



# grace notes

September 2023

## Breaking Ground

It feels like we have been in an endless holding pattern for our building project. After hopes of breaking ground this Spring, we are now looking at a late September or October date. I am praying that we are able to get all of the exterior work done before the ground freezes. Even though we



have been in this holding pattern, I am filled with gratitude. Our congregation just voted to move ahead with taking out our mortgage of \$2.2 million. This number seems huge and it is large, but it covers our project and then some. It allows us to have the contingencies we need. We also do not need to take out the full amount. Because of this vote, we will close on the loan soon and then we will be set to go. All of the preparation work that has been done by the building task force has been amazing. I am also so thankful for the hard work and diligence of Tracie Russell, our Church Administrator. She is thoroughly leading us through this process and making sure all of our ducks are in a row.

While I am hopeful that we will be able to have an actual date to break ground in the near future, I do feel that we are turning the page on a new chapter here at Grace Lutheran. Our church is filled with new life. In the midst of transition there is good energy. We have a new CYF Director Will Weikle, a new Childcare Director, Christine Klersy, and Scott Christensen has stepped up volunteering his time as Outreach Ministry Team Leader. I am excited to work with these gifted and committed individuals as we continue to serve our community in so many ways. I believe that there will be some ground breaking ministry happening here at Grace and I am hopeful about where God will lead us.

There are two things that I want to lift up for you in terms of ministry at Grace. First is that I have heard an ongoing request for an evening Bible Study. We are offering one this year on Wednesday nights that will be led by Pastor Maria or me. Please join us. Come for a week or two and see if it fits your needs. We want to help people read and study the Bible. I will be honest, in this day and age there are so many different ways to do it. I primarily use my Bible app when I go on visits because of the font size. I will also use different translations from the Bible app to help me explore a text, and I even have the narrator read aloud to me when I drive. All of these methods enhance my faith and help me be immersed in the word of God. I also use my study Bible and many resources to further my understandings.

Second is a grief group. Our church is looking at leading a grief group this fall and using a resource called Grief Share. The person who was planning on leading for us is no longer able to, and so I am hoping that you might prayerfully consider if this is something you want to learn more about. My hope is that we will be offering this class starting sometime in October. As someone who has buried a mother and also walked alongside my dad and so many others in grief, I believe without question that providing support and resources for the grieving is an essential component of ministry. I believe God will provide, even as we wait for a leader, and I want to assure you that we are committed to helping those who are grieving and those who are leading.

I hope that you will continue to pray for Grace Lutheran Church as we anticipate all of the ground-breaking opportunities on the horizon.

Blessings,  
Pastor Joanna Mitchell



# Associate Pastor's Message

## Routines, Practices, and Habits

It is the end of August as I write to you all. And it is at this point in the summer that I have always fallen apart. As a kid, I was very dysregulated and grouchy. I was ready to go back to school, to see my friends, to have a routine. As a youth, swimming practice two-a-days had begun and I was constantly hungry and sore, but grateful for a routine even if it did include long breaks in the middle of the day lounging on the couch before practice in the afternoon. Even then I craved the routine of going back to the classroom, seeing friends and getting a syllabus, a schedule and order for my life. Throughout all my years, even to this day, the siren song of the store's school supply section beckons to me promises of organization and regulation: calendars, notebooks, pens, pencils, and highlighters, folders, whatever "new" system that would get my life back to order.



Even though I am no longer in school, recently I have admitted on several accounts that I am a mess! My best friend reminded me when she is a mess she returns to the habits and practices she has to set her on course. It wasn't until she reminded me of this that I remembered one of the reasons I love fall so much. Summer is so much fun and filled with endless sun and possibility. But I can only handle this discombobulation for so long. This summer was no different: vacations, Vacation Bible School, Summer Stretch, Middle School and High School trips, and all the other sporadic church and not church events. I am now ready for the routine of fall. Returning to my habits and practices. And getting my life out of this mess and back in order!

We have habits and practices as a community that get us back on track too. The routine of fall programming. The return to the Narrative Lectionary which begins each fall in Genesis and leads us through God's story told in the Old Testament until Christmas when we arrive at the New Testament through the rest of the school year. What I absolutely love about the beginning of the Bible is that it grounds us in the creation story. A story of order from chaos. Sounds a lot like the return to routine in Fall. The first creation story walks us through God's creation of all that is. First, God creates the containers: the sky, land, and sea. And in the following days God will fill those containers with stars, sun, and moon, with plants and trees, with birds, fish, and creepy crawling creatures, and finally humans. God takes the chaos and gives it structure and brings it to order. The second creation story focuses on getting back to work. Humans receive our practices and routines. The message translation says "God took the Man and set him down in the Garden of Eden to work the ground and keep it in order" (Genesis 2:15). This is how we begin our Fall together, getting back to our routines, practices and habits.

I wonder if you feel this way at the end of Summer and beginning of Fall. The call to return to routine and habit. Possibly having spent a lot of time away from home on summer vacations and at the lake? Or adding extra outings? Having the kids home from school for the summer figuring out each week which camp or friend's house they are staying at? Maybe getting up earlier or staying up later with the sun? Letting normal chores give way to beautiful summer days outside in Minnesota? Personally, I know I need this fall return to routines, practices and habits. I need to exercise every day with extra walks for Chandler as needed. I need my morning quiet time in gratitude and devotion, to eat three healthy meals a day (less ice cream), and to intentionally live out my purpose through my work and play. I need to make my bed and tidy my house every day and make sure my sink is clean in the evening. Brush my teeth twice a day. Keep up with my laundry weekly, vacuuming and watering my house plants, and to see my therapist regularly. And check in with friends and family. I meet with my peer group of pastors at least once a month. Returning to routines, practices, and habits also means less time on screens and more time in nature. Less time watching TV and more time learning new things. All these routines, practices, and habits help me return to stability and feel connected to God and to others. What are your routines? Will you consider adding a new routine, habit, or practice this year by joining us for worship each week, or Bible study? Maybe begin a new giving practice or volunteer in an outreach ministry? - Pastor Maria Markman





## Vision Board Message

At the end of July, I had the privilege to travel with 14 high schoolers and 6 other adults to Appalachia, VA, in the wooded mountains and old mining towns, to work on home repairs with Appalachia Service Project (ASP). The ASP theme for this summer was "Love Strong" based upon Luke 10:27

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and Love your neighbor as yourself" (NIV)*



We were the last crew for the summer, which meant that we got to complete the projects for the homeowners, and what a rewarding experience that was! We served people who would have been unable to pay for, and complete the work on their own. And as the finished projects were revealed throughout the week, the looks on the homeowners' faces and their abundant gratitude made a lasting impact on both the students and chaperones.

In our devotion time over lunch, while sitting in a shady spot near a creek, we talked about generosity and how generosity is defined. Our crew defined generosity as giving freely without expecting anything in return. One of the homeowners told stories about just that – how they went out of their way to help others and when those people would ask how they could return the favor or pay them back, they said they wanted nothing but for them to pay it forward.

Just as we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, our youth stand on our shoulders. Throughout the week we got to bear witness to these amazing teenagers' generosity. They gave it their all – in their work, in their willingness to learn, in their daily chores, and in the way they cared for the homeowners, each other and even us chaperones! It was so uplifting to work alongside these incredible human beings and watch them grow in so many ways.

These young people are the future of our world and the future of our church. And what I've learned this week is that if we invest in them, they will flourish and impact many more lives than we ever could on our own. So next time you're at church, take some time to introduce yourself to any of the young people there. Get to know them, remember their names, and build those relationships. You'll be so glad you did – I know I am!



Chrissy Gast  
Vice President, Vision Board





## Devotion

*I wrote this devotion and shared with the large group one morning while on the Grace High School mission trip to Appalachia Service Project (ASP) in August.*

Hello, my name is Nancy Jenkins and I am with the group from Grace Lutheran Church in Andover, MN, which is a northern suburb of Minneapolis. Today I am sharing something that I wrote early one morning this week.

Let me start by saying that I am not a pastor, I have not attended seminary, and I have no formal training on the Bible. However, as some of you know from Grace know, I have a habit of volunteering for things at church, I enjoy writing, and I am part of a weekly Zoom Bible study at our church that raises far more questions than it ever finds answers to. Often, we see the stories of the Bible in a new light of God's abundant grace and love.

Speaking of questions, let me start with some questions. Do you ever feel too small or too insignificant for God's love and care for you? Do you ever feel not good enough or outside the reach of God's love?

Recently I have been pondering the story of the wheat and the weeds from the Gospel of Matthew 13. In short, Jesus was answering the question, "should we get rid of the weeds while trying to grow wheat?" And Jesus tells them no, let both wheat and weeds remain and let them both grow until harvest.

Our human minds are so quick to label and judge: wheat is good; weeds are bad. This dividing, judging, and labeling ability wasn't just an issue in Jesus' time. We do this all the time in our modern world: this person is right and good; another person is wrong and bad. Some people interpret the weeds in this story as evil people. However, even in this very text Jesus points out a good aspect of the weeds: later the weeds can be used to burn for fire. Perhaps this fire would have been used to warm their living space or for cooking.

What fascinates me is that in the very next section of Matthew, Jesus refers to weeds again and encourages us to have the faith of a very specific weed: a mustard seed. Jesus lifts up a weed as an example of how to live a life of faith. This weed, from its tiny seed (less than a 12th of an inch) can grow to become a tree 20-30' tall tree with a wide canopy. Jesus, seemingly trying to ensure that we understand the size and scope of this weed once it's fully grown, said that even birds perch in the branches of a mustard tree. This is another way Jesus seems to affirm the innate goodness, beauty, and purpose of this weed.

Both of these stories or examples in Matthew were told in response to the question, "what is the kingdom of heaven like?" Jesus' answer? The kingdom of heaven is like the tiny mustard seed: no thing and no person is too small for God's eyes and vision. In addition, all are included, even what (or who) we humans label as "weeds". God can reach all people in radical and beautiful ways. No one is outside of God's plans, God's grace, or God's love.

Let's pray. *Loving God who sees and loves all people - we give you thanks for this day and for all that it holds. Thank you that nothing is too small or too big for you. Give us eyes to see your great love for all people. Fill us with your loving presence. We trust in your boundless grace and goodness. In your name we pray. Amen.*







## Gratitude & Ministry News



### Gratitude

Hello, Wonderful Grace family! I just wanted to personally put a post in the Grace At A Glance this month to tell you how my family and I are so grateful for this church!

As most of you know about 2 months ago my van caught fire in my garage, and we were able to get out safely, Praise God!

However, because of the smoke damage it caused, we were told we are not allowed to live in our house until they completely clean it. We had to replace the carpet, floors and clean and repaint the walls. Which meant they had to take out everything we owned from the house and clean it or throw it away. We are currently living in a three bedroom apartment in Champlin.

We have been so blessed by this wonderful congregation. Thank you everyone who has reached out to me, brought us meals, and helped us with school supplies for our children this fall. Also we just received our noisy offering and we are so grateful for anyone who donated as we were not expecting it at all!

We have been told we'll be in the apartment until Halloween but we're going to be okay and we are grateful every day for this church.

God bless all of you!

Kendra, Jeremy, Avery and AJ Mattke



### Love of Grace Bazaar Cancelled

We are very sad to announce that the Love of Grace Bazaar scheduled to be on November 11, 2023 is being cancelled for this year. With the building project, we know there will be areas under construction that will limit our areas to use for the Bazaar, we know shifting of construction areas will be taking place to make it hard to plan spaces, and most importantly the safety overall for everyone.

At this point in time, we certainly hope to have our Love of Grace Bazaar once again in 2024 on the second Saturday in November - November 9, 2024.



### Girl's Night Out

Girl's Night Out is an informal gathering of women from Grace. We meet at a local restaurant at 6:00pm on the first Tuesday of each month for good food and lively conversation. All women of Grace are invited. Locations are subject to change—details will be announced. We'd love to hear your suggestions for good places to go! Contact Gayle Pacholl for more information.



### WOW Begins Sept. 20th

**An Invitation to check us out!** Women On Wednesday (WOW) is gearing up to begin its 26<sup>th</sup> year this fall on **Wednesday, Sept. 20th at 9:30am**. All women are welcome and we have child care available. We have 5 choices of book studies. WOW follows the Anoka Hennepin School Calendar. WOW has been a wonderful way for women to connect in very meaningful ways. Many of the women in WOW do not attend Grace but have found a circle of community through their time together in WOW. Questions can be directed to Deb Corey, Mary Welle, or Anne Weikle.





# Ministry News

"God's work. Our hands." Sunday



## GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS Outreach Ministry Event SUNDAY SEPT. 17<sup>th</sup>

Calling all hands! And feet, voices, and whatever you can offer! Grace will once again be celebrating our annual God's Work Our Hands Outreach Ministry event on Sunday September 17<sup>th</sup>!

We will begin with **ONE Worship Service on Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am.** At the end of worship at 10am, we will take a group photo in the Sanctuary and then split up to do many ministry outreach projects in the local community and here at Grace.

We need YOUR participation in this event! The event last year included yard clean up for some of our homebound seniors, projects at Stepping Stones and Sand Creek Elementary, music for seniors at Homestead, and meal prep for vulnerable families at Lord of Life, and more!

Here at Grace there were many indoor projects for young and old, including quilt tying, rolling band-aids and hospice kits that are shipped overseas, and notes of encouragement for various groups outside of Grace. We will even be doing a community art project for the Sanctuary. There is truly something for everyone to participate in!

Mark your calendars for Sunday September 17<sup>th</sup> and look for future sign up opportunities. After our service projects we will gather back at Grace for a meal of celebration and fellowship!

If you can not stay for the entire event, feel free to participate for as long as you can. If you have an idea of a service project that may be needed please contact Scott Christensen at 612-247-3599 or send an e-mail to [scottc8970@gmail.com](mailto:scottc8970@gmail.com). We look forward to seeing you at God's Work Our Hands on Sunday September 17<sup>th</sup>!

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## Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices

Adult Faith Formation at Grace applied to be in a 2 year learning cohort through the Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA on the topic Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices. Grace has been chosen to be a part of this next cohort beginning Fall 2023. We will explore ancient Christian contemplative practices as well as asset based community engagement. A team has been developed for this work, but we will need help! We are excited to share all that we are learning with all of you and apply it to Grace and beyond our walls, engaging with our community! The team will be installed in Worship on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>. For more information or to get involved email [mariam@graceandover.org](mailto:mariam@graceandover.org).







## Ministry News



### Wednesday Evening Bible Study

**Starting September 13, 2023  
6:00-6:55pm; Room 105/107**

Have you been looking for a way to strengthen your faith? Have you wanted to read the Bible but didn't know where to start? Come join us on Wednesday evenings Bible study led by Pastor Joanna or Pastor Maria. We will be exploring the preaching text and working our way through the Bible. Starting in January we will move into the Gospel of Mark. No experience necessary. Questions about the Bible are welcomed. We hope you will come, listen, learn, and explore the Bible with us!

### New Member Class

Are you interested in joining Grace Lutheran and learning more about our church and the various ways you can grow in faith and serve others? If so, please mark your calendars for our New Member classes offered this fall on October 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> from 12:30-1:30pm. We look forward to connecting with you.



### Graceful Seniors

All seniors are invited to join us for fellowship and Bible Study the second Tuesday of each month. This Fall we are

studying the book of Genesis.

8:30-9:00am Donuts and Coffee

9:00-10:00am Pastor Maria led Bible Study

Come and join the fun! If you would like to join Graceful Seniors please call the church office.



### Ruth Circle

Ruth Circle will meet on September 11, 2023 12:30-2:00 (note this is the second Monday due to Labor Day) A group of mostly retired women who meet the first Monday of each month following quilters (12-12:30pm lunch & 12:30-2:00pm study) Our study together follows the monthly ELCA Gather Magazine Bible Study. Please contact the church office or Low Jackson to participate. In September our study "Salvation Now: a world waiting on wellness" begins on page 34 of the July/ August magazine.



**CELEBRATING ALL OF GOD'S CREATION:  
JOIN US FOR A**

**PET  
BLESSING**



**October 4, 2023  
5:30 pm- 6:00 pm**



### "Willy and Johnnie's"

Join OK@PLAY for an evening of food and fun!

On **Wednesday, September 6th at 4:00pm.** Meet us at Willy McCoy's (Andover) for an early dinner, dinner expense is responsibility of each individual. At 5:30pm come to Johnnie and Kathy Tillery's house in Andover to "tour" Johnnie's sports collections (baseball, hockey, football) and see Kathy doing her quilting magic!

**Please sign up on REALM by September 3rd** so we can make reservations at Willy McCoy's. Questions? Contact Deb Stang 763.427.3252 or DebOdellStang@gmail.com



# Youth Ministry

## FALL REGISTRATIONS ARE NOW OPEN



### Catechism Kick-Off and Orientation

**Who:** ALL Catechism participants and their parents (6th, 7th, and 8th graders)

**What:** Catechism Kick-Off and Orientation: Come and meet Will our new CYF director and learn what changes we have made to our Catechism program. We realize that our Catechism students are all "new" to the program especially after the pandemic and much transition. We want to start this year off well with clear expectations and information on all that we have in store for the year ahead. You will not want to miss this time together. There will be a lot of information and a whole lot of fun! **When:** September 6, 2023 6-7pm **Where:** Worship Center



**Register for Catechism today on Realm!**



### Own Your Faith Orientation

**Who:** ALL 9th graders and those preparing for the rite of confirmation and their parents

**What:** Come and learn all that this year has in store!

**When:** September 6, 2023 7-8pm and stay for High School youth group bonfire 8-8:45 PM

**Where:** Worship Center



**Lake Wapogasset**  
LUTHERAN BIBLE CAMP, INC.

### Camp Wapo Fall Retreat

**Who:** All 6th-9th graders

**What:** Camp Wapo Encounter Youth Retreat where we will explore how wide, long, high and deep is the love of Christ!

**When:** Sept. 29th-Oct. 1st—We will leave after school on Friday and return Sunday evening.

**Where:** Camp Wapo | 738 Hickory Point Ln, Amery, WI 54001

**Cost:** \$200 **Please register on Realm today!**



**High School**  
Ministry at Grace  
9th - 12th Grade

### High School Youth Group

Every Wed. starting Sept. 6th 7:45-8:45am in the Youth Room.

For more information or questions, please contact Will Weikle [willw@graceandover.org](mailto:willw@graceandover.org)

### Calling All Parents!

Green Ribbon Parent group is moving to Wednesday evenings this year beginning **Wed., Sept. 6th, 6:30-7:00pm.**

Every human has mental health. Just like with our overall health, some days are good and other days our wellness needs special attention and support. Green Ribbon parents acknowledge the truth that all of us, including our kids, struggle with mental health. This group offers time and space to meet with other parents, connect and support one another as you parent your students. This group was meeting on Monday evenings but will switch to Wednesday beginning September 6th. We will begin meeting on the first Wednesday of the month from 6-7pm and adjust as needed to fit your busy schedules. For more information or questions please contact Pastor Maria Markman [mariam@graceandover.org](mailto:mariam@graceandover.org)







# Childrens Ministry

**FALL REGISTRATIONS  
ARE NOW OPEN**

## Sunday School

**Who:** Children 4 yrs-5th grade  
**What:** Age appropriate faith formation on Sunday Mornings following the same lessons adults learn in worship. Parents are asked to volunteer twice in the classroom this year!

**When:** During 8:45am and 10:30am worship following the children's message.

**Where:** Children will be dismissed from the worship center following the children's message to the Fellowship Hall. **Please register on Realm today!**



## Child, Youth and Family Ministry Schedule

Date:	Event:	Time:
9/6	Catechism Kick-off and Orientation 6th, 7th, and 8th graders and their parents!	6:00 pm
	OYF Orientation: 9 <sup>th</sup> Graders & parents	7:00 pm
	Youth Group Bonfire: 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	8:00 pm
9/10	RALLY SUNDAY OYF Blessing AND Backpack Blessing: 9 <sup>th</sup> graders and EVERYONE! Kids Time at 10:30am service. Ministry Fair and Fellowship after each service.	8:45 am OR 10:30 am
	Family Pizza: Everyone!	5:30 pm
9/13	<b>Wednesday Night Programing</b> Kids Night Out Elementary Age Catechism 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Green Ribbon Parents	6:00 pm
	Wednesday Night Worship	7:00 pm
	Youth Group: 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	7:45 pm
	Worship @ 9:00am God's Work Our Hands: Everyone! Service projects 10am & Lunch 1pm	9:00 am
9/17	Café Zupas Fundraiser: Everyone!	4-8pm
9/19	Family Pizza: Everyone!	5:30 pm
	<b>Wednesday Night Programing</b> Kids Night Out Elementary Age Catechism 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Green Ribbon Parents	6:00 pm
	Wednesday Worship	7:00 pm
	Youth Group: 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	7:45 pm
	First day of Sunday School-8:45/10:30am Treblemakers Children's Choir	9:40-10:20am
9/27	Family Pizza: Everyone!	5:30pm
	<b>Wednesday Night Programing</b> Kids Night Out Elementary Age Catechism 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Green Ribbon Parents	6:00 pm
	Wednesday Worship	7:00 pm
	Youth Group: 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	7:45 pm
9/29-10/1	Camp Wapo Retreat: 6th-9th graders weekend	
10/1	Sunday School-8:45/10:30am Treblemakers 9:50-10:20am Youth Ministry Team Meeting-12pm	
	Family Pizza: Everyone!	5:30 pm
10/4	<b>Wednesday Night Programing</b> Kids Night Out Elementary Age Catechism 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Green Ribbon Parents	6:00 pm
	Wednesday Night Worship	7:00 pm
	Youth Group: 9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	7:45 pm



## Kids Night Out!

**Who:** Elementary age kids  
**What:** Wednesday night programming with Kelsey Russell

**When:** Wednesdays during the school year 6-7pm.

**Where:** Seeds of Grace Pre-school Rooms  
**Register on Realm today!**



## Children's Choir: Treblemakers!

**Who:** Elementary aged children with Will Weikle

**What:** Children's Choir  
**When:** Sunday Mornings between services 9:50-10:20am  
**Where:** Fellowship Hall  
**Register on Realm today!**



REGISTER YOUR TRUNK ON REALM: PRIZE FOR BEST!



## SAVE THE DATE

TRUNK OR TREAT  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25TH  
6-7PM

SCHEDULE  
5:00-5:45 SET-UP  
5:45-7:00 TRUNK OR TREAT,  
FOOD TRUCKS, & INDOOR  
GAMES  
7:00-7:45 WORSHIP

FOOD TRUCKS: RUSTIC CHEF AND TURKEY KING  
NO NEED TO REGISTER TO ATTEND EVERYONE IS WELCOME!



# Grace Lutheran Church

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[www.grace-andover.org](http://www.grace-andover.org)

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Join us for  
**WEDNESDAY  
NIGHTS AT  
GRACE**  
Begins September 13th  
5:30-6:00 FAMILY PIZZA (\$2.00 SLICE)  
6:00-7:00 EDUCATION HOUR:  
Faith Formation for every age  
Catechism, Kids Night Out, Adult Bible Study  
7:00-7:45 WORSHIP  
7:45-8:45 HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP



 Grace Lutheran Church  
...experience grace

**RALLY SUNDAY**  
Sunday, Sept. 10th  
After 8:45am & 10:30am Worships

Fellowship  
Games  
Pancakes  
Ministry Fair  
Music



"God's work. Our hands." Sunday



**SUNDAY  
SEPT. 17TH**  
**9AM-WORSHIP**  
**10AM-PROJECTS**  
**1PM-LUNCH**

*All Are Welcome Here!*