



grace notes

January/February 2022

Transforming INSIDE + OUT

Come and See God's Generosity

Jesus' transformation in the Gospel of John begins with a simple invitation, "Come and see." These men who become his disciples merely go and see. Unsure of who this man is and aware of all the proclamations that have been made about him: "Lamb of God," "Son of God," "Rabbi," they follow. At first blush, going to see is incredible; Jesus takes ordinary water and transforms it into the most delicious abundant wine they have ever tasted. I imagine the disciples nudging each other and nodding, "Yes! This is going to be amazing. Look at this guy!" They are right in one sense, it will be amazing, but it won't always be as fun as abundant wine. It will take hard work, including hard inner-work: asking deep questions, being willing to take risks, humility, confession and more. By the time they have seen all that Jesus has to offer, they will be transformed. They will recognize that God's blessings don't just come as abundant wine, but in abundant love and care. God's love isn't like Hallmark, there to just make us feel good; it will result in the disciples laying down their own agendas and being willing to follow Jesus to places of risk, vulnerability, suffering and pain. In the end, all of them will be transformed in new and radical ways: from followers to leaders, from God-curious to God-centered, from leaders to servants.

On the weekend of February 5th and 6th we officially kick off our **Transforming Inside and Out** generosity campaign. Some of us have been working on this since November in preparation and in prayer. When I reached out to the members of our team, I did so with an invitation to "come and see." I wanted them to ask questions, to inquire and know what they were getting into, and I also affirmed what I saw in these individuals, leaders willing to invest, be honest and who were open to transformation. November seems like a long time ago now because so much has happened as we have prepared for this weekend. I have seen members of our own team start to transform. I have seen this in their words, their passion, their commitment. I have also witnessed God's generosity, and that is the most amazing part of it all.

God has been present with us on this journey. On a day when we were struggling to make graphic design decisions, Dave from Presto Graphics stopped by the office to drop things off and answered our questions, helping us make the right decision to move forward. Christmas week, we had final edits due to our graphic designer, only for Marie to be at home sick with a fever, and yet, the team came together, worked hard, and got everything done. I realize as I write this, you might be thinking- okay, sure. That's fine. And that is what it looks like from the outside, but it feels different on the inside. I have felt pushed and stretched in new ways, and in the hardest moments, something small happens and I become aware that God is part of this entire process.

The transformation that God is doing within me is not over yet. It has only just begun. I know it won't necessarily be easy. I am hoping for a couple more abundant wine, or mountain-top experiences along the way. I am excited to not only experience God's generosity, but to share it. I am both scared and eager to see what God does within my heart, my mind, and my spirit. I also am looking forward to seeing what God will do within you.

When we finish Transforming Inside & Out, I am convinced that we at Grace Lutheran Church will have grown: grown in faith, grown as leaders, grown in love and in our spirits, grow in understanding our mission, and grown as a church because God is opening us all up to our neighborhood, to pour out love, generosity and to share our faith in radical love. So come and see.

Blessings, Pastor Joanna Mitchell

Associate Pastor's Message



Paradox: a gift of faith

One of the things I absolutely love about our Lutheran faith is Martin Luther's teaching *simul iustus et peccator*, Latin meaning that we are simultaneously both saint and sinner. I love this teaching, not only because of what it means for me as a Christian navigating our complex world, but also because I love the idea of paradox, two seemingly true and exclusive things existing at the same time. One might

think that wearing a Christian identity means sin is no longer an issue in the life of faith. And yet we still live in a fallen and broken world, and the church is no exception. We are both enduringly sinful and freed and forgiven with the righteousness of God. Can I get an Amen? This is a difficult thing to understand especially by those who have felt wronged by the church or by Christian people. And continues to be a barrier for many people who view the church and its members as hypocritical.

This year, in worship, we are studying the Gospel according to John. Time and again the evangelist breaks open the box of what we think we know about God and Jesus. Right when we think God is doing one thing, we are shown another possibility as well, that expands our understanding and invites us to answer yes, these are most certainly true. Even if at first glance the ideas seem contradictory. Throughout the gospel, John will use two stories usually one after the other to make his point. The first two scripture lessons we have read in John, The Wedding at Cana (2:1-11) and The Cleansing of the Temple (2:13-22) show us the Gospel and therefore the good news found within is for both insiders and outsiders. The wedding at Cana invited us to ask who is included, while the temple narrative makes us wonder who are we excluding? Both important factors when considering our own values of welcoming others, connection, and service. This pattern of revelation continues through the Gospel pairing light and darkness, life, and death, from above and from below, the now and not yet. I find so much hope in paradox, in the idea of "both" "and." Especially in a world that is increasingly divided on so many things. Can we pause and wonder if things aren't mutually exclusive, if two things can both be true? Can we hold space for differing opinions?

Scholars note that the Gospel of John was written to a community who debated the identity of Jesus. A central theme in John is the question, who is this man? The Jewish people of the time wondered if Jesus was in fact the Messiah or if this man's claims were blasphemy. Jesus, on multiple occasions will use the term "I AM" referring to himself and connecting him to the divine. At the same time proving himself the Messiah of Israel's tradition and expanding to the growing and diverse Christian community that also included Samaritan and Greek believers. The inclusion of gentile believers not only means we are included into the family of God, but others too! Once again expanding the reach of the message of God and our understanding of who God is and what God is up to in our world. This reflection is an invitation to you to keep your eyes, mind, and heart open, as together we journey through the Gospel of John. How is God expanding your understanding of who God is, who you are, and deepening your relationship with the divine, our neighbors, and the world around us?

Pastor Maria Markman

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



Vision Board

STEWARDSHIP

As a Vision Board member I was asked to write a piece for this edition of Grace Notes. Being a new member, I really had no idea of what to write. Then I looked back at how I got here. I have been a member of Grace for more than 20 years, attending services fairly regularly, serving on the ushering team, attending some of the church sponsored events and helping out with various other events, set up, teardowns etc., but I have not been as active as many of the members at Grace are. Then, last May I was asked if I would put my name in for the Vision Board election. It seemed that there were three openings and only three candidates running. The nominating committee felt that they needed to give the members more choices. I agreed without any real expectation that I would be elected. I submitted a short resume outlining my background as a small, independent business owner and experience on municipal and industry committees. It was pretty clear that I did not have the background with charitable and religious organizations that many of the other candidates had. I was therefore surprised when I was elected by the very narrowest of margins. I approached this responsibility with a fair amount of trepidation because I never considered myself to be overly religious or spiritual. While having a deep belief in God; and understanding that he is in every aspect of our lives, I was not sure how well I would be able to fulfill these responsibilities.

As it turns out, I think God had a plan. It soon became obvious that over the next three years a large part of the Vision Boards responsibilities will be overseeing the capital campaign and church building project. Having spent the last forty years working with architects, engineers, construction trades and finance teams, I believe these are some of the talents that will be needed.

When we talk of stewardship, the gifts of time, treasure and talent often come up. God gave all of us these gifts, some more than others. We all have used these gifts for our own benefit. But the question is how much of these God given gifts have we used to give back and worship God? Some can dedicate more time to helping others, serving in the community and church, working on church projects, supporting mission projects, etc. Some can use their talents whether it is physical, personal or professional skills, to help further God's plans. Then the tough question is how much treasure does God want us to use for his works?

In answering this question, we must first acknowledge that all our time, talents and treasures are a gift from God. We may have used the time, talent and the ability that God gave us to work hard to earn these treasures, but without these gifts we would have nothing. (Luke 12:48) "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded."

As we began our capital campaign, please consider that everything we have is a gift from God. We have been given the opportunity to give back to God and further his works. By this point I hope you are aware that we need to raise approximately 1.2 million dollars to move ahead with our plan #2 that will address most of our current requirements.

However, I firmly believe that this congregation has the ability to raise more than this, which would let us consider Plan #3 with the new, larger fellowship hall, expanded narthex, new kitchen, additional storage along with better utilization of existing space, etc. This will also help meet our future requirements. Many have asked, can we build plan #2 now and add Plan #3 in the future? The answer is yes, at a much higher cost than if we do it now.

As we kick off this capital campaign, I ask that you pray on this and consider all that God has given to us and what we can give back. God Bless.

Bill Hentges
Vision Board Member

Ministries



Stephanie's Story: Breaking the Generational Cycle of Homelessness

2021 has been another year of change for Family Promise and the families we serve, and we are grateful for your creativity and steadfastness--thank you, volunteers and donors!

Every family comes to Family Promise with a unique story under different circumstances. Most recently, we helped Stephanie's family move from homelessness to housing independence. Stephanie is a young mom of two sweet boys. She first experienced homelessness as a young teen when her parents lost their housing. For five years, she lived with different relatives and on friends' couches. She was eight months pregnant when she and her not-quite-two-year-old entered the Family Promise shelter program in May.

"Amazing people" is how Stephanie describes Family Promise staff and church volunteers. When Stephanie's second child was born in June, our community was there to support her. She received many donated items.

Unlike many families experiencing homelessness, Stephanie can count on her best friend to jump in to help her with some daily tasks, such as childcare, when needed. "The difference that one or two reliable support people make can change the trajectory of someone's life," says Karla.

Stephanie's family moved into their new apartment in October. With the support of our community—donated items from IKEA Twin Cities, a move-in basket from our friends at Zion Lutheran Church, and furniture from Bridging—she had all her household needs. Settling into her first home, she is excited, energized, and confident. With her new budget skills and income—"I really do make this much!"--she is determined to manage her monthly bills and save money, too.

"Family Promise gave me a safe haven; they wrapped their arms around me. I am so grateful this program was open to me," says Stephanie.



Qigong Practice Group

Meets every 1st and 3rd Tuesday

1:30 pm,

for up to 1 ¼ hour

Grace Classrooms 105/107

Are you ready to improve your well being by learning practical ways to keep you and your loved ones healthier – longer? Well... the Qigong Practice Group at Grace Lutheran Church has been meeting twice a month since last summer. Each session includes focused, gentle movements (yet very powerful), a sitting meditation and practical information on how to maintain your health and that of your friends or family. Clothing is casual. There is no cost, and you do not have to be a church member to attend.

Qigong is one of the fundamental components of Traditional Chinese Medicine, as practiced by the Chinese for over 5 thousand years. Many find Qigong practice as a helpful aide to our Western medicine pharmaceuticals and surgical procedures.

The Qigong Practice Group at Grace is led by Randy Sparer, trained as an energy healer in Spring Forest Qigong. If interested, please call or text Randy at 612-812-2392. Our group would like for you to join us!



Men's Ministry

Grace Guys,

I wanted to invite all of you to join us for breakfast at Bakers Square the third Saturday (February 18th) of each month at 8:00 am. Please let me know if you think you will be able to make it so I can reserve a table. I can be reached at 612-850-8815. Stephen Hirt

Ministries

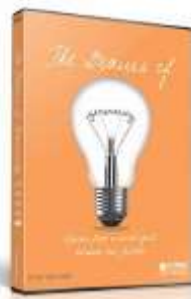


Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, Feb. 6th

Sunday, February 6th in the Grace Fellowship Hall after all Worship Services, 9:30am-12:30pm. Enjoy delicious pancakes, sausage, juice and coffee while supporting our local Boy Scouts. Freewill offering is greatly appreciated.

"The Genius of Generosity" Small Groups



As part of our "Transforming Inside & Out" capital campaign, we will be having small group discussions on the book, "The Genius of Generosity" by Chip Ingram. This smaller than usual-sized book is 116 pages and an easy read about a pastor who is given access to a check book to spend money on those in need. This book can be purchased on Amazon for \$7 and an audio version is available for \$4. The Amazon description says, "The Bible teaches us that generosity is the gateway to intimacy with God as we steward the Owner's resources to please Him. In Genius of Generosity, pastor and author Chip Ingram provides motivation and practical application from Scripture to help each of us grow towards a life of greater giving."

Groups will meet weekly 3-4 times during February and early March. We hope to offer a variety of meeting times (i.e. Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings between worship services), both in person and via zoom. Please contact Pastor Maria if you are interested in joining a book discussion group or facilitating a group.

Empty Nesters/ Parents of Independent Children Group



Monday, Feb. 14th @ 6:30pm

Love & Money

Our next event will be on **Monday, February 14 from 6:30 pm to 7:45 pm** in the Seeds of Grace preschool classroom. We will socialize, have dinner, and discuss a lighthearted topic.

This group is still searching for a better, more accurate name, but we know our purpose: we are a welcoming group that gathers together for dinner, conversations, volunteering, and fun events. As our kids become more independent and reach milestones such as being confirmed, getting their driver's license, or graduating from high school, we often sense a loss of connection with our kids and also with other parents at church. This group is for you if:

- You no longer have kids living under your roof
- If you have an adult "child" (18-30 years old) still living at home
- You have teenagers who can drive and you sense the changes that are approaching as they will someday graduate from high school

You wonder whether anyone has good ideas on how to "parent" teenagers and adult "children" who live at home.

Since we will be serving dinner, we ask that you please register on Realm or contact Nancy Jenkins (dnjenkins@comcast.net) or Sandy Schmoll (sandys@graceandover.org). Please email us if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you!

Ministries



Graceful Seniors

Graceful Seniors is a group of mostly retired folks who meet the second Tuesday of each month (February 8th) in the Fellowship Hall for breakfast and a Bible study (8:30-10:00 am). In February, we will reflect on our first jobs. Do you remember your first job? How did it feel to be hired? *In preparation for our time together you can read Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-19; Genesis 39:2-6.* Think about what work God has invited you to do.

Projection/ Streaming Training!



Are you interested in running our projections, or helping with the live stream? We would WELCOME your presence in the sound booth! David will be offering short training sessions after Saturday worship, and between services on Sundays.

If you have any questions you can email David, (davidp@graceandover.org) or just show up on Saturday or Sunday.



Ruth Circle

Ruth Circle is a group of mostly retired women who meet the first Monday of each month following quilters (12-12:30pm lunch, 12:30-1:30pm study) Bring your lunch and join Pastor Joanna, Pastor Maria and others as we engage the Gather magazine monthly Bible Study. Our next gathering is February 7th. The office has extra copies of the study for those who don't have a subscription or who would like to try it out.



Self-Care for the Caregiver



Monthly virtual sessions: begins **January 27th at 6pm**; offered the last Thursday of each month. A virtual monthly drop in group, **Care/Support for the Caregiver**.

Each of these groups would provide community, support and an education topic. There will be a MHC Navigator, a therapist and our educator (Drew Brooks) at the meeting each month. Many of you are searching for help for a loved one, but you also need support too. Below is the link for people to register for these free MH Connect events:

<https://www.mhconnect.org/events>



Family Table Sunday, Feb. 20th

Grace will be serving another Family Table "take-out" meal on Sunday, February 20th. 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, contact Lynda Wilde at lwilde@comcast.net or visit www.graceandover.org/outreachministries.



Thank You!

Grace Family,
We don't have enough words to express our appreciation for your amazing generosity and love sent our way during last month's noisy offerings. Our journey is long and through the multitude of doctors' appointments, labs and evaluations, we are most humbled with your kindness, words of encouragement, hugs, love and prayers as we faithfully prepare for Sam's forthcoming kidney transplant. We feel blessed to share the love of God with such a loving Grace community. Thank you and God Bless! *The Fernandez Family*

Children's Ministry



Schedule

Wednesday, February 2 | No Children's Programming or worship.

Sunday, February 6 | Transforming Inside and Out Kick Off, Sunday School 8:45 and 10:30am; Scout Sunday and Pancake Breakfast; Egg Roll Fundraiser pick up.

Wednesday, February 9 | Wednesday Programming: 6:00-6:30pm Family Pizza, Adult, Kid, and Catechism small groups 6:30-7:30pm and Intergenerational Worship 7:30-8:00pm.

Friday, February 11 | Valentine's Dance 6:00-7:30pm.

Sunday, February 13 | Transforming Inside and Out, Sunday School 8:45 and 10:30am.

Wednesday, February 16 | Wednesday Programming: 6:00-6:30pm Family Pizza, Adult, Kid, and Catechism small groups 6:30-7:30pm and Intergenerational Worship 7:30-8:00pm.

Sunday, February 20 | Transforming Inside and Out, Sunday School 8:45 and 10:30am.

Wednesday, February 23 | Wednesday Programming: 6:00-6:30pm Family Pizza, Adult, Kid, and Catechism small groups 6:30-7:30pm and Intergenerational Worship 7:30-8:00pm.

Sunday, February 27 | Transforming Inside and Out, Sunday School 8:45 and 10:30am.

SAVE THE DATES Children's Ministry



- February 11th-Valentine's Dance 6:00-7:30 pm
- April 3rd- Resurrection Garden @ Noon
- April 6th-1st Communion class 5-7pm
- April 14th-1st Communion Celebration at Maundy Thursday worship 7pm
- April 10th- Eggstravaganza after worships and Palm Sunday Children's program in both worship services.
- May 8th- Last day of Sunday School
- VBS- June 12th kick off Sunday; June 13th-16th VBS 9am-4pm; June 17th 4th and 5th grade event day; June 19th VBS Sunday (kids sing in church and special sermon)



Looking for Acolytes

An acolyte is someone who assists in worship and often lights the candles on the altar.

This is a GREAT way for your kids to get involved with worship. We are looking for elementary and middle school aged youth 3rd grade and above to help with lighting and extinguishing candles in worship as well as helping assist with communion serving. If your child is interested in assisting in this way and sharing their gifts by serving the Grace Community in Worship please contact Kris Miller in the church office!

Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2021

Current & Capital Offerings \$840,337.27
Other Income \$190,776.73
Expenses \$940,815.26
Mortgage Balance \$0.00**
Building Project Offerings \$1,150.00
Dedicated Offerings \$98,972.39
Dedicated Funds in Balance Sheet \$130,317.38
Dedicated Expenses \$87,835.93

faith and finances

Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2020

Current & Capital Offerings \$821,215.01
*Other Income \$245,094.57
Expenses \$925,932.16
Mortgage Balance \$489,385.90
Dedicated Offerings \$24,232.64
Dedicated Funds in Balance Sheet \$127,485.24
Dedicated Expenses \$18,160.31

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. Dedicated Offerings and Dedicated Funds are those offerings that are directed by the giver to a specific ministry fund. (*Includes \$160,000 in PPP Grant; **Mortgage Paid off in Nov. 2021)

Youth Ministry



President's Day Snow Tubing Trip to Elm Creek!

Middle and High School Youth are invited to an afternoon of snow tubing on Monday, February 21st. Meet at church at 1:00pm to carpool to Elm Creek in Maple Grove and then back to church for hot cocoa and a snack. Pick up from church at 5:00pm. Warming houses are available, please bring warm clothes appropriate for tubing. Cost is \$15. Friends are always welcome! Sign up on Realm!



Wild Mountain Ski Trip

In December, a group from Grace went skiing at Wild Mountain and we had a BLAST! Anoka-Hennepin has Tuesday, February 22nd off and we are planning another Wild Mountain Youth and Family Ski Day! Open to all: adults, families, children, youth and friends. New skiers and old pros are invited to sign up. Students under 6th grade must have an adult join them. We will carpool from church at 9:00am. Youth without an adult will be supervised and driven by an adult leader. Cost is: \$30 for adults, \$26 for students plus \$24 for anyone needing ski or snowboard rentals. **Sign up on Realm by February 16th.**



Egg Roll Youth Fundraiser

The Youth will be taking orders for homemade Cambodian egg rolls (made and rolled by our youth and adult volunteers) on **Sunday, January 16th and the 23rd**. The egg rolls come frozen, fully cooked and ready to be warmed up in the oven or air fryer. The cost is \$10 for a pack of 10 and will be distributed on Sunday February 6th after worship, just in time for all your snacking needs during the Superbowl the following Sunday! Don't need them right away? They can be in the freezer for a year so stock up! Egg Roll Ingredients: Egg roll shell, ground pork, onion, carrot, bean thread noodle, garlic, pepper and fish sauce.

Not able to order on Sunday? You can place an online order through Realm or, email Kristi at KristiL@graceandover.org. You also can call the church office at 763.421.6520.

All proceeds will go towards youth summer trips and activities. Thank you for supporting our youth!

Cooking with Kristi



February Cooking with Kristi is Tuesday, February 1st at 6:00pm! To RSVP text Kristi Larson at 651.230.6057 or email her at kristil@graceandover.org



Wednesday Night Youth Group

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



*“The Word became flesh
and blood and
moved into the
neighborhood.*

Generous Inside & Out”

John 1

Transforming Inside & Out is a generosity campaign to create welcoming and updated spaces at Grace Lutheran Church which reflect our values, support our ministries and transform how we gather, connect worship and serve.

We serve a generous God who knows and loves us, inside and out. As we allow God to stretch us, we become increasingly aware of the needs around us, and our hearts will be drawn to share God’s love with our neighbors in new ways. We believe this generosity campaign will result in spiritual growth for us individually and collectively, and that the season ahead will be one of the most memorable chapters in the life of our church. We believe God is calling us to enter a period of increased giving to help us transform: our lives, our ministry, and our building.

Important Dates to Remember

February 5/6 - Kick off Weekend

Feb. 12/13 – Campaign Weekend

Feb. 19/20 – Campaign Weekend

Feb. 26/27 - Campaign Weekend

March 5/6 - Commitment Weekend

March 19/20 - First Fruits and Celebration Weekend

March 26/27 - First Fruits and Celebration Weekend

Will you join us in the Transforming Inside & Out generosity campaign allowing God to transform our building, our lives, and our community? Together, let’s move boldly forward so that we can share the love of God in new ways in our community.



Grace Lutheran Church

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Grace Lutheran Church

Worship Times

Wednesdays at 7:30pm

Saturdays at 5pm

Sundays at 8:45am and 10:30am

All are Welcome!