

# grace notes

January/February 2023



It was just a year ago that I took my first frantic trip to Arizona to see my mom. My dad had texted on January 6<sup>th</sup>, Epiphany, with the fear that my mom might be nearing the end. In truth, she had a bad 24 hours, but the reality was, even though it wasn't days away, it wasn't much longer that we had with her. In January, I left events at Grace two times and flew to Arizona in a panic to see my mom. Worried about her, worried about my dad, and already grieving the loss that was to come, while also being unable to predict when, where or how it would be. There were so many unanswered questions and a lot of

living in the disorder. All I could do was show up to the best of my ability and allow that to be enough. And it was. It was enough. I spent quality time with my mom, dad, and sister. I got to be there at the end. Now as I turn the page on the calendar, I feel echoes of my journey from last year in my body. The grief is resurfacing in a new and different way. There are big dates in my future: my dad's birthday, my birthday and the one-year anniversary of my mom's death. Days that I hadn't recognized until I changed the calendar. I always knew the first year, this year of firsts is a hard one. But I have been surprised at what has been easy and what has been harder. Christmas went better than I anticipated, but a renewed sorrow has crept in on my drives to and from work. I have noticed my kids have started to talk a little more about their own loss.

I have been meeting with my therapist for 6 months now. Somehow wading through this year in all of the transitions in both my family and the church. He has been helpful in allowing me to have perspective, to process various dynamics, and in naming the truth that it has been, and it is a lot.

During the last few months at Grace, many of you have experienced the loss of a loved one. Our list of those who are grieving is long. As I have received word of each loss, I feel a sorrow deep in my gut. It's a little more visceral than it was before, because my body has now experienced this type of pain and I know it is more than just in mind and spirit that one experiences grief. It is a whole-body thing. I want you to know that I am praying for you. We as a staff pray every week for the needs of our church. Our first half hour of staff meeting is spent in devotion and prayer. If you have special prayer requests, please reach out to any one of us on staff and we will be sure to bring your concern to our prayer time.

I also want you to know that Grace is a part of the North Metro Grief Coalition. They offer grief support twice a year, 6 weeks prior to Christmas and 7 weeks prior to Easter (they avoid Holy Week). It takes place on Thursday at local churches and includes a speaker as well as a small group time.

While, I am happy about the ability to point toward these resources, I also recognize that they are limited. Our Circle of Grace group is considering starting a grief group and I am thankful for the leadership of our team in examining this. If you are interested in being a part of the grief group or would like more support in your grief, please reach out. Both Pastor Maria and I are available to listen. We would also like to get you in touch with some of our leaders who are working on grief ministry.

On February 22nd, we will join together for Ash Wednesday at Grace. We welcome you to come either at 1pm or at 7pm. This worship service kicks off the beginning of Lent, a time of reflection and a time of deepening our faith. On Ash Wednesday we confess our own mortality, and we are invited to remember that we are dust and to dust we shall return. It is a confession I have remembered a lot in this past year. Our world tries to avoid death. We use other phrases like passed away, or have changed our wedding vows to as long as we both shall live, instead of death do us part. The truth is, while we might want to believe that death is not real, it very much is. And in fact, our faith invites us to remember. To remember that we are born finite. To remember that God is present with us in our life and yes, also in our death. That death is not something we need to fear because it has been overcome by the cross and the grave.

As we enter New Year and look forward to new possibilities at Grace and in our own lives, we also are invited to examine the losses and all of the ways God has been faithful throughout it all.

Pastor Joanna Mitchell

## Associate Pastor's Message



### Godspell | The Musical

A couple of months ago, a friend reached out with an opportunity. She shared with me that a theater in Woodbury was holding auditions for the musical Godspell. She wondered if I wanted to audition. I thought about it and days turned to weeks and all of a sudden it was audition week and I had a decision to make. Many of you may know, theater has always been a part of my life. I grew up performing in my grandparent's basement, productions written and directed and performed by me (and my cousins, I guess). Then I auditioned for community theater and theater in school. All leading to a three and a half year hiatus from school between high school and college when I traveled the world singing and dancing and teaching kids with a group called the Young Americans. I even continued to perform in college and throughout seminary. But starting my "big girl" job and COVID, I hadn't found the time or the right opportunity to continue this passion. I thought this is my shot!

This year at Grace we will be steeped in the Gospel According to St. Matthew. Perfect! I thought. Stephen Schwartz (Wicked, Pippin, Children of Eden) the writer of Godspell the musical used the Gospel of St. Matthew in his writing of this musical! The content of the show would help deepen my study of this Gospel for preaching and teaching here at Grace! The timing was right too. We would be set to perform the last two weekends of February, before the chaos of Lenten programming really gets started. And speaking of Lent, what better way to get in the mood than to perform Jesus' life and ministry and crucifixion as one of his disciples? I also wanted to know if I still could do it? After a few years off the stage and surviving a stroke, who knows if I would even make it. So, I had made up my mind. I would audition. And I did. And I made it. The correlations didn't stop there. Once rehearsals began. I learned more about Open Door Community Theater in Woodbury. Every show they produce, a percentage of the proceeds go toward an area charity. They give back! For Godspell, the charity they are supporting is called Angels of Hope, a group that is supporting women and families who have lost a child, a cause that is very near to my heart. My mom had a still born baby when I was 5 years old, my brother Joseph.

This is my invitation to all of you! To come and see: Godspell! The show is structured as a series of parables primarily based on the Gospel of Matthew, emphasizing Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Chapter 5). The cast evolves from individual voices to one voice; operating and moving as one unit, a community! Jesus acts as the conduit to bring them together. Together we build a "beautiful city" by celebrating our community and connecting as individuals. Godspell is the perfect show to fully embrace and actively live out our Open Door mission of giving back, fostering inclusiveness, and supporting community. Performances will be February 17, 18, 19 and February 24, 25, and 26th at King of Kings Lutheran Church in Woodbury. Fridays and Saturdays are at 7 pm and Sunday matinees are at 3 pm. Sunday February 19th will be ASL interpreted. Tickets are on sale on the Open Door Website: [opendoorcommunitytheatre.org](https://opendoorcommunitytheatre.org)

Lastly, thank you! This show is an ensemble show which means there are very few moments when we are not all on stage together. Rehearsals require all of us to be there. Throughout some of January and all of February, I will be at rehearsals and unavailable for week day evening meetings and programming. Thank you for allowing me this time and this opportunity to do what I love and share the gospel out in the world! I really do hope that you can make it to one of the performances, and believe this show will be a great prequel to our Lenten journeys as we journey with Jesus to the cross.

See you on the stage!  
Pastor Maria Markman

## Vision Board

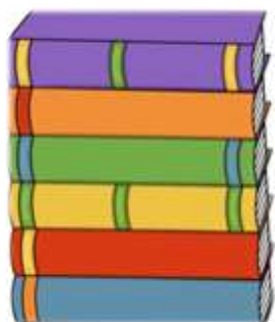
### Time Of Waiting

Advent, the time of waiting, is over. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all! However, in some ways, the congregation's time of waiting is just beginning with the start of our building renovation. With this project, changes will come to Grace. Sound and lighting will be improved in our worship space, accessible restrooms will be added, offices relocated to better serve the community and more. But with these necessary renovations will come some inconveniences during the building process. The Vision Board and Grace Staff will do our best to communicate during the process, what to expect and how it may impact our daily church lives. We recognize that while change is necessary, it can be difficult. During this process, one way we can help each other is to simply listen to each other. To hear and recognize the needs and the temporary discomfort that a major building project can bring.



The Vision Board has been reading the book B.L.E.S.S by Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson. During our latest meeting, we discussed a chapter of this book about listening to our neighbors as part of a process to get to know them better and open up dialogue. While the book itself is centered on ways to spread the good news of Jesus, learning how to be a better listener can pay dividends in many ways. We will need to listen to each other as we are aware that change can be difficult, and no decision will likely please every member of the congregation. The project leaders have spent much time listening to the congregation's needs and wants and put a plan of action into place from those messages. Going forward through the project, please know that we are always available to listen and help in any way we can.

May God continue to bless you and all of us in the New Year! Dan Johnson, Vision Board



### Thank you

Thank you, Grace Lutheran Church community for helping me be so successful with my Girl Scout Gold Award Project for the past 2 years. You have graciously donated many children and adult books that have been given to Hope4Youth. Hundreds and hundreds of your donated books have been gifted to these youth and their children. My project will be closing this Spring and I am no longer in need of book donations at this time, but am very grateful for all your help you provided. Olivia Surratt



*Year End finances will be posted prior to our  
Annual Congregational Meeting on February 5th.*

## Building Updates

### Building Task Force Update



The Building Task Force has met throughout the year with their efforts trained on providing the best finished product within the budget, as established by the sale of the Nightingale property and the fundraising of Transforming Inside and Out. It must also be mentioned that the current economic conditions have added, or more so, subtracted from our project. Higher material costs than once were expected to moderate into 2023 have not at this time. This has pushed the Task Force to look hard at what is possible with the inevitable need to change or cut items. We will still have a finished product that we can be proud of, one that will enhance our worship experience, allow us to gather, and provide space that furthers our mission to others.

Partners in our pursuit include Busch Architects, the lead in design efforts, Apex Companies, providing construction management experience, and Donlar Construction, Construction Manager at Risk, similar to a General Contractor, but engaged earlier in the process by providing cost estimates and building techniques as iterations of design are produced. Task Force members include Greg Ackerson, Francis Fernandez, Dennis Grabowski, Nancy Jenkins, Kathie Karsnia, Pastor Joanna, Rochelle Poore, Tracie Russell, Sandy Schmoll, Brook Vander Leest and Charlie Wold. The Task Force has been meeting regularly throughout the past year. The initial meetings were geared toward providing options for the congregation to comment on, and provide momentum for our capital campaign. The Transforming results established the financial value that then focused our attention to greater building details. Bringing Donlar on board gave the Task Force the voice from the construction industry, further adjusting our vision to what is possible.

Next on our agenda is to determine the scope of work for the final bidding documents that will be released to subcontractors. There is a high likelihood that there will be alternates that we could choose to accept or reject for those items that would be nice, but if too costly, ignored. We believe that bid documents will be on the street by the end of January. A rough construction schedule would have a start this Spring when the ground is frost free, likely April sometime. Completion is anticipated to be this November. Expect disruptions in accessibility but not in service. The Farmers Market will remain at Grace through the construction season. *Charlie Wold*



### Transforming Recap

In November we began our relationship with Donlar, who is our construction manager at risk. (A CMAR has responsibility to negotiate a guaranteed maximum price during the design phase thus the construction manager will be responsible for any costs that exceed that amount). Our team has been working closely with Donlar as they put together estimates and Busch Architects as we finalize designs. Our initial estimates are much higher than anticipated. In part, because the cost of materials has increased a lot over the last year. For example, a unit of steel has quadrupled! All of this means that we have had to reexamine the scope of our project. We do ask everyone to join us as we pray for God's help as we make hard choices about what our priorities are, and how to move forward in a budget conscience way. I want you to know that our team has spent hours in conversations and in examination of what is best for the future of Grace and all its ministries.

Some changes that we have already made to our project are that we have decided not to include the two additional offices that were additions on the Southeast side of Grace. We have also cut the Narthex expansion. We will still renovate our kitchen; however we plan to take a different approach that will work within our current building structure and doesn't bump out like it had been initially presented.

Please join us on February 5th in worship for an update on the project. Also, please feel free to reach out to any members of our team about what is happening. We look forward to sharing with you. *Pastor Joanna Mitchell*

## Reflection

### *"I Carry a Story Inside" by Nancy Jenkins*

Since both pastors were scheduled to attend a youth event offsite during worship on Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, and because it was Grace's "Blue Christmas" service, I was asked to share a reflection that evening. Initially, I struggled to figure out what I should share but eventually the words came to me. I asked several people for their feedback on my reflection, I incorporated their edits, and I practiced giving my talk in the sanctuary. That Wednesday evening, however, there was a winter storm and all after school activities for most school districts were canceled as well as all Grace events. Several of my friends said that they were sorry that I hadn't been able to share my reflection and it was too bad that my effort had been wasted. I didn't actually have any regrets, however, because I knew how much writing my reflection had helped me process my grief about losing my mom last March.



The next day Pastor Maria graciously offered me the opportunity to share my reflection at the January 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday evening worship instead and immediately I had resistance to this idea. "What is going on inside of me? Why don't I say yes like I did in November when Pastor Maria asked me? What's the difference?" The truth was that I couldn't see past Christmas. I couldn't imagine my January birthday without my mom. I couldn't imagine telling my Blue Christmas story amid the newness of January and so I said no. I declined the opportunity to share my reflection. It felt like the window for telling my story had come and gone like a flash of lightning. The reflection, once excited and ready to face the world, had retreated back inside of me, deep within. That evening I wrote this poem in response to how I felt about my reflection.

### *I Carry a Story Inside*

Saw and felt the light of day for a time  
 It rose with my breath, found its voice, and took flight  
 It echoed into the universe  
 Instead of waving goodbye and leaving me  
 Or circling around me  
 Now it is hidden deep within  
 I hold it close  
 Buried gently beneath the layers  
 Of tender, sacred, holy soil  
 Why did it recede?  
 Was the light too strong?  
 Was my voice or my body too weak?  
 Was the winged flight too scary?  
 I know no answers, only that  
 I carry a story inside

## Art Project



### *"His Banner Over Us Is Love" by Nancy Jenkins*

Last July, amid the busyness of life at Grace without Pastor Maria, Pastor Joanna announced one morning that she would like to do a congregational art project this fall. The goal was to have two banners in the sanctuary by mid-January when the pastors begin their sermon series on the book of Matthew which includes "The Beatitudes". Pastor Joanna had found online several large-scale coloring pages featuring "The Beatitudes" and this artwork was to somehow be transformed into the cloth banners in the sanctuary. Pastor Joanna had led a congregational art project at her former church and so she had the vision for how this would work and what the outcome would look like. As the volunteer assigned to coordinate this project, I was several steps behind in envisioning what the end-product would look like.

The hope and intention was to have many groups and multiple generations of people at Grace participate in this art project, and we accomplished this. The two banners are the result of the artistic contributions of several groups at Grace:

- Children and adults who participated in our "God's Work, Our Hands" and "Trunk or Treat" events
- Catechism youth and their leaders
- Graceful Seniors
- Ruth Circle Ladies
- Seeds of Grace Staff
- Vision Board Members
- Church Office Staff/Volunteers
- Choir Members
- Various Volunteers



Special thanks to Kristi Evanger who provided finishing touches to the original paper "tiles" before they were sent to the printers, and to Jan Margotto who glued a backing to both banners which allows them to be displayed.

Truthfully, the process was far from perfect and often messy. Paint and water were spilled numerous times. Our original paper didn't accept the watercolors paints as we had anticipated. The second set of paper tiles ended up costing more than expected. One of the tiles was much too dark and had to be redone. The paints had to be diluted for the second banner. The printing company often didn't follow up as desired. As Project Manager, I made my own mistakes along the way. For example, I didn't keep proper track of the computer files containing the tiles and I had to bug Pastor Joanna more than once for her to re-send them to me.

One morning shortly after the second banner was finished, I woke up with these words on my mind:



"His banner over me is love." These words are from the Bible (Song of Solomon 2:4) and also from a song. "He brought me to his banqueting table, his banner over me is love." I sang these words at Sunday School as a child and there were hand motions which I loved (and which hopefully made up for my lack of vocal quality). I never really understood the full meaning of the lyrics of this song when I was a child, and so I Googled, "his banner over me is love" and this is what was written:

*"Child, my banner over you is love. Banners are proclamations, bold statements of fact displayed over people, places, and things. They are indisputable declarations meant for all to see."* I love it! This IS why I Google things! His banner over us is love! These two Beatitude banners over us are love.

Come and see what we have collectively done as a congregation! In addition to the banners in the sanctuary, some of the original tiles are displayed on our art wall near Classroom 105/107. Thank you to everyone who participated!

## Ministries



### Women's Retreat

The Women's Retreat Ministry team wants you to **plan ahead to "Be Uplifted"** for an Amazing, Fun-Filled Event that is happening in February 2023. This event is our over-night weekend **Winter Women's Retreat at Luther Point Bible Camp on Friday February 24 thru Sunday February 26, 2023**. We invite ALL Grace women and their friends to come. At this fun event, you will meet and get to know more women at our church, laugh a lot, and **RELAX**. We have everything planned and provided for you except your overnight bag – The team will provide all your meals, daily devotion sessions, carpooling, lots of free time, a field trip to a creamery, outdoor hiking (if you so choose), snacks and wonderful women fellowship that you can only get at a Women's Retreat. Our goal for this retreat is to grow in relationship with one another and God; provide tangible spiritual take-aways to apply to your daily life and have **LOTS OF FUN AND LAUGHTER**. This Women's Retreat is also a safe and encouraging environment where EVERYONE is invited to come. **Space is limited so registration will be required for this event-Go to Realm NOW to register**. The cost is only \$135 which include 3 meals, 2 overnight lodging and carpooling cost. Packing list and additional details will be sent to you once you register!. Can't wait to see all you Fabulous Women at this Wonderful Event in February 2023. Reach out to Stacy Surratt for any questions [stacysurratt@yahoo.com](mailto:stacysurratt@yahoo.com)

### Spring Forest Qigong Practice Group



Spring Forest Qigong practice group led by Randy Sparer meets at Grace the 1st & 3rd Mondays of each month at 2:30pm. Through gentle, yet powerful healing movements and meditations, you will learn how to heal yourself. Questions, contact Randy Sparer 612-812-2392.



### Family Table

Family Table is an outreach program sponsored by several churches in the area including Grace. On the 3rd Sunday of each month, we are privileged to prepare a variety of meals for our guests. Many of our guests have been affected by the risings costs in food and gas, and truly appreciate the meals we provide. Others are looking for opportunities to share a meal and conversation with friends. Recently, we have opened up the fellowship room for indoor dining, and slowly folks are taking advantage of the opportunity. That also gives us a chance to visit with our guests and get to know them. If you are looking for a fun way to volunteer, please check out the Sign Up Genius link. The calendar is posted thru July 2023, so you can do some planning. Come help us help others! Whether you are able to volunteer on site or contribute cash or food, we need you! You are such an important part of our outreach programs! If you have any questions, you can contact Lynda Wilde at [lrwilde@comcast.net](mailto:lrwilde@comcast.net) or call/text 612.418.6444.



## Ministries

### Empty Nesters / Parents of Inde- pendent Children!



This means you – all of you who have adult children or those of you who are feeling the freedom of having older/ independent kids. It's a new year and we are excited about our next two social events:

**Tuesday, January 24 from 6:30 to 8 pm** – we will be having our annual kick off dinner here at Grace. Please join us for food, dessert, conversation, and a lot of laughs! Please RSVP to Nancy so that we know how many people we will be serving. If you have any dietary restrictions, please let us know those as well. We cannot accommodate every restriction, but it is helpful to know if we have several people who are gluten-free, for example. You won't want to miss this fun night at Grace!

**Monday, February 13 from 6:00 to 8 pm** – we will be meeting for dinner and drinks at **Invictus Brewing Co / Topsy Steer** (2025 105<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Blaine). We aren't able to make reservations for our group so please let Nancy know if you are planning to attend so that we can have enough tables together. If you aren't familiar with Invictus / Topsy Steer, their website says that they offer "local, sassy, brew food."

We look forward to seeing you! Feel free to invite your friends and please RSVP to Nancy Jenkins at [djjenkins@comcast.net](mailto:djjenkins@comcast.net).



### Graceful Seniors: Second Tuesday of the Month

**8:30-10:00am**

Graceful Seniors is a group of mostly retired folks who meet the second Tuesday of each month in the Fellowship Hall for breakfast and a Bible Study (8:30-10:00am). Bring your Bibles! We are studying Revelation. We are continuing our study through Revelation and if all goes according to plan, January 10th we will have studied Revelation 5-7. Our next gathering will be February 14th where we will continue through Revelation 7-9. If you are a senior and interested in joining us on the second Tuesday of the month, please call the church office so we can make sure we have coffee and a donut for you! We would love to have you join us!



### The Wait is Over!

The Chosen Season Three Coming Soon to Sunday Nights at Grace!

Long awaited, The Chosen (season 3) will be returning to our faith formation line up. We are currently waiting for more episodes to become available and for our fearless leaders to prepare for our discussions. In upcoming weeks look for details in Grace at a Glance and the Sunday Trifold for dates and times. If you have not joined us yet, feel free to catch up on Seasons one and two while you wait and join us as we watch and study season three together!



### Sand Creek Snacks for Students

We are currently gathering healthy snacks for students at Sand Creek Elementary. The following snacks can be left in the tub in the Narthex.

- Nature Valley Crunchy Granola Bars
- NutriGrain Soft Baked Breakfast Bars with Real Fruit
- Gold Fish (individually packaged)
- Skinny Pop (individually packaged)
- Fruit Snacks (preferably with real fruit nutrition)



### Ruth Circle

**12:30-2:00pm**

A group of mostly retired women who meet the first Monday of each month following quilters (12-12:30 lunch 12:30-2:00 study) Our study together follows the monthly ELCA Gather Magazine Bible Study. Please contact the church office or Low Jackson to participate.

## Ministries

## Children's Ministry



HELP END FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

### Family Promise

Thanks to supporters like you, Family Promise in Anoka County continued to serve children and families experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity throughout 2022. In the past year, we have served over **55 families, including 145 children** between our Prevention, Shelter, and Housing Stabilization programs. Recently, two families in our Shelter program were able to transition from homelessness to permanent housing, just in time for the holidays. *This was possible because of the support they received from you, through Family Promise in Anoka County.*

We have been sharing with you our plans to develop a static a static Guest House. We are happy to announce everything is coming together for our Guest House project. The commercial building will be available for us to get in, start making plans, and prepare for the renovations as soon as January. There is going to be a great deal of work to do in the new year, but I'm excited we have the opportunity.

To help keep everything moving forward, we are getting together some teams of people to help with the early stages of the project, including messaging, fundraising, and renovation. If you are interested in helping with one of these temporary committees, we'd appreciate the help!

### February 5th

### Congregational Meeting



Change of date for the congregational meeting: Because we need to give the congregation two weeks to review the proposed budget, we are postponing the congregational meeting to **Sunday February 5th at 10am**. This will be the same day as the Transforming Inside and Out presentation, but that will take place during the generosity moment during all our worship services.



### Children's Ministry Calendar

### January-March 2023

- 1/11- Kids night out (6-7pm)
- 1/15- Sunday School & Nursery (8:45 & 10:30)
- 1/18- Kids night out (6-7pm)
- 1/22- Sunday School & Nursery (8:45 & 10:30)
- 1/25- Kids night out (6-7pm)
- 1/29- Sunday School & Nursery (8:45 & 10:30)
- 2/1- Kids night out (6-7pm)
- 2/5- Sunday School & Nursery (8:45 & 10:30)
- 2/8- Kids night out (6-7pm)
- 2/10- Valentines Day Dance
- 2/12- Sunday School & Nursery (8:45 & 10:30)
- 2/15- Kids night out (6-7pm)
- 2/19- Sunday School & Nursery (8:45 & 10:30)
- 2/22- Kids night out (6-7pm)
- 2/26- Sunday School & Nursery (8:45 & 10:30)
- 3/1- Kids night out (6-7pm)
- 3/5- Sunday School & Nursery (8:45 & 10:30)
- 3/8- Feed My Starving Children Family Event (7-8:45pm)
- 3/12- SPRING BREAK Large Group Sunday School & Nursery (8:45am & 10:30am)
- 3/15- SPRING BREAK No Kids night out
- 3/19- SPRING BREAK Large Group Sunday School & Nursery (8:45am & 10:30am)
- 3/22- Kids night out (6-7pm)

### Valentines Day Dance



Join us for the Valentines Day Dance!  
For kids, kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade!

**Date: Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Time: 5pm-6:30pm!**

Location: Grace Lutheran Church

## Youth Ministries



### Catechism

New Calendars went home before Christmas, if yours did not make it home you can pick one up anytime outside the CYF director's door or email Molly and she can email you a copy! Mol-

lys@graceandover.org

As we work our way to Lent we have a couple of new series starting! First, *No Problem: A 4-week study from the Old & New Testament on LOVING OTHERS*. Apologies—they're hard to give, but they're sometimes hard to receive, too. When you're the one who has hurt someone else, saying you're sorry (and actually meaning it) takes work and practice. But when you're the one who's been hurt by someone else, things get even more complicated. What if you don't want to forgive them? What if they don't seem sorry? What if they won't even admit they're wrong? What if they've moved on, but you're still not over it? In this 4-week series from the Gospels, we'll find out what it means to truly give (and receive) forgiveness. We'll discover that when you need forgiveness, it's not enough to just apologize. And when you've been hurt and need to forgive, we'll explore the importance of shifting your perspective, remembering God forgave first, and remembering Jesus knows what it's like to be hurt.

Next, *On The Flip Side: A 4-week study from the Prophets & Gospels on Justice*.

When Jesus was on earth, he wasn't exactly known for telling people what they wanted to hear. Jesus' message was unlike any message people had ever heard before. He didn't give shallow motivational speeches or feel-good sermons. He didn't recycle the same messages other religious leaders were teaching. He flipped people's ideas about God, the world, and themselves completely upside down — usually in uncomfortable ways. And that's always how God's words have worked! In this four-week series, we'll compare Jesus' words in the Gospels with the words of the Old Testament prophets to see how God's words have always challenged our understanding of what's wrong or right, good or bad, and just or unjust. We'll talk about how, both then and now, God flips our assumptions about who God values, our definition of righteousness, our understanding of what's good enough, and our definition of justice.

### Catechism Small

#### Group Night!

February 15th is our next Small Group Night! Each Small Group can make plans together for this night to spend the entire Catechism time together! You will be contacted by your child's leader to share the plan!



### Feed My Starving Children Packing Event



Join us at Feed My Starving Children! For all ages!

**Date: March 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Time: 7:00pm-8:45pm**

Location: 401 93<sup>rd</sup> Ave. NW

Coon Rapids, MN 55433

We have a total of 65 spots available, and it is first come first served! If you are interested please reach out to Kelsey Russell at kelseyr@graceandover.org



### High School Sunday Mornings

We will continue to meet Sunday mornings after each service at 10:00am and/or 11:45am in the Youth Room for conversation and games with some friendly competition for a weekly prize and of course, yummy donuts!

## Youth Ministries



### Summer Trips Fundraising

Fundraising Opportunities coming up for students going on Summer Trips this summer with Pastor Joanna or Pastor Maria.

Support the students taking these impactful Summer trips in the coming months. We are returning to our popular fundraising initiatives and trying out a couple of new ones!

### Valentine's Candy Bouquets!

New this year, give the sweetest of all gifts for Valentine's Day with chocolate candy or a mixed candy bouquet. Instead of flowers, a vase is filled with popular candies, all nut-free.

Students will be taking orders beginning January 29<sup>th</sup> in the narthex before and after each service, and bouquets will be available to pick up on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

### Scrip Gift Card Fundraising

This is an easy fundraiser for our students to help them reach their fundraising goals! And, it does not require you or your friends to buy unwanted items. Scrip is the one fundraising program that offers gift cards everyone loves to give, receive and use every day—all your regular places, groceries, restaurants, department stores, fast food, etc.

You can also expect to see these fundraisers returning this year:

- Green Valley Greenhouse gift cards: Sundays this Spring, April 30<sup>th</sup>-May 14<sup>th</sup>
- Egg Your Yard: watch for details coming soon.
- Pizza Ranch: Date to TBD

### Middle School Summer



### Festival Camp

Middle School Youth- Join us this Summer for Summer Festival Camp at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN. **Camp runs from July 16<sup>th</sup>- July 19<sup>th</sup>.** Cost for trip is \$270 plus transportation. We will leave Sunday morning after church and check in at Gustavus around 1:30pm. Any questions please talk to Pastor Joanna Mitchell or [summerfestivalcamp.com](http://summerfestivalcamp.com)

For a week during the summer, teens have the chance to get away from real life, hang out with people from all across the Midwest, deepen friendships, and talk about God. Everyday speakers come to share inspiring and challenging stories about real life, God, and where the two intertwine. The days are packed with fun surprises of all kinds. From the music, the movies, the games, the speakers, and club – all with laughter to tears – Summer Festival Camp really has something for everybody.

Summer Festival combines wild games, gut-busting humor, a messy fight, meaningful music, relevant speakers, breakout sessions and small group discussion time for a unique experience. Camp helps students draw closer to Jesus, each other and to the leaders from their church. See the daily schedule below for more details about what a day at camp looks like. Sign up today on Realm.

#### **Sample Summer Festival Daily Schedule:**

8:30 Breakfast  
 9:15 Morning Event  
 10:15 Morning Club  
 11:15 Morning Small Group Time  
 12:00 Lunch  
 1:15 Afternoon Event  
 2:30 Free Time  
 4:00 Workshops  
 5:00 Dinner  
 6:00 Free Time  
 7:00 Club  
 8:15 Evening Small Group Time  
 9:15 Evening Event  
 10:15 Late Night Scramble  
 11:30 Lights out

## Youth Ministries



### Green Ribbon Group

### First Monday of the Month

6:30–8:30 pm

Green Ribbon Group meets the first Monday of the month at 6:30pm. This group is for parents/guardians of children who are growing up with mental health ups and downs, atypical identity, and other hard issues. This group is a confidential, non-judgmental, safe space to talk about struggles others may not understand. We are working to provide childcare for parents who might need this during Green Ribbon. If you or a youth in your life are willing to work from 6:15-8:30pm on this Monday night please reach out to Pastor Maria. This would be a paid position for our youth and could be used as a fundraiser for summer trips.



### Adult Chaperones Needed

**Are you interested in being an adult chaperone for one of our High School Trips?**

Please email Pastor Joanna Mitchell at [joannam@graceandover.org](mailto:joannam@graceandover.org) for Appalachian Service Project and Pastor Maria Markman at [mariam@graceandover.org](mailto:mariam@graceandover.org) for Christikon High School trip for more information.



### Appalachian Service Project

It's been a while since Grace Youth have been able to go on a mission trip. We are so excited about this year's High School Summer Trip to the Appalachian Mountains where we will be participating in the Appalachian Service Project (ASP). July 28<sup>th</sup>-August 6<sup>th</sup>.

We will travel by van from Andover to an assigned region (we find out in March where we are going) where we will spend a week working on homes and connecting with families who are in need of home maintenance and repair.

When I was a youth, I participated in this project for all three years of my high school career. The families I met and the work we did impacted me profoundly and gave me a great appreciation for all that I have, and a desire to give back. I remember being quite nervous about participating in this project. I didn't know much about construction and was unsteady with a hammer and a nail. And yet, each year I came home having done something I never thought I could do, for example re-roofing a house, restoring a floor, building a deck and more. I know that others in our group felt the same way. Today, I am a proud member of the Women's Build with Habitat for Humanity because I enjoy being able to work with my hands and use some power tools.

We have 15 spots reserved for youth and need 6 adults as volunteers. ASP serves West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee. We will be staying at a school or community center. Fundraising and scholarships are available. Cost of the trip is \$700 which includes travel expenses. **Last day to sign up is February 28th!**

Sign up today on Realm and talk to Pastor Joanna Mitchell for more information.

## Youth Ministries



### *Christikon High School Backpacking Trip 2023* **July 14th-July 22nd in McLeod, MT**

A week at Christikon Lutheran Bible Camp in the beautiful Montana mountains for all current 9th -12th grade students (students must have completed 9th grade by July 2023.)

You spend your first and last nights at the main camp. The rest of the time you are hiking through our mountain wilderness. And you find a special life together: Worship and Bible Study are woven together with the exhilaration of high country camping. Two trained counselors will lead our group as guides and program leaders. Christikon provides you with backpacks, tents, cooking gear, and food. You supply your own sleeping bag, hiking boots, rain gear, and clothing. Financial assistance is available. We will also be looking for adult volunteers to drive. Register on Realm. Last day to sign up is February 28th. Any questions, contact Pastor Maria Markman at [mariam@graceandover.org](mailto:mariam@graceandover.org).

## Church Events



1/26-Centering Prayer 9am  
1/26-Bible Study Zoom 10:30am  
1/28-Zoom Fellowship 9am  
1/29-Worship 8:45 & 10:30am  
1/29-H.S. Donuts & Dreams 10 & 11:45am  
1/31-Transforming Inside & Out-Winter Variety Show 6:30pm  
2/1-WOW 9:30-11:15am  
2/1-Wednesday Night Programing 5:15-7pm  
2/1-Wednesday Night Worship 7pm  
2/2-Centering Prayer 9am  
2/2-Bible Study Zoom 10:30am  
2/4-Zoom Fellowship 9am  
2/5-Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast 9am-1pm  
2/5-Worship 8:45 & 10:30am  
2/5-H.S. Donuts & Dreams 10 & 11:45am  
2/5-Annual Congregational Meeting 10am  
2/6-Ruth Circle 12:30pm  
2/7-Men at Willy McCoy's 6:30pm  
2/8-WOW 9:30-11:15am  
2/8-Wednesday Night Programing 5:15-7pm  
2/8-Wednesday Night Worship 7pm  
2/9-Centering Prayer 9am  
2/9-Bible Study Zoom 10:30am  
2/10-Grace Quilters 2 9:30am  
2/10-Valentine's Day Dance 5-6:30pm  
2/11-Zoom Fellowship 9am  
2/12-Worship 8:45 & 10:30am  
2/12-H.S. Donuts & Dreams 10 & 11:45am  
2/14-Empty Nester Group 6pm  
2/15-WOW 9:30-11:15am  
2/15-Wednesday Night Programing 5:15-7pm  
2/15-Wednesday Night Worship 7pm  
2/16-Centering Prayer 9am  
2/16-Bible Study Zoom 10:30am  
2/18-Zoom Fellowship 9am  
2/19-Worship 8:45 & 10:30am (Transfiguration)  
2/19-H.S. Donuts & Dreams 10 & 11:45am  
2/22-WOW 9:30-11:15am  
2/22-Wednesday Night Programing 5:15-7pm  
2/22-Ash Wednesday Worship 1pm & 7pm  
*For more events please visit [graceandover.org](http://graceandover.org)*

## Church Calendar Events

1/22-Worship 8:45 & 10:30am  
1/22-H.S. Donuts & Dreams 10 & 11:45am  
1/22-New Member Class 12-1:30pm  
1/24-Empty Nester Dinner 6:30-8:00pm  
1/25-WOW 9:30-11:15am  
1/25-Wednesday Night Programing 5:15-7pm  
1/25-Wednesday Night Worship 7pm



## *Grace Lutheran Church*

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[www.graceandover.org](http://www.graceandover.org)

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*Lent Worships Begin Feb. 22nd*

**Ash Wednesday Worship 1pm & 7pm**

**Lenten Wednesday Worships 1pm & 7pm**

**Maundy Thursday Worships 1pm & 7pm**

**Good Friday Worships 1pm & 7pm**

**Easter Worships 7am, 8:45am & 10:30am**