

grace notes

May 2022

Dear Grace Friends,

Over the past few years, I have really come to love the Easter Season. Now, don't get me wrong, I have always loved the Easter Story, it is after all the pivotal story of our faith, but the Easter Season has become a time of great reflection and spiritual renewal for me. There is something about living in the midst of death and resurrection that helps you look at things differently. While, this has always been a part of my ministry, I feel like the pandemic, and the various changes over the past few years have made it even more apparent.

Currently, I am on retreat with Pastor Maria. We are spending time praying, reflecting, visioning and planning. Part of our time is spent looking backward and part of our time is looking ahead. For the last two years, we have gone on retreat together and we use the Easter Narrative as our centering scripture for our time together. This year, we have been reading through John's Gospel, just like we do in church together. Yesterday, most of our time was spent celebrating the success of last year, as well as considering what we need to do differently and how we might move ahead. The Easter narrative has provided a helpful framework. We spent time contemplating Jesus' words to Mary: Do not hold onto me and wondered what things we might be holding onto that we might need to release in order to follow Jesus into this next stage of ministry. We wondered about Jesus' proclamation that he has not yet ascended and considered what "we have not yet done."

I hope you will join Pastor Maria and me in reflecting on these questions of what are you holding on to and what have we not yet done? Could you reflect on these questions as an individual, family, and then what this means for us as a church community?

What is evident in the Easter Gospel is that although Jesus has died and been raised, the truth is Mary, and the other disciples just want to go back to the way it was before. I feel this! Don't you? Wouldn't it be great if we could just return to what felt safe, comfortable, and dependable? It was working, wasn't it? Maybe, maybe not. It brought people to faith, for sure and it also got Jesus killed so.... Maybe some change was needed. The ministry was also completely dependent on Jesus to guide them every step of the way. And one of the things that happens on the other side of the resurrection is Jesus helps the disciples see that God is within them and guiding them forward. That they don't need Jesus or the past to dictate each step, but together they will move forward in a new and different way. There will be an expansion of ministry because of the other voices and people who are brought to the table.

We have a big change on the horizon at Grace. The Vision Board has decided to eliminate our Saturday night worship and concentrate our efforts on Wednesday evening instead.* I am thankful for the faith filled contemplation of the Vision Board as they have prayed about our worship schedule and what is best for the future of Grace. I know that there is loss in the discontinuation of something that was loved and appreciated. I pray that we might consider what's next and how God is leading us forward.

Wednesday evening worship will begin on June 1st at 7pm. We will also be inviting everyone to a bible study at 6pm. I hope you will come. We will be studying the lesson that will be preached on that evening and have time for conversation and prayer. You do not need to prepare to come to the bible study, or even have a bible, just bring yourself and a willingness to listen and learn. We will also be offering a kids' time on Weds. night during the sermon, where kids will be excused for 10-15 minutes to play and learn with each other and an adult leader. We hope this will allow more families to join us during the summer months.

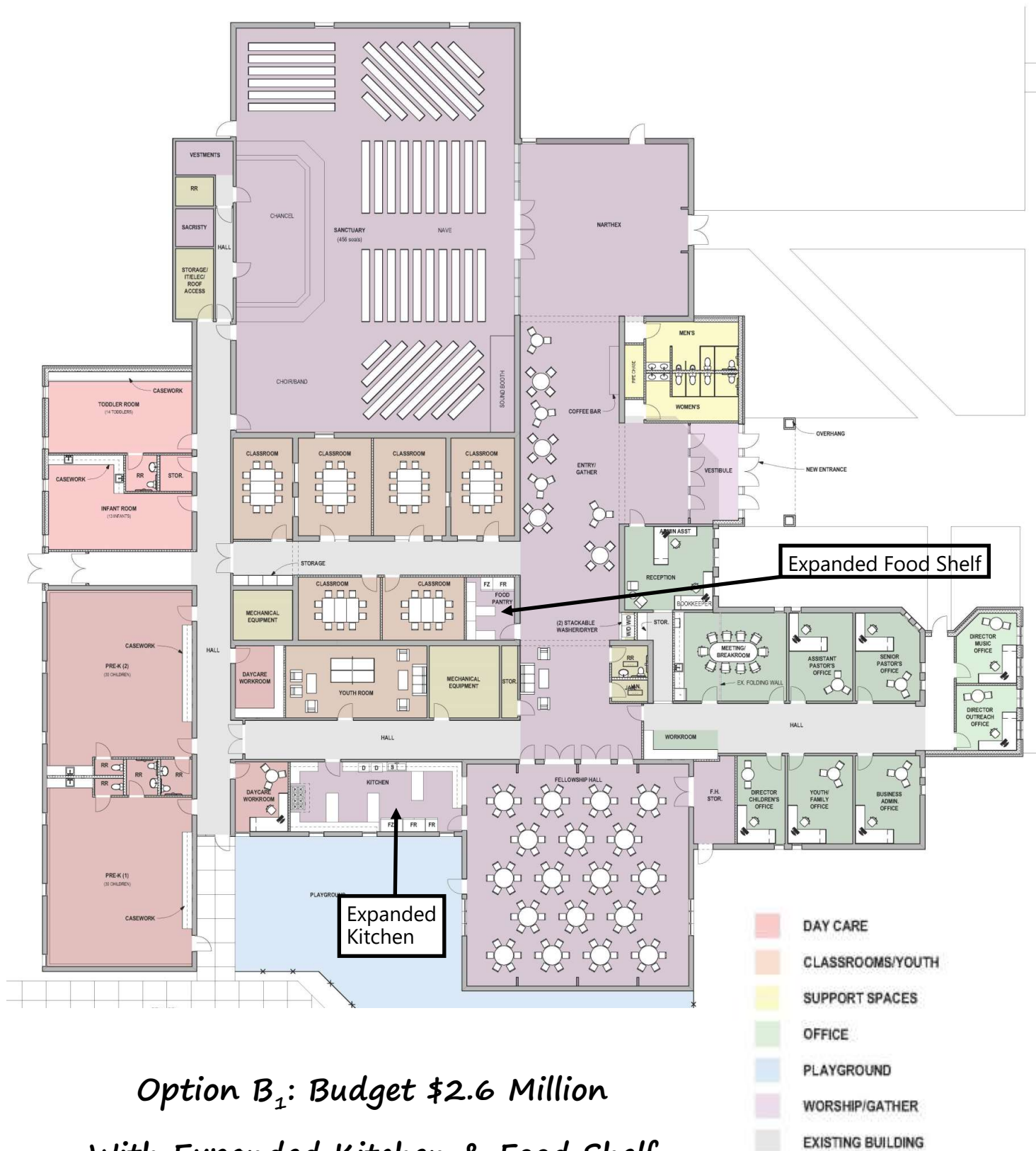
Being people of faith together is complicated. One of the things I appreciate about the Easter Gospel is that the various characters need different things. Mary needs to find Jesus in the garden, Thomas needs to put his hands in Jesus' wounds, Peter needs forgiveness. Jesus is able to recognize the needs of his beloved people and also help them move ahead. None of them are allowed to hold onto the way it was before, but they all have to live on the other side of the resurrection. This is where we live too, on the other side of the resurrection where Jesus greets us in love, reminds us we are beloved, comes to us in our doubt, forgives us our sins, and sends us forward in faith. I give thanks to God for this gift and for all of you!

Pastor Joanna Mitchell



*For more information on this change, please see the letter from the executive team on page 7 of our newsletter. This also was mailed out the last week in April.

New Building Plans



Option B₁: Budget \$2.6 Million
With Expanded Kitchen & Food Shelf

- Expanded Kitchen, Food Shelf and Narthex

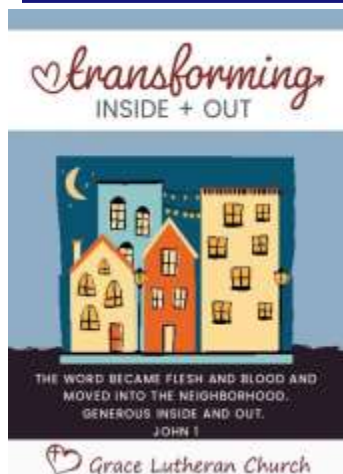
New Building Plans



Option C₁: Budget \$3.5 Million

- New Church Kitchen, Expanded Food Shelf, Fellowship Hall, and Storage Area.

Transforming Inside & Out



God has been doing amazing transforming in the life and ministry of Grace Lutheran. I am so thankful!

During the final weeks of March, we invited you to bring your first fruit offerings to Grace for our Generosity Appeal. As of April 20th, 2022, 138 families have made commitments of \$1,560,533 and \$174,986 has already been received. More than 10% of our pledged amount has been given and we exceeded our campaign goal by \$360,000! The generosity of all of you is apparent and abundant. Thanks be to God! Please know it is not too late to be a part of this campaign.

Because of this, we have gone back to our architect and asked for an additional plans (see page 4) that takes into consideration some of the concerns we heard from all of you about a need for more storage and for better kitchen facilities. Do not miss our congregational meeting on May 22nd at 10am where we will be voting on the next step in our building project, presenting some timelines, as well as voting on new Vision Board members. Pastor Joanna Mitchell

Time to Take the Leap?

As a church, we've talked extensively about generosity lately. In fact, everyone is probably tired of hearing about it! But generosity is something that has been in my heart and my mind for quite some time. If I'm completely honest, it's something I have personally struggled with over the years. I'm guessing I'm not alone in that sentiment.

I've gone through tough periods in my life, as we all have. There have been many seasons where I didn't have any time for myself to even contemplate giving my time elsewhere. Or the times where I needed to preserve my financial resources, since I'm a single earner in my household. I'm an accountant by trade, so being conservative with my resources and ensuring I can take care of my family is part of my general make up. I'm independent. I can take care of myself and don't need anyone's help. Right?

But what if I stopped worrying about all that? What if I reminded myself that I do have extra time and could spend one less night sitting on the couch? What if I acknowledged the money, I have in my bank account isn't really my money to begin with? What if I had to accept someone's help in the future? What if I stopped worrying about all the "what ifs"?!

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 says, *"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."*

I started to acknowledge that I have been blessed beyond measure. I have a wonderful family, amazing friends, adequate health, and a good job. So, I started to make some choices. I decided to give more of my time, both inside and outside of church, leaving less time for me and my family. I prayed during the capital campaign, and I felt compelled to give more of my financial resources. I took a step forward in my personal goal of tithing, leaving less money in my checking account. And guess what? I still have everything I need and then some.

No one is suffering because of these choices I have made. In fact, it is the exact opposite. I've gained new friendships with people I otherwise might not have crossed paths with. I have experienced the ability to let go a little and trust that I have enough. I am setting an example for my children, and conversations have opened up between us because of these changes. I feel the abundance of God and am thankful I've taken these leaps of faith.

Matthew 10:8 *"...Freely you have received; freely give."*

Maybe it's your time to take the leap? I promise you won't regret it. ~Anna Welle, Vision Board



Associate Pastor's Message



Grace's Green Kitchen

A reflection on Creation Care

by Pastor Maria Markman

Growing up, every year on or around Earth Day, my dad and I would take spring's first bike ride! In theory, it was a bike ride. In actuality, it was a "bike walk and pick up trash in the alley behind our house and in neighborhood parks" all day event! What a trick my dad played! We still need to clarify with my dad when we go on walks, "Dad, is this a trash pick up walk or a walk, walk?" He has instilled in me a care for God's creation that

I am still thankful for to this day! As I reflect on this practice from my youth, I think about the other adjustments I have made in my life and that we have made as a church to continue to care for God's creation. You might wonder why care for the environment is even pertinent for people of faith. Shouldn't we be learning about forgiveness? Scripture? Prayer? The truth of the matter comes from humankind's very first God given job!

In the beginning, when God created the heaven and the earth and made all living things including humans, God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26).

Dominion in this instance doesn't mean control or rule, but rather dominion is our opportunity for care for the earth and everything in, on, and around it in the way that God provides, nurtures, and cares for us! What a holy call that God has given to each of us!

Last August, we moved to having a green kitchen at Grace and Seeds of Grace Preschool and Daycare Center. This means we are no longer using paper or plastic throw away products in our kitchen. We cannot accept any donations of these products either. We share an energy efficient combination dishwasher sanitizer with Seeds of Grace. The dishwasher allows us to wash and sanitize any dishes (including communion cups) efficiently and quickly. Whenever an outreach or program team uses the kitchen at Grace these are our new guidelines. Please note our dishwasher does require a brief 5 minute tutorial but is so simple to use. We also have whole new sets of dishes, cups, bowls, and silverware for all our events and programming! Thank you for helping us keep our kitchen green and live into our call to care for God's creation!

If you think of other ways to make our church more green, we would love to hear your suggestions email grace@graceandover.org. To learn more about what the ELCA believes search Creation Care ELCA to read the ELCA social statement on Creation Care and download your own study.

New Member Class

Sunday, May 22, 12:00-1:30pm. Anyone interested in becoming members of Grace or if you just want to learn more about Grace and the Ministry Areas we serve, please sign up on Realm, email krism@graceandover.org or call the Church Office at 763-421-6520.



Vision Board



Dear Grace Lutheran Church,
Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

As we reflect on this past Easter season, we recognize that after death there is new life. We see it all around us in the spring season. Seeds are sprouting, the birds are singing and soon the flowers will be blooming. God's promise is everywhere! Isaiah 43:18-19 says, *Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it. I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*

The Vision Board has come to the decision to discontinue Saturday evening service. We know this is difficult to hear. We value all our members and the unique ways in which they connect at Grace. We have been weighing this decision for more than a year and have invited those involved in Saturday night worship to listening sessions. Because of the feedback received, we spent this whole academic year experimenting and assessing what is best for the future of Grace. There are several reasons why we feel this change is necessary.

While the staff have flexibility in their work agreement, the pastoral and music staff have been working too many hours. They do not routinely get two consecutive days off; they are missing out on family events and personal time. We must be mindful of protecting our staff from burnout. Having a meaningful and consistent Sabbath is commanded by God and essential to the health and well-being of their ministry.

Depth of our preaching staff has decreased with the departure of Debbie Jorgens and Pastor Hahn's passing.

We have been unable to hire musicians for Saturday evening service. Saturday is a key time for musicians to be hired for more profitable wages.

We have heard a desire to have a Wednesday evening worship during the summer. This might lead to further community outreach as we provide a non-weekend option.

Saturday service consistently has 19 -39 people in attendance and seems to be holding steady here.

There are faithful and connected people at the Saturday evening service. We are so thankful for the leadership and commitment of this group. The Vision Board and staff at Grace support all lay lead ministries and believe this is the time, that Saturday worshippers might explore different lay-lead options for Saturday evening. We are excited to see what new offerings might be birthed with the discontinuation of Saturday service (examples: leading small groups at Grace, dinner church, or an innovative gathering at an outside venue to increase our community footprint).

The last Saturday worship will be held May 21st. We will be having a potluck, and fellowship time in thanksgiving for the wonderful community on Saturday night.

This year, we added a Wednesday evening worship as part of our catechism curriculum and is something we would like to continue as we go into the future. It is our plan to move to a Wednesday evening worship this summer. Wednesday worship will begin on June 1st at 7pm. This worship will be adapted from what we have been doing during the year to be a more comprehensive worship: celebrating Holy Communion regularly (at least 2x a month), contemporary music, with a kids' message and kids' time. The preaching staff will be using the sermon from the prior Sunday. We believe Wednesday nights will give us the opportunity to reach those who have busy weekends or are away at cabins. We also have already found Wednesday worship to be successful, and we would like to continue to adapt and grow it to be consistent throughout the year.

The Vision Board as always is available for questions and discussion.

In Christ, Your Vision Board Executive Team

President: Ann Lange, Vice President: Brook Vander Leest, Secretary: Lori Ackerson

Jan. 1 to March 31, 2022

Current & Capital Offerings \$221,872.70
Other Income \$12,364.92
Expenses \$215,131.00
Building Project Offerings \$127,194.97
Dedicated Offerings \$76,853.30
Dedicated Funds in Balance Sheet \$1,113,609.06



Jan. 1 to March 31, 2021

Current & Capital Offerings \$227,312.72
Other Income \$28,524.60
Expenses \$247,524.60
Building Project Offerings \$0.00
Dedicated Offerings \$100,168.74
Dedicated Funds in Balance Sheet \$230,027.29

Ministries



Empty Nester/Parents of Independent Children Events

Are you looking to add some fun to your life because your teenage and twenty-something kids have their own social lives? If so, the "Empty Nesters" is a group of middle aged folks who like to have fun conversations and build connections. Our next two events are:

- Thursday, May 12 from 6 pm to 8:30 pm at the home of Steven and Karen Gfroerer. Their address is: 16041 Saint Andrews Lane, Ramsey, 55303. We will do outside games (Pickleball, bags, bocce ball, etc.) Please bring a snack and the Gfroerer's will provide water, beer, and lemonade. In case of inclement weather, we will go inside or in the garage or both.
- Thursday, June 16 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the home of Doug and Angie Hanson. Their address is: 15102 152nd Terrace NW, Ramsey. This event will be a bonfire. Please bring a lawn chair and BYOB. Hanson's will provide snacks.

Please contact Sandy Schmoll (sandys@graceandover.org) or Nancy Jenkins (dnjenkins@comcast.net) if you have any questions.



Women's Retreat Team
is back for another
Women's Half Day Retreat

Grow in Gratitude

What: Breakfast, fellowship & painting a spring pot for planting!
When: Saturday, May 21st 9-Noon
Where: Grace Fellowship Hall
Cost: \$25
Register and pay in Realm today!



Graceful Seniors

Graceful Seniors is a group of mostly retired folks who meet the second Tuesday of each month (May 10th) in the Fellowship Hall for breakfast and a Bible study (8:30-10:00 am). In May, join AP Hopper (our Organist and Outreach Director) for a Bible Study. She will lead you in a study of what happened following Jesus' resurrection on The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35).



SPRING FOREST
QIGONG

Qigong Practice Group

Meets every 1st and 3rd Tuesday 1:30 pm, for up to 1 ¼ hours in the Grace Fellowship Hall.

Are you ready to improve your wellbeing and support your immune system by learning practical ways to keep you and your loved ones healthier – longer? The Qigong Practice Group at Grace Lutheran Church meets twice a month. Each session includes focused, gentle standing movements designed for healing (similar to tai chi), a sitting guided healing 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 Group 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 you to join us!

Dakota

Sacred Sites Tour

Saturday, June 25th -10:00 am to 2:00 pm
Led by Rev Jim Bear Jacobs
Minnesota Council of Churches



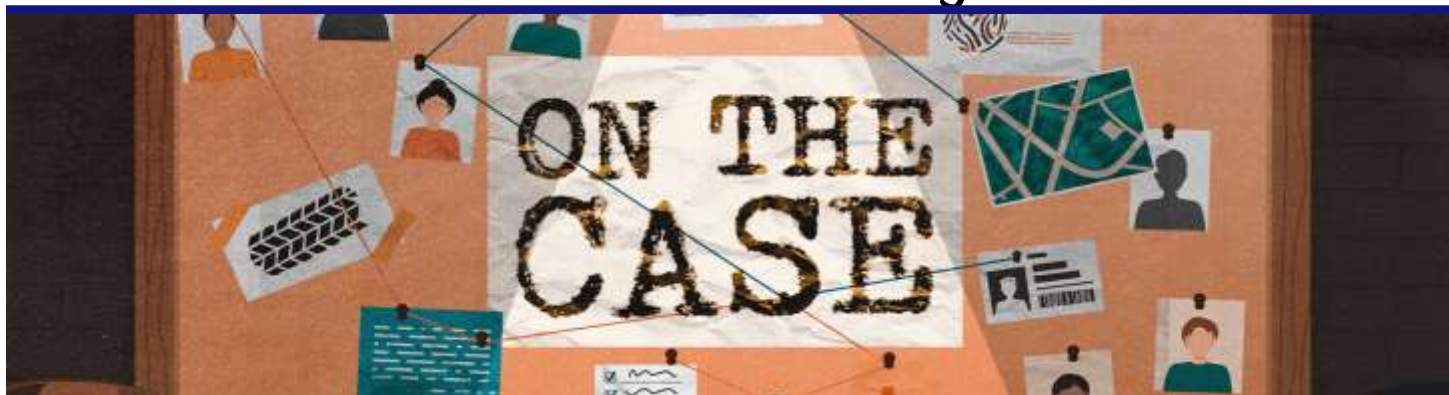
From the Healing Minnesota Stories website, of which this tour is a part; "The tour offers an opportunity to learn about Minnesota history from a Native perspective through story-telling and experiencing the sites in silence/meditation/reflection."

Participants drive on their own or carpool to where the tour begins, in the Church of St Peter parking lot and then we go from there to 3 sites: Fort Snelling State Park, the Dakota Internment Camp (after the U.S.-Dakota War) Site and Pilot Knob Hill, a traditional burial ground. One of the sites involves standing so you are welcome to bring a lawn chair. Bring a bag lunch, water, and dress for the weather.

If you can help with a donation of \$20-\$25 to offset the cost of the Tour - thank you. Students are free as we have a donation to cover their cost.

Space is limited and registrations are being taken via email or phone. To register, email Barb Anderson at: jbbdanderson@msn.com or call her at 763-360-2906.

Children's Ministry



VBS Dates:

June 12th

Kick off Sunday:

Food Trucks & Celebration

June 13th - 16th

Preschool-5th grade VBS

June 17th

4th & 5th grade Event Day

June 19th

VBS Sunday in Worship

COST: \$30/child

(Maximum cost per family \$75;
scholarships available)

Grace-andover.org

Register online

Today!

Pastor Maria Markman

763-421-6520

Grace Lutheran Church

"ON THE CASE"

Vacation Bible School 2022

Growing spiritually doesn't have to be an unsolved mystery! Take a four-day journey with kid detectives as they dig into a few of Jesus' parables to solve the mysteries of how to grow their faith, how to care for, serve, and love others. They'll discover that the answers have been there all along: spend time with God. spend time with others, use your gifts, and share your story. Register by May 31st! Email us with questions!

Schedule

8:00-9:00 – Pre-care for working parents, Check-in

9:00-11:30 -VBS Programming: Preschool and Kindergarten
(for current preschoolers through those who just completed kindergarten)

9:00-11:30 – Grade school age Discovery classes
(for students who have just completed 1-5th grade)

11:30-1:00 – Lunch and Mid-day care**

1:00-4:00 - VBS Programming: 1st- 5th Grade
(for students who have just completed 1-5th grade)

4:00-5:00 – After Care and Pick-up

stuff to bring

- bottle of water.
- secure shoes (avoid sandals and slippers).
- hats and sunblock lotion (for outdoor play).
- change of clothes for emergencies (for younger kids).
- If your child is staying all day and not enrolled in Seeds of Grace pre-school they will need to pack a lunch each day (Grade school kids only).

**Non-Seeds of Grace Preschool and Kindergarten VBS participants can eat their packed lunch and stay for mid-day care, however they must be picked up by 12:45pm.

Youth Ministries



Luther Point July 17th-22nd

Current 3rd – 8th graders! Are you ready to go to CAMP this summer?! Spend a week at camp where campers spend time learning more about God through worship, Bible studies, games, swimming in the lake, meeting new friends, and hanging out with cool counselors. Participants will experience an Outpost adventure (we will be sleeping in our regular cabins), service project, low-ropes course, and more! Check out the Grace Lutheran Youth Website for more information!

Middle School and High School Picnic and Fun in the Park



May 22nd - 12:00-2:00pm

Middle School and High School youth are invited to Crooked Lake Park & Beach for a picnic and games! Lunch will be provided - hot dogs, chips, drinks, and ice cream. Bring any outdoor fun items you want - games, balls, frisbees, etc. Friends welcome! Pick up and drop off at Crooked Lake Park & Beach. We will be in the picnic shelter closest to the lake (near the bathrooms). Sign Up on Realm! Cost is \$5.



CONFIRMATION

Confirmation Sunday

Please join us as we celebrate our 9th grade students during their Affirmation of Baptism on May 15th during the 8:45am and 10:30am worship services.



Middle School Montana Trip

We still have room for our current 7th and 8th grade students to join us in Montana at Christikon from July 8th – 16th! Kids will spend their week mostly on-site (sleeping in a cabin) where they will belong to a "family group" with seven other campers and a counselor and spend time hiking, doing service projects, Bible study, and other activities. You also get to spend a night camping out away from the main site. You will meet kids from other places, enjoy some free time, eat great food, and play games. Check out the youth website at www.graceandover.org to register and for more information!



Cooking with Kristi!

Tuesday, May 3rd is the final Cooking with Kristi of the year! All high school students are invited to join us. Come at 6:00pm as we will cook something together and then eat dinner! Bring \$5 and a friend!



Youth Ministry

Summer Stretch Is Back!

Are you a current 5th-8th grader and worried you will be bored this summer? Worry no more! Participate this summer in a dynamic ministry that stretches your faith and your friendships at Grace Lutheran Church! **Summer Stretch runs every Thursday (June 23rd – August 4th) from 9:00am – 5:00pm.** Participants should be dropped off and picked up at church.

In the mornings we begin with a devotion or quick Bible Study surrounding our theme: *Our Story, God's Story*. We then load the bus and spend the rest of the morning doing fun service projects around the Twin Cities (Feed My Starving Children, Global Health Ministries, and helping the environment etc.) The afternoons are spent doing a fun recreational activity (Examples: Urban Air, Bunker Beach Water Park, roller skating, Grand Slam, ice skating, an Escape Room, and more!) On August 4th we will spend the entire day at Valleyfair!

At Summer Stretch, students will learn about loving God and our neighbor through service. We will spend part of the time in the morning in Bible Study. Students not only spend time serving our world, but will also learn about key social justice issues facing our city, state, and world, such as clean water, global health issues, global and local hunger, and the environment.

Registration open NOW! If you register with your \$100 deposit by May 1st you will receive the early bird special rate! The early bird rate is \$250 and includes 6 weeks of service/recreation PLUS an additional day at Valleyfair on Thursday, Aug. 4th. Transportation to events, admission to all service and recreational activities, guest speakers, admission to Valleyfair, snacks, and a tee shirt are included in the fee. After May 1st the rate increases to \$300. See the Grace website for details on this program. Summer Stretch is limited to 50 students who are currently in 5th-8th grade, so register TODAY so you don't miss out on the fun!

For more information on pricing, frequently asked questions, or to register, check out the Grace Lutheran website www.graceandover.org and click on Summer Fun! Or contact Kristi Larson at KristiL@graceandover.org or 651.230.6057



For more information or to register go to: www.graceandover.org

Time & Talent Generosity

Grace is starting a new page in Grace Notes and on the web page, called Time & Talent Generosity. On this page Grace will list all the ways you can donate your time and/or talents all on one page!



What is Altar Guild?

Altar Guild is just fancy words for setting up, resetting and cleaning up on Communion Sundays. It only takes about 30-40 minutes and is a wonderful way to help with Worship behind the scenes. You will be trained on how to set up and clean up the special service elements. Families and adults are welcome (there must be someone over 21 years old dispensing the wine) to join this essential and sacred element of worship. Please contact the Church office.



Communion Servers

Communion Servers are needed for all Worship times. It is a simple, yet powerful way to be involved during Worship and takes only 10 minutes! What a fulfilling and quick way to help out at Grace. Training will be provided. Please contact the Church office.

Technical Assistants



Technical Assistants are needed at each Worship service. It is a way to help during worship behind the scenes and in a vital role! If you can turn on a computer, you can be a technical assistant. Training will be provided. Please contact the Church office.

Ushers



Worship Ushers are needed each and every Sunday! Ushers help with greeting people, helping people get what they need for worship, control traffic flow during communion and other times, make sure that the welcome table is clean and tidy, and that coffee is available for Sunday Fellowship. All you need to do is come a bit early to worship and stay a bit later. Training will be provided. Please contact the Church office.

Vacation Bible School Helpers



We are looking for a variety of volunteers for this year's VBS! VBS will run June 13th-17th. The schedule is:

June 12th-Kick Off Sunday
June 13-16th

- 9-11:30am- Preschool and Kindergarten
- 1-4pm-1st through 5th Graders*

June 17th-4th and 5th Grade Event Day

June 19th-VBS Sunday (kids sing in church and special sermon)

*There will be opportunities for 1-5th graders to be with us all day and pre and post care available for a limited number of students. Please contact Pastor Maria Markman for more information.



Worship Nursery Helpers

Do you like playing with little children (infant to three years old)? Volunteer in the nursery during worship on Sunday! Adult volunteers must be high school students or adults. Middle School students are welcome to help with an adult volunteer. Interested? Reach out to Kristi at kristil@graceandover.org.

Special Events

Fernandez Family Fundraiser



Sunday May 1, 12:00-3:00pm

Grace Lutheran Church
13655 Round Lake Blvd. NW
Andover, MN 55304
www.graceandover.org

**Sign up on Realm or call the Church Office at
763-421-6520**

Join us in raising funds to benefit the Fernandez Family as
17 year old Samantha awaits a kidney transplant.

**\$20 per person entry fee (includes meal)
\$5.00/person food for spectators
Bouncy House for kids
Silent Auction**



Grace Lutheran Church

13655 Round Lake Blvd NW.
Andover, MN 55304
(763) 421-6520
www.graceandover.org

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Grace Lutheran Church Worships

Through May 22, 2022

Saturdays 5pm and Sun. 8:45am & 10:30am

Beginning May 29, 2022

Sundays at 8:30am & 10:00am

Wednesdays at 7:00pm

