

Living Our Faith: A Glimpse, A Breath, A Connection, A Hope, And A Promise.

I often jump into things. If I am going to start something, then I am in. At times this is a great approach to life. Other times, it's not so good. Just a few months ago, I decided to start weightlifting, so I jumped into a workout that I had been doing a few years ago and ended up getting injured. It took me almost a month to recover. I blamed poor shoes, but the reality was, I started too fast and I hurt myself. It's hard to injure yourself in the same way when it comes to spiritual exercises, but we can do something too fast and burn out, or feel like a failure and think we just don't have it. It is in these moments that it is important to remember that we don't have to run the whole race of spirituality, or even know the climb that is ahead, but instead start with the first step. The first step is often the hardest to take, but it's an important one because we dare to get on the path of growing and transforming in faith.

This Lent we are offering a series entitled: Living Our Faith: A Glimpse, a Breath, a Connection, a Hope, and a Promise. Our series is being put on in collaboration with other local churches. Each week, one of 6 pastors (including me) will share a message about what it means to live their faith. They will share personal stories, practices and invite you to participate alongside them as well. I am excited to welcome Pastor David Lechelt from Lord of Life, Pastor Kristina Hill from Cross of Hope, Pastor Kevin Doley from Faith Lutheran, and Pastor Karen Everson, from the United Methodist Church in Anoka (bios included later) to Grace Lutheran to share a message about the ways that they live their faith.

You might notice that our theme all contains singular words, a glimpse, a breath, a connection, a hope, and a promise. This is intentional just as is the first step in a spiritual exercise. We want to invite you to start by taking the next step for you. Perhaps you might start centering prayer, or reading the scriptures. My hope is that you start small- begin with 5 minutes of silence a day, or one chapter of the Gospel of Mark. Don't try to overwhelm yourself with your practices.

Our faith is a life-long adventure. At times, it feels like we are walking uphill, other times we might feel off the path entirely. Sometimes, our faith is inspired, leading us in purpose and in healing. It doesn't matter where you are on this journey. What I know to be true is that God is with us and God invites us to just start by taking one step. I am grateful to have you all as companions in this journey and pray that together we will grow one step at a time.

Blessings, Pastor Joanna Mitchell

Calendar of Events

January 2024

14th-11:45am Outreach Round Table

16th-4pm-8pm Café Zupa's Fundraiser

18th-6pm Grief Group

21st-12:30pm Family Table

21st-31st-Droolin' Moose Fundraiser

24th-6:15pm Healthy Screen Relationships

February 2024

4th-9:45am Congregational Annual Meeting

6th-13th-Grace Mission Trip to Belize

11th-Droolin' Moose Product Pick Up

14th-1pm & 7pm Ash Wednesday Worships

18th-12:30pm Family Table

18th-1pm CEDAW Presentation

19th-9am Wild Mtn Ski Day

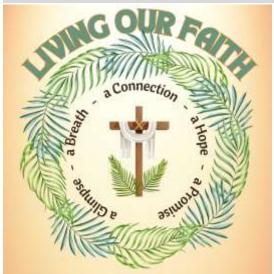
21st-1pm & 7pm Lent Wednesday Worships

24th-26th Women's Retreat

28th 1pm & 7pm Lent Wednesday Worships



Lent 2024



Lent

During this years Lent, please join us for a unique experience as we explore the question, how do we live our faith? Local churches and their pastors are partnering in a shared Lenten Worship Series: Living our Faith: a Glimpse, a Breath, a Connection, a Hope, and a Promise.

Lent is a time to grow spiritually through faith practices and we hope you will join us for worship and prayer as we look and listen for God. Lent begins on February 14th with our Ash Wednesday Worship at 1pm and 7pm which includes the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion. The following 5 weeks we will have worship at both 1pm and 7pm on Wednesdays and invite you to join us.

To learn more about our preachers, please read their bios below. We all look forward to meeting you and give thanks for

your welcome!. Because of construction we are currently not sure what will be happening regarding dinners. Please continue to be patient with us in our planning.



Joining us on February 21st, Kevin Doely is the Senior Pastor serving at Faith Lutheran Church of Coon Rapids. Kevin and his wife Krista have three sons (Jordan & wife Emily, Josh, Noah). He is a graduate of Concordia College in Moorhead and Luther Seminary in St. Paul. Kevin has a background in media and enjoys creative pursuits in music and ventriloquism (<u>revkev.net</u>) The Lenten message focuses on God's promise of everlasting love for us and a hope-filled future!

A Promise: 1 John 3:1-2;19-24



Joining us on February 28th, David Lechelt has served Lord of Life Ramsey as Senior Pastor since 2013, passionate for community gathering and outreach, collaborative mission and ministry. He's "thumbs up" for all things French and enjoys cooking for his wife Mary, family and friends. His message is a hope grounded in the new life that God is actively drawing forth from our shared cross bearing with Jesus.

A Hope: First Corinthians 13



Join us on March 6th, Rev. Karen Evenson has been Pastor of the United Methodist Church of Anoka since 2022. She is a graduate of Concordia College—Moorhead ('92) and of United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities ('15). Karen lives life with a "Choose Joy" attitude which permeates her life and ministry. She has three grown children, and two granddaughters, ages 4-1/2 years and 9 months. "Jesus' breath brings into us the Holy Spirit, by which we can live, love, forgive and be forgiven in the best, and in the most difficult of times."

A Breath: John 20:19-23



Joining us on March 13th, Kristina Hill (she/her) serves as the Pastor of Cross of Hope Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Ramsey, where she has been since July 2021. She grew up five minutes away from Cross of Hope but attended Grace Lutheran in Andover from preschool to college. A graduate of Anoka High School and the University of Minnesota Duluth, she is currently in her second year of Ph.D. studies in Systematic Theology at Luther Seminary. She lives with her husband, two sons (Zack, age 8 and Darby, age 5), three dogs, and cat in Andover.

A Connection: John 15:1-17



Associate Pastor's Message



And Immediately...

I took the week between Christmas and New Year's off. Well, I attempted to take the time off. I ended up joining the crew from Grace in scavenging for furniture for our building project. If you have roamed the halls or peeked into some of our classrooms and have spotted new furniture, it is from that day. We were given an opportunity to take this furniture from an office space. This was an office complex that since the Covid-19 pandemic shut down, had now become obsolete. The workers now working from home had no need for their office furniture, lobby furniture, reception furniture. You get the idea. All of this furniture would be thrown away in the demolition of the building. The opportunity for us to take the furniture

came quickly and at no cost to us outside of our time and labor and has saved us literally thousands of dollars in furnishing our new spaces. However, if we wanted it we needed to move immediately. We needed to make it happen before January 1st.

The rest of my week off was a restful time with family and friends. But upon returning to Grace, Tuesday January 2nd because of the holiday, meant a day down and too much to do. And immediately we got to work, planning and rearranging our church spaces to host hundreds for U.S. Air Force Major Jeffrey T. Hoernemann's funeral. Preparing for a baptismal reunion party and Intro to Bible course, amping back up for Catechism and regularly scheduled programming throughout the week here at Grace. Summer Youth Events and trips being planned. Retreats and youth ski events, Lent and Holy Week planning. And, and, and! Soon enough I will join a group from Grace in traveling to Belize to continue our work on a community medical center. If you would like to support our build, email me and I will send you a link to our fundraising page. More on the specifics of what we will be doing below. If our holidays brought any calm or a silent night, this pause is no longer, as staff and volunteers immediately hopped back into doing the work of the church! This is what we do and who we are, answering the call of Jesus to follow him, healing the broken, comforting the sick and bereaved, preaching and teaching, and serving others.

In Mark's Gospel, stories often begin with the phrase "and immediately..." "The Spirit immediately drove him into the wilderness" (Mark 1:12) "And immediately they left their nets and followed him" (Mark 1:18). The Bible scholars at the Bible Project suggest that Mark uses immediately 41 times in his short Gospel. This gives us as readers a sense of urgency. For Jesus' first followers, there was an urgency to following Jesus. There was an urgency for the work of God. For us, there is urgency too-in following Jesus, in doing the work of God here at Grace and beyond our doors.

As we study our way through the Gospel of Mark this year, I hope that you will hear God's urgent call. That following Jesus is about more than right practice or belief, following Jesus means that we begin the work of God now! That the kingdom of God might begin, immediately. Right here. Right now.

Pastor Maria Markman



Vision Board Message

Reflections on Love



Sometimes, people make New Year's resolutions centered around one word. As we begin a new year and a new building project, I would like to focus on the word LOVE, for that is the cement that holds relationships together.

"What the World Needs Now Is Love, Sweet Love. It's the only thing that there's just too little of."

These words taken from Jackie De Shannon and Burt Bacharach ring so true, not just for some but for everyone.

Against the backdrop of our war-torn world, this song becomes more poignant than ever.

The letters in love give a formula as to how to get along with others.

L – listen to others

O – open our eyes to the needs of others

V – value the humanity of others

E – enjoy giving to others

Depending on which version of the Bible that you're using, the word 'love' is mentioned 361 times, almost equivalent to one a day for an entire year.

What a pleasant planet this would be if we operated on the principle of love.

Love is so comprehensive that in the Greek language, there are four kinds of love: Eros—romantic love; Storge—family love; Philia—brotherly love; Agape—God's divine love.

When Christ was asked in Matthew 22:40 what the greatest commandment was, he replied, "Love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself."

Would we followed this simple directive. Even when little, one of the first songs we learn is "Jesus Loves Me."

Recently, I came upon an extension of that song ending with:

I love Jesus, does He know? Have I ever told him so? Jesus loves to hear me say that I love him every day.

May we express our love to Jesus and others every day, for Grace is more than walls; it's love.

~Jan Anderson, Vision Board

December Vision Board Highlights:

- Established goals/priorities to maintain during construction project
- Reviewed work completed to date on 2024 budget
- Reviewed and approved funding requests for Transforming Tithe
- Set agenda for 2/4 congregational meeting
- Reviewed and approved Employee Handbook
- Received update on sequencing and progress of construction project
- Established a plan for the open Treasurer position
- Reviewed current financial status





Gratitude & Finance



Thank You

Dear Grace Family,

On behalf of myself and my family, I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to those who contributed to the December noisy offering for my nieces and nephew. I would also like to thank those that reached out by phone call, email, text, or by sending a card after the loss of my sister. Your generosity and support are most appreciated. I'm grateful to call Grace home.

Thank you, Michelle Busitzky

A Big Thank You From Sand Creek Elementary



Because of your generosity ten families in need received Christmas dinners, and 25 children received gifts they weren't expecting. This is in addition to all the blessings you provided during the fall: a pickup full of school supplies, clean pants and underwear to help with accidents and puddles, snacks for those who

can't provide their own, and Thanksgiving dinners. Thank you for your continued support of Sand Creek Elementary, and for helping meet the needs of students so they can focus on learning.

Thank You

Thank You

We are thankful for Family Table and all the work the people put in for the people who receive it. We receive lunches from Grace every month. Thank you for The Grace Giving Tree. We are grateful that people who gave so much so others could enjoy the holidays. We appreciate the gift cards we were given that we use for food and medicine. We are grateful for those people who stopped by and dropped things off for us.

Those Grace members who drive us to medical appointments are much appreciated!

Thank you to all at Grace who give, From Thankful Receivers

FINANCE	<u>YTD thru</u> 12/31/2023		Budget This Year YTD	
<u>Income</u>				
Grace Contributions	\$	744,822	\$	789,000
Transforming Receipts	\$	542,581	\$	500,000
Capital Receipts	\$	88,895	\$	115,000
Grace Registration Income	\$	27,793	\$	41,635
Grace Other Income	\$	104,853	\$	101,520
Seeds of Grace Tuition Income	\$	640,537	\$	665,300
Total Income	\$	2,149,481	\$	2,212,455
<u>Expenses</u>				
Operational Ministry Expenses	\$	1,513,437	\$	1,648,319
Capital Expenses	\$	636,044	\$	566,000
Total Expenses (includes Seeds of Grace expenses)	\$	2,149,481	\$	2,214,319
Operating Margin	\$	-	\$	(1,864)





Belize Mission Trip with Bold Hope

This February (6-13), 20-25 of us will be traveling to Belize for a Mission Trip. Details about some of the projects we will be working on are below.

Georgetown Clinic

Last year a team from our church replaced the roof and refurbished an existing medical clinic that was in disrepair. This year we will be installing new electrical circuits and floor tiles. After this work is done the Clinic will be complete and will meet National Standards, which will then allow the government to staff the clinic with medical personnel, providing local medical services to the community. Currently community members must travel a couple of hours to obtain medical attention which can be a significant strain for many in the community. The above picture shows the clinic before our trip last year and what we got accomplished during our trip (the after picture).

Maya Mopan Multipurpose Building

We will begin the construction of a multipurpose building near the school in Maya Mopan. Even though the school is run by the government, the government rarely provides any assistance in the upkeep or construction of school facilities. This building will be used as an assembly place for church services, community meetings, and other activities for years to come.

If you would like to financially support the work we will be doing in Belize you may do so by going to this link: https://boldhope.org/mission-trips/grace-lutheran-church-bz-020624-021324-4a73/IQGBRPXN And please pray for the safety of our team and that God touches our hearts and blesses our work.

Graceful Seniors

All seniors are invited to join us for fellowship and Bible Study Tuesday, February 13th. We will be finishing our Bible Study on Genesis.



- 8:30-9:00am Donuts and Coffee
- 9:00-10:00am Pastor Joanna led Bible Study Come and join the fun! If you would like to join Graceful Seniors please call the church office.



May Love Be

A prayer for today and for all people –Nancy Jenkins

May love be.

May love be present,

May love hold and comfort.

May love move and inspire.

May love remove the scales from our eyes and the callouses on our hearts.

May love build bridges across divisions and unify. May love heal.

May love be.



Congregational Meeting

Please join us on

Sunday February 4th

We will be presenting and voting on the proposed budget for 2024 along with electing voting members to attend synod assembly on Sunday, February 4th at 9:45-10:30am. Budget proposals will be available two weeks prior to the meeting.

You are also invited to attend an informational meeting on the budget on January 28th with members of the Vision Board and the financial team will be in Room 104 at 9:45am & 11:30am.





Fan the Flame Within 2024 Women's Retreat

Women of Grace! We want you to attend our 2024 Women's Retreat this coming February. This Amazing, Relaxing, Fun -Filled Event is happening on February 23-25 2024 at Luther Point Bible Camp in Grantsburg, WI. This event, entitled "Fan the Flame Within", is our over-night weekend Winter Women's Retreat where 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 outdoor hiking (if you so choose), 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 and snacks, 2 overnight lodging and carpooling cost. Packing list and additional details will be sent to you once you register!

If you are unable to attend this year's event but want to help and be a part of the retreat, we need your help in gathering supplies for our service projects we are doing during the retreat. Below is a list of items needed – please bring these items anytime until January 31 and put them in the grey bin in the Narthex marked "Women' Retreat Service Project Donations". Thank you in advance for all your help.

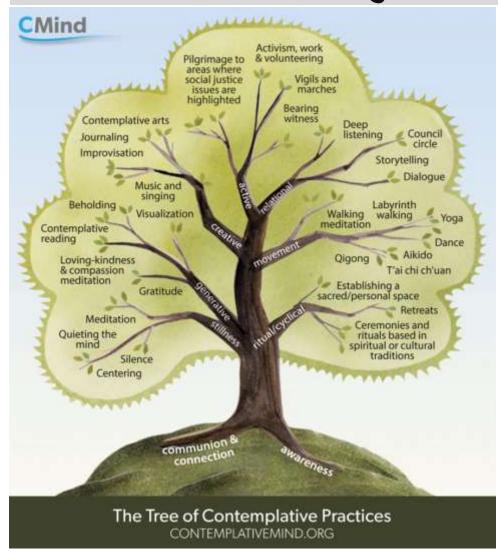
Can't wait to see all you Fabulous Women at this Wonderful Event in February 2024. Reach out to Stacy Surratt for any questions – stacysurratt@yahoo.com

Donation items needed:

- Dove Brand Full size or 3-4oz size of Neutral fragrance (vanilla or coco butter) of Shampoo
- Dove Brand Full size or 3-4oz size of Neutral fragrance (vanilla or coco butter) of Conditioner
- Dove Brand Full size or 3-4oz size of Neutral fragrance (vanilla or coco butter) of Body Wash
- Dove Brand Full size or 3-4oz size of Neutral fragrance (vanilla or coco butter) of Body Lotion
- Shower Puffs
- Band-Aids
- Mechanical and regular pencils
- Colored ink pens
- Thin dry erase markers
- Small note pads
- Hot chocolate and apple cider packets
- Individually wrapper bite size chocolate
- Cozy socks.







Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices Team Report

You may be asking yourself what is "a tree of contemplative practice" so I have included a picture. As part of our first meeting with the Faith Practices & Neighboring Practices two-year cohort group, we were given this drawing of a tree. Please look more closely at the diagram. What do you notice and what catches your attention? For me, I notice that the roots are proportional as they would be in a real tree. I also love that the branches list words such as stillness, movement, creative and relational because these are words that are part of my daily life and resonate with me.

As you move outward from

the branches, what words do you notice and which of these do you practice? Do you walk, meditate, journal, quilt, sing, play an instrument, volunteer, do yoga or enjoy creative arts? There may be something that you enjoy that isn't included in this drawing: great! The question is what are your spiritual practices, what helps you pay attention in the moment, and what helps you turn "Godward"?

Nancy Jenkins

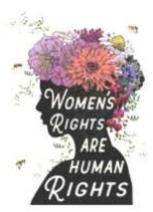
Green Ribbon

Do you have a child who struggles with mental health? Are you feeling isolated as a parent and in need of support? Come join Green Ribbon group. A group of supportive and confidential parents supporting other parents raising their children. Our next meeting is February 14th in Pastor Maria's office during Wednesday night programming from 6:00-6:50 PM. Meetings are led by Jeff Anderson and Dan Brasgalla. If you are curious or have questions please reach out to Pastor Maria and she will help get you connected!





Standing Up for Women's Rights in Andover



People of Grace Church! We invite you to attend our program on a resolution for the City of Andover about protecting and strengthening women's rights in our community. The event is on Sunday, February 18, 2024, at 1:00 pm at Grace.

Andover residents Olivia Paulson, a Mitchell Hamline School of Law student, and Amanda Novak, a local lawyer, will share surprising information about gender-based violence, maternal mortality, and other challenges in our area. For example, unsettling data includes the following:

- Every year, it is estimated more than 10 million women and men are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States.
- In 2022 in Minnesota, 6,710 women were victims of rape or aggravated assault, with an average of 18 women each day.
- From 2012-2019, there were 468 sexual and domestic assault offenses in

In 1970, the UN passed a document known as CEDAW ('see-daw'), the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. CEDAW is known as the human rights document for women. Only six nations in the world haven't ratified CEDAW: Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Palau, Tonga—and the US.

Men and women throughout the US are standing up for CEDAW and bringing significant changes to their towns and neighborhoods.

Nine Minnesota cities have ratified support for CEDAW and its principles at the local level: Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, Northfield, Edina, Eden Prairie, Red Wing, Golden Valley, and Richfield. Andover can become the 10th Minnesota city to affirm women's rights. The time is now to expand safety, security, and support for women – which makes our community better for all of us.

This event is free and open to the public. Please join us on Sunday, February 18, at 1:00 pm for this important discussion—and treats!

A Stephen Ministry Invitation, Training Begins Soon at Lord of Life Ramsey STEPHEN



When people are having difficult times in their lives, they tend to turn to family, friends, counselors, and the church. Too often, they simply retreat into themselves and suffer in silence because they're not sure what to do or where to go for help. Sometimes they don't want to admit that they need help to move forward.

There is an organization called "Stephen Ministry" that can be there to help. Stephen Ministry offers a proven and effective way to organize, equip, and supervise a team of congregation members called Stephen Ministers—to provide high-quality, one-to-one, Christ-centered care to people in the congregation and the community experiencing life difficulties. These include grief, divorce, cancer, hospitalization, physical rehabilitation, long-term care, chronic illness, terminal illness, job loss, loss of a home, military deployment, the onset of a disability, spiritual crisis, and other struggles people have.

Ministers are trained through a series of 20 sessions (usually weekly.) They are instructed by a trained Stephen Leader who will teach principles and skills that equip individuals with high-quality, Christcentered emotional and spiritual care to others. Mike Zagaros of Lord of Life Ramsey is a certified trainer and will offer training beginning in February or March of 2024. Please contact him at 612-387-0220 most evenings to sign up for training or receive more information.



Child, Youth and Family Director's Message

Jonuary 24 & 31, 2024 Free Workshop! Grace Mental Health Team Presents

Healthy Screen Relationships Workshop

Families of all ages! Wednesday January 24 5:15-6:50 PM Dinner provided.

Questions to Pastor Maria

Is tech enhancing or taking away from your family life? Do you crave connection free from device interruptions?
Join us and Parent Coach Merri Guggisberg to learn how to build healthy screen relationships in your

Now that the Christmas season is finished, we are back to running regular programming. We have several special events happening throughout these next few months with our youth! On January 24th, we are having a healthy screen relationship workshop with a special guest. We are having our second "Small Group Night" with our catechism students this month. The first one went well, and gave the groups a different sort of opportunity to connect and form relationships with each other. Lastly, we are going on a ski trip to Wild Mountain on Presidents Day! This is open to all, so sign up on Realm!

We have a lot of fundraising opportunities coming up with our Youth. The one coming up this month is Droolin' Moose! If you enjoy a good chocolate, I hope you will consider order-

ing some before or after worship on 1/21 or 1/28 in the Narthex! The chocolate will be available for pick up on 2/11, just in time for Valentine's Day. We also have "Egg My Yard" coming up, if you would like a secret visit from the Easter Bunny (leaving Easter Eggs around your yard), happening at the end of March. Lastly, we will continue the Green Valley Gift Card fundraiser in May, so save your summer green thumb purchases to support our Youth!

I will be traveling to New Orleans for the Extravaganza in January! This is a nationwide conference for ELCA Youth Ministry workers. I also started courses to receive a Child, Youth and Family Graduate Certificate from Luther Seminary at the beginning of the year! This is fully covered by their Jubilee Scholarship, and I am looking forward to all that I have to learn.

This month's Volunteer Shout-out goes to April Anderson. She is the backbone and such a great support in so many different programs here at Grace, both with Youth and other forms of ministry. With the children, April is consistently there to support the Treble Makers (children's choir) and the Christmas Program. With the Youth, April is an incredible small group leader for Catechism, and a huge part of the Youth Ministry Team. April, I am so appreciative of all that you do to support me, and to support the Youth here at Grace. Thank you for all that you do.

Will Weikle



Wild Mountain Youth/Family Ski

Day 2024

Please join us for an outing to Wild Mountain! Anoka-Hennepin is on break Monday, February 19th for President's

Day. Let's have a ski/snowboard day! We are inviting all adults, families, children, youth and friends. New skiers/boarders and old pros are invited to sign up. **Students under 6th grade must have an adult join them**. We will carpool from church at 9:00am. Youth without adult supervision will be supervised and driven by an adult leader. Cost is: \$31 and anyone needing ski or snowboard rental will be additional \$25. You can bring additional money for food/snacks if you desire or bring a lunch. Grace will be providing some small snacks for this event. **Please sign up by February 5th on Realm.**



Construction Update

Construction has begun! On December 13, 2023, three trees were removed and utility lines were marked. The week of December 18th, the hole for the new Seeds of Grace classrooms began, forms were placed, concrete poured and footings were set to cure. The week of December 25th, masonry block was installed, more concrete poured and the roof construction began. The week of January 1, 2024 was a short week due to the New Year's holiday and the funeral of Mj. Hoernemann. The crews were able to waterproof and insulate the below grade block walls of the classrooms and backfill. The long anticipated gas meter relocation will be happening on Wed. January 17th and then the digging for the new front entrance and bathrooms will begin there after. For more weekly updates go the grace-andover.org and click on the Construction Updates tab.





Grace Lutheran Church

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

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Weekly Worships

Sundays 8:45am Sundays 10:30am Wednesdays 7:00pm

Wednesday Lenten Worships Feb. 14th-March 20th Wednesdays 1:00pm Wednesdays 7:00pm

ALL ARE WELCOME HERE