



# Grace Notes

March 2024

## Living in Abundance

Our family likes to play Donkey Kong. It was our pandemic past time, hence the name of our pandemic dog, Dixie Kong (named after one of the characters). In Donkey Kong, the characters occasionally find a banana room, which is a room filled with 100 bananas. Donkey and Dixie bounce around in an attempt to collect the bananas and also win things like extra lives and puzzle pieces. One of the animated sequences before you fight a big boss involves an Owl crushing two bananas. Dixie and Donkey are horrified! They gasp and cry and then they fight. It's completely ridiculous, especially given the fact that there are bananas everywhere, and complete banana rooms. This scene had me thinking about how often we act like this. In a world where there is enough for everyone, we focus on how little we have and our desire for more.

Jesus invites us to live in abundance, which is of course easier said than done. When the disciples come back from fishing having caught nothing, Jesus invites them to go deeper and before they know it, the boat is overflowing. When the crowd is hungry, the disciples are ready to send them home to take care of themselves, and Jesus instead reminds them to bless what is there, and give it. Soon enough crowds are fed and 12 baskets left over. The disciples wonder about these events, both celebrating and seeing God's kingdom among them.

As we live through a building project at Grace, I am struck by the abundance of things we have. From all of the items we have in closets and storage. We have accumulated a lot! We have dedicated people committed to recycling and disposing in a green way. Thank you so much. We often see limited space and yet we have been able to find enough storage. This is a good faith practice. Clearing things out, making space, and then seeing what you have. When I have done this in my home life, I usually discover that I have more than I even realized. I am so grateful for the generosity of all of you. You have made it possible for us to move forward on our building project, being both fiscally responsible and not living in scarcity. You trust God to lead us and have supported the leadership. You continue to generously give of your time, your finances and yourselves, to make our church a place where we indeed have enough.

We have experienced (once again) a time when some staff members have been out on medical leave. We continue to pray for Marie Kolar as she recovers from her fall and ask for her healing to be complete. I give thanks because we have had volunteers show up, help out, and give of themselves. In a time where more has shifted to staff members plates, we have also had new hands extended, allowing us to not live in fear of what we do not have, but to give thanks for what we do have.

Thanks be to God! Pastor Joanna Mitchell

## Calendar of Events

### March 2024

11-15th - Spring Break

13th - 1pm & 7pm Lent  
Wednesday Worship

17th - Family Table 12:30-  
1:30pm

20th - 1pm & 7pm Lent  
Wednesday Worship, 6pm  
First Communion Class

24th - Palm Sunday,  
Pancake Breakfast 1-  
12:30pm,  
Children's Ministry Outing  
at InnerActive 2-4pm

27th - No Worship,  
6pm First Communion  
Class

28th - 1pm & 7pm Maun-  
dy Thursday Worship

29th - Seeds of Grace  
closed  
1pm & 7pm Good Friday  
Worship

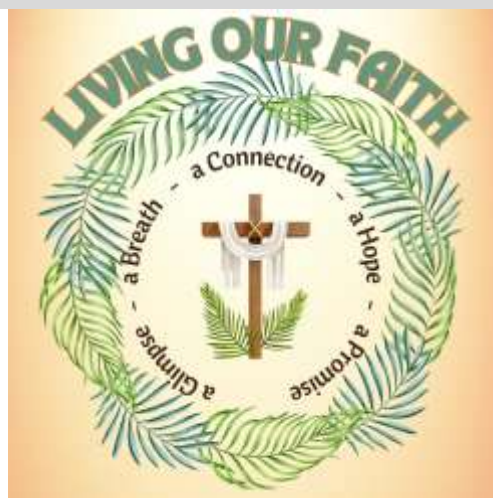
31st - 7am, 8:45am, &  
10:30am Easter Worship

### April 2024

1st - Church office closed

6th - FMSC 12-1:45pm

# Lent 2024



## Grace's Lenten Season

**Wednesday Lenten Worship**  
*Living Our Faith: ...a glimpse ...a breath ...a hope ...a promise ...a connection*  
 February 21-March 20 | 1:00 pm & 7:00 pm

**Sunday Worship | 8:45 am and 10:30 am**

**Holy Week | March 25-31, 2024**  
 Palm Sunday March 25 | 8:45 & 10:30 am  
 Maundy Thursday March 28 | 1 & 7 pm  
 Good Friday March 29 | 1 & 7 pm  
 Easter Sunday March 31 | 7, 8:45, & 10:30 am

## Lenten Series: Living Our Faith

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. We invite you to join us for worship on Wednesdays at 1pm or 7pm on Wednesdays

To learn more about our preachers, please read their bios below. We all look forward to meeting you and give thanks for your welcome! There will be no Lenten suppers due to the kitchen remodel.



**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*



**Joining us on March 20th,** Joanna Mitchell is the Senior Pastor at Grace since 2019. She was lucky enough to join Grace right before the pandemic, so she didn't miss out on any of the fun on zoom or learning to worship with a new community in unusual ways. She grew up in Plymouth, Minnesota, is married to Jeff, and the mother of two daughters Helena age 20 and Lily age 17. They have two hyper-dogs: Dixie and Koda. She cheers on the Wisconsin Badgers, her alma mater; swims with an incredible group of friends and spends as much time as possible reading. She has been taking classes through the *Center of Action and Contemplation* and exploring various ways to engage in contemplative practices to enhance her spiritual life.

*A Glimpse: Philippians 2:12-16*

# Vision Board Message

## Since Creation

Since Creation, mankind has been faced with answering four basic questions. The answers to these questions lay the foundation for each person's worldview. Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? And why am I here? When events take place that require individual action, justification, or rationalization, the answers to these questions form your worldview and in turn, your action, inaction, and / or opinion. The reality of if your answers are based in truth, or if you have bought a lie, will determine your priorities in life.

A Christian Biblical answer to the basic four should be profoundly different than that of an atheist, yet why are there minimal noticeable everyday differences, societally, between believers and non-believers? If you are a child of the one true God, created in His image and made to glorify and enjoy Him forever, why do you worship at the altar of entertainment?

*You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. Exodus 20:4-6*

You may not have made images in which you physically bow before however the sin of idolatry is rampant. The only difference between the gambling addict and the porn addict is that only one can openly wear their favorite outfit to church without public scorn. All are forms of sedation through distraction – i.e. idolatry.

You can answer this attack on your consumption of idolatry with denial ("that's not me"), rationalization ("it's just the way I unwind"), or conviction by the Holy Spirit which leads to a change in lifestyle. By the Grace of God, both you and I can let Christ expel the lies that have been residing within our answers to the basic four, replace them with His eternal truth, and in turn have a change in lifestyle that positively impacts our work, home life, relationships, and communities.

Make the choice to stop being medicated by entertainment, porn, politics, food, alcohol, drugs, or any other sin. Re-examine your worldview and let Christ make the changes necessary to bring it into right relationship with Him. Let thanksgiving for His Grace and Mercy be effervescent in your life to the point you sing with conviction the words of Horatio G. Spafford:

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!

My sin, not in part but the whole,

Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

*But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." - Joshua 24:15*

~ Carl Chandler, Vision Board

## January Vision Board Highlights:

- Seeds of Grace Director Christine Klersy and SOG Advisory Board President, Amber Ringwelski attended and gave an update on Seeds of Grace.
- Vision Board approved the 2024 budget to present to the congregation.
- Building Project Update- Infant room will move to 105/107 when approved.



# Associate Pastor's Message



## Community Stakeholder Mapping

"...So he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"  
 Luke 10:29

On January 9th Grace's Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices team met once again with area churches and the Minneapolis Area Synod team for continued learning. This meeting centered around "Community Stakeholder Mapping." Community Stakeholder mapping is a technique used in business and in many community development projects as a collaborative process of identifying a list of key people within a community (and beyond if necessary) and assessing who is there, their role, mindset and gifts within the community. We applied this tool to better understand our neighborhood.

We have decided to share our unfinished map with the congregation because we want you to help us finish our map by thinking about who our neighbors are.

- Who have we missed?
- What is their role in our community?
- What is their mindset?
- What gifts do they represent?

As a church who is concerned with loving God and loving our neighbor, understanding who our neighbors are and why we are located here. Grace is not in this neighborhood by accident. God calls each of us to be church in specific places and times. As we are transforming through the changes to our building, our community is changing too. Can we be good neighbors through the disruptions we are causing throughout our building? Do we even know who is in our neighborhood and what gifts they provide? How can we begin to know them better?

There are pens and post-its, blank pages and masking tape.

- Please reflect on our community stakeholder map
- If we missed anyone add them to the map by making your own drawing on a blank page. Include information about who is there, their role, their mindset, and 1 or 2 words to describe their gifts.
- OR add to what is already on the map by asking the same questions and answering them on the post-its (role, mindset, gifts)

Pastor Maria Markman

# Ministry News



## Neighboring Prayer

Dear God,

I offer a prayer for neighborhood. What is neighborhood? Is it a building block for all of creation? Is neighborhood simply all the entangled lives that exist in one place? We know that Place matters. Where we land in this life matters. The location of Grace, the church building, matters. You, oh Lord, show us in nature how to live. All the organisms in a cluster, in any given space, interact to facilitate the survival of the whole. In nature, you show us how to build community, how to ensure survival for young and old, for future generations. You show us how strengths and weaknesses intermingle in beautiful ways in the neighborhood. You show us that everyone matters. Every part of everyone matters. The thoughts, the feelings, the spirit, the physical bodies of every

individual matters and contributes to the beauty of the whole. We quiet ourselves to be open to you, oh God, so that glimpses of our neighbors' vulnerability are revealed along with glimpses of our own, and we hold these vulnerabilities gently. We quiet ourselves, Oh God, so that we might better see the strengths and talents and creativity in our neighbors as well as the strengths and talents and creativity within our own selves and that each one would be free enough to share the best of themselves. We pray for the neighborhood where you have planted Grace the church, the building. You, oh Lord, breathe life into this building. You, oh God, exhale that which no longer belongs. You look and see the big picture, the surrounding landscape. You see the way that our choices as individuals and as a community of believers affect the breath and life around this building called Grace, around this state of being that is called grace. Our own small minds are not able to hold all that matters, but you, Jesus, do see it. You see how our interactions and words matter. You see how our inmost selves matter. You see that together we create a neighborhood and it matters. Please bless this place in such a way that your vision, your Spirit, your holiness is revealed to all who enter this place.

In Christ we pray, Amen

~Anne Weikle

## Graceful Seniors

The 2nd Tuesday of the Month (March 13th). All seniors are invited to join us for fellowship and Bible Study.

- 8:30-9:00 Donuts and Coffee
- 9:00-10:00 Pastor Maria led Bible Study finishing Genesis.

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



# Ministry News



## Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices Team Report

### Gifts, talents and skills – By Mike Schaaf

At the kickoff retreat for the Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices (FPNP) groups, one of the first things we were asked to do was to write down a skill or talent that we do well enough to teach to someone else. We then placed our sticky note up on a board. Our leader Nick did not immediately use this information, but kept referring to it throughout the day; showing how many skills and talents are available to accomplish God's work in our congregations, our neighborhoods and the larger community.

*"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." – 1 Peter 4:10, NIV*

I brought this idea to one of the Men's Ministry gatherings and asked those in attendance to give me one gift, skill or talent that they could teach to someone. The responses included what they do in their work life – computer skills, business planning, driving semi's, electrical work, construction equipment, small engine maintenance. Also, what they do as hobbies - riding a motorcycle, fly fishing, woodworking, smoking your next meal on a grill and many others.

At the January FPNP cohort meeting, the topic was Community Stakeholder Mapping. You may have seen Pastor Maria's article about this and the map we created with our artistic "talents". We started to identify key people, businesses and services within our community. So give it some thought and be prepared. I may ask you what gift you have that you could teach to someone else.

*14 "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." – Matthew 5:14-16*

I look forward to the ways that the Grace congregation can work with our stakeholders, combining our wide range of gifts, talent and skills to be a positive force in our neighborhood and community.

For more information or to get involved with Men's ministry at Grace, reach out to Mike Schaaf [mcccc06@msn.com](mailto:mcccc06@msn.com)

## 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 March 20th 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!



## Ministry News

### FMSC MEAL PACKING EVENT

**Sat. April 6<sup>th</sup> / 12:00 – 1:45 PM**

Calling all Meal Packers! Grace will be hosting a meal packing event at Feed My Starving Children in Coon Rapids on Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup>, from 12:00 – 1:45 PM!

Grace has produced thousands of Mana Pack meals over the years that feed hungry children and vulnerable families around the world. The current need has never been greater, with a famine in the Horn of Africa and the war in Ukraine disrupting food shipments globally.

We have a history and tradition at Grace of packing meals for FMSC. At our last packing event in November, we had a great time packing meals for over 100 children to feed them for a year. It's easy to learn if you've never done it before and it is also a family friendly way to serve!

Please join me on Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 PM. We have reserved 50 slots, so feel free to bring a friend, neighbor, or family member. You can sign up through the Blue Sheets in Worship, or by calling the church office.

Thanks for serving and sharing God's Love!  
Scott Christensen, Outreach Ministry Team Leader

**“FOR I WAS *hungry* AND YOU  
GAVE ME SOMETHING TO *eat...*”**

—Matthew 25:35




# Child, Youth and Family News

GRACE LUTHERAN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

# Spring OUTING

**MARCH 24**  
**2:00-4:00 PM**



**InnerActive located in Mounds View**  
**2240 Woodale Dr.**  
**Mounds View, MN 55112**

**Ticket purchases have to be made online ahead of time. \$13.25 per kid & 2 adults are allowed per kid for free.**

**To Purchase Your Tickets!**

PURCHASING TICKETS: SELECT MARCH 24 AND A BUILDING CODE WILL BE EMAILED TO YOU TO GIVE YOU ACCESS TO THE BUILDING. THE CODE IS GOOD FOR THE ENTIRE DAY SO YOU CAN GO EARLIER OR STAY LATER! NO FOOD FOR PURCHASE, BUT YOU MAY BRING YOUR OWN. THERE ARE A BUNCH OF CUBBIES AVAILABLE TO STORE YOUR THINGS. PARENTS MUST STAY WITH THEIR CHILDREN.

## Upcoming Youth Events

We have some exciting things planned for the next couple months with our children, youth and family ministries!

- On March 6th, we have our next "Small Group Night" for Catechism.
- At the end of March, we have our Egg My Yard fundraiser for the Youth.
- On April 12th, we are planning on collaborating with the youth ministry at Zion Lutheran Church in Anoka, for a partial lock-in "Lutheran Late Night" event!
- On April 19th, we will have our second Movie Night event, where parents

# FIRST COMMUNION CLASS

Register Today on Realm

March 20 | Instruction 6:00-7:00 pm

March 27 | Instruction 6:00-7:00 pm

March 28 | Maundy Thursday Worship Celebration 6:30-8:00 pm




Children of all ages are welcome to the Lord's Table. Historically at Grace, children in 3rd grade have been invited to receive First Communion instruction. However, if you believe your child is ready, we welcome them to participate. Children older than 3rd grade who haven't yet received First Communion instruction, are also invited.

**Parents and children are required to attend this class together.**

Children will receive their First Communion in Worship March 28th (Maundy Thursday Worship) at 7:00pm.



## Child, Youth and Family Director's Message

### Youth Group

These past few months have been all about figuring out who we are as a Youth Group. We have such a wonderful group of high schoolers who are interesting and creative and funny and fun to be around. One of my favorite aspects of youth group that has evolved to be a weekly occurrence are the prayer requests. I start each session by walking around to each student and ask if there are any prayer requests. Every week, most of the high schoolers have something to say. I've learned a lot about prayer by doing this! Here is one moment I would like to share with you.

One Wednesday, I started going around the circle asking for Prayer requests. As I approached one student, he leaned over to both of the people he was sitting next to, and asked them to submit a prayer request on his behalf, for his own mental health. When I got to him, and he saw that I noticed him asking other people to submit a prayer request, he sheepishly looked down and said, "Sorry Will, I know we aren't allowed to pray for ourselves, so I asked them to do it for me." While it was partially a joke, I could also see the sincerity behind it. I told him that he is entirely empowered to pray for himself, and to request prayers for himself. He says, "well, in that case, pray for my mental health!" The next week, when I start going around the circle for prayer requests, he announces to the group, "You guys, these prayers really work! My mental health is so much better this week!" I share this story for two reasons. The first is to highlight what we are learning in Youth Group. I've come to realize that so much of what we are learning together doesn't actually come from a lesson, but from little conversations just like this one.

The second is that requesting prayers for yourself can be hard! I wonder, what is heavy on your shoulders right now? What is going on in your life that would feel good knowing someone is praying for you? Who is someone you could ask to pray for you, and pray for this burden / challenge / guilt that you are carrying? Jesus says "from the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise." Maybe you have something to learn from this youth, that it is okay to request prayers for yourself.

### Shout out



Shout out to Gretchen Schlosser this month! In CYF ministries, Gretchen is an invaluable member of the Youth Ministry Team, and one of the Youth Group adult leaders. In particular, I would like to highlight her work with the Youth Group. Last year, Gretchen was the Catechism leader for the 8th grade girls group, who are now in 9th grade and part of the Youth Group. It is incredible to see the deep connection that she shares with each of these students. Every week, if Gretchen isn't at Youth Group, she can expect at least one phone call from the girls asking where she is. When she is here, any one of these girls can sit down to have a vulnerable conversation with her because there is such a strong foundation of trust that has been built.

Gretchen, thank you so much for your commitment and love that you show week after week to our Youth. Thank you for the time you've spent collecting ugly sweaters from Goodwill, helping in Youth Group, and working the table in the Narthex for fundraisers, and everything else you do for the YMT.

### Egg My Yard

Easter is right around the corner, along with our next Youth trip fundraiser, Egg My Yard! Do you have children who are just itching for the Easter Bunny to visit your house? Egg orders are a minimum \$20 for 20 eggs, or an additional \$10 for every additional 10 eggs, you can support our youth AND get a hassle free easter egg hunt right in your front (or back) yard! The Easter Eggs will be hidden at an age appropriate level on the day before Easter - Saturday evening (March 30th). Sign up on Realm, or contact Will Weikle if you have any questions. WillW@GraceAndover.org



# Gratitude & Finance

## Thank You

To the entire staff and volunteers at Grace Lutheran:

Thank you all for your kind words, support and time during our darkest days following Jeff's passing. We are so very grateful for each of you. You all played a huge part in making a very sad event into a beautiful celebration of our son, Jeff Hoernemann's life. We are humbled and touched beyond words.

With sincere appreciation,  
Tom & Cathy Hoernemann



## FINANCE

	<u>YTD thru 1/31/24</u>		<u>Budget This Year</u>	
			<u>YTD</u>	
<b><u>Income</u></b>				
Grace Contributions	\$	62,085	\$	61,548
Transforming Receipts	\$	29,221	\$	30,000
Capital Receipts	\$	5,610	\$	7,500
Grace Registration Income	\$	1,720	\$	1,942
Grace Other Income	\$	11,523	\$	7,893
Seeds of Grace Tuition Income	\$	54,003	\$	54,667
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>169,171</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>168,139</b>
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>				
Operational Ministry Expenses	\$	132,662	\$	129,936
Capital Expenses	\$	29,221	\$	29,125
<b>Total Expenses (includes Seeds of Grace expenses)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>161,883</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>159,061</b>
Operating Margin	\$	7,288	\$	9,079

## Construction Update

This has been an outstanding month of construction! The weather, though not so good for outdoor skating or sledding, has been remarkable in aiding our building's transformation.

The daycare/nursery addition on the Round Lake Blvd side of our facility has progressed from a hole in the ground to a structure with walls, a roof, and a concrete floor. The electricians and plumbers are busy in the space installing conduits and piping. Carrying this pace forward, we should see kids playing and learning in the rooms by mid-May.

And the walls came tumbling down! On Tuesday, February 13, the former nursery became a hole in the building. This hole will be replaced by our new entry, one with lots of windows and light and equipped with security and assisted doors. The area will also include the new ADA compliant restrooms. There are a lot of construction details. The greatest impact to the schedule will be the relocation of the sanctuary heating plant. It will be removed from its present location (behind the louvers on the narthex south wall) to a new roof structure.

The next big deal is the rehab and extension of the kitchen. The day care infants have moved to Rooms 105-107 making room for the expansion. Features of the rehab and expansion will include new cabinetry, an additional dishwasher, a second sink, plus new ranges and microwaves. A larger center prep surface will also be featured.

So much at once but all to the good.

In closing, pray for the Seedlings of Grace as they have and will be disrupted; pray for the Staff as they have had to accommodate changing spaces with continuing programs; pray for the builders as they must keep the facility operational during their efforts; pray for all those who are being transformed- inside and out. Amen

~Charlie Wold,





# Grace Lutheran Church

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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**