



# grace notes

## November 2021

Throughout October, our scriptures have led us through the wilderness. We have heard the cries of the Israelites, hungered with them for nourishing food and even peeked into the promised land. One of the things I love about the scriptures is finding myself in the story. It has been easy to find myself in the story of the Exodus after this past year and a half. Hasn't it been a wilderness? Many of us have cried out during the pandemic. We have complained about the isolation and the spiritual drought we have found ourselves in. We have had moments when it seems that the crisis is over and yet, we find ourselves still dealing with continued uncertainty. This is life and this is faith. Even when the Israelites FINALLY make it into the Promised Land it takes centuries for them to find their place and established themselves. Why in the world do I think we should be able to do all of this in a few years? Thankfully, we don't have to literally wander in a desert. And yet, in some ways as we move forward on a building project and renovations from Grace, it can seem as daunting as building a temple to house the ark of the covenant. We may have all sorts of questions: Is this the right time? Is this the right plan? Are we moving too fast? What does the future of Grace really look like? What are we hoping to accomplish through this building project? And can we afford it?

These are some of the major questions I have wrestled with and continue to contemplate. Reading the Bible reminds me that the questions I struggle with today are faithful questions. At the center of everything we are doing and dreaming about at Grace is prayer and discernment. It is good for us to ask questions. It is good for us to be wise. It is good for us to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to learn and to have their voices heard.

When I arrived at Grace, a proposed timeline was pinned on my wall with dates informing me of this building project. It started with New Senior Pastor begins in September 2019 and ends with construction and portables removed in the years 2022-2023. We have been working our way through this timeline. We prayerfully decided to sell the Nightingale Property in January 2021. While many of us had hoped that the proceeds from the land would cover any renovations for our building, we knew that the upcoming renovations needed would be expensive and we would need you to invest in the future of Grace.

Since January, we have asked you about your wants and needs for our building. That information was used by our architect, Kevin Busch and his team to put together three proposals for us to consider. These plans have been displayed since September 12th in our narthex, and on our website. We have presented them in detail after worship and invited your questions and input. We have included the plans in this newsletter. Please review them because we want your feedback: to know what you like, what you don't like, and which plan we should move forward. These plans are focused on the future layout and configuration of our building. They are also not in their final form. Pending the success of our capital appeal, and the feedback we receive, the architects will make changes and finalize aesthetics.

If you have questions or comments about any of the plans, please reach out to me or a member of the Vision Board, or our building task force. We will continue to have a representative available each weekend after worship to answer questions. We also have included names and emails in this newsletter. We hope that you will share your thoughts **before Sunday November 14th** so that your opinion will be heard.

**On November 20th and 21st following all our worship services we will be having a congregational vote about moving ahead on the building project and beginning a capital appeal.** We will also be voting on tithing on the money from the sale of our land. We want you to be present at this meeting, so that you can vote and ask questions. We cannot build grace alone. God has connected us as a community of faith to wander together, to support each other in difficult times, to listen and contemplate together and to move forward in faith.

God unfortunately doesn't give us a complete map of what the future holds. But I do know that God is leading us forward in faith and calling us as the people of grace to important work in sharing God's message of love, not only with our walls, but breaking down barriers so that all might experience grace.

Pastor Joanna Mitchell

## Plan #1

The First Plan is our most affordable plan at \$1.6 million dollars.

It includes the following:

- New Entrance
- Secured Daycare
- Updated and A.D.A Bathrooms
- Additional Classroom Space
- Parking Lot Re-pavement, HVAC Updates and Roofing Updates
- Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall Updates including lighting.



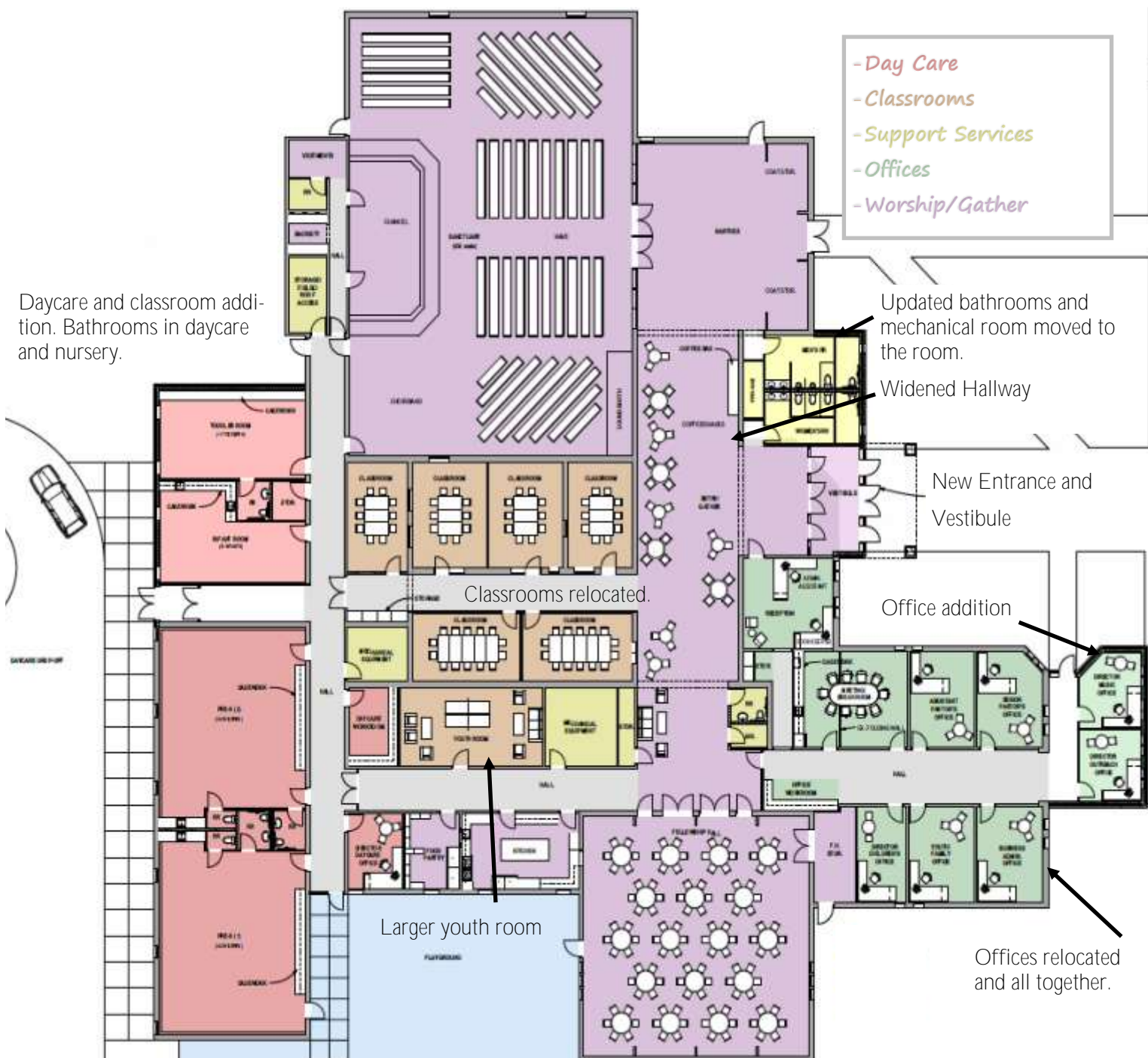


## Plan #2

The Second Plan is our mid-range plan at \$2.2 million dollars.

It includes all of Plan #1 and the following:

- Reconfigurations of our classrooms and office space
- A Gender-Neutral/Family Bathroom
- Moving the mechanical room to the roof top to expand our Narthex space.
- Youth Room Expansion
- Fixing Sound in the Sanctuary



## Plan #3

The Third Plan is our most expensive plan at \$3.6 million dollars.

It includes all of Plans #1 & #2 and the following:

- A New Fellowship Hall off the Narthex
- Major Expansion of the Narthex
- A New Kitchen for Grace
- The Current Fellowship Hall becomes the Youth Room

New Grace Kitchen,  
Fellowship Hall and expanded  
Narthex



## Associate Pastor's Letter

### Love God, Love the Stranger

*"You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" Deuteronomy 10:19.*

Two of my friends, their baby, and two cats recently moved to Costa Rica. They asked if I could help them with their move. I would help with navigating the airport and customs with two cats and a baby, not to mention all of their stuff. I agreed to help and now after returning from the trip, know just how important it was for them to have an extra set of hands. And I am so grateful they asked me to be the extra set of hands!



My experience in Costa Rica was wonderful! It is a beautiful country with mountains and rainforests, coastline and fresh fruit. What I appreciated most about my time there was my interaction with the locals and all the wonderful foods. My high school Spanish got some good use, although I wish I would have had a refresher before going. It was important to my friends that they reside in a more rural area, an area with little or no tourism. They decided not to have a car, but rather to travel as the locals do, walking, biking, and taking public transportation. There were many challenges on our trip as well. Navigating the airport, language barriers, getting lost with no cell service in a torrential downpour. Because my friends are moving there, I viewed this trip through a different lens. We weren't just touring around as tourists. But rather as immigrants in a foreign country. I found myself wondering as we sought help from the locals standing in the bus line, if I would be as welcoming to foreigners asking for help. What if the tables were turned and someone was trying to communicate with me, but had limited ability to speak English. I thought about the fear we had purchasing a cell phone plan, worried we might be taken advantage of because of our limited understanding. I joked, as my friend signed her new mobile contract, "And now you have signed away your first born child." We laughed, but in reality we only had limited knowledge of what the contract said. A contract that was her only lifeline to navigating the city, calling for help, and keeping in contact with friends and family back home. Sure we had taken Spanish in school and she visited Nicaragua many times for mission work right after college, but now she was making life in a country where she only had limited knowledge of the language, certainly not the intricate language of cell phone plans, not to mention legal paperwork.

Here at Grace, in our adult study on Wednesday nights, as we think together about *What God is Like?* we have often wondered about how we read the Bible through a modern lens. But sometimes in order to understand Scripture, we must understand the context it was written in, making us not only cultural anthropologists, but time travelers as well. Another study over the past six weeks, at Grace, a group has gathered on Thursday evenings to discuss, *The God Who Sees: Immigrants, the Bible, and the journey to belong* By Karen Gonzalez. There is also a group studying this book throughout the year as a part of their WOW (Women on Wednesdays) study. The author has brought to my attention that there is no way to read the Bible without reading a story of immigration. Sandra Maria Van Opstal in the foreword to the book states, "The Story of Scripture is the story of displaced people." Reading the stories of Abraham, Hagar, Ruth and Naomi, and even the Holy Family as immigrants has opened my eyes and my heart to a God who does in fact see those who have been displaced and those who are so often pushed to the margins of society. Although this is not my lived reality day in and day out as a United States citizen, it has been enlightening to read and study Karen's story and reading the Bible through this lens. It might be interesting to note loving our neighbors is mentioned only once in the Torah (first five books of the Old Testament), where loving the stranger is listed 39 times. We have discussed how our building might be welcoming to strangers when they enter, but is God calling us to be welcoming in our community as well? How might God be calling us to see others and not only see them but love them, be gracious and patient and extend hospitality to them?

¡Pura Vida!, Pastor Maria

### Finances

#### Jan. 1 to Sept. 30, 2021

Current & Capital Offerings-\$608,044.26  
Expenses—\$607,364.07  
Mortgage Balance \$422,706.72  
Dedicated Offerings—\$61,769.06  
Dedicated Fund Totals -\$84,289.98

#### Jan. 1 to Sept. 30, 2020

Current & Capital Offerings-\$591,630.11  
Expenses—\$585,206.64  
Mortgage Balance \$511,199.43  
Dedicated Offerings-\$11,626.58  
Dedicated Fund Totals-\$70,887.80

To better align with accounting practices, dedicated revenues and expenses have been separated from operating revenue and expenses to give a more accurate picture of our financial standing.



## Thank You, Thanksgiving Worship & Vision Board



A thank you from Cathy who was blessed by a God's Work, Our Hands team of volunteers who did a Fall Clean-Up on her yard.

Grace Lutheran Church Friends:

Thank you so very much for your grace, love, and thoughtfulness. God blesses me every day in some way. Now he is blessing me by all of you. I have no words. Thank you just isn't enough. I hope and pray that the Lord blesses each one of you as he has blessed me.

Thank you for always helping me so I'm able to stay in my home where we raised our son and where my husband, Gary passed away. I am praying the Lord will bless me with one last request. To leave the same way Gary did. Thank you for blessing me.

Thank you, Grace Lutheran Church for doing yard work for us on Grace's God's Work. Our Hands Day. Your kindness is greatly appreciated.

Arden & Shirley Kirkendall

*Thank You!*



### Thanksgiving Worship & Pie Social

**TUESDAY, November 23rd**

**from 7-8:30pm**

The tradition of Thanksgiving Worship and Pie Social at Grace is BACK!! We will be gathering for Worship on **TUESDAY, November 23rd** at 7pm and then join us for a the pie social after worship.



### Change is Part of Life

*"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new." -- Socrates*

There are many changes in our lives. We will always have change, and without change we will become stagnate. Change equals growth.

We have change in the seasons here in Minnesota. After the hot humid summer comes the cool fall temperatures. And with that God turns the green leaves into brilliant yellow, orange, and red colors in so many of our trees. This is a wonderful change that we all enjoy.

We of course have change in our lives too. As we grow from babies and children to adults, there are many changes. These are physical and emotional. And as I get older, I have noticed wrinkles appearing, my hairline receding and my hair turning gray. These too are normal changes that are hard to avoid.

We have change at Grace too. Changes can be small like learning a new hymn. Change can also be large like replacing staff with new personnel. And look at our Grace property. Soon the portables will be gone and replaced with fantastic additions to our facility. This will be a huge change. I thank God for this growth opportunity for our church. How many new people can this change draw into our Grace family? Let us all work together to help facilitate this change and bring more people into our church family.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** says *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"*

Joel Anderson, Vision Board Member

### Wednesday Evenings at Grace Schedule:

**6:00-6:30pm**-Family Pizza

**6:30-7:30pm**-Children, Catechism, High School, Adult Large and Small Groups

**7:30-8:00pm**-Intergenerational Worship

**8:00-9:00pm**-High School Fellowship



## Ministries

### GRACE4RAKAI

#### Ministry Team

The Grace4Rakai Ministry Team is excited to be highlighting the weekend of November 13 and 14, 2021 at Grace Lutheran Church to lift up our friends and colleagues at ACT (African Children Today) who live in Uganda, Rakai. Many of us in this congregation sponsor children there and we want to continue to provide updates and critical support for ACT's outreach efforts. During this weekend at Grace, we will provide you with updates on our sponsor children and the ACT Junior School; have an opportunity to purchase items made by the Hope Again Women from Rakai and learn more about what amazing and exciting things are happening there. We will provide updates on the Medical Clinic, Amazing Grace Bakery, the Milling Operation and updates on the progress of the new High School being built. We will also highlight the scholarship fund that the Grace4Rakai Ministry Team has established to provide financial support as needed for children sponsored by the Grace community. Also stick around between services on Sunday morning, November 14th, as we will be hosting another "Live From Rakai" event from the Grace Worship Center. During this event, Ann Hill and Richard Mutaawe, Director of ACT, will bring us up to date with the various ministries over in Rakai and take your questions! Even though the global COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted our friends in Rakai, we want to celebrate the generosity that the Grace community has provided over this past year. We look forward to seeing you the weekend of November 13/14 - It will be exciting weekend so please plan to be a part of it. The Grace4Rakai Team - led by Stacy Surratt and Scott Christensen



**Would you like to share God's grace in a very tangible and REAL way this Christmas?** If so, please consider "adopting" a local family who will be truly blessed by your generosity. Through our Faith & Community Partnership with Sand Creek Elementary School, we will connect families, individuals, or groups from Grace Lutheran with local student families in need.

If you choose to adopt a family, you will receive a list of family members, with genders and ages, but no names. Historically, adopters have shopped for gifts and added gift cards at their discretion. But this year, because of COVID-19, distributing gifts will be difficult. **Therefore, we are asking adopters to purchase ONLY gift cards to whatever vendors and in whatever amount the adopter chooses.** If you are interested in adopting a local family this Christmas, please contact Jan Margotto at 763-434-4617.



**Sand Creek  
Elementary Kiddos  
Need WARM Winter  
Mittens, Gloves and Hats!**

The cold weather will soon be on its way in Minnesota. There are many of the children at Sand Creek Elementary in need of **WARM** winter mittens, gloves, and hats. Various sizes are needed for boys and girls in grades K-5. If possible, **waterproof mittens and gloves are preferred** so the kids can play in the snow to their hearts' content. And please - NO light-weight mittens/gloves, as they just do not work to keep the kiddos warm and dry.

During the month of November, we will be collecting donations in the narthex in the "Sand Creek" green tote. Let's see how many we can collect! With the effects of COVID-19 economy still causing issues with the families, there are many in need.

Any questions can be directed to Ann Lange 763-438-5623. Thank you for your loving generosity to the Sand Creek children in need!



## Ministries



### Ski Day on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at Wild Mountain

Anoka Hennepin and St. Francis don't have school on December 3rd. We would love to take a trip together to Wild Mountain. People of all ages are invited for a day of skiing. Transportation and carpools can be arranged as needed in particular for Middle School and High School Students. Sign up on Realm today! The mountain opens at 10am. We will leave church at 9am for the hill. Reach out to Pastor Joanna Mitchell with any questions. Adult rates for a group of 20 or more are \$28. Youth Rates are \$24. For more information on rentals check out <https://wildmountain.com/ski-ride/skisb-groups>

### Graceful Seniors

Graceful Seniors is a group of mostly retired folks who meet the second Tuesday of each month (November 9th) in the Fellowship Hall for breakfast and a brief study (8:30-10:00 am). In November, we are planning our funeral services. It can be difficult to talk about the end of life. But when the time comes, having a plan for what you want for your service can be both helpful and meaningful for your family. There are so many decisions to make at the time of death for family members. Planning ahead can give both you and them peace of mind that your celebration of life honors you and gives your loved ones another way to remember you. For more information please contact Pastor Maria.



### Thank you from Grace Quilters and Important Dates

Thank you to those who have donated cotton and flannel fabric and cotton/polyester/flannel sheets to our mission work. We have been making many quilts and donating them to Anoka Foster Care, Haven for Heroes, Sand Creek Elementary and Alexander House. We meet on Monday mornings from 9AM to Noon and welcome newcomers to join us. During the Christmas season, we will NOT be meeting on Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

### Ruth Circle



Ruth Circle is a group of mostly retired women who meet the first Monday of each month following quilters (12-12:30 lunch 12:30-1:30 study) Bring your lunch and join Pastor Joanna and others as we engage the Gather magazine monthly Bible Study. Our next gathering is November 1st. The office has extra copies of the study for those who don't have a subscription or who would like to try it out.

### Attention Parents of Independent Children and Empty Nesters!



You took them to Sunday School for years. Maybe they're close to finishing Catechism, driving themselves to activities or going off to college. Has the independence of your teen, college-aged or young adult children left you wondering "What's next"? If you are in a relationship, how do you reconnect with your partner or spouse now that you have more "free time"?

Help us answer these questions, and more! Our topic-based group (name TBD) will kick-off Monday, November 15th from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. Please join us for pizza and a short video while we discuss the next chapters of parenthood. Register on REALM or email Pastor Maria at [mariam@graceandover.org](mailto:mariam@graceandover.org)

WE NEED YOU!



### Do you have an idea for a bible study or small group session?

The Adult Education Team would like to hear from you. Is there a book you enjoyed, a video series or a specific topic you would like to see used in a small group? We are here to help you bring it to reality. The Adult Education Team is a diverse group of individuals who have a desire to expand the opportunities for you to grow in your faith. We are here to assist with promoting and hosting in-person or remote learning opportunities. Please reach out to Pastor Maria at [MariaM@graceandover.org](mailto:MariaM@graceandover.org)



## Children's Ministry



### Auditions for Children's Advent Program

As the Christmas season approaches the Children's Ministry Team is excited to announce Rejoice: Hymns of Praise, a program filled with children sharing the stories, songs, and prayers that lead up to the birth of Jesus Christ! If your child is interested in this program, there will be auditions for those who want a singing or speaking solo in the show. **Auditions for the program will be on Tuesday, November 9th from 6-8pm or Saturday November 13th from noon-2pm.**

Students will be singing "Happy Birthday" and reading from the script. Families are encouraged to come whenever works for them during those time slots. We are also looking for volunteers to help with singing, staging, performance day help, as well as adults who are willing to read some parts with the children. I am so excited for our performers and volunteers **on Sunday, November 14th for our first rehearsal at noon!** If you have any questions, you can email Bekah Hirt ([rebekah.hirt@ahschools.us](mailto:rebekah.hirt@ahschools.us)).



### Sunday School Schedule 2021-22

**Wednesday, November 3** | Wednesday  
Nights at Grace- 5:30-8pm

**Saturday, November 6** | All Saints Luminary  
Event at Dusk (6-8pm)

**Sunday, November 7** | Sunday School  
(8:45/10:30am)

**Tuesday, November 9** | Christmas program  
rehearsal (6-8pm)

**Wednesday, November 10** | Wednesday  
Nights at Grace- 5:30-8pm

**Sunday, November 14** | Sunday School  
(8:45/10:30am), Christmas program rehearsal  
12:00-2:30pm

**Wednesday, November 17** | Wednesday  
Nights at Grace- 5:30-8pm

**Thursday, November 18** | Children's Ministry  
Team meeting 6:30-8pm

**Sunday, November 21** | Sunday School  
(8:45/10:30am), Christmas program rehearsal  
12:00-2:30pm

**Tuesday, November 23** | Thanksgiving Ser-  
vice and Pie 7-8:30pm

**Wednesday, November 24** | Pastor Maria's  
Birthday, No Wednesday night programming  
for Thanksgiving

**Sunday, November 28** | Sunday School  
(8:45/10:30am), Christmas program rehearsal  
12:00-2:30pm, Advent Wreath Making Event  
and Potluck 5pm

## Youth Ministry



**Escape for PIE!**  
Saturday Nov. 20th  
12:00-4:30pm

All high school students (and friends) are invited for an escape room followed by pie! Cost: \$25 for the escape room plus bring money for pie. We will meet at church to carpool to the escape room (adults will be driving) and then go for pie at Baker's Square by church. Please eat lunch before you arrive. Sign up on Realm!



**Cooking with  
Kristi**

**Nov. 2nd-6:30pm**

Fun fact about Kristi—she loves to cook and loves TEACHING kids how to cook simple, but delicious meals that they can make themselves now, or as they emerge into adulthood. The first Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm we are gathering to cook dinner and eat! Why? Because cooking, food and community are important. The Bible even tells us so. In years past this has been a favorite event for students. RSVP each month to Kristi if you can join us on **November 2nd, or December 7th.**



### Youth Christmas Parties!

Save the Dates for the Middle School and High School Christmas parties!

- Middle School is Friday, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> 7-9pm
- High School is Friday, Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> 8-11pm

**Wednesday  
Night Youth**

**Group is back!**

9th - 12th Grade Students meet every Wednesday after 7:30pm worship until 9:00pm for time to hang out, snacks, and more!



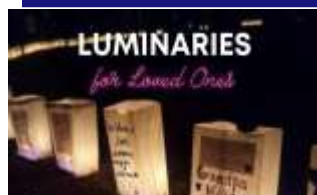
**Thanksgiving Break**

**No Catechism or Youth  
Night November 25<sup>th</sup> for  
Thanksgiving Break**





## Events



**All Saint's  
Luminary Event**  
Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> 6-8pm

Drive through the parking lot at Grace Lutheran while remembering loved ones who have gone before us. You will have a chance to decorate a luminary in weeks prior. Music, meditation, and candles will guide your drive through the luminaries. Register on the weekly blue sheets if you would like to help with this event.

**Conversations on  
Race and Culture  
Intersectionality**



Nov. 16, 2021  
6:30-8 PM

Join us for a conversation on the topic of intersectionality. Intersectionality is defined as the complex and cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups. We will take a glimpse into the experience of folks who get caught in multiple levels of privilege or discrimination based on their social location for example being both a person of color and someone who suffers with anxiety and depression.



**Family Table**  
Sunday, Nov. 21st

Grace will be serving another Family Table "take-out" meal on Sunday, November 21st. There are plenty of opportunities for you to help, whether it's making food, or donating bottled water! We also need assistance packing meals and bringing the meals out to our guests in the parking lot. If you can help, please sign up! If you can help, please contact Lynda Wilde at lwilde@comcast.net or visit [www.graceandover.org/outreach\\_ministries](http://www.graceandover.org/outreach_ministries).

**OK@Play**

"It's A  
Wonderful Life"  
at Lyric Arts



Nov. 26th at 7:30pm

OK@Play will be attending the Lyric Arts Theater Presentation of "A Wonderful Life" on Friday, November 26th at 7:30PM. Masks are required as well as proof of COVID-19 vaccination **or** negative COVID-19 test. Cost: \$29.75. A limited number of tickets are available. Deadline to purchase tickets is Nov. 3rd. Sign up on REALM today!

**Advent Wreath  
Making  
and Potluck**



Nov. 28th at 5pm

Come one, come all for a wonderful evening potluck, fellowship and advent wreath making. No experience necessary. Please bring yourselves, a scissors or plant snipper and a dish to pass. Sunday November 28, 2021 at 5 pm. The cost is \$20 per kit.

Please contact Mandi DeGrote with questions.



**First  
Sunday of  
Advent  
November  
28th**





## *Grace Lutheran Church*

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*Grace Lutheran Church*

*Worship Times*

*Saturdays at 5pm*

*Sundays at 8:45am and 10:30am*

*All are Welcome!*