

Grace Notes

March 2021



In a year...

Something stirred in me when the Lenten Cross was brought back into the sanctuary just this past week, reminding me that it has been a year. A year since we had gathered with a full sanctuary and kids coming up and playing in our pray ground. A year since we had walked around carelessly for worship. A year since coffee and donuts had been shared in our fellowship hall. A year since I have looked in many of your eyes and pronounced a blessing upon you directly to your face.

Almost a year ago, I knelt on the floor of our sanctuary and I prayed for healing: for our world, for our nation, and for us. I had no idea how God would respond or what that would look like. Healing has come in unexpected ways. It has come through laughter shared with puns on Zoom. Healing has come in love notes that appear in my mailbox from time to time from people in our community, just reaching out to say they care. Healing has come in both our prayers of lament and our ongoing prayers of gratitude.

And yet, I grieve. I grieve the losses that we have encountered over this past year. The people we know and love who have died of COVID-19, like my friend Craig and so many of your grandparents or aunts and uncles. It is rare now to find someone who doesn't know someone who has had a loved one die of the virus. It makes sense that we have surpassed 500,000 deaths in the United States. A lot of people have died and I grieve. I grieve, not only the loss of lives, but other losses too. I grieve that two weeks ago was the first time in almost a year that my children had walked into their own schools to attend class. I grieve that dances and High School activities didn't happen. I grieve that for too long, my kids have been an avatar face on the computer instead of an in the flesh student for their teachers. I grieve for those who have given up and gotten lost. I grieve for those who are too scared to come out of their homes. I grieve for all of those who have been unable to have a funeral for their family member. I grieve for the ways we have become angry at each other instead of united in our care.

Perhaps it is because it has been a year, that I realized the impact of the ongoing trauma that all of us have experienced. It is indeed different than an event like 9-11, but it is also the same. Our world has changed because of COVID-19. We have changed.

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Message from Pastor Maria Markman



Walking with God

A reflection from Pastor Maria Markman

"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him..." Colossians 2:6

For years, I knew as soon as I got a big girl job and a more permanent living situation, (more permanent than moving every year seminary, internship, seminary, first call), the first thing I would do was get a dog. I had high expectations for this dog, above all else my dog would be a good walking companion. Because as soon as he was old enough, he would also be a good running partner. After all, one must learn how to walk before he can run. I grew up with dogs who walked well and ran well, but walked neighbor dogs who didn't. They would sniff on every tree and stop to relieve themselves on every corner. I just couldn't stand it! On October 12th my dream came true. Many of you have gotten to see Chandler either at church, on social media, on zoom calls, or Sunday School virtual videos. If you haven't I am sure you will get the opportunity to meet him soon.

It was on October 13th that Chandler and I began walking together. We walked together everyday. Everyday we spend at least 20 minutes together (many times longer and multiple times a day) learning each others' rhythm. Our daily walks have been successful. As he learned, I would often say when he would get distracted by a scent or car or animal or other human, "Chandler, whose walk is this? Yours? Or Mine?" Of course we were on the walk together, but I am in charge. Chandler is so good on a lead. Chandler can even be let off a lead, ready to return when called by name. This was proved true when I was sick with COVID-19 and on the days when I could not walk him myself, others came to my aid to walk him for me. They always left showering him with praises, "Chandler, you are so cute," "Chandler, you are such a good boy," and telling me how great of a walker he is. And really our walks together and being outdoors have been such saving graces throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. And a recent article sent from a friend from the [Wall Street Journal](#) suggests being outdoors is the new 10,000 steps as far as health is concerned. Chandler and I are getting both! I am such a proud dog mom. There are things we are still learning, like not to jump up to say hello, not to nibble on fingers, or chew on my shoes, and together we will get there.

This morning I was thinking about all of this and how it relates to our life of faith. I imagine Jesus walking with us and visa versa. Do I spend as much time walking with Chandler as I do in my relationship with God? The more time I spend reading the Bible, in prayer, worship, and relationship with other believers, the more I understand the direction and path we are going, Jesus and I. Sometimes I get distracted by other things in life and Jesus gently asks, "Whose walk is this Maria? Yours? Or mine? I would like Jesus to direct my walk. Wouldn't you?"

Two beloved hymns come to mind, *Lead Me*, *Guide Me* and *In the Garden*, let their words become our prayer today:

Dear God,

Lead us, guide us along the way, if you are leading we cannot stray. Lord, let us walk each day with you, tell us that we are your own, let us be filled with your unquenchable joy! Amen.

Pastor's Message Continued

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In October, I started reading the bible through the yearlong bible project. I read it through an app on my phone (You should consider doing this too! It's amazing! I'd be willing to lead you in trying this). I have realized recently that I am most successful in keeping up with my readings when I listen to the audio part. It's been fantastic. As I have been listening to the story of our faith, I realize that what this last year has been for me, is part of the ongoing narrative of the world. There are times of trial and there are times of healing. There is joy and there is grief (of course I always knew this, but somehow right now I feel it more acutely.). Right now, I am listening to the book of Isaiah. Isaiah tells the story of a hard time for the people of Israel- there is judgment, there is despair, there are works of repentance and there is great promise proclaimed as well. God always points to a hope that we do not see.

Throughout the biblical narrative, there is one constant: God's faithfulness to us. God does indeed get frustrated



and call us to a different way of life. God does work through both the trials and tribulations but in the end, God's answer to us after what has been a hard year is hope, is love, is freedom and grace. How have you changed in this past year? How have you grown? How has God been faithful? May you feel God's loving presence surrounding you today, and may God's love sustain you, may you look forward in hope after what has been a really long tough year.

Blessings,
Pastor Joanna Mitchell



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Building Task Force

Building Task Force Update

By Dennis Grabowski

The congregational vote on Jan. 31st approved the decision to sell the Nightingale property. As a



result, the Task Force has begun the process of selecting a realtor to assist in that sale. When that selection is complete, our recommendation will be brought before the Vision Board for final approval. We are also moving forward in our search for an architect. Here again, after we have gathered sufficient information, we will make a recommendation to the Vision Board for approval.

When the above decisions have been made, we can move to the more exciting part of this journey. Precisely, what is it that our congregation, wants to do? What should our church look like in the future? This is where you, the congregation, come in. In the near future, the Task Force will establish an interactive document within the Grace website that will ask for your thoughts, ideas and concerns regarding our existing building, and how this construction project will make improvements. Additionally, on Sunday, March 7th, two meetings will be held to begin discussions of the ideas submitted as well as any new thoughts from the meetings.

Proverbs 11:14, "A nation falls through a lack of guidance, but victory comes through the counsel of many."

Please plan to attend:

**Sunday March 7th at 9:30 am in-person
in the Sanctuary**

Sunday March 7th at 11:45 am on Zoom

Ministries



"Social Devotions"-Faith and Worry

By Stacy Surratt

The Women's Retreat Team is excited to be hosting another "Social Devotions" in the month of March. "Social Devotions" is a monthly virtual Zoom Gathering for ALL Grace Women. Because of COVID-19, there was not an overnight GLC Women's Retreat in February 2021– But the Women's Retreat Team still wanted to connect and encourage every woman at Grace Lutheran Church during these trying times.

So feel free to *Virtually* swing by to get a "Spiritual Nugget" and Socialize with the Women at Grace on a monthly Zoom Call. Each month's call will have a different theme and is meant to uplift and provide a few spiritual truths for you to apply to your daily lives.

March's **Social Devotion** will be on Sunday evening March 21st, 2021 from 7pm-7:45pm. **The Zoom Link will be available for you on Grace at a Glance as well as on the GLC website under Church Online – Zoom Meetings.** There is no need to RSVP – just pop on each month and enjoy seeing our Grace Women and hearing how God can impact our lives!

Below are the Monthly Themes and Dates:

March 21, 2021 – Faith and Worry

April 18, 2021- Sing for Joy

May 16, 2021 – You are Not Alone

We are looking forward to seeing every GLC woman's beautiful face on March 21st. Please look for an email in March that will remind you of this fun and encouraging event! If you have any questions – contact Stacy Surratt at 317-506-6362 or stacysurratt@yahoo.com

Graceful Seniors is back!

By Pastor Maria Markman



Join Pastor Maria at Grace on Tuesday March 9th for breakfast and fellowship 8:30-9:00 am and a study at 9:00-10:00 am.

Pastor Maria is working on finalizing the details of the grand return of Graceful Seniors. But 2021 will be all about stories of faith, stories from the Bible and your stories. Pastor Maria and Jan Anderson have partnered together to create a Bible Study curriculum that will help us grow in faith and relationship with one another, and leave a lasting legacy for our families and loved ones.

Curious? Come and join us March 9th.

Breakfast will be for purchase at Farmstead. You are unable to eat at the Farmstead so the meal will be mobile. You are invited to bring your meal from the Farmstead to Grace for physically distanced fellowship in the fellowship hall and throughout Grace's campus. We will not have coffee available, but you are welcome to bring your own. If you are uncomfortable eating together, join us for the program only in the worship center. We will be distanced and masked much like in-person worship. Not comfortable meeting in person at all, join us online through Grace's website. Still got questions? Email Pastor Maria mariam@graceandover.org or give her a call 507-330-2471.

If you would be willing to help Pastor Maria invite seniors to these events please email or call her or the church office.

Ministries



FAMILY TABLE NEEDS YOU!

By Debbie Jorgens

Grace hosts the Family Table on the 3rd Sunday of every month from 12:30-1:30 PM. That means we'll be preparing and serving a "meal-to-go" for our neighbors in need on March 21st! There are a variety of ways to help, whether it's donating food items, helping to pack the meals, or bringing the meals out to our guests as they pull up in the parking lot. To learn more, please email Lynda Wilde at lrwilde@comcast.net or call her at (612) 418-6444. To sign-up to help, watch for the "Sign-up Genius" link in Grace-at-a-Glance.



Mental Health Connect Speaker Series:

Tangled Up in Grief

Monday, March 8th

6:30-8:00 pm via Zoom

By Debbie Jorgens

After losing her son, Cole, to mental health-related issues in 2018, mental health solutions and resources became a passion for Vicki Elliott, executive director of Mental Health Connect. Join us as Vicki shares her personal story of loss, pain, and deep grief. The conversation will help us understand why grief is so complicated, why it lasts so long, and why it seems to take a winding path.

This presentation is for anyone who is grieving, who wants to help someone else as they grieve, or who simply wants to learn more about the grieving process, including resources and tools. The Zoom link to this presentation can be found in Grace-at-a-Glance, on Grace's website, or at www.mhconnect.org.



ADULT EDUCATION

By Pastor Maria Markman

Adult Education (the group formerly known as "SALT") – Recently the Adult Education team re-

affirmed their vision and purpose: to provide opportunities for God to transform hearts and minds. The team will work with the Associate Pastor of Faith Formation to offer classes, small groups, speakers, and various events. The emphasis in 2021 will be on social justice: expanding our understanding, awareness, and comfort zones, reaching beyond our own culture. If you are interested in learning more or being a part of the Adult Education Team, email Pastor Maria at mariam@graceandover.org



Children's Ministry



Children's Ministry 2021 Spring Schedule

Sunday, March 7 9:30-10:20 AM	In-person Sunday School in the Fellowship Hall
Sunday, March 14	No Sunday School Spring Break
Thursday, March 18 6:30 PM	Children's Ministry Team Meeting
Sunday, March 21 9:30 AM -12:00 PM	No Sunday School; Sign up for a time slot to come and make your Resurrection Garden or to pick up a kit to do on your own.
Sunday, March 28 9:30-10:20 AM	Sunday School Celebration: Eggstravaganza! In the fellowship hall
Sunday, April 4	No Sunday School Easter Sunday
Sunday, April 11 9:30-10:20 AM	In-person Sunday School
Thursday, April 15 6:30 PM	Children's Ministry Team Meeting
Sunday, April 18 9:30-10:20 AM	In-person Sunday School
Sunday, April 25 9:30-10:20 AM	In-person Sunday School
Sunday, May 2 9:30-10:20 AM	In-person Sunday School
Sunday, May 9 9:30-10:20 AM	In-person Sunday School
Sunday, May 16 9:30-10:20 AM	Last Day of Sunday School Celebration!
Thursday, May 20 6:30 PM	Children's Ministry Team Meeting



Return to In-person Sunday School

By Pastor Maria Markman

In-person Sunday School has begun and all are welcome! We meet between worship services beginning at 9:30 AM and ending at 10:20 AM. Kids of all ages are welcome to attend together. We will be in the fellowship hall to ensure we can social distance. Until weather permits we will stay indoors, but when the weather gets warmer, we may move to an outdoor model much like in the fall. If we need to split into multiple rooms and groups for safety we are able to do so. All are required to wear masks. Together we will explore the Bible lesson for the day through stories, games, crafts, and other activities! I look forward to seeing you face to face!



Join the Children's Ministry Team

By Pastor Maria Markman

Do you have children involved in children's ministry at Grace? Maybe you are not a parent but enjoy working with children? Are you interested in joining the children's ministry team and working with Pastor Maria to provide meaningful faith formation for our children and families? If so or if you would like more information email Pastor Maria @ mariam@graceandover.org or give her a call.



SAVE THE DATE
Summer Vacation Children's
Ministry Programming
June 13th—17th

Children's Ministry & Youth Ministry & Lenten Services



Resurrection Garden Event March 21st 9:30am-Noon

Suggested Donation \$15 per garden kit.

EVERYONE is Welcome to participate!

Register on Realm to ensure we have enough supplies for your family!

It is a fun activity for your family, a great teaching tool about Jesus' resurrection, and a beautiful centerpiece that will grow just in time for Easter.



Children's Ministry Team Presents:

The Easter Eggstravaganza

March 28th 9:30 am-10:20 am in the Fellowship Hall

Fun for the whole family: socially distanced crafts, games, prizes, and more!



Youth Volunteering at ACBC Every Monday

By Kristi Larson

High School Students interested in volunteering at ACBC food shelf on Mondays from 12:00 pm-2:00 pm please contact Kristi KristiL@graceandover.org. Not in the Anoka-Hennepin District but still interested in volunteering a different day? Contact Kristi and let's set something up!



Green Ribbon Meeting

By Kristi Larson

Our next Green Ribbon Meeting is on Monday, March 1st at 6:30 pm at church! Parents, grandparents, and other caregivers of children with mental illness are invited to join us to share and listen with empathy and grace. You are not alone! This is an open group for parents in and outside of Grace. Please contact Kristi Larson at KristiL@graceandover.org

Green Ribbon meets the first Monday of each month at 6:30 pm. Due to Easter, we will meet on April 12th for our meeting next month. We are currently meeting in person in the Fellowship Hall.

Meetings are open to anyone that has a child, grandchild or is a caregiver for a young person that is struggling with mental health. Parents do not need to attend Grace to join us. All are welcome.



Lenten Worship Series

By Pastor Joanna Mitchell

Our Lenten Worship Series is focused on our Christian Identity and discerning the values

that we hold as a community of faith.

Grace Lutheran Church is a community that is:

- Christ-Centered
- Accepting of Everyone
- Compassionate
- Connected
- Empowered to share God's Love

During Lent we are invited to a time of prayer and contemplation, a time to think and reflect about God and what God has given us through the gift and love of Jesus. Please join us for Lenten Worship on Wednesdays, either online or in-person and we hope you will consider being a part of a small group to discuss and explore our values.



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Lenten Wednesdays Worship

(Weds. 3/3, 3/10, 3/17 & 3/24)

Worship: 1pm, 6pm and 7:15pm

With small groups in-person, and on Zoom.



Easter Sunday Worship

April 4, 2021

7:00 am— Sunrise—In-person
(Reservations Required)

8:15 am— Traditional— In-person
(Reservations Required)

9:30 am— Contemporary—In-person
(Reservations Required)

11:00 am— Blended—Outdoor
in the Parking Lot



Holy Week Worship

Maundy Thursday 4/1—1:00 pm and 7:00 pm

Good Friday 4/2—1:00 pm and 7:00 pm

Easter Vigil Saturday 4/3— 5:00 pm