

# CONNECTIONS

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GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



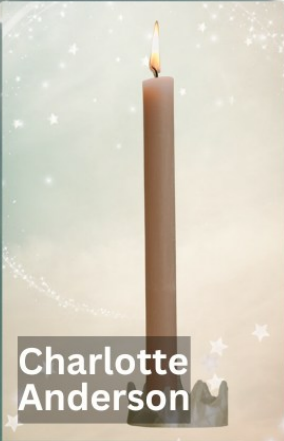
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“If we live by the Spirit, let’s follow the Spirit.”  
Galatians 5:25

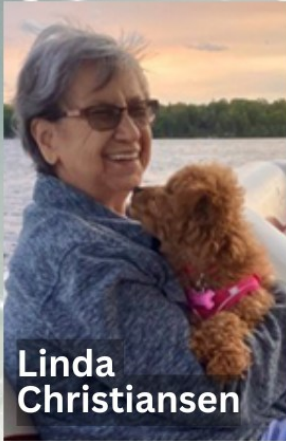
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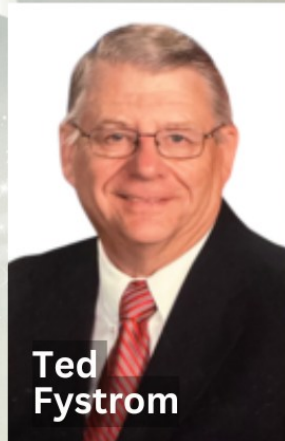
# All Saints Remembrances



Charlotte  
Anderson



Linda  
Christiansen



Ted  
Fystrom



John  
Hite



LaVonne Hite



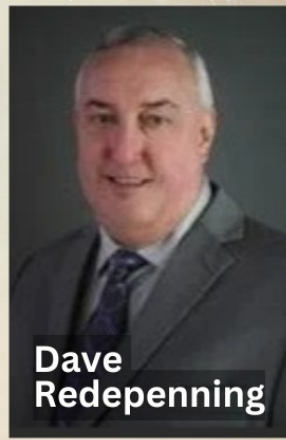
Dan  
Husak



Mike  
Kemp



Howard  
Monserud



Dave  
Redepenning



Dick  
Schroeder



Cathy  
Stoll



Marianne  
Thielen



Lois Vadner



Ralph  
Wernimont

”...God will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
Death will be no more; mourning and  
crying and pain will be no more...”  
~ Revelation 21:4



# The Story Behind the Pocket Hug Project

by Julie Linaman

*Julie, Andy, and Sydney are members of Grace. Julie is a leader in Circle of Grace, and has taught Sunday School, Andy has been an Own Your Faith Mentor and a member of our Mental Health Team. Sydney attended Seeds of Grace and is now a 2nd grader.*

As parents, we strive to raise our children well—to equip them with the tools they need to become kind, capable, and compassionate adults. But what does that really look like in practice? Did we nurture them in a way that encourages not just success, but also generosity, discipline, and faith—just as the Lord calls us to do?

Earlier this year, we had a conversation with our vibrant, kind-hearted 7-year-old daughter, Sydney. We wanted to help her grow in the area of “giving back,” though we weren’t exactly sure how that would take shape. It was simply a seed planted—one we hoped would bloom over time.

With the help of Tara, our amazing foreign exchange student, Sydney learned how to make loom bracelets. Inspired and excited, she decided she wanted to sell them. But knowing how time-intensive they are, we thought about adding something simpler that still carried meaning. With school fast approaching, I suggested including Pocket Hugs—a small, thoughtful gift with a big heart—and Sydney was immediately on board.

Just like that, a little business was born. Even more inspiring, Sydney decided from the start that she wanted to donate all her earnings to help others. We didn’t yet know what that would look like, but she was fully in the driver’s seat. And within just a short time, she had raised \$500 through her bracelets and hugs.

A month later, Sydney had the funds in hand—but still wasn’t quite sure where to direct her support, or even what to call her project. Then tragedy struck at Annunciation School. That day, Sydney came home, and I sat down to gently explain what had happened—not to instill fear, but to offer understanding. As I spoke, she stopped me and said, with quiet conviction, that she knew exactly what she wanted to do.

It was simply a seed  
planted - one we  
hoped would bloom  
over time.

And that’s how the Pocket Hug Project was born.

With her tender heart, love for others, and unwavering faith, Sydney has since raised over \$6,000 for the students and staff of Annunciation School, along with donating 450 Pocket Hugs. She’s also extended her support to the ER workers at Children’s Hospital and HCMC, donating 50 additional Pocket Hugs to those who care for others in their most vulnerable moments.



Sydney has always treasured the Pocket Hug we gave her when she started kindergarten. She doesn’t carry it every day, but she knows that in moments of fear or uncertainty, she can hold it close as a reminder of the love surrounding her. That’s exactly what she hopes to share with others: something small, but powerful—a tangible symbol of love and comfort.

All it took was a vision, a heart full of love, and the support of a caring community like ours. Together, we can continue to spread kindness, one Pocket Hug at a time.

We as parents are beyond proud of not only Sydney, but of this community that offers generosity in so many ways. Thank you to all who foster those loving hearts, big and small.



I've struggled to find the right words to express my gratitude for everything you've done for our family. Since becoming my dad's caretaker, we've faced many challenges, and you have been there for us. You cared for my kids, appreciating their unique personalities, and made our lives easier during tough times. Thank you for all your support; we miss you dearly!  
~ Seeds of Grace Parent



I appreciate your amazing communication! You guys are amazing! Thank you ❤️  
~ Seeds of Grace Parent

Our Sunday School raised enough funds to donate 20 goats and 110 chickens through Heifer International! Thank you to families for teaching our kids that generosity is the G.O.A.T. (Greatest Of All Time).  
~ Pastor Maria M.

We appreciate all that you do to ensure Seeds of Grace is a positive, safe, helping place for our kids! ~ Seeds of Grace parent



We so appreciate all that you and everyone there has poured into her and into our lives in the process. The love and kindness and compassion really shines through. Thank you so much.  
~ Seeds of Grace Parent

Thank you for your prayers!  
~ Carolyn G.

Just a little note to say thank you for all your hard work Sunday for Volunteer Recognition.  
~ Ann Marie J.  
P.S. I like my pen too!

We give thanks for you and your ministry and for your ongoing support of Tapestry. Your gifts help us walk alongside people from many countries. ~ Pastor Melissa & Deacon Josue

Grace Lutheran Church, thank you all for the beautiful get-well card.  
~ Willie G.

Thank you all for everything, and all you have done. It wasn't easy to work through all the things that went on.  
~ Bev & Dan T.

My family and I wanted to reach out to you and thank you for accommodating us for our remembrance luncheon for our father. It meant so much for to all of us since Grace Lutheran was the church we attended throughout our childhood. Everyone that helped was amazing and our family cannot thank all of you enough.  
~ The Hovdestad's

# It's not happy people is grateful people



My family and I are so grateful for all that was done to create a beautiful celebration of life for my mom. I appreciated each and every one of you! Your love and support mean so much and we couldn't have asked for a better celebration of life. We are blessed by our Grace family. ~ The Russell & Herring Families

I'm grateful for all the beautiful and helpful people here.  
~ Anonymous

You are amazing! Thank you for generous donation to Sand Creek Elementary School. Your support during these challenging times means more than words can say. Thank you for your compassion and generosity.  
~ Tess G.

Thank you for all the help. (It was) much needed in our time of sorrow. ~ Joe H.



I wanted to take moment and thank you for your generosity and commitment to Hope 4 Youth and participating in the Pack the Pantry Challenge. We are so grateful for your partnership and heart for this mission. ~ Nikki K.

Thankful for the friendliness.  
~ Anonymous

I'm very thankful I found this congregation.  
~ Anonymous

The Sand Creek Team would like to say a huge and heart felt thank you for ALL the donations given to Sand Creek Elementary in August! We were so blessed by your generosity this year! ~ Ann L.

Thank you for your gift to Lutheran Disaster Response - Texas Flooding. Your spirit filled generosity helps families and communities reeling from disasters, in the immediate aftermath and far into the future. No matter the disaster, no matter the need, your gifts enable people to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. ~ Rev. Daniel R.

Thanks to everyone for the service you provided for my husband's funeral. Bless you.  
~ Judy S.

who are grateful it  
who are happy.





# Sharing our Gifts: A Stewardship of the Whole Life

by Pastor Joanna Mitchell

Our mission statement at Grace Lutheran Church is to listen, grow, and serve so that all might experience grace. I spend a lot of time listening. Listening to staff members as they do their ministry. Listening to members of our community as they struggle with health concerns and mourn the death of loved ones. Listening to people who are hungry and hurting. Listening to the news and people's opinions about world events. I also listen to God.

Listening to God happens in many ways: through scripture and Bible study, in silence, in worship, and in conversation. As people of faith, we listen to God and attempt to discern what God is saying, though it can be hard.

The Apostle Paul writes: *"But what happens when we live God's way? God brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely."* — Galatians 5:22-23 The Message

**Stewardship becomes the way we tend and share the fruit God has grown in us—offering back not just our financial resources but our whole selves.**

Paul invites us to contemplate what it means to live God's way. You would think Paul would give us a list of things to do, like pray, read the Bible, memorize the 10 Commandments, and confess your sins. But Paul doesn't. Instead, he writes of the actions, and the gifts God gives to us. How God will bring us gifts. How God will plant in us seeds that will grow and in their growth change us and the world around us.

This passage reflects on the fruits of the Spirit, emphasizing that following God fills us with kindness, compassion, loyalty, and patience. Paul seeks transformation through God's love and Spirit, fostering hope and kindness, especially during challenging times. The desire for God's love and hope is expressed as a source of strength against fear and division.

Paul concludes by saying: *"Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives."* — Galatians 5:26-27

These gifts God plants in us naturally overflow into how we share our lives with others. Stewardship becomes the way we tend and share the fruit God has grown in us—offering back not just our financial resources but our whole selves.

Every fall at Grace, we are invited to make a commitment to our spiritual life. This is often focused on making financial gifts. One of the fruits of the spirit is indeed generosity. In a society that is often consumed with financial well-being, this is an important part of our spiritual growth, letting go of our need for control and making a commitment to give financially what God has given us.







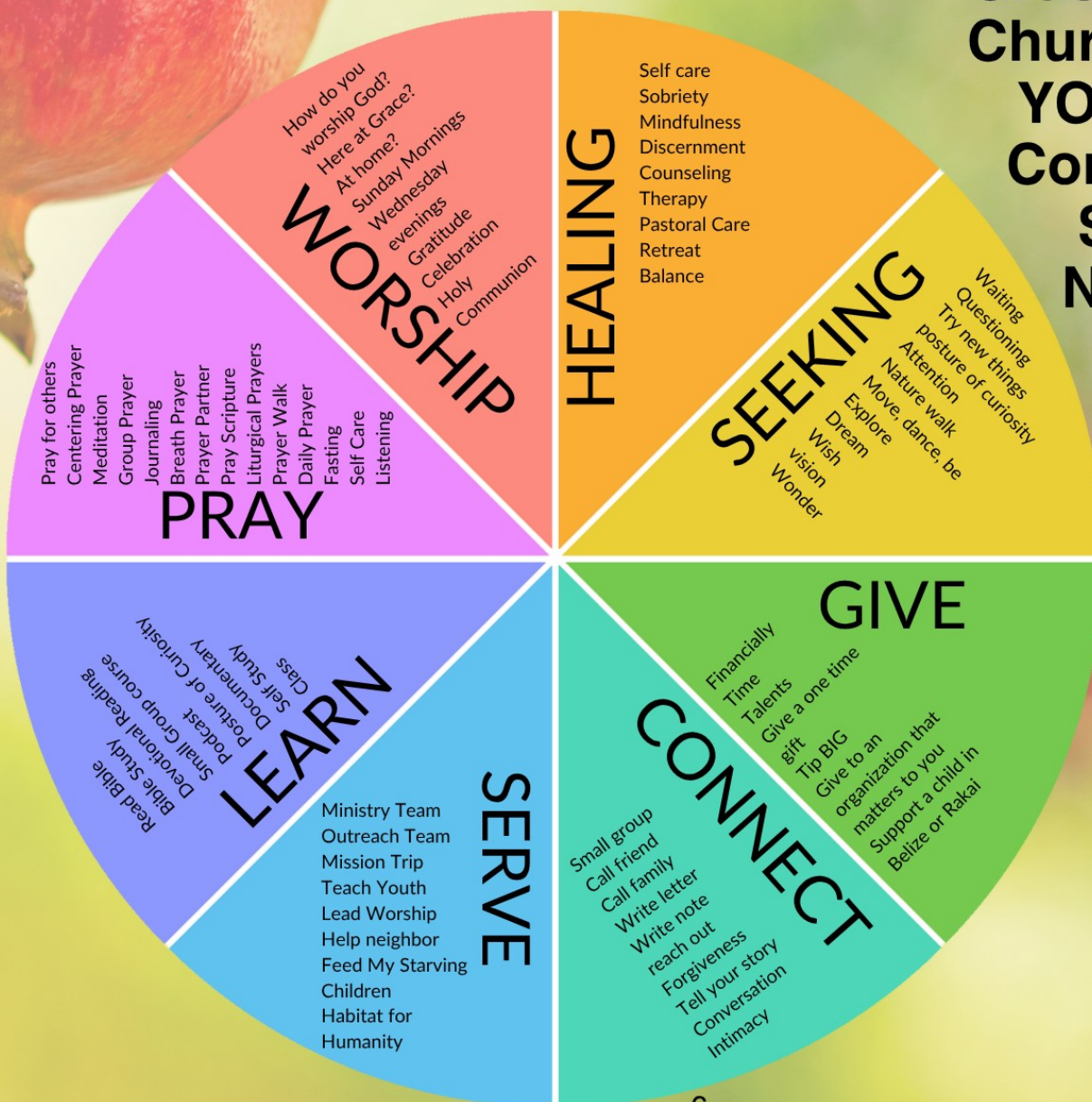
The commitment to spiritual life transcends money; it involves listening to God's word, being open to transformation, and shifting focus from self-interest to serving others. This journey fosters growth in spiritual lives, relationships, and love, reflecting the nature of Jesus, who serves.

The Gifts wheel below offers ideas for personal spiritual growth. I encourage you to choose a slice that resonates with you to commit to faith practices, enabling God's Spirit to guide our lives at Grace, in our homes, schools, and communities.

I hope you will join us throughout November as we explore the fruits of the Spirit and all that God has given to us and how we might respond. Each Sunday and Wednesday in November, we will gather for worship with a generosity moment exploring these themes. On November 23rd and 25th, you will be invited to make a commitment to God—both a financial pledge to support our shared ministry and a personal commitment to invest in your spiritual growth through the practices that speak, to your heart.

Blessings, Pastor Joanna Mitchell

**Grace Lutheran  
Church Sharing  
YOUR Gifts!  
Commitment  
Sunday  
Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>**







# Family Table

Family Table is an outreach program sponsored by several churches in the area including Grace. Families and individuals who take advantage of these meals have the opportunity through the network of Family Table to find a meal locally almost every day of the year! Some people who come to Family Table don't need a hot meal per se but appreciate the community and socialization it provides. Some have even become dear friends. Our volunteers also enjoy getting to know the guests.

Grace serves a hot meal to be eaten on site or taken home once a month on the third Sunday. Deb and Kevin Corey who regularly volunteer with Family table love it because they can bring their grandkids to help serve. And the grandkids love it too! They also appreciate serving with other members of Grace and getting to know people who maybe worship at different times. This is an easy ministry to get involved with as it takes a minimal time commitment (less than two hours) and all ages and abilities are welcome to participate!

Here is a testimonial from Jessie Schoenborn whose whole family volunteers for Family Table!

Our family enjoys helping at family table! There are five of us! My husband and I, and our three kids Ellie (13), Gabe (10), and Nate (7). Nate says, "I like giving the food to people." Gabe likes running the food to the cars. Ellie says, "It's amazing to see their happy faces when they get the food." Tim says, "it's a good way to give back." I am glad that our church has this program for the community and for our kids and us to experience the feeling that comes with serving. We started signing up shortly after we joined Grace in 2022, partly because you can sign up monthly with Lynda as you can fit in your family schedule. This is only one way out of the many ways we see how Grace has a chance for our church members to serve others. It is one way that distinguishes our church from others because the people at Grace don't only talk about their faith, they live it! -Jessie Schoenborn

## Third Sunday of the month at 12:00pm

For more information or to get involved  
contact Lynda Wilde.





# Untapped Potential

by Chrissy Gast

*Chrissy is a former Vision Board President. She and her husband, Kevin, and their two kids are members of Grace. Chrissy & Kevin will be going on the mission trip to Belize in February.*

I've been reflecting on what it means to follow the Spirit - not just in belief, but in action. As a former member of Grace's Vision Board, I had the privilege of reading *Leading Faithful Innovation*, a book that profoundly shifted how I view leadership and discipleship. One passage in particular stood out: "You have a wealth of untapped potential sitting in your pews." We need to rethink how we define leadership in our church - each one of us is a leader!

This idea - that each of us has God-given gifts, waiting to be discovered and shared - sparked something in me. It helped birth the idea of offering a spiritual gifts assessment to our congregation, a way to help us see ourselves and each other as Spirit-empowered contributors to the life and mission of Grace.

Years ago, I took a spiritual gifts inventory and discovered that music was one of my gifts. At the time, I was in the thick of parenting young children and couldn't fully act on it. But the desire stayed with me. Now that my kids are older and having recently completed my term on the Vision Board, I've felt the Spirit nudging me to lean into this gift. I've joined the praise team on Wednesday evenings, and it has been a joyful reminder that our gifts are not just for us - they're for the building up of the body.

As we launch our upcoming spiritual gifts study, *Exploring Your Gifts and Talents*, I'm excited for others to experience what I've experienced: the freedom that comes from discovering your unique role in God's work, and the joy of stepping into it. I believe a greater understanding of our gifts can unleash creativity, connection, and new forms of ministry in our community. The Spirit is already at work - let's follow where it leads!

**Exploring  
Your Gifts  
and Talents**

**Bible Study begins  
on Wed. Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>  
at 6:00pm in  
room 113**





# Love of Grace Bazaar

By Jamie Zupou

*Jamie and her husband, Harold, are active members of Grace. Jamie serves as a leader in Women of the Word, is part of the Circle of Grace, and contributes to the Love of Grace Bazaar team. Meanwhile, Harold has been involved in numerous special projects within the church and Seeds of Grace.*

I like routines and schedules. I am predictable and love a good checklist. I ask God everyday how I can share His love in my thoughts, words and actions. Making cards is a hobby of mine and when I was asked to join the craft bazaar team, it seemed to be a good fit. Tell me what to do and I will organize a list and get things done. Simple enough but not everyone works like me. Meetings were long, decisions took forever to make but we mustered through and had a successful event.

The next year the whole team came back. The meetings were much more productive. The work that had been done the year before had produced a well-oiled machine. We still had a leader but now partnerships were formed. Some worked on the food while others made contacts with vendors and worked on building logistics. My group worked on volunteers and publicity. We had our checklist, did what we needed and came together to give a report. We were trusted, focused and ran efficiently for years.

Oops....and then there was COVID and a huge renovation project. We were able to have one craft bazaar in 2022. Fast forward to 2025 and an email comes to me asking if I want to be on the team again. In asking my husband, I got a resounding YES! He planned to get a table this year and wanted a good spot. I joined the team again. Some new faces this year which brings new energy and ideas. One of these is to reach out to other churches who are having craft shows and help each other advertise. We now have a list of surrounding church craft sales to share with you and 8 other churches in our community.

We are reaching more than just our Andover neighbors. It has rippled out to Coon Rapids, Ramsey, Blaine and Anoka bringing them into our renovated space. We have built connections through our teamwork and the talents our community shares. We are evangelizing through our art. This November 8<sup>th</sup>, come see what this looks like. Yes, you can get mittens, a gift or lefse but you will also see new faces moving about and being welcomed in. Grace is known for this and so it continues.

# Love of Grace Bazaar

**Nov. 8, 2025 9:00am - 3:00pm**  
**Handmade Crafts & Food**





# Upcoming Events

**Calling ALL Seniors!**

**Tuesday,  
November 11th  
8:30 - 10:00am**

Join us as Kathy Besst from Arbor Oaks, discusses key topics on Senior Living, like:

- When to transition to a care facility
- When to remove rugs from your home

Don't miss this insightful talk!



**FEED MY  
STARVING  
CHILDREN**



## Grace's Annual Fall Packing Event!

**Sat. Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am**

Please scan  
the QR code  
to sign up.



## Adopt a Sand Creek Family 2025

Share God's grace  
this Christmas by  
adopting a local  
Sand Creek  
Elementary  
family.

Register by scanning  
the QR code.



## Thanksgiving Eve

## Worship & Pie Social

**Wed., Nov. 26th  
at 7:00pm**



## Light

"The true light  
that shines on  
all people was  
coming into the  
world."  
~ John 1:9

## Advent

Begins Sunday,  
November 30th



**Christmas  
Campout  
Sun., Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>  
at 4:00pm**



## Sing Christmas Cantata 2025

**Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>  
at 8:30am and 10:15am**



**Sunday, December 21, 2025  
8:30am and 10:15am**

## Christmas Worships



**Christmas Eve  
2:00pm  
4:00pm  
9:00pm**

**Christmas Day  
10:00am**



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

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# TRUNK OR TREAT

WED. OCT. 29<sup>TH</sup>  
@ 5PM

