvd. NW  
Andover, MN 55304  
763-421-6520

For our Staff Directory please visit:  
**[www.graceandover.org](http://www.graceandover.org)**

*thank you!*

Grace Lutheran Church-

***Thanks for single-handedly restoring my faith in humanity. I needed that!***

Thank you so much for your financial support through Noisy offerings, your prayers and kind gestures. They have meant the world to me as I recovered from my accident.

God Bless you all,  
Jack Zirkle



**Food Collection**

By Kris Miller

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

Soups – Especially Chunky Soups and Cream Soups  
Peanut Butter  
Hamburger Helper  
Tuna Helper  
Canned Chili Beans  
Pancake Mix  
Syrup  
Crackers

If you are able to donate any of these items, please drop off in the Church Office. Thank you!



By Kris Miller

**American Red Cross Blood Drive  
Grace Lutheran Church**

**Tuesday, October 27 1:00pm-6:00pm**

Blood is currently in short supply and your donations are desperately needed to save lives. To register to give blood at Grace on Tuesday, October 27, go to [www.redcrossblood.org/give](http://www.redcrossblood.org/give) or call the Red Cross at 1-800-RED CROSS.



**Annual Garden Fall Clean-Up**

By Kris Miller

The Annual Garden Ministry Fall Clean-Up is scheduled for Saturday, October 24 beginning at 9:00am. Help is needed to "spruce up" the church grounds and gardens in preparation for winter. No gardening skills needed, just willing hands. Bring your gloves, rakes, pruners, etc.

If you can help, e-mail [krism@graceandover.org](mailto:krism@graceandover.org) or call the Church Office at 763-421-6520.



## Small Groups



### Staying Connected

By Pastor Maria Markman

People of Grace,

If any of you have been reading Grace's online devotions <http://www.grace-andover.org/category/devotions/>, then you have started to read John van de Laar's Devotion "Learning to Belong." This 28-day study is filled with wisdom about community, belonging, and the church. During a time where we all long for connection and community, John emphasizes what we have learned in scripture in the creation stories, we were created for connection with the world, with each other, and with God. We are wired for connection. John states, "Science agrees with the Scriptures that we are wired to connect. The University of Miami's Touch Research Institute has conducted extensive studies on the effects of touch on human beings. The results indicate that '...touch lessened pain, improved pulmonary function, increased growth in infants, lowered blood glucose and improved immune function' Connection contributes to our health. Disconnection damages it." It isn't just touch, but being in one another's presence positively affects us as well.

So what do we do amid a pandemic where it literally feels as though this virus is a complete affront to what we need and desire most? We seek out connection. We find new ways of showing up, of being community, of caring for our neighbors, of being church.

One of the new ways we hope will help fuel this need is by offering adult small groups starting October 4th for 6 weeks. It is not too late to sign up for a small group. We have 7 different small groups ranging in topics and delivery methods, times, and days. In addition, we will continue to meet on Sunday mornings for Zoom fellowship. If you haven't tried this, I strongly encourage it. Especially when church was only online, this was church for me those weeks.

Meeting, laughing, lamenting, and connecting with others in our community on Sunday mornings. We also will continue to offer a weekly Pastor led Zoom Bible Study at 10:30 AM on Thursday mornings on the upcoming preaching text. And groups like Men's Ministry and Bible studies as well as WOW (Women on Wednesdays). There are so many opportunities to get connected at Grace this fall, we hope you will consider trying one of these ways. It is not too late to get connected for fall.

We also understand that some may be intimidated by Zoom. If this is the case, you are not alone. Please reach out to the church office and schedule a Zoom tutor. We can help you set it up, navigate, and find confidence in using Zoom, so that is no longer a barrier for your ability to connect.

Reaching out to you,  
Pastor Maria



### Small Group Opportunities

By Maria Markman

Stay connected or re-connect with small groups at Grace. If you are anything like me, this time, living in a pandemic has been difficult. It has been especially hard to find connection with others. Please join us in our new initiative: SMALL GROUPS at GRACE. *We want YOU and everyone at Grace to sign up and connect!*

Small groups will start the week of October 4-10th and run for 6 weeks (November 14). Small groups will be led by staff and/or lay leaders. Sign up for a group that interests you, meets a way you feel comfortable at a time that also fits your schedule. Sign up online or by calling the church office at 763-421-6520

## Small Group Offerings

### Centering Prayer

With Anne Weikle

*Grace Worship Center, Thursdays at 1:00 PM (Start date Oct. 8).* Centering Prayer is a practice in which one intends to quiet the busy mind and intentionally spend about 20 minutes resting in the Loving Presence of the Trinity. When done with others, Centering Prayer can build community.

### Worship Music in the Parking Lot

With Greg and Lori Ackerson

*Grace parking lot, Sunday evenings at 7:00 PM (Start date Oct. 4).* We will be playing worship music in the church parking lot. We will be gathering to sing contemporary worship music and see what conversations are sparked! Lyrics will be provided. This is a voluntary, social gathering held outdoors.

### Conversations on Mental Health and the Church

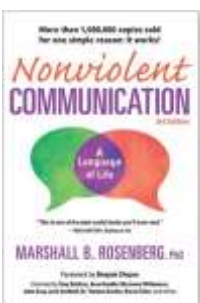
With Debbie Jorgens and Nancy Jenkins

*Mondays, October 5th at 7pm.* Join us in learning how we can be more compassionate and responsive to those struggling with mental health. As a guide to our discussion we'll use the book, *Whispers in the Pews: Voices on Mental Illness in the Church* by Chris Morris. This book is a collection of essays from various authors: men and women, pastors and church members, counselors and nurses, parents and children. All have a unique view of how mental health conditions affect people, and how the church has responded to these circumstances.

### Life Moments Through Memoir: Everyone has a Story to Tell

With Jan Anderson

*Zoom Tuesdays (starting October 6) @ Time TBD.* We will explore moments within your life in the form of memoir to form her-story or his-story, because everyone has a story to tell. We will also look at different memoirs, some long and others short. This will allow us to read and write, learning from others as they in turn will, learn from us!



### Nonviolent Communication Book Study

With John Anderson

*Zoom Monday evenings at 6:30-7:45PM, (Start date Oct. 5).* *NonViolent Communication: A Language of Life: Life-Changing Tools for Healthy Relationships* by Marshall Rosenberg. Learn tools to listen, understand and speak! Book order details

will accompany registration info. Books are approximately \$10.50 from most sources.

### Our Response to COVID-19: Finding Compassion

With Lavonne Hite

*Zoom Thursdays at 2:00 PM (Starting October 8th).* Circumstances are different. Now, home is the safe place. Outside of our home we need be vigilant and stay aware. Our collective grief from the sickness and death can be overwhelming, and at times ignored as we continue on with our overwhelming responsibilities. During these 6 weeks, we will explore our sense of mission, purpose and joy, by finding the right balance between caring for our loved ones, work, community and our own needs of practical, emotional and spiritual support. Books that will be discussed: *The Inner Voice of Love*, by Henri Nouwen, *Good Grief*, by Granger E. Westberg, *The Caregiver Support Guide*, Ester R.A. Leutenberg & Carroll Morris, *Kathy Khalsa, OTR/L*

### Young Adult Meet Up

With Bekah Hirt and Pastor Maria Markman

*Meeting day, time, and format TBD.* Seeking young adults ages 17-35 at Grace. Together we plan to explore what it means to live and be people of faith in our world today. Our course will span from fun "get to know you" conversations, to real talk on issues facing ourselves, our church, our country, our culture, and our world. Our hope is that after this 6 week small group, the group might continue to serve the young adult population at Grace and in our community as a ministry of Grace.



## Outreach Ministries

### God's Work, Our Hands

By Debbie Jorgens

Grace celebrated "God's Work, Our Hands" the weekend of September 19-20, showing God's love by serving our neighbors near and far through a variety of hands-on projects, including cleaning up our neighbors' yards, packing hospice kits for Tanzania, and painting blessing rocks. We were reminded that although *God* is always at work in the world, it is *our* call to carry out that work each and every day! Thanks to everyone who participated in our "God's Work, Our Hands" activities, and thanks for the many ways you continue to love and serve your neighbors!



### Family Promise

By Debbie Jorgens

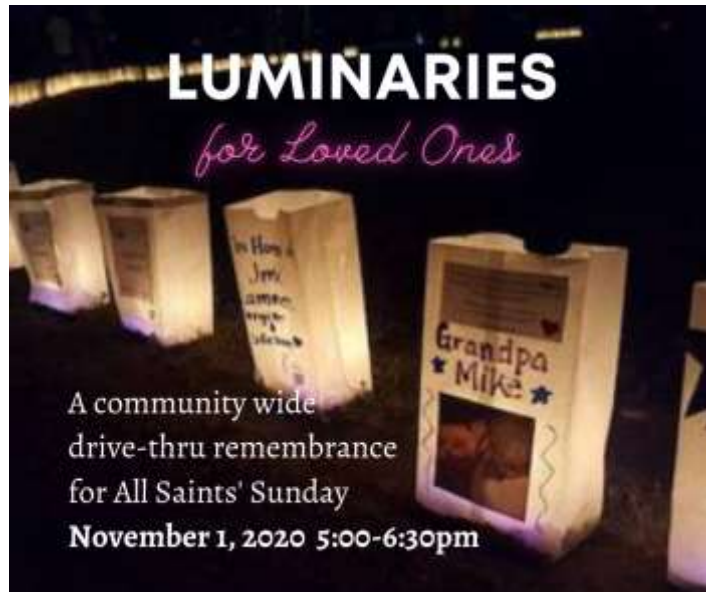
We're proud that Grace is one of the sponsors for Family Promise in Anoka County's first virtual fundraiser to be held on Thursday, October 8th at 7:00 PM. This will be an

interactive, live-streamed event featuring a look-back over 10 years with reflections from volunteers, community leaders, and founding board members. A former guest family will share their story, and there will be a special message from Family Promise staff. Be among the first to hear about Family Promise's big plans for the future!

Let's celebrate Family Promise and give thanks for our partnership with them by tuning in to this event from the comfort of our own homes, remembering those who struggle to find a home. Their fundraising goal for this event is \$25,000, **Please be as generous as you can, and remember every single dollar counts!**

Register at [www.familypromiseanoka.org/events](http://www.familypromiseanoka.org/events)

## All Saints Day



### All Saints Luminary Drive-thru

By Pastor Joanna Mitchell

On November 1<sup>st</sup> from 5-6:30pm the Anoka Area Ministerium is joining together for a community-wide drive-thru to remember the Saints on All Saint's Sunday. Grace Lutheran Church will be one of the six local churches welcoming people to their parking lot to see the luminaries, pray and hear music in remembrance of the saints.

White bags will be available at worship and in the church office for anyone who wants to pick up and decorate a bag. We need you to drop off your bags by noon on November 1<sup>st</sup> so that we can put them on display for the evening.

You can decorate a bag in remembrance of someone who has died over this past year, or many years ago. We hope that we can light up our corner with the glow of the saints as we pray, remember and give thanks for those who have gone before us.

Please contact Pastor Joanna Mitchell or Kris Miller with any questions.



## Worship



### Worship Plans

By Pastor Joanna Mitchell

I know many of you would like to know what worship will look like as the weather gets colder. Currently, our plan is to continue outdoor worship on Saturday night at 5 pm and at 8:45 am on Sunday morning for as long as possible. I believe this allows as many people as possible to connect with one another and be present in worship if they desire. If we are rained out, we will move indoors for worship and make that announcement an hour before worship. We will post that on our website one hour before worship giving people the opportunity to decide if they would rather stay home for worship or not. We will, of course, be livestreaming worship so that you can participate from home.

We will be creatively thinking about worship once it becomes too cold and will give you an update in our newsletter in November.

Thank you for your patience.  
Pastor Joanna Mitchell



5:00 pm - Saturday Evening in the Courtyard Service  
8:45 am - Sunday Morning Parking Lot Service  
10:30 am - Sunday Morning in the Sanctuary Service\*

Communion Sundays are the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.

\*Reservations Required

### 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 Sept. 27, 2020. Expenses are shown through the end of August 2020.

#### Mortgage:

YTD Mortgage Principal paid = \$57,002.85  
Remaining Principal = \$51,8425.45

	2020	2019
General Offerings YTD	\$491,300.58	\$480,075.01
Capital Offerings YTD	\$77,514.72	\$67,628.50
Jan.-Aug. Expenses	\$535,041.79	\$523,960.94

## Children's Ministry



### Children's Ministry Calendar

By Pastor Maria Markman

**October 4** - Oktoberfest; No Worship and Play Sunday School

**October 11** - Worship and Play Sunday School

**October 18** - MEA Worship and Play Sunday School. *\*Please dress your children in paint clothes this day.*

**October 25** - FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOOL, everyone is invited to come and learn about communion. Families are encouraged to come together.

**October 28** - TRUNK OR TREAT Parade

**November 1** - Worship and Play Sunday School  
(Look for more decisions following this date about what Worship and Play will look like throughout winter and amid COVID regulations at this time)

**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.

### Some Changes in Children's Ministry

By Pastor Maria Markman  
A note about some changes in our usual church children's ministry calendar. Last year,



and in years past we have held a first communion class in the fall as well as given Bibles to our 3 year old's and 2nd graders. Our plan is to delay these events until spring when we are able to rely on warmer weather. We will be offering a family Sunday school event on the subject of communion on October 25th. We hope families and children of all ages are able to join us for that event. We will then hold a first communion class for those who are ready in the spring with a celebration on Maundy Thursday (the Thursday before Easter). We will also be postponing our Bible give away and learning event. But know that if your family needs a Spark Story Bible or an NRSV Bible we would LOVE to give you one as soon as possible. Please email Pastor Maria [mariam@graceandover.org](mailto:mariam@graceandover.org) to get your Bibles!

## Children's Ministry



### Monthly Family Devotions

By Pastor Maria Markman

As fun as Sunday School can be, we know that faith formation is best fostered at home. Statistics show it is most likely for children to stay connected to the church if their families talk about faith in the home. For the startling number of young adults who are leaving the church, the ones who stay usually talk to one or both of their parents or guardians about faith at home. The Coronavirus has changed our entire world and it has changed how we do Sunday School, faith formation, and church in general. And it has given us a unique opportunity to do things differently, maybe try something we have always wanted to, like time for family devotions. Each month Gracekids Children's Ministry will provide your family with devotions. You may use these or find others that work for your family. If you are not receiving the emails please email [mariam@graceandover.org](mailto:mariam@graceandover.org) and we will gladly add you to our list or you can find our children and family devotions on the Grace Website: <http://www.grace-andover.org/childrens-ministry-devotions/>

### Children's Christmas Program

By Pastor Maria Markman

Christmas and the possibility of a Children's Christmas program might seem too good to be true. But keep your eyes peeled in the next months for ways your family can get involved with a virtual children's Christmas program. This will be a fun way to get the most people involved (maybe even a few pets). And we hope a meaningful message that your family can keep in the digital archives forever!



### Trunk Or Treat is RETURNING! October 28, 2020

By Pastor Maria Markman

Our Trunk Or Treat event at Grace has been fun and safe for families. So we were committed to finding a way to continue this tradition even in the midst of our new pandemic reality. Our Trunk Or Treat will require a little more coordination, but will have all of the same elements. Think State Fair Food parade. Families are invited to dress up and drive through our parade of decorated trunks. You'll stay warm, have a blast, and go home with some extra fun treats!

**To pull all of this off, WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

If you are interested in helping us plan and execute, join the Children's Ministry Team following 10:30 am worship on October 11th.

If you would like to donate candy or small Halloween themed toys (pencils, tooth brushes, etc.) please drop them off at the church office by October 23rd.





# 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](http://www.graceandover.org)

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# Grace Lutheran Newsletter