

grace notes

May 2021

Being Led by the Holy Spirit



I love the beginning of the book of Acts. The disciples go from being confused and scared, to being commissioned by Jesus to share the Gospel from Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and finally to the ends of the earth. By chapter two, they have received the Holy Spirit as it lands on them in tongues of fire, and then the book just takes off. While I love the beginning of Acts, I am also intimidated by it. There is A LOT that happens in this book and I am often confused about what is happening where, and

by whom. There is a piece of me that finds the book messy and disorganized and maybe that's the point. When it comes to being led by the Holy Spirit into the world, it is messy, disorganized, chaotic, and confusing.

While I often prefer life to be orderly and predictable, the reality is with the Holy Spirit at the helm, order and predictability are rare. We might as well buckle our seatbelts and get ready for a bumpy ride. And yet, one of the things I notice when I read the book of Acts is that God is ever present. It really doesn't matter where the disciples go, if they end up in jail, or if they are in the midst of a foreign city, or even in the middle of the wilderness, God's Spirit is upon them, leading them, connecting them to new people, and empowering them on their journey.

You all have been through a lot of change at Grace over few years: pastor transitions, staff transitions, COVID-19, virtual worship and small groups, the beginning and ending of some ministries, and the list probably could go on and on. There are even more transitions in our future as we will be searching for new worship directors and a building project. But one of the things I notice in the book of Acts, no matter where God's Spirit leads the people, they spend time listening to each other. In these conversations, new understandings are born. In these conversations, God's spirit awakens them to new visions. In these conversations, new dreams are dreamed. I want you to know that in these next transitions at Grace, I will be listening. I want to hear about your hopes and dreams for our music ministry. If you love contemporary worship or traditional worship, I want to hear what you like about your preferred worship style, and what that might look like as we move into the future. I hope that you will keep envisioning how we might modify our building to be more reflective of our values and accessible for ministry. Please keep your eyes and ears open, as I will be inviting you to forums to share your ideas.

And finally, I invite you to pray. Please pray about the future of Grace, and the work God has called us to do. Please pray with an open mind, heart, and a willingness to listen, because God is still speaking. God is present with us and what God is saying might at first sound messy and chaotic, and it just might be exactly the voice that we need to follow as we all move forward in ministry and faith together.

Blessings,
Pastor Joanna Mitchell

Associate Pastor's Message



Newness

It is the practice of some at the beginning of a new year to choose a word, an intention for the year. Unlike a list of resolutions or goals, an intention can transform many parts of your life, and does not end in a culmination, but allows space for continued growth. After a year like 2020, I didn't feel like writing goals or even picking a word of intention for 2021. But my best friend did and luckily for me, I get to live vicariously and sometimes directly through her word of intention. She chose "newness." After a year of what seems like "no" and "can't," newness is refreshing. Instead of hitting roadblocks, newness has invited me to imagine what might be possible. Where might we find newness in our everyday -trying a new food or drink, or having a new

experience -sleeping under the stars outside in April! Yes, it was very cold, but it was also rejuvenating to be out in nature in a new way!

In my last year at seminary, I had to do a project on a faith community. Because I was already working at Grace, I used Grace as the focus of my project to create a contextual overview of the community - location, demographics, participation, missional identity, analysis of financial data, historical summary, and vision for the future, the whole gambit! It was a BIG project, spanning the duration of a semester and in the end, was 40 pages in length. I scoured old Grace financials, programs, and special transitional reports, government websites on Andover and surrounding communities, and held interviews of members, including my own experience at Grace, to complete the project. I noted then, the large transitions in Grace's recent history. And since then, Grace has experienced even more transition: the death of a beloved pastor, the departure of beloved staff members Beth Clarstrom, Kate Morphew, Tom Baker, and Jonathan Orwig. We give thanks for their faithful ministries at Grace and at the same time, welcome new staff Marie Kolar, Frances Fernandez, and I transitioned from Children's Ministry Director to Associate Pastor of Faith Formation. I am sure there will be more to add in the future. We have voted to sell our Nightingale property and embark on a building project. So much transition and more because of the reality of pandemic life. While we can easily get caught up in the ever changing-ness of our life together, I hope we do not get discouraged by the transitions. Instead, grieving our losses and celebrating the newness! We are after all, people of faith who proclaim God's message of death and resurrection!

"And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.'" -Revelation 21:5-6 (NRSV)

A couple of weeks ago now, Pastor Joanna and I spent some time away on a visioning retreat. Together we wrote out our hopes and fears, we discussed our values as a congregation, and how those values might shape our mission and vision together -newness! God says, "I am making all things new!" I say "great, I just hope I do not miss it because I am too busy trying to get back to the way things were." Would you join us in looking for newness this year? Wondering, what can we do! What are the possibilities God is opening up for us?!

"We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly, just as he knows us!" 1 Corinthians 13:12 (MSG).

Blessings,
Pastor Maria Markman

Mental Health Ministry



May is National Mental Health Awareness Month

By Debbie Jorgens

Mental illness affects millions of Americans and their families. Since 1949, the month of May has been designated "National Mental Health Awareness Month" to call attention to mental illness, the stigma surrounding it, and the need to support those affected by it. Education is a critical component to eliminating this stigma and supporting all who struggle with mental health.

On April 25th and May 2nd, we were fortunate to have Chris Shaw of The Heart and Mind Connection, offer presentations on "Mental Health 101" and "Suicide Prevention." Here are a few other upcoming opportunities we hope you'll keep in mind:

"ANGST" Raising Awareness Around Anxiety"

Virtual Film and Panel Discussion
Tuesday, May 4th from 6:30-8:00 PM

Monday Night Speaker Series:

"Resiliency: How to Cultivate our Bounce Back-ability"

Monday, May 10th from 6:30-8:00 PM
Offered by Mental Health Connect

Mental Health Weekend at Grace May 15th-16th

The topic of mental health and our call to respond with love and compassion to those with mental illness will be woven into our worship services through music, liturgy and the spoken word.

See our web site at www.graceandover.org for more information.

5-4-3-2-1 Calming Technique for Anxiety

By Nancy Jenkins

Do you ever feel anxious beyond your personal comfort level and wish there was something you could do to calm yourself? The following five-step exercise can be used during times of anxiety to help ground us, move us out of our anxious mind, and to slow down and focus our thoughts. The great thing about this calming strategy is that it can be done silently, utilizes what is right around us, and can be done without moving. This technique can also be helpful with children and youth when they need to focus their thoughts or calm their emotions.

5: Name five things you **SEE** around you. It could be a pen, a spot on the ceiling, a picture, or anything you can see.

4: Find four things you can **FEEL** with your skin. It could be your clothes, your chair, or the ground under your feet. For example, "this blanket feels gentle on my skin."

3: Recognize three things you **HEAR**. This can be any external sound. Focus on things you can hear outside of your body. You may become aware of traffic noise in the background or birds chirping.

2: Notice two things you can **SMELL**. Without moving, is there anything you can smell right now? If not, take a few breaths and see if you notice anything such as the lingering smell of maple syrup. If you don't notice anything, do you have Chapstick or hand sanitizer nearby you that has a scent?

1: Acknowledge one thing you can **TASTE**. If you can't taste anything, you can take a sip of water or instead you can choose to name a taste that you like.

If thinking about these different elements is helpful and if writing is one of the ways that you process emotions, you may find an additional benefit by writing these things down as you focus on each sense.

This tool is one of many options you could use if you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed. If anxiety is something that you struggle with regularly, and you continue to have trouble refocusing or coping with these feelings, please talk to your primary care provider.

Compiled from the following sources:
<https://www.letss.org.au/index.php/individual-blog/the-54321-technique-grounding-exercise-for-panic-attacks>

<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/behavioral-health-partners/bhp-blog/april-2018/5-4-3-2-1-coping-technique-for-anxiety.aspx>

Ministries



Graceful Seniors is back!

By Pastor Maria Markman

Join Pastor Maria on Tuesday May 11th for breakfast and fellowship 8:30-9:00 am and a study 9:00-10:00 am. We are collecting a free will offering for coffee and donuts,

as well as other Graceful Seniors funds. Please bring your story packet, as well as any "Beginnings" stories you have written to share with the group. We hope a few of you will share your stories. We will then continue with the next topic and scriptures.

Please wear your mask and maintain social distance. We will eat first in the fellowship hall and then remain there for the program. If you are uncomfortable eating together, join us for the program only. We will also send a recording of our program session to those who wish to participate from home. Questions? Email Pastor Maria Markman mariam@graceandover.org or give her a call 507-330-2471.



Social Devotions- "You Are Not Alone"

By Stacy Surratt

The Women's Retreat Team is excited to be hosting another **"Social Devotions"** in the month of May. "Social Devotions" is a monthly virtual Zoom Gathering for ALL Grace Women. Because of COVID-19, the Women's Retreat Team 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.

May's **Social Devotion** will be on Sunday evening May 16, 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 and enjoy seeing our Grace Women, and hearing how God can impact our lives!

This is our last Social Devotions event that is planned so far for 2021 - please try to join us for this fun and inspirational zoom gathering. You will not be disappointed!

Please look for an email in May 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



Continuing our Conversations on Race and Culture

By Pastor Maria Markman

Did you know that May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month? As we think about this month and the people it celebrates, we also need to take time to reflect on, and act upon the acts of violence that have been experienced over the last year. Since 2020 more than 4,000 Asian American and Pacific Islander people have been attacked around the United States (StopAAPIHate). This blatant racism, discrimination, and hatred are not the first time in our long history where these people have experienced this level of hatred. Throughout the history of our country, from the beginnings of the West, World War II, Korean and Vietnam Wars and many more moments in history, people have been targeted because they are Asian.

People of Grace, in these Conversations on Race and Culture, I hope to give a small glimpse of long and interwoven history of Asian Americans and our country, in order to gain understanding of their story, provide solidarity, and advocating for those in our community and around the world, as well as discuss steps to usher in peace and reconciliation between the diverse people of God.

Join us, May 19th at 7pm via ZOOM for this educating conversation about how to better serve our Asian American siblings in Christ!



Men's Ministry

By Stephen Hirt

Men's Ministry will be meeting at Chad Handler's house on **May 4th at 6:30**

pm for grilling and games. Everyone please bring your meat to grill, beverage to drink and lawn chair to sit in. If you have a lawn game you would like to bring, feel free to bring it along. If you have any questions please call Stephen Hirt at 612-850-8815 or Chad Hadler at 763-350-3918. This is in place of the Men's Ministry Buffalo Wild Wings gathering.

Ministries



Prepare and Enrich Marriage Day Retreat

May 22, 2021 10:00 am-2:00 pm
(we will break for lunch)
in the fellowship hall.

By Maria Markman

It is important for married couples to do things together to keep their marriages alive and healthy. Prayer, good communication and fun, as well as dedicated time together for ongoing growth and understanding are all necessary tools. Join Pastor Maria for a day marriage retreat.

Total Event Cost: \$45.00

\$35.00 for Couples Assessment (details below)
\$10.00 for lunch. Lunch will be provided by Nelson's Deli in Spring Lake Park.

When you register for the event, you will need to provide your email address and the address of your spouse. After you have registered, you will each receive an email with a link to the prepare and enrich couples assessment. Pastor Maria is a certified Prepare and Enrich Facilitator. The Prepare and Enrich assessment and curriculum has been #1 in marriage assessments for over 35 years. Your assessment should be taken on your own (not together). The assessment takes about 20 minutes. Whoever logs into the assessment first will be asked to pay the assessment fee of \$35. Only one of you will need to pay this fee. This fee is paid through Prepare and Enrich and not on through Grace or Realm. I hope you consider taking the assessment and joining us for our day retreat. You must take the assessment prior to our retreat to attend.



Healing Minnesota's Stories: Dakota Sacred Sites Tour

May 8th

9:30-1:30 PM

Suggested Donation: \$25

By Maria Markman

Grace Lutheran Church's Adult Ed Team is planning to attend a private Indigenous Sacred Sites Tour. The tour is 4 hours. If you are interested in joining us, we need at least 3 more people, but could have as many as 15 more people join our tour.

Please email Pastor Maria Markman if you are interested in attending mariam@graceandover.org

About the Sacred Sites Tour:

We believe in the power of healing stories. Stories heal because they make invisible pain visible. The listener and storyteller are both healed by their acts. Churches and all faith communities can play a key role in promoting and experiencing healing by opening ourselves to our own history, and listening to the stories of Native people. Through sharing and retelling of old traumatic stories, we can create new positive ones. This effort began in 2012 and continues to bring together Native and non-Native people to share stories and increase awareness of the value of American Indian language, culture, and our shared history.

Tours are led by Rev. Jim Bear Jacobs (Mohican) and Bob Klanderud (Dakota). The tours offer an opportunity to learn about Minnesota history from a Native perspective through story-telling and experiencing the sites in silence/ meditation/ reflection.

All tours meet at Church of St. Peter, 1405 Sibley Memorial Highway, St. Paul, MN 55120

Children's Ministry



Children's Ministry 2021 Spring Schedule

Sunday, May 2nd 9:30-10:20 AM	In-person Sunday School
Thursday, May 6th 6:30 PM	VBS volunteer Informational Meeting via ZOOM
Sunday, May 9th 9:30-10:20 AM	In-person Sunday School
Sunday, May 16th 9:30-10:20 AM	Last Day of Sunday School Celebration!
Thursday, May 20th 6:30 PM	Children's Ministry Team Meeting
Sunday, June 13th 6:00-7:30 PM	VBS KICK OFF and Registration
Monday-Thursday, June 14th-17th 6:00-7:30 PM	VBS (Note June 18th will be used as a rain day in case of inclement weather).
Sunday, June 27th 4-8 PM	SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPPLY CLEAN UP AND ORGANIZATION DAY!



We've had a blast this year!
Join Sunday School for our
year end party!

May 16th 9:20-10:30 AM

Wear bright colors! And join us for crafts and games, and a lesson on what we learned this year!



SAVE THE DATE

Summer Vacation Children's
Ministry Programming
June 13th-17th 6:00-7:30 PM

Save June 18th in case of rain.

Calling all volunteers! We need you!

**Please contact Pastor Maria Markman if
you are interested in joining the Summer
Vacation Volunteer Team!**

Youth Ministry



Green Ribbon Meeting

Our next Green Ribbon Meeting is on Monday, May 3rd at 6:30pm in person in the Fellowship Hall! 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 6:30pm. Our June meeting will be June 7th.

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.



Food Shelf & Clothing

Youth Volunteering at ACBC Every Week!

High School Students interested in volunteering at ACBC food shelf on student's independent learning days (generally Fridays) from 12:00pm-2:00pm please contact Kristi Larson at 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!



High School Youth Night

High School Youth night is every Tuesday from 6:30pm-8:00pm at church. We play games, spend time together and have a discussion/devotion. All 9th - 12th grade students are welcome to join us! Haven't been to church or youth group in a while? WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU BACK! Now is a great time to try out youth group at Grace. Questions? Please email Kristi Larson at KristiL@graceandover.org



Green Valley Gift Cards

The youth are selling \$25 dollar Green Valley Garden Center gift cards to raise money for their Christikon camp adventure in Montana this summer! The gift cards never expire or lose value. Students will be selling gift cards before and after worship on April 18th, 25th and May 2nd or you can call Kris at the front desk to arrange for a pickup. The sale ends May 10th. Questions? Contact Kris Miller or Kristi Larson at KristiL@graceandover.org. Great for Mother's day gifts and all your spring projects!



Confirmation Sunday is May 23rd !

Please join us in praying for these 9th grade students in the final weeks of their Own Your Faith journey, Confirmation interviews, retreat, projects and their decision to confirm their faith as new members of Grace Lutheran.



Grace Lutheran Church

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Worship Times for the Summer of 2021
Starting Sunday, May 30th through September 5th
5 pm on Saturdays
8:30 am & 10 am on Sundays
and as always online.

Visit our web site at www.graceandover.org for more information.