



Grace Lutheran Church

A radically inclusive multicultural community who serve
and lead together with the love of Jesus.

Fall 2026

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Quarterly Newsletter

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Building Sustainable Ministries: Creating Space for Everyone to Belong, Serve, and Flourish

by Tessa Krippaehne

One of the best ways we strengthen the life of our church is by taking an honest look at how we do ministry. That's the work the Building Sustainable Ministries Team has been doing over the past several months.

Our goal has not been simply to organize ministries or build new systems. Our goal is to help the ministries of Grace become more sustainable, more connected, and more accessible – so that the gifts, passions, and time of our congregation can be shared in meaningful ways.

We started by listening.

Ministry leaders were invited to reflect on the ministries they lead: What is working well? What is challenging? Who is involved? Where are there opportunities to grow? What resources are needed? And perhaps most importantly, how does this ministry help us live out our calling as a church?

Those conversations and ministry evaluations have helped us identify both strengths and opportunities across our ministries. We've been looking at ways to strengthen communication, clarify roles and expectations for volunteers, create healthier systems for sharing responsibility, and ensure that our ministries remain aligned with our mission.

We're also making it easier for people to discover the many ways to connect at Grace.

Sometimes the hardest part of getting involved is simply knowing what's out there. Grace has an incredible variety of ministries, service opportunities, groups, and ways to participate, but they can be hard to see from the outside. As part of our team's work, we are partnering with ministry leaders to create a new ministry guide that will give both newcomers and longtime members a clearer picture of the opportunities available at Grace, what each ministry is about, and how they can get involved.

And now, we're getting ready to celebrate!

Join Us for the Ministry Showcase – September 20

On Sunday, September 20, we'll bring this work to life at a combined 9:30 am

grace
in ACTION

Building Sustainable Ministries: Creating Space for Everyone to Belong, Serve, and Flourish, continued

worship service followed by our Ministry Showcase.

Come explore the many ways God is already at work through the people of Grace. Ministry leaders will be on hand to share about their ministries, answer your questions, and help you find where your gifts, interests, and passions might connect with the needs of our community.

At the Showcase, you'll find ministries organized into these categories:

- Congregational Care
- Worship & Music
- Children, Youth & Families
- Connection & Belonging
- Community Outreach & Local Mission
- Global Mission Partnerships
- Operations Teams

Whether you've been looking for a way to serve, hoping to meet new people, curious what happens beyond Sunday morning, or just wondering what's available for you and your family – come explore!

You might discover a ministry you'd never heard of. You might find a place to use a gift you've been waiting to share. Or you might simply find a new way to belong.

The work of building sustainable ministries is ultimately about more than systems and structures. **It's about people.**

It's about strengthening our ministries so they can thrive for years to come. It's about sharing responsibility, so it doesn't rest on the shoulders of just a few. It's about making room for new leaders and new ideas. And it's about helping every person who walks through our doors discover their place in the life and mission of Grace.

We hope you'll join us on September 20 and see where you might belong, serve, and flourish.

Building Sustainable Ministries Team:

Tessa Krippaehne

Pastor Rachel Swenson

Jason Astrup

Lindsey Astrup

Amy Baker

Shelby Chatterton

Laird Vernon



Engaging and Inspiring Servant Leadership

by Pastor Chad Johnson



The disciple Andrew said it best after his encounter with Jesus, "Come and see, come and grow, come and serve!" That is a beautiful way to live in faith.

This has always been the call of the church. With our eyes fixed on Jesus everything else flows from there. And we here at Grace are dialed in to deepening into these ways of being in the world.

To that end, this past spring, with the assistance of Jeff Gross, (one of our church members, band members, great community leader in Des Moines, author and consultant) we surveyed the church community of Grace. We wanted to hear the hurts and hopes, the dreams and desires, the faith hunger and thirst, and then put together our next steps on the journey of discipleship in Jesus.

Forty two of us Gracers gathered for a spring servant leadership retreat. We got honest about our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. We opened up conversation for how best to renew our faith community. The room was full of life and inspiration. Truly the Holy Spirit was stirring us up with imagination and hope.

From that retreat, four new teams were formed. Here is a short summary of what each team has been up too.

Sustainable Ministry Systems Team

Our team has sent out surveys to all ministry leaders on the current health of the ministry. We have also began collecting information from all ministries to go in a Ministry Booklet. Hayley Goodner has designed a beautiful booklet and all of our focus right now is on completing that in time for printing. The booklet will also link to digital content within our website for more information on each ministry. We are also working on the grace in ACTION Ministry Showcase, and combined 9:30 am service for September 20 that will be ministry focused. We are partnering with the Engagement Team to deploy a Ministry Matching (time and talent survey) during the showcase.

Engagement Team

Our team is currently finalizing our Small Group Formation Guide, and our Ministry Matching (new name for time and talent!) survey! Our next goal is collaborate with the Sustainable Ministry Systems Team to prep for the grace in ACTION Ministry Showcase starting to bring folks in to utilize the new small group formation framework, and get some new groups launched. We'll be launching a worship and movement group in the midst of this! And following that, the focus of the Engagement Team will be on engaging ALL, with an initial look toward our neurodiverse community and making worship accessible to them. May God bless our work!

Next Gen Team

Next Gen has met and decided that our next step is going to be reaching out to ministries that already have intergenerational practices and we will be gathering some notes about what works best for our already established intergenerational time to try and translate that into some new opportunities! More to come!

Local Outreach Team

Our Local Outreach Team is currently focused on building a strong foundation for this ministry. Laird Vernon has developed an excellent planning tool that helps us identify key stakeholders, recognize community assets, create a strategic game plan, better understand who our neighbors are, and evaluate how we are inviting the local community into the life of Grace. The team, Liz Vernon, Hayley Goodner, Paul Marth, Laird Vernon, Amy Baker, and Pastor Salvador Cossio, along with more leaders, will coordinate outreach activities throughout the year with the goal of strengthening relationships with our neighbors and learning from the community itself. Rather than simply inviting people to church events, we hope to engage in meaningful community listening and research that allows local voices to shape the present and future of our ministry. Our vision is for community members not only to participate in the life of the church but also to help guide its direction by sharing their experiences, hopes, and ideas. As relationships grow, we also hope to identify and empower community leaders who can serve as bridges between Grace Lutheran Church and the wider community, helping us become a church that listens well, serves faithfully, and reflects God's love for all. This work reflects our commitment to being a congregation that is present in the community, builds authentic relationships, and creates spaces where everyone has the opportunity to experience God's love, discover they belong, build meaningful relationships, and participate in the life and mission of the church.

I hope you are inspired by all you see here. Grace is a place that thrives through the work of the people! Who is the church? WE are the church!

Let's keep growing on the journey with JESUS!

Deepening Discipleship

by Pastor Chad Johnson



Eighty percent of people say they check their phones within the first 10 minutes of waking up. Most check their phones over 261 times a day. One in three adults say they are constantly online due to the phone in their hand. For better or worse, we are logging hours on our phones. Which means, God's Word is also right at your fingertips.

Our world is increasingly messy, complicated, and can be overwhelming. The voices of the world are loud. We need focused time to **Dwell** in the vision and the voice of the One who calls us by name – who gives grace to our daily living – who redeems and restores and heals. Jesus has promised that he will not leave us orphaned. His voice is the one we need more of.

To access more of his voice, we as Grace Lutheran Church have partnered with **Dwell** for the coming year as part of our initiative to deepen discipleship as we journey with Jesus and each other. Imagine our entire congregation all taking the time each day to **Dwell** in the word of the Lord. How would that shape us? How would that equip us? What new life would that bring to our faith lives?

Dwell is a daily audio Bible app, easily downloadable to your phone, that offers a short daily devotion on a Scripture verse, along with meditation and prayer. You can use it anywhere. When you rise up in the morning, while making your first cup of coffee, on the commute, with your small group Bible Study, before or after a meal time, with your spouse or friends or children, before you go to bed, wherever you are, in whatever you are doing, you can **Dwell** with the spirit of God.

There are additional resources on the **Dwell** app, from meditative prayer, to **Dwell** at Night, to Biblical reflection. All resources to bless you in God's Word.

I don't know about you, but I want more of that, not less. To be centered, to be equipped, to come to full flourishing life. We need the vision and voice of Jesus to lead us.

My prayer is that our entire congregation will download the Dwell app and utilize this resource. The cost is already covered and it is free for you to use. Let's get started this September and enjoy a 365 day journey of deepening discipleship – this is our time to DWELL!

About Dwell

Helping people make the Bible the soundtrack of their lives.

Guiding Principles

Biblical Formation is our *what*.

Every piece of content in **Dwell**, including our ever-growing library of guided content, is built on this biblical foundation.

Audio is our *how*.

Dwell offers solace through an audio-centric approach that frees you from screens, bringing Scripture to life wherever you go.

Daily Transformation is our *why*.

Dwell is animated by the transformational power of daily time with God through the Bible that is both intentional and habitual.

Deepening Discipleship, continued

To get started on our year of Dwelling in the Word, here is a guide to set it up:

How do I join my church's Dwell subscription?

My church has provided **Dwell** for me, how do I join?

I'm New to Dwell

Our church sign-up link and QR code:

<https://dwellapp.io/signup/with/xlfQyHSd>



1. Enter the link into your web browser (mobile or desktop)
2. Scroll down and fill in your information to complete your sign-up
3. Download the **Dwell** app to your mobile device and start listening!

I Already Have a Dwell Account

If you already have a **Dwell** account, you'll need to manually join your church's account to access your church's custom content. Here's how:

1. Open a web browser and go to dwellapp.io — **not** the **Dwell** app
2. Sign in with your username and password
3. In the same browser, navigate to your church's landing page
4. Join your church account
5. Re-open the **Dwell** app on your phone
6. Log out and log back in — this step is important!
7. On the "**Me**" page, you should now see a link to your church's custom listening passages, playlists, and plans

After you have signed up and began using the **Dwell** App, shoot me an email and let me know how you are receiving blessing through this wonderful resource!



Discipleship 101

It breaks my heart that so many Christians spend their entire lives sitting before a 31,102 piece jigsaw puzzle, running their fingers through the verses, but never actually seeing the finished masterpiece and the face of the One it was meant to reveal.

What Does “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” Mean?

GLC – Grace Lutheran Church – is an ELCA congregation. What Does “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” Mean?

*This article was written by an ELCA pastor and edited for our use.

Every word in that name – ELCA - can be confusing. Let’s talk about it.

“Evangelical”

In Lutheran history, *evangelical* does not mean what it commonly means in American religious culture today.

In the Lutheran tradition, “evangelical” comes from the Reformation and refers to a church shaped by the *evangel*—the good news of Jesus Christ. It reflects core Reformation convictions such as:

- Salvation by grace alone
- Faith alone
- Scripture in the language of the people
- A focus on God’s initiative rather than human merit

In Germany, many Lutheran churches are still called “Evangelical” churches (for example, the Evangelische Kirche im Deutschland).

This is distinct from modern American evangelicalism, which developed later and is often associated with revival movements, conversion experiences, specific views on biblical authority, and particular political alignments. When we use “Evangelical” in the ELCA, we are using it in the older Reformation sense.

“Lutheran”

Lutheran churches trace their roots to the 16th-century Reformation sparked by Martin Luther in Germany. Lutheranism spread throughout Northern Europe, especially Germany and the Scandinavian and Baltic countries.

In the United States, Lutheranism arrived primarily through immigration. Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, German, Slovak, Latvian, Finnish, Estonian, and other European communities formed Lutheran congregations that were often organized around language and ethnicity.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, there were many distinct Lutheran bodies in America:

- Norwegian Lutheran Church in America
- Swedish Lutheran Church in America

- Slovak Lutheran Church
- German synods
- And many more

These groups initially worshiped in their native languages and were closely tied to their immigrant identities.

Over time, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, English replaced those languages, and ethnic distinctions became less central. As that happened, Lutheran denominations began merging.

By the mid-20th century, most Lutherans in the U.S. were part of a few larger bodies, including:

- The Lutheran Church in America (LCA)
- The American Lutheran Church (ALC)
- The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC)

In 1988, those three bodies merged to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). It is a relatively young denomination.

At its founding, the ELCA had about 5.2 million members. Today it has approximately 3 million members. The decline reflects demographic shifts, aging membership, lower birth rates, and some departures over theological decisions.

“In America”

Lutherans were not among the dominant colonial religious groups. Unlike Congregationalists in New England or Anglicans in the South, Lutherans did not shape early American religious identity in the same way. Germany, for example, was late to colonial expansion.

Because of immigration patterns, Lutheran settlement concentrated heavily in the Upper Midwest—Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, the Dakotas, and parts of Pennsylvania.

For perspective:

- In parts of Minnesota or northeastern Iowa, there may be dozens of Lutheran churches in a single county.
- In Arkansas, there are only about 19 ELCA congregations statewide.

That’s why Lutheranism can feel unfamiliar, uncommon in some areas, and why some historically described it as a “northern church.”

2. ELCA and Other Lutheran Bodies

Not all Lutherans in the U.S. are part of the ELCA. Other large

What Does “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” Mean?, continued

Lutheran bodies include:

- The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS)
- The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

The initial major dividing line between the ELCA and more conservative Lutheran bodies was women's ordination.

Beginning in the 1970s, most mainline Protestant denominations, including Lutheran predecessor bodies that would form the ELCA, began ordaining women. The LCMS and WELS did not.

In 2009, the ELCA voted to allow partnered LGBTQ clergy to serve. That decision led to additional departures and the formation of new Lutheran groups.

Today, the ELCA ordains:

- Women
- LGBTQ clergy
- Married clergy

And the denomination affirms LGBTQ people in all aspects of church life.

3. ELCA as a “Mainline” Protestant Church

The ELCA is considered part of the “mainline” Protestant tradition. That includes denominations such as:

- United Methodist Church
- Episcopal Church
- Presbyterian Church (USA)
- United Church of Christ
- Moravian Church

The ELCA is in full communion with all of these churches. “Full communion” means:

- Mutual recognition of baptism and Eucharist
- Interchangeability of clergy
- Shared ministry and cooperation

Historically, mainline Protestant denominations were at their numerical height in the mid-20th century. Today they represent a smaller percentage of the population. Among younger generations, affiliation with mainline Protestant churches is significantly lower than it was in the 1970s.

So when you join an ELCA congregation, you are joining a tradition that is smaller statistically but historically influential and theologically substantial.

4. Lutheran Social Service and Global Ministries

One of the strongest through-lines in American Lutheran history is social service.

Because Lutherans were immigrants, many Lutheran institutions developed to care for newcomers, the elderly, children, and vulnerable communities. Some key organizations connected to the ELCA include:

- **Global Refuge** (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service) – refugee resettlement and immigration support
- **Lutheran World Relief** – international development and aid
- **Lutheran Disaster Response** – disaster recovery and long-term rebuilding
- **Lutheran Services in America** – a nationwide network of Lutheran social service agencies

GLC is one of the most significant funders of these agencies throughout our 70 year history. We continue to be on the leading edge of that support.

Historically, some of these agencies were supported jointly by multiple Lutheran bodies. Over time, support structures have shifted.

This emphasis on neighbor-care is deeply embedded in Lutheran theology: faith is trust in God's grace; love is expressed in service to neighbor.

You may occasionally see Lutheran agencies mentioned in national conversations about immigration or government funding; I'll say a brief word about that below.

5. Transparency and History

One of the things I value about the ELCA is its transparency. You can easily find:

- Official apologies for Lutheran contributions to anti-Jewish theology or as another example a repudiation of the doctrine of discovery
- Social statements on race, immigration, the environment, and other issues
- Records of votes and churchwide assembly decisions

That transparency means you can see both the strengths and the failures of the denomination. Nothing is hidden behind branding.

What Does “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” Mean?, continued

6. Where GLC Fits

GLC is part of the ELCA, but every ELCA congregation has significant local expression and freedom. As you may notice at Grace, people here come from a wide range of religious (and non-religious) backgrounds. That diversity reflects both:

- The flexibility of the ELCA
- The specific culture of this congregation

When the ELCA gathers in Churchwide Assembly (most recently in Phoenix), representatives from across the country vote on churchwide commitments. Many of the values emphasized there, like justice, inclusion, global responsibility, align closely with what you experience here.

This means the name on the sign matches the practice inside the building. Although some ELCA churches may not feel like the national church reflects their local expression, I believe our congregation does experience significant alignment.

Why This Matters

You are joining:

- A church rooted in the Reformation
- A denomination shaped by immigration and social care

- A mainline Protestant body committed to women's ordination and LGBTQ inclusion
- A church that values theological depth, Christian ethics, public witness, grace leading the way, and transparency

P.S. It's also important to say that many Lutheran communities often described as “ethnic” or “immigrant” are in fact long-standing and indigenous expressions of Lutheran Christianity. Lutheranism in America today is far more diverse than its Northern European roots might suggest. The ELCA includes vibrant Latino ministries (including long-established Puerto Rican Lutheran congregations¹), African-descent congregations, Ethiopian and Eritrean Lutheran communities, Southeast Asian congregations, and many multicultural church plants. In many places, some of the most dynamic Lutheran communities are immigrant-led or multilingual. While our history in many regions is Scandinavian and German, our present and future are deeply global. We are a world-wide church with a world-wide communion.

Never be afraid to ask a question. Who are we? Why do we do what we do? How is Jesus calling us to live? We get to be the church – better together!



2026 Transformational Travel: Discovering What God Is Already Doing

by Pastor Salvador Cossio

This year, our Transformational Travel experience took us once again to La Misión, Baja California, Mexico, where we spent time with our partners at Door of Faith Orphanage. We did not go simply to see what we could do for others. We went with open hearts, ready to discover and experience what God is already doing in that place.

And we saw God everywhere.

We saw God in the love and dedication of the staff who care for the children. We saw God in the children who welcomed us, laughed with us, worked alongside us, and reminded us of the joy of being together. We experienced God through the people who welcomed us into their community and through the opportunities we had to serve alongside one another.

This year, we were able to form two teams and participate in different projects. One team worked off-site, partnering with Amor Ministries to build a home for a family of four. The other team served at Door of Faith, building bunk beds and benches and painting a study room.

We loved working on these projects and seeing what we could accomplish together. But along the way, we were reminded of something even more important: **the greatest part of transformational travel is not what we build with our hands, but the relationships that God's Spirit builds with one another.**

The conversations, shared meals, laughter, hard work, new friendships, and moments of simply being present with one another became some of the most meaningful parts of our journey.

Transformational travel reminds us that God is present in the things we know and also in the things we have yet to discover. When we travel with curiosity, humility, and open hearts, we begin to recognize that God was there long before we arrived.

Perhaps that is one of the greatest gifts of these experiences: discovering that our church family is bigger than we imagined. Across languages, cultures, borders, and different life experiences, **we discover that we belong to one another.**

We returned home grateful for the work we accomplished, but even more grateful for the people who welcomed us, served alongside us, and helped us experience God's love in new ways.

And we can't wait to discover where God will lead us next.



Transformational Travel to El Salvador

by Pastor Kristian Johnson

What does it mean to be a Lutheran Christian? When we are at our best, we are pointing to Jesus as the Living Word (in Greek, Logos), as our primary source of truth, grace, personal devotion, and collective courage.

In Martin Luther's reflection on the third article of the Lord's prayer: "Thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven" he writes: "God breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature..."

And by God's grace, we become living answers to this prayer.

As a Lutheran Pastor, there is one person in our lifetimes that has embodied this Christian witness as faithfully as anyone in history... and he is a Roman Catholic Saint!

Óscar Arnulfo Romero. Romero was born in El Salvador in 1917, became a Roman Catholic priest and eventually Archbishop of San Salvador in 1977. When he became archbishop, his country was being torn apart by poverty, political repression, violence, and growing conflict. Archbishop Romero was thought to be a caring but quiet priest who wouldn't provide any resistance to the oppressive actions of the country's ruling elite.

Romero was close friends with a priest named Father Rutilio Grande. Grande was active in his solidarity with the poor and

oppressed and in denouncing the violence and injustices perpetrated by the ruling elite. Then on March 12, 1977, as Father Rutilio was driving to mass in his car with 72-year-old Manuel Solórzano and 15 year-old Nelson Rutilio Lemus, a government-backed death squad opened fire on the vehicle, assassinating Father Grande and his two traveling companions.

This was a conversion moment for Romero.

Romero came to understand his calling as his vocation as proclaiming the Gospel and speaking on behalf of those whose voices were being silenced. For Romero, our love for Jesus could never be separated from our love of our neighbors. His witness was not rooted in partisan politics or violence, but in his conviction that the Eucharist, the Gospel, and the cross of Christ called Christians to give themselves for the life of the world.

Every year for the last 25 years, Anna-Kari and I bring our mission groups to visit the place where Romero lived and died- the Divine Providence Hospital and Chapel ("La Divina Providencia") And this year, I learned a detail that deeply touched me. As Romero started receiving multiple death threats, he would often remark to the Catholic sisters with whom he shared meals and community, "If they come for me, I pray that I alone would be killed. I don't want others around me to die, like what happened with Father Rutilio."

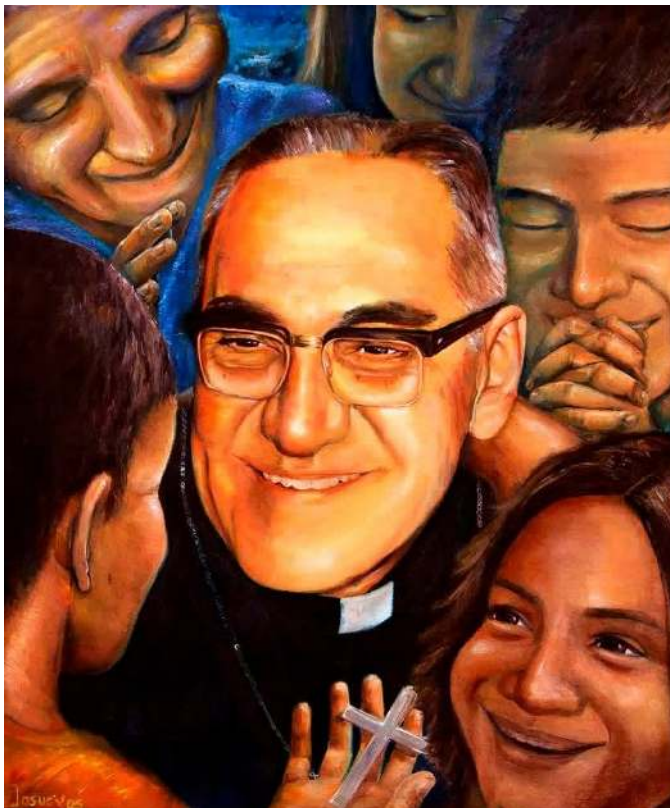
On March 24, 1980, while celebrating Mass in the chapel of the Divine Providence Hospital in San Salvador, Romero was closing his sermon, facing the doors in the back of the sanctuary, which were propped open. These were his words:

"This holy Mass of thanksgiving, then, is just such an act of faith. By Christian faith... we remember that this body that was immolated and this flesh that was sacrificed for humankind also nourish us so that we can give our bodies and our blood to suffering and pain, as Christ did, not for our own sake but to bring justice and peace to our people. Let us therefore join closely together in faith and hope at this moment of prayer...."

There is an audio recording of this mass. And in the recording, after Romero has said the words above, you can hear Romero suddenly stop speaking. Why?

Because at this moment, Romero sees a man in a red car that has pulled up right outside the doors of the church. Then Romero watches the man pull out a rifle and point it right at him.

And Romero doesn't cry out, in fear that others might put themselves in harm's way in his defense. The same radical love for others that guided his public ministry also guided his last moments.



Transformational Travel to El Salvador, continued

The government-backed hitman pulls the trigger, an exploding bullet enters his heart, instantly killing him. The assassin drove away.

No one else was hurt.

Just weeks earlier, Romero had written, "As a Christian I do not believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me, I will be resurrected in the Salvadoran people."

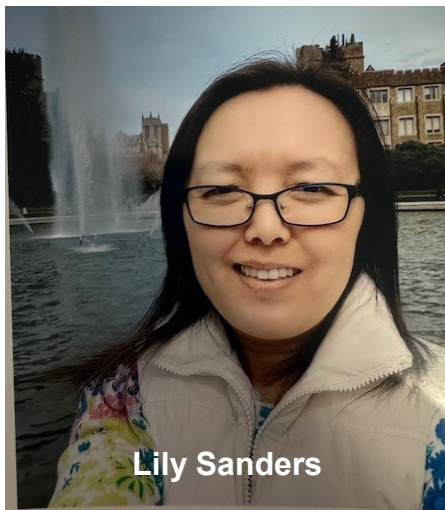
And that unstoppable, resurrection-powered love is what we experience every August in El Salvador.

And every time YOU AND I go to the altar to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we receive the power to resist violence, denounce evil, and embody God's kingdom of love here on earth, in real time.

God bless the memory of Saint Oscar Romero. ♥️🙏



Welcome Newcomers



Lily Sanders

Hi brothers and sisters of Grace,

My name is Lily Sanders. I recently moved to Des Moines and fell in love with the beach and the people here.

I knew God in 2009 in Shanghai and was baptized in 2012 in Los Angeles. On the journey to pursue belief, I realized God is love. He is the Lord and the ruler of the world.

I am currently a mother of a 9-year-old daughter, Melda. I hope to teach her with God's words, and she can grow up as the way God likes, follow His path and become a Christian one day.

I like the sun, music and ocean; I like reading, cooking and travel; I love God. It is my pleasure to be a member of Grace.

May God bless us!



Houston and Fiona Lui with children, Camden and Finn

Houston and Fiona both work in the medical field. Areas of interest and service at Grace are community outreach, communion serving as a family, Children's Church (as needed), and KOTK Choir and other areas (as needed)

Finn and Camden attend schools nearby.

A Day of Grace, Gratitude and God's Faithfulness

by Pastor Salvador Cossio

Ordination and Installation — June 12, 2026

What a beautiful celebration we shared!

June 12 was one of the most meaningful days of my life not because of any single moment, but because of the way God wove together so many people, stories, experiences, and blessings into one unforgettable day.

On that day, I was ordained as a **Minister of Word and Sacrament in the ELCA** and installed as a pastor here at Grace Lutheran Church. Even now, as I reflect on that celebration, my heart is filled with gratitude.

I am deeply grateful for the Grace community. Your love, support, prayers, patience, and encouragement have shaped my journey over these past years. This was not a journey I walked alone. So many of you have accompanied me, challenged me, prayed for me, taught me, and reminded me again and again of God's grace.



I am also grateful for the clergy colleagues, mentors, family, and friends who gathered with us to celebrate this milestone. I was especially moved by the presence of friends who had once stepped away from church communities but came to Grace that day and experienced hospitality, welcome, and belonging. Hearing that their spirits were touched and renewed reminded me of something important: **the church is at its best when people encounter grace and discover that there is a place for them.**

God's Spirit was present throughout the day in worship, in the prayers and blessings, in the music, in the laughter and tears, in conversations around tables, and in the fellowship we shared afterward. It was a powerful reminder that the church is not simply a building or an institution. **The church is people, woven together by God's grace, learning to love God and our neighbors together.**

Throughout seminary, candidacy, and my internship, I dreamed about the possibility of becoming a pastor. Yet I could never have imagined the way God would bring everything together with such grace, joy, and abundance. The journey included challenges, growth, mistakes, learning, discernment, and countless reminders of God's faithfulness.

Ordination and installation were not the finish line. They marked another beginning.

As we move forward together, my prayer is that we continue to dream boldly about what God is calling Grace Lutheran Church to become. May we remain open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. May we continue creating spaces where people know they belong. May we listen to our neighbors, serve alongside them, welcome those who have felt pushed away, and discover new ways to put God's love into action.

There is still so much for us to discover together.

Thank you, Grace Lutheran Church, for your kindness, your trust, your support, and your love. It is a blessing and an honor to serve as your pastor and, even more importantly, to serve **alongside you** as together we follow where the Holy Spirit leads.

May we keep dreaming, walking, serving, and growing together trusting that God is already ahead of us, beside us, and among us.

Love you ALL.

A Day of Grace, Gratitude and God's Faithfulness, continued



Lutheran World Relief Quilting and Kits - Grace Quilters

by Janet Labes

Grace Quilters have been meeting throughout the summer and finished about 75 quilts, getting ready for the next shipment for Lutheran World Relief at the end of October.

Quilt #12,100 was finished on August 13. Thanks to all the quilting helpers, it only took four months to make 100 quilts. Our goal is about 300 quilts per year, so we are on schedule.

Quilters coordinate the LWR School Kits project. Watch for lists of items to contribute to be included in the kits. Financial gifts to purchase items can be given through your offerings, designated LWR SCHOOL KITS.

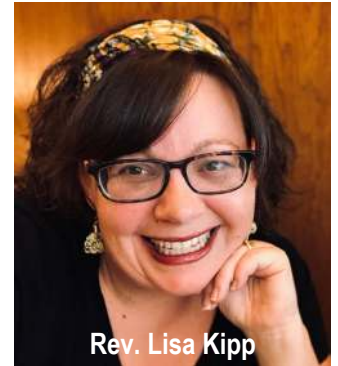
Quilters are looking forward to the visit of LWR Representative Pastor Lisa Kipp to Grace on Sunday, September 27, to hear her preach and to share the latest stories of work of LWR.

LWR School Kits will be packed during the Faith Formation hour on that day. Come and help with a fun hands-on project to be a part of LWR service and hear more stories.

Lutheran World Relief has recently announced that they will be assisting with Disaster Relief for the Spokane wildfires this summer. Monetary gifts from Grace and individual donors, as well as quilts and kits help neighbors near and far in times of need.

We continue to be thankful for all the fabrics donated to make quilts. We are always ready to accept more fabric, primarily cottons, to put it to good use. If you know someone who is downsizing fabric collections, tell them about us.

Quilters meet in the Fellowship Hall on Thursday mornings, 9:00 am to Noon. Anyone is welcome to come at any time. There are several tasks in putting quilts together, and you do not need to know how to sew. We enjoy good fellowship at the same time.



Rev. Lisa Kipp



LWR School Kits A collection box for donated items is located in the Fireside Room. **Amazon wish list available...use orange QR code.** Items needed: **crayons** (box of 16 or 24), **rulers** (30 cm./or cm one side, inches on the other), **blue or black pens** (no gel), **pencil sharpeners**, **scissors** (blunt tipped), **erasers** (2 1/2"). **If interested in giving monetary gift, please note on your check in the memo line 'school kits'.** Questions, contact Shirley at twite5@comcast.net



Confirmation News

by Pastor Rachel Swenson

We're looking forward to another great year of being the church together, flourishing in our **identity, belonging** and **purpose** as followers of Christ - and growing in the midst of our confirmation experience! The formation that happens in these unique years in the lives of our middle schoolers is pretty spectacular to witness. Our confirmands continue to bless our whole family of faith as we spend intentional time together sharing and learning about Biblical themes and stories, major parts of worship, and what it means to be Christ followers every day.

During the school-year, we gather roughly twice monthly on Wednesday nights from 6:30 to 7:30pm. Middle School and High School combined Youth Group will also continue to meet weekly every Wednesday, led by Pastor Salvador (see page 28 for details).

This year we continue what we began last year - a three year curriculum journey, with grades 6 & 7 meeting together and grade 8 meeting separately to work on all things Faith Project. Grades 6 & 7 will focus on Year B this year, returning to Year A next year, with grade 8 focusing on Year C every year.

Year A - Identity: Who am I? What does it mean to me to be a follower of Christ?

Year B - Belonging: Where do I fit? What does it mean to me to be Lutheran?

Year C - Purpose: What difference can I make? How am I called to serve God and my neighbor?

Our confirmation year culminates in Confirmation Sunday and our Faith Fair, held on **May 16, 2027**, when our 8th graders present the Faith Projects they've been working on all year and experience the rite of confirmation.

Our sessions on Wednesday nights begin September 9 from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. Acolyte Training for incoming 6th graders/ reminder for everyone else will be the same night after our session.

Parents, grandparents, families of all shapes and sizes are key to the impact of our confirmation ministry. Your own relationship with God and how you tell that story to all our kids has great impact. None of this is possible without all of us at the table. May we all feel the transformation of God's grace and love in our lives!

Please keep our confirmands in prayer as we begin a new year of faithful formation and discovery!

Acolyte Electronic Sign-Ups

We have officially moved our acolyte scheduling into a digital format! If you have an acolyte in your family (6-8 graders), please reach out to Pastor Rachel for instructions on how to get connected in that space.

Children's Church

by Pastor Rachel Swenson

The beginning of the school year means we're excited to get Children's Church back up and running in September! Children's Church tells the same story as we hear in worship – just told in a way that a 5-year-old can understand it. Children's Church isn't a time to "quiet down" worship – it's a chance for kids to grasp on to the scripture, witness in ways that make sense to them. As one kiddo put it last year, "Grandma, we learned all about Jesus today and let me tell you the whole story..." Children's Church gives our kids (preschool-5th grade) the chance to hear the scripture story, share in fellowship together, and engage in a craft or game that helps make the scripture real and engaging. It's a joy and delight to spend time together each Sunday!

Children's Church needs you! Children's Church meets during worship every week September - May for 15-20 minutes and walks alongside pre-school-5th graders. Our kiddos and their faith journeys need you! Contact Pastor Rachel - pastorrachel@gotgrace.com if interested in joining as a leader.



Upcoming Worship Series

September #flourishinconnectionandservice

September 6 – One Service at 9:30 am

September 13 – All In Sunday – Blessing of Fall Ministry

September 20 – One Service at 9:30 am – Ministry Showcase Event

September 27 – Rev. Lisa Kipp & LWR plus School Kit Assembly Event



October #flourishendures

Special Notes: All month the special focus is on our discipleship growth journey – practical tools and steps for growth will be shared!

Series Motto: *Rooted in Christ. Strengthened Through Trials. Faithful to the End.*

Series Theme Verse:

"Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."
Hebrews 12:1-2 (NRSV)

Series Vision

Jesus never promised His disciples an easy journey. He promised His presence, His Spirit, and His victory. In a world marked by uncertainty, suffering, and distraction, flourishing disciples are not those who avoid hardship—they are those who remain faithful through it. Like deeply rooted trees that withstand storms, enduring disciples grow stronger because their lives are anchored in Christ.

This four-week series equips the congregation to cultivate resilient faith, steadfast hope, and joyful perseverance.

October 4 – Rooted to Endure (Thrivent & Lighthouse Ministry Highlight)

October 11 – Enduring Through Trials (Flourish Gathering)

October 18 – Encouraged to Endure Together

October 25 – Finishing Well (Reformation)



November #generouslife

November 1 – All Saints Sunday

Three week Generosity Series Theme:
Living with Open Hands, Open Hearts, and Open Lives

November 8 – Living with Open Hands

November 15 – Living with Open Hearts

November 22 – Living Committed Lives (Flourish Cards) (Pumpkin Pie event)



Series Tagline "Freely We Have Received. Freely We Give."

Series Theme Verse *"You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us."* — **2 Corinthians 9:11 (NRSV)**

Series Vision Generosity is not simply about giving money—it is a way of life shaped by the generous heart of God. Jesus calls His followers to live with open hands, recognizing that everything we have is a gift entrusted to us for the blessing of others and the glory of God.

This three-week generosity series culminates in **Commitment Sunday**, with the giving of our Flourish Cards for 2027.

Upcoming Worship Series, continued

November 29 to January 3 - #Awe and Wonder

Special Notes: for Advent and through Christmas, the theme is Awe and Wonder. In a world of distraction and discouragement, we bolster our faith on a journey to rediscover our awe and wonder in the Gospel story of infant Jesus.

**"What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb,
If I were a Wise Man I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give Him, Give my heart."
Poem by Christina Rossetti "In the Bleak Midwinter"**

Series Theme:

"When we slow down to behold Christ, our hearts are filled with awe and our lives are transformed by wonder."

Series Theme Verse

"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." — John 1:14 (NRSV)

Series Vision

Advent invites us to slow down and recover the sense of awe that often gets lost amid the busyness of the season. In a culture of rushing, decorating, shopping, and scheduling, the Church is called to pause and marvel at the greatest mystery in history: God has come to dwell among us. May all of us have a life-changing encounter with the living God.

November 29 (Advent 1) - The Wonder of Hope

December 6 (Advent 2) - The Wonder of Peace

December 13 (Advent 3) - The Wonder of Joy

December 20 (Advent 4) - The Wonder of Love

Las Posada Christmas Party

December 24 (Christmas Eve 4:00, 6:00, and 8:00 pm) -

The Wonder of God With Us

December 25 (Christmas Day 10:00 am) - The Wonder of God With Us

December 27 (One Service at 9:30 am) - The Wonder of God With Us



You Are Welcome | Esta Es Tu Casa

by Pastor Salvador Cossio

English

Fall is coming, and in a world that too often pushes people toward loneliness and isolation, here at Grace we want to create a **safe, welcoming space where everyone can experience belonging and community.**

If you know someone who is looking for a place to worship in Spanish, study the Bible in Spanish, build relationships, or simply find a community where they are welcomed, please invite them to join us.

There is a place for you here. You belong. You are welcome.

Español

Se acerca el otoño, y en un mundo que muchas veces empuja a las personas hacia la soledad y el aislamiento, aquí en Grace queremos crear un **espacio seguro y acogedor donde todos puedan experimentar comunidad y sentido de pertenencia.**

Si conoces a alguien que esté buscando un lugar para adorar en español, estudiar la Biblia en español, crear nuevas relaciones o simplemente encontrar una comunidad donde sea bienvenido, invítalo a acompañarnos.

Aquí hay un lugar para ti. Aquí perteneces. Eres bienvenido. Esta es tu casa.

Sunday Faith Formation @ 9:45 -10:45 am

by Pastor Rachel Swenson

As the leaves begin to change and the rhythm of fall settles in, we are reminded that every season brings an invitation to grow. This fall, Adult Faith Formation invites us to **Flourish**—to explore what it means to grow in faith, deepen our relationships, and discover God's presence in the ordinary places of our lives.

Flourishing doesn't mean having everything figured out. It means making room for God to work in us and through us, even in seasons of change, uncertainty, or new beginnings. Together, we'll have opportunities to learn, ask questions, share our stories, serve our community, and reflect on how our faith shapes the way we live and love.



As we enter this new season, we hope you'll join us as we **Flourish together**—rooted in God's grace, connected to one another, and open to where the Spirit is leading us. Come as you are, and let's see what can grow when we make space for identity, belonging, and purpose.

Join us!

September

- 13 – ALL IN Sunday Breakfast and Fellowship
- 20 – Ministry Showcase @ 10:30 am
- 27 – LWR School Kits & Pastor Lisa Kipp

October

- 4 – Lighthouse Ministries Project
- 11 – Flourish Focus Sunday
- 18 – Music Ministry Focus led with Geoffrey Boers
- 25 – Reformation Sunday led by Geoffrey Boers

November

- 1 – All Saints Stories & Reflection
- 8 – Thrivent Charitable Planning Conversation & Lighthouse Ministries Kits and Doughnuts
- 15 – Kitchen Sink with Pastor Chad Johnson
- 22 – Praise and Pumpkin Pie (Commitment Weekend—No programming)
- 29 – First Sunday in Advent—Bible Study with Ken Onstot

ALL IN - September 13



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

ALL IN

Sunday, September 13

Worship & Backpack Blessings 8:30 & 11:00

Breakfast available between services

GOTGRACE.COM

Saturday Seekers Bible Study

by Pastor Rachel Swenson



SATURDAY SEEKERS
Bible Study

Saturday Seekers gather with the intention of diving deep into scripture, awakening our imagination and listening to the Holy Spirit. Vivian Kauth has been fearlessly leading us through a deep dive into the story of the apostles after Jesus ascends to heaven and the creation of the early church. Each gathering, we all gain new insights into the realities of the early church, what the apostles were facing, and how God's Spirit wove through it all. Each time we gather, we read through portions of the book, pause for questions or insights, and listen to the movement of the Spirit alive and well amongst us.

Join us as we study the book of Acts and deep dive into the early church and what it has to teach us about how to be the church today. We begin again on September 19 at 9:30 am. Join in on our shared exploration of the story of faith we've inherited and how we are to live into it.

September 19, October 17, November 21 & December 19

9:30 - 11:00 am | Upper Room

Questions? Contact Vivan Kauth at vj.kauth@comcast.net

Vacation Bible School

by Pastor Rachel Swenson

What an incredible year in VBS as we explored Rainforest Falls and all about how wonderful God is! We learned all about how God is our creator, that God created places as wild and diverse as the rainforest, and that God created each of us to be unique, diverse and totally special. God knows what an ants eye looks like, what a moths wing feels like, and God knows exactly what's going on in our hearts, our minds, and our spirits. God knows everything! And even though God knows everything, God still loves us. Which means that no matter what questions we have, what grumpiness we feel, or what loneliness we're worried about, God still loves us and wants the best for us. We learned together about what it means for God to be our safe place. We grounded ourselves in scripture by learning that God is our refuge. We encountered King David himself in our bible adventuring, got to try and untangle Dr. Flutterby from his butterfly net, and learned about what it means to be safe places for other people. We talked about how God's love covers all of us no matter what and that every single person is loved by God. We had a ton of fun in games, crafts, and sharing in snack time. We talked about the joys of God's foreverness all around us and the joys of God's foreverness that continues even after our lives come to an end. A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who made it possible to have such an incredible experience at Rainforest Falls! God is so good and all we can say after such a fun week is WOW GOD!!



Vacation Bible School (VBS)



Waterland Festival and Parade



Thanks to all who made it out to The Waterland Parade! What a great turn out for our small town! Loved loving on our community and spreading smiles and cheer. It was so much fun seeing Grace members, Preschool students, and Grace Children's Center kiddos and their families. A joyful day full of all the things that make our great town so unique. Keep your ears out to join in next year!



Youth Summer Fun!



Take Me Out To the Ball Game!



Senior Sunday



Pastor Salvador's Ordination & Installation



Lazy F Ranch Retreat!



Synod Gathering on Generosity

by Diane Nelson

"Pocket books are moral documents"

These words from guest speaker Tim Brown grabbed my attention at the recent Synod Gathering on Generosity. I spent most of Tim's presentation on the edge of my seat and I want to share my notes because so much of what he shared caught my attention.

Tim shared **14 Kinds of Stewardship**.

This list extended past the traditional aspects I'd grown up with. What comes to mind as you review this list?

- 1) Financial – how we use our pocketbooks
- 2) Voice – how we advocate for our neighbors
- 3) Relationship – how we interact with our neighbors
- 4) Land – how we use our property
- 5) Mission Wellspring – how we utilize our space
- 6) Body – how we steward our health
- 7) Creation – how we care for our world
- 8) Collective Body – how we care for and connect with our community
- 9) Praise – how we connect with God
- 10) Time – how we use our hours
- 11) Social Media – how we steward our online presence
- 12) Call – how we care for our purpose
- 13) I.T. – how we steward our tech/tools
- 14) Message – how do we steward God's message?

Stewardship is all that follows "I BELIEVE..."

"Why are we generous? It is a taught concept. A lot of us are taught at an early age to *conserve*."

I was definitely someone who was taught to conserve and grew up in a household that modeled this. You never knew what surprise could be around the next corner, so my parents saved, saved, saved! Additionally, since I was a child, I was taught to give 10% to the church. My siblings and I received our allowance in dimes to make this as easy as possible for us!

"Generosity is paradox. Both giver and receiver get something out of it. Good in the moment and in long term."

Tim shared bar charts that looked at generosity in

relation to happiness. This wasn't just in the generosity of money, but also in time and volunteering. The statistics were clear. Generosity makes people happier as they look beyond themselves. Those who were not generous, those who had been taught to conserve and reflect inward, were the least happy on the list.

"Generosity does not usually work in the simple, zero-sum, win-lose ways. The results of generosity are often instead unexpected, counterintuitive, win-win... in clear, significant ways strong enough to make a difference in people's lives."

I think Grace gets this. I know the Summer Mission Trips have made a difference in the lives of my own kids and so many others in our youth program. Our generosity moments where we learn about the work happening in India, Haiti, El Salvador and Guatemala (just to name a few) continue these stories of transformation. I am grateful Grace Ministry Fund makes us all participants in this generosity.

Generosity is a discipleship practice – Then, Tim shared one of those "mic-drop" type of statements. What a difference moving a few words around in a sentence can have.

"We need to practice our ways into new ways of thinking or being."

We don't think ourselves into new ways of practicing."

"Who taught **you** to be generous? Send them a message and thank them." Tim paused and had us get out our phones and send a text to that person right then and there!

My Dad passed away several years ago, so I used this for a time of reflection and gratitude. Such a simple exercise was very meaningful for me, and happened in the form of a prayer.

Take time to thank that person. Go ahead, do it!

Tim shared a few closing statements. "Make your life the first life you save. Understand that, you do not live for yourself." Lastly, "Generosity is a way we make this place beautiful. It is not what God wants from us, but **for us**."

Want more? Let's chat. Diane Nelson, Finance Specialist – diane@gotgrace.com

Global Hunger Explained: Who, What, Why and How You Can Help



Without a regular food source, Aisata Dicko is forced to rely on donations from neighbors in Mali's capital city of Bamako. (Jake Lyell for LWR)

Hunger is a universal crisis. Even though *our world produces more than enough food to feed its 8.3 billion inhabitants*, hunger remains a constant and heartbreaking reality for a massive portion of the global population.

Roughly 1 in 11 of our neighbors face chronic hunger, while nearly 2.4 billion are considered food insecure, meaning they lack consistent access to food. The crisis disproportionately affects the most vulnerable, including women and children and those living in rural communities. It touches God's children in every corner of our planet, and creates long-standing effects on health outcomes, economic development and even perpetuates conflict.

Hunger is a complex and ubiquitous global challenge. The reasons behind the crisis are complex, but understanding them more deeply is the first step toward a lasting and credible solution. Below you will learn more about hunger — WHO it impacts, WHERE it's happening, WHY it continues, and HOW you are helping families thrive and build greater resilience in face of it.

WHO hunger impacts



Most days, two-year-old Mariatu in Sierra Leone has only one meal a day — a cup of dry rice split among six family members.

Hunger's grip is the tightest on the most vulnerable.

While poverty is a global issue, severe food insecurity is concentrated in regions where compounding crises — conflict *and* drought, displacement *and* disasters — make it incredibly difficult for families to survive.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the region most affected, where unpredictable weather and conflict often disrupt access to food and agricultural supplies. Disaster-prone areas in **Southern Asia** are also home to a staggering number of people facing hunger. Often referred to as the "Dry Corridor," communities in countries like Guatemala and Honduras in **Central America** face extended periods of extreme heat and unpredictable rainfall that destroy crops year after year.

Because of your love, Lutheran World Relief works in some of

the hardest places to access, reaching the most vulnerable neighbors. We have seen firsthand in many of these communities the devastation that hunger causes families, and how it keeps them trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty.

WHAT causes hunger

The forces driving global hunger

Hunger is rarely caused by just one thing. It is often a combination of catastrophic factors that push vulnerable families to the brink.

Conflict and Displacement

Conflict is the main driver of hunger in

most of the world's food crises today. When violence breaks out, farmers are forced to abandon their fields, local markets close, and roads used to transport food are destroyed. The war in Ukraine, a country which is a major grain exporter, disrupted global food supplies in ways that were felt by farmers oceans away. But hunger also perpetuates violence, increasing fighting as resources decrease. Most people facing severe food crises live in countries torn apart from conflict.

Extreme Weather

Extreme weather, like extended droughts, floods and powerful storms, is happening more often and with greater intensity. For small-scale farmers who rely on rainfall for their crops, one bad season can wipe out an entire year's worth of food and income. In East Africa, for example, long droughts have devastated livestock, leaving families with no way to get nourishment or earn a living.

Economic Instability

Soaring food prices and economic crises can make food impossible to afford, even when it's available. The most vulnerable families are hit the hardest because they spend the largest portion of their income on food. When prices suddenly increase, they are forced to buy less food or choose cheaper, less nutritious options to get by. In Mali, rising fertilizer costs meant farmers had to buy less costly and less effective varieties, or go without. As a result, crop production went down and farmers had fewer crops to sell, and even fewer to feed their own families.



After Claudine and her family narrowly escaped rebel violence by fleeing their home village in the Democratic Republic of Congo, only to arrive in a displacement camp to face another threat — hunger.

Global Hunger Explained, continued

WHY hunger continues

The systemic causes of hunger's persistence

While conflict and extreme weather trigger hunger crises, deeper, systemic problems allow hunger to continue.

Poverty and Inequality

Poverty and inequality are at the heart of the hunger crisis. Our neighbors are hungry not because there's not enough food, but because they cannot afford or access it. Women are especially affected. In many cultures, they have less access to land, loans and education, which makes them more vulnerable to hunger even though they are often the ones growing food for their families.



Born into Nepal's lowest caste, Jayantri used LWR's training and flood-resilient banana saplings to transform his flooded land into a thriving livelihood.

Broken and Inequitable Systems

In many regions, a large amount of food is lost before it ever gets to a family's table. Unpredictable weather, inadequate storage, poor infrastructure, and lack of knowledge around resilient seeds or pest and water management mean that a significant portion of harvests can spoil or be destroyed before even being sold. And for those who can bring their crops to market, it's usually not at a scale or quality that makes them attractive to the larger players that control market forces in a region. Addressing these larger systemic issues surrounding hunger is critical to creating sustainable and meaningful change. It involves working in collaboration with local community leaders, governments and organizations on multiple levels.

HOW hunger keeps our neighbors in poverty

The effects of hunger reach far beyond the physical pain of an empty belly. They create ripples that can harm individuals for a lifetime and trap entire communities in a cycle of poverty that becomes almost impossible to break free from.

Immediate Effects

In the short term, severe hunger leads to acute malnutrition, where the body starts to break down its own tissue for energy. This leaves people, especially children, dangerously weak and vulnerable to illness. A common cold that a healthy child could easily fight off can become deadly for a child who is malnourished. Mentally, hunger makes it impossible to focus. Parents can't work effectively, and children struggle to learn in school. In fact, in our work in Sierra Leone, a lack of food is cited as a top barrier keeping girls from attending and succeeding at school.

Long-Term Consequences

While short-term effects can often be reversed through nutritional and medical interventions, the long-term damage caused by hunger is often permanent. An extended lack of nutrition in early childhood causes stunting, which impairs growth and development. Stunted children often face cognitive delays that limit their ability to learn and earn a living as adults.

This creates a cycle that can last for generations. When children cannot reach their full potential, their entire community's economic future suffers. Hunger costs billions of dollars annually — including lost productivity, higher public and private health care costs, even reduced GDP levels — making it even harder for the countries and communities most affected to escape poverty. These impacts make hunger not only a humanitarian crisis, but a global economic one as well.

HOW you help hungry neighbors

Your love creates real and lasting solutions

Ending hunger is not just about meeting urgent needs — it's about equipping families with the knowledge, resources, and support to grow their resilience in times of uncertainty and thrive for generations to come. Your compassion and generosity make both immediate relief and lasting progress possible for suffering communities.

SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS: SAVING LIVES NOW

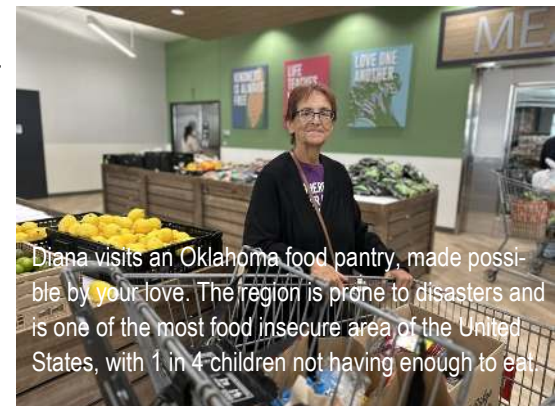
When disaster hits — whether it's conflict, drought or severe storms — your support delivers real hope and tangible help right when families need it most.

Emergency food assistance

Your support enables Lutheran World Relief to respond to our neighbors in their greatest time of need, providing emergency food, cash

transfers and essential supplies to families who have lost their crops or been uprooted by crisis. In South Sudan, thousands of families fled violence only to become

severely malnourished on the harrowing journey to safety. Your love welcomed them upon their arrival in displacement camps with immediate sustenance, including ready-to-eat therapeutic



Diana visits an Oklahoma food pantry, made possible by your love. The region is prone to disasters and is one of the most food insecure area of the United States, with 1 in 4 children not having enough to eat.

Global Hunger Explained, continued

food to treat severe malnutrition. Closer to home, you fed those affected by severe weather across the United States through food pantries and cash transfers, which ensure local economies are supported while neighbors have the dignity of choice.

Supporting health and nutrition

LWR partners with local organizations to ensure that mothers and young children receive vital nutritional support during crisis situations and beyond. In Guatemala's Western Highlands, your generosity empowered training and education, teaching families to promote exclusive breastfeeding, introduce diverse foods for young children, and provide clean water and sanitation. As a result, 100% of children under six months of age were exclusively breastfed, and all young children accessed more varied, nutritious food.

These rapid interventions save lives and set the stage for recovery — allowing families to weather crises with dignity and resilience.

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS: BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR TOMORROW



Coffee farmer Bessy in Honduras is learning organic and sustainable agricultural practices, which will improve her product and open her access to specialty and international markets.

Real and lasting change is possible when you invest in families and communities, empowering them to build a brighter, hunger-free future.

Improved agricultural practices

From the dry regions of Central America to the Sahel in Africa, your love teaches farmers how to adapt to changing weather, conserve water, and diversify crops with weather-resilient seeds and sustainable farming methods. In Burkina Faso, LWR has supported sesame farmers to cultivate more than 341,000 acres using improved agricultural practices. As a result, farmers have sold 166,354 metric tons of high-quality sesame, valued at \$243 million — up from just \$2.8 million in 2016.

Strengthening local economies

LWR doesn't stop at helping farmers produce more food; we connect producers to markets and provide training in business and post-harvest practices. In Central America's coffee and cocoa sectors, tens of thousands of producers have been trained in everything from improved farming to cooperative marketing and digital tools. These skills have enabled families not only to earn more, but also to invest in their children's education and design brighter futures.

Equipping women farmers

Women produce half of the world's food — up to 80% in some countries — yet own less than 20% of farmland. If women had the same access to resources as men, farm yields could increase by 20–30%, feeding an additional 100 to 150 million people. For over 70 years, LWR has partnered with women farmers, knowing their success transforms entire communities. Your support helps women improve crops, adopt better techniques and connect with buyers who pay fair prices. LWR collaborates with farmers, businesses, and governments to create equitable markets that feed families and improve lives. In Ukraine, your generosity has enabled farmers to rebuild after losing everything in the war. Thanks to your support, farming families have received essential supplies, training for sustainable production and micro-grants to grow their businesses. These efforts strengthen farming communities' resilience against the economic impacts of conflict.

You are the engine of change

Your support isn't just felt today — it breaks the cycle of hunger for tomorrow. Each program, partnership and training is designed to bring lasting progress, so families can provide for their children and build flourishing communities.

Your generosity powers both emergency responses and long-term solutions, from providing cash transfers to neighbors devastated by tornadoes to weather-resistant seeds and training on improved agricultural practices for farmers in disaster-prone communities.

Together, we can create a world where every family has the resources and dignity to thrive— today and for generations to come.

Youth Summer Camp: Planting Seeds of Trust

by Pastor Salvador Cossio

This year, **58 people, 35 youth and 23 adults, showed up for Summer Camp** ready to plant seeds of **hope, love, kindness, and belonging**, and to create a safe place where our youth could simply be themselves, build relationships, and experience God's love.

Our main theme for the week was **"Trust."** Together, we explored what it means to **trust Jesus, trust one another, and trust the people God places in our lives.** We learned that trust does not happen instantly. Like a seed, it needs to be planted, cared for, and given time to grow, and even if we don't trust, Jesus will still show up in our lives.

There was plenty of fun along the way! Our games brought laughter and teamwork. Our time at the lake, swimming, inner tubing, and simply hanging out together gave us opportunities to enjoy God's creation. And our meals? They were better than an all-inclusive hotel! Our incredible kitchen crew made sure everyone was well fed and deeply loved.

But the best part of camp was not the activities, the lake, or even the food. **It was the friendships and relationships we built together.** Youth and adults shared meals, conversations, laughter, worship, games, and moments of vulnerability. We discovered that when we create a community where people feel safe and know they belong, trust begins to grow.

Even watching the **meteor shower together** took on a deeper meaning. Under a sky filled with stars and streaks of light, surrounded by friends who had spent the week learning to trust one another, we were reminded of how big God's creation is and yet how deeply connected we are to God and to each other.

We came to camp to talk about trust. We left having **practiced trust.**

The seeds planted during this week will continue to grow long after camp is over. Seeds of hope. Seeds of kindness. Seeds of friendship. Seeds of faith. And seeds that remind every young person:

You are loved. You are safe here. You belong. And you do not walk through life alone.



A collage of 15 photographs capturing various activities at a school event. The images are arranged in a grid-like fashion. Top row: a blue school bus parked on a road; a student sitting on the steps of a blue school bus; a student kicking a soccer ball on a grass field; a group of students playing soccer, with one student holding a large soccer ball. Second row: a student holding a large soccer ball; two students sitting at a table eating; a student playing volleyball on a grass field. Third row: a student playing guitar; a student swinging a bat on a baseball field; a student playing volleyball on a grass field. Fourth row: a student playing basketball; a student playing tennis; a student playing badminton. Fifth row: a student playing table tennis; a student playing pool; a student playing mini-golf; a student playing air hockey; a student playing ping-pong. The photos show students engaged in various sports and activities, with some images showing students playing together and others showing individual students performing or playing.



Sign Up for Upcoming Youth Retreat: November 6 - 8

We are excited to share that this year we will be joining our Lutheran siblings from across the Northwest Washington Synod for the Middle School and High School Fall Retreat at Black Diamond Camp!

November 6–8, 2026
Black Diamond Camp

This is going to be an awesome weekend of faith, fun, fellowship, worship, games, and building new friendships with middle and high school youth from Lutheran congregations throughout our synod.

We need to reserve our spaces early! Space for the retreat is limited, so we encourage families to register as soon as registration becomes available. Reserving early will help make sure everyone from Grace who wants to participate has a spot. Here is the registration link: <https://gotgrace.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3806698> or use the QR code.



I am really excited for our youth to experience the wider church and to discover that our Lutheran family is much bigger than our own congregation. We belong to one another, and retreats like this are a wonderful opportunity to experience that!

For more information or questions, please contact Pastor Salvador at pastorsalvador@gotgrace.com.

We hope you can join us for this phenomenal weekend!

Youth Calendar

**Wednesday Groove Nights start
at 6:00 pm with family-style dinner
Sunday Connections 9:45 am**

September

Wednesdays:

September 2	Groove night
September 9	Groove night (Parent Meeting at 6:30 PM)
September 16	Groove night
September 23	Groove night
September 30	Groove night

Sundays:

September 6	One worship service at 9:30 AM; no Sunday Connections
September 13	Sunday Connections
September 20	One worship service at 9:30 AM; no Sunday Connections
September 27	Sunday Connections

October

Wednesdays:

October 7	Groove night
October 14	Groove night
October 21	Groove night
October 28	Groove night

Sundays:

October 4	Sunday Connections
October 11	Sunday Connections
October 18	Sunday Connections
October 25	Sunday Connections

November

Wednesdays:

November 4	Groove night
November 6–8	Synod-wide Fall Middle School & High School Retreat
November 11	Groove night
November 18	Groove night
November 25	No Groove night, Thanksgiving week

Sundays:

November 1	Sunday Connections
November 8	Sunday Connections (a few will be at the Synod-wide fall retreat)
November 15	Sunday Connections
November 22	Sunday Connections

Fall Retreat for Women - October 3

QR Code to Register



**2026 Fall Retreat – Seek Inspiration
NWWA Synodical Women's Organization of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

Saturday – October 3rd / 9 am ~ 4 pm
(Doors open @ 8:30 am for registration)

Our Saviors Lutheran Church
215 W Mukilteo Blvd, Everett, WA 98203

Please join with women from our Synod as we learn & grow as Women of the ELCA
Our speaker will be Pastor Kacey Hahn of St Matthew's Lutheran in Renton

Lunch & Snacks will be provided
We will have time to visit and meet new friends and to catch up with other WELCA friends
We'll have Inspirational Activities and end our time together with Worship and much more

Registration form attached. For questions contact Millie Fosberg @ 360 941 4742 or nwwaswopresident@gmail.com

OUR PURPOSE

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

PROPÓSITO

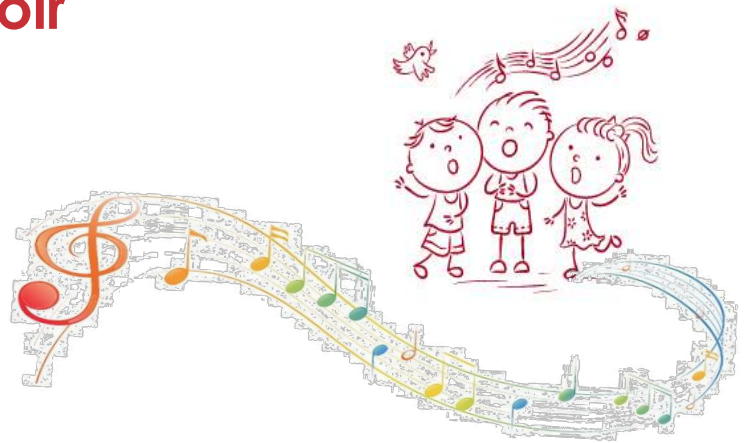
Como comunidad de mujeres creadas a imagen de Dios, llamadas a convertirnos en discípulas de Jesucristo, y fortalecidas por el Espíritu Santo, nos comprometemos a crecer en la fe, afirmar nuestros dones, apoyarnos las unas a las otras en nuestras respectivas vocaciones, involucrarnos en el ejercicio del ministerio y la acción, y promover la sanación y la integridad en la iglesia, la sociedad, y el mundo.

Kids of the Kingdom Choir

Kids of the Kingdom Choir

First rehearsal is
Monday, September 7
5:30 pm

Questions? Email Jason at
jason.astrup@gmail.com



Handbells at Grace

Handbells at Grace

SERVE and make music with Handbells!
There are handbell choirs for kids, youth, and
adults of all ages and skill levels. Sign up today.

Jubilant Ringers (Grades 6-12)

Sunday 6:30 - 8:00 pm starting September 20 (tentative*)

This is our most advanced youth handbell choir. Participation is by director invitation. Participants are high school students who have 4-5+ years of musical experience and have demonstrated a long-term commitment to the handbell program.

Joyful Ringers (Grades 3-8)

Monday 6:15 - 7:15 pm starting September 14

Open to all upper elementary and middle school kids. Children with little or no prior musical experience are welcome to join. This is a fun opportunity to make new friends while learning how to play a new musical instrument.

Resounding Grace Ringers (Grade 9-Adult)

Monday 7:15 - 8:45 pm starting September 21 (tentative*)

Open to adults of all ages, and to any high school student participating in the Jubilant Ringers.

*Rehearsal times for the Jubilant Ringers and Resounding Grace are tentative and may need to change before our first rehearsal. If you are interested in joining either of these groups, please contact Brian Tervo at bells@gotgrace.com so he can provide you any updates made to our schedule.

KidREACH

by Amy Sylvester



...changing the world,
one child at a time!

KidREACH Tutoring starts back up in October, our first session with students will be October 1! On September 24 we encourage all returning and new tutors as well as those curious-about-tutoring to join us from 6:00 - 7:30 pm for KidREACH Orientation and Training. This year we are excited to now offer meals to our students before tutoring begins. If you would like to help with providing a meal for our students, or would like more information about tutoring, please contact Amy Sylvester at 206.979.1665 or amysdahlias@aol.com. Come make a difference in the life of a child!

KidREACH
Relating, Educating And Communicating Hope



GriefShare

by Diane Nelson

GRIEF SHARE Group at Grace

Healing from loss is a journey...

Everyone experiences grief differently...

There's no "right way" to grieve

Feeling angry or full of regret? Are you depressed and wondering how to heal? Do you walk around in a mental fog? All this is normal. And while your grief journey is unique, you'll find many grieving people are facing the same struggles. And others who've gone before you can help.

Grief cannot be rushed

You may wish you could bypass the difficult emotions or push down the pain. Or maybe others are pressuring you to "get up and move on." But healing from grief and loss requires you to go through your grief. We have resources that can help you find relief and stability.

Finding support is crucial

Grief is a journey that shouldn't be traveled alone. You may feel like no one understands and be tempted to isolate, but as counselor David Bueno Martin says, "Healing happens in the context of finding others who can help you." A GriefShare group is a safe place to find support.

We are blessed by Louise Luberts and her passion to lead GriefShare Groups at Grace. Here are the upcoming schedule of events:

Loss of a Spouse One session on **Sunday, September 13 at 12:30 - 2:30 pm** in the Upper Room. This group is designed to help those who have lost a spouse to death. Our prayer is that this group will help you find peace, hope, and joy again.

Surviving the Holidays One session on **Sunday, November 1 at 12:30 - 2:30 pm** in the Upper Room.

GriefShare Video & Discussion Series meet **Sundays at 12:30 - 2:30 pm** in the Upper Room on the following dates: **September 27, October 4, 11, 18, *25, November 8, *15, 22, December 6, 13 and 20**. Join us and others who have lost a loved one. This is where we can learn to process the loss we have experienced. We welcome you to join at anytime during the sessions. Please know you will be in a place of loving kindness. Your workbook will be provided for you at the first session. God bless you!

Questions? Contact Louise Luberts at griefshare@gotgrace.com



A Message From Our Bishop

by Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee



On July 18, 1976 Pastor Nancy Winder was ordained into Word and Sacrament ministry. She was the first woman ordained in what was then the North Pacific District and the fourteenth woman ordained in the American Lutheran Church.

But Nancy and those thirteen women were not the first. We remember all the women who came before them. In scripture we remember Mary, the mother of Jesus, Elizabeth, Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene, Phoebe, Priscilla, Junea, Lydia, and all the unnamed women including the Samaritan woman at the well who ran to proclaim what she had seen and heard, becoming the first to declare Jesus as Lord.

Along with these women in scripture, we also remember the countless women in these last 2000 years – Hildegard, Katie Luther, Argula von Grumbach, Maria Stewart, Phoebe Palmer, Catherine Booth, Margaret Wold, and so many others who were called by the Holy Spirit to preach, teach, proclaim, lead, and serve. We give thanks for the myriad of gifts that God has poured out through women for the sake of the church and the life of the world.

I am so thankful for the many women in our lives who passed on their faith to us. The women who taught Sunday School, prepared the altar, made meals, visited those who were sick, and marched against injustice. The women theologians, mystics, and writers. The women who, in countless ways, proclaimed through word and deed the good news of Jesus.

Thank you to our sisters in Christ. Thank you for the ways you have lived out your faith in every vocation. Thank you to the women who have gone before us, to the women serving today, and to the women who continue to say yes to God's call – including those called into ordained ministry.

I wonder, do you remember the first time you heard a woman preach? The first time you heard an alto or soprano voice chanting the liturgy or saying the words of institution? I remember. I was twenty years old. Seeing and hearing someone who looked like me, who had a body like mine, made the gospel come alive in a way I hadn't experienced before. Truly, it changed my life.

This is why I grieve what is happening to some of our sisters in other denominations. In recent weeks, the Southern Baptist Convention voted at its annual assembly to further restrict women from teaching, preaching, and pastoral leadership. This means women ordained ten or twenty or fifty years ago may now find their callings denied by the very churches they have faithfully served. So many women – chosen, loved, called, sent – women with fire in their bellies to preach the gospel may no longer do so. Not by God, but by their denomination. Their silencing is not only a tragedy for them; it is a tragedy for the whole Church.

So today there is an urgency to remember, celebrate, and publicly proclaim, that women are called by God. Just as the Spirit came to Mary, who sang of the mighty brought down from their thrones, just as the Spirit sent Mary Magdalene to proclaim resurrection to the apostles, just as Lydia helped birth a community of believers, the Spirit has called and continues to call women in every age.

So, in joy, thankfulness, and celebration, let us give thanks for the women of the past, present, and future who continue to proclaim, teach, lead, and serve. For, as we read in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, "Since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart ... For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord."

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee | bishop@lutheransnw.org

Estudio Biblico en Grace | Bible Study at Grace

by Pastor Salvador Cossio

¡Estudiemus juntos la Biblia!

Te invitamos a un espacio para **conocer más de Jesús, de Dios y de su Espíritu**, hacer preguntas, compartir nuestras experiencias y descubrir juntos lo que significa seguir a Jesús.

También es una oportunidad para **conocernos mejor como comunidad**, construir amistades y descubrir un lugar donde todos podemos pertenecer.

Solo ven como eres.

Aquí perteneces. Eres bienvenido. Esta es tu casa.

Grace Lutheran Church | Estudio Bíblico en Español

Bible Study at Grace

Let's study the Bible together!

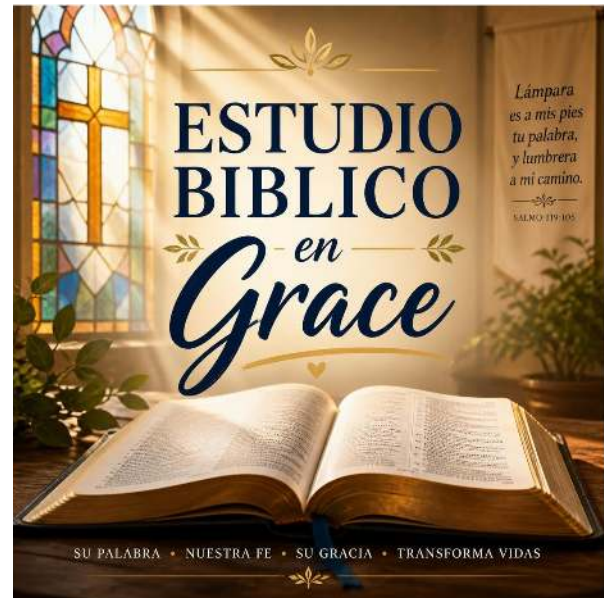
We invite you to a space where we can learn more about Jesus, God, and His Spirit; ask questions; share our experiences; and discover together what it means to follow Jesus.

It is also an opportunity to get to know one another better as a community, build friendships, and find a place where we all belong.

Just come as you are.

You belong here. You are welcome. This is your home.

Grace Lutheran Church | Spanish Bible Study



Thank You Building and Property Teams

by Paul Marth

As the warm summer days start to shorten, get more wet, and we begin to move back inside, I want to pause to thank our building and property ministry team members for their summer service.

Hans Pann and the building ministry team continues to “paint a little here, fix a little something there”, repairing and caring all over our campus.

Thank you Paul Twedt, Dusty Jones, Tim Jones, Jakob Twedt, Al Vraspir, Tim Willhite, and Pat Togher.

Thank you too, to our property team servants: Betty Lou Erickson, Jerry Kauth, Fred Detamore, Dave McGinnis, Bruce Bales, Rand Barnard, and TJ Johannsen who have served to keep our property fresh, beautiful, and welcoming.

I also want to acknowledge the members of Word of Truth, especially Tim Lvutin, for their ongoing partnership and service.

As you are probably aware, our buildings and property take a lot of work to keep beautiful. Without the service of these folks, and others, we simply couldn't do what we do. We are grateful for their gift of service. Thank you!



Called to Be Human: Introducing the LiVE Projects for 2026-2027

by Pastor David Hahn, Northwest Washington Synod, Director of Formation and Learning

What does it mean to be human?

Adrienne Marie Brown's book, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, notes nine principles:

1. Small is good, small is all. (The large is a reflection of the small.)
2. Change is constant. (Be like water.)
3. There is always enough time for the right work.
4. **There is a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it.**
5. Never a failure, always a lesson.
6. Trust the People. (If you trust the people, they become trustworthy.)
7. Move at the speed of trust. Focus on critical connections more than critical mass; build the resilience by building the relationships.
8. Less prep, more presence.
9. What you pay attention to grows.

Principle four has me thinking, what is the conversation we, as church, at this moment, need to be having? This year's LiVE Project theme is an answer to this: **Called to be Human**. What kind of people does our world need us to show up as in light of our life in Jesus?

Amid all the challenges, disagreements, polarities, fears and anxieties, the Spirit is calling the church to show up and wrestle with this question, and in ways that speak to the dignity of being human. This comes alongside a world, as we know, that is challenging that.

So, we're thrilled to introduce "**Called to Be Human**," as the theme guiding our entire LiVE Project program year. Across four retreats and two online courses, we'll explore what it means to live fully into our humanity in light of our Christian faith, our motivations and presuppositions, our affections and desires, our freedom, our consciousness, our conscience.

Why this theme, and why now? Because so much of our world, so many of the systems of our world, are, in fact, undermining our dignity as humans. The economic, political and even technological as AI and digital cultures, are dividing our attention and intentions to live with and for one another.

We ourselves are tempted to pick a side, a brand, a single story, and stick to it. But anyone who has actually paused to notice our life in Christ is so much more expansive. We are wonderfully, and beautifully made, as the Psalmist recalls.

There's a passage from *Inviting the Mystic, Supporting the Prophet*, by Katherine Dyckman and Patrick Carroll, that has been sitting with us as we've built this year's programming, and we want to share it with you:

Called to Be Human: Introducing the LiVE Projects for 2026-2027, continued

It is as if each human person constitutes a committee constantly sitting to decide life's questions and the behavior desired in a given situation. This committee has many members within₁ each voicing a particular slant-our fears₁ feelings₁ dreams₁ and hopes₁ our history and relationships₁ our memory₁ our various sub-personalities₁ and our reason. Hopefully₁ the chairperson of that committee is reason₁ deeply influenced and guided by affectivity.

Isn't that a wonderful image? A committee, constantly in session, full of competing voices, fear and hope, memory and dream, reason and feeling, all trying to have their say. And the goal isn't to silence any of them, but to listen well enough that a good chairperson (reason, guided by love) can help the whole gathering move toward a decision, a way of being in the world, that's actually *whole*.

The quote goes on:

Descriptively the task of a human person appears to become more and more integrated₁ whole₁ "together₁" within that on-going meeting. All the voices need to be heard and listened to. Ultimately₁ at their best₁ people make choices that chart the direction and₁ over time₁ develop the person. Since his ability and responsibility to choose is at the heart of human motivation the spiritual director aids another to reach a harmonious decision from this complex and fascinating committee.

That's the heart of what we mean by "**Called to Be Human.**" Not a call to have it all figured out. Not a call to quiet the noisy parts of ourselves. But a call to the ongoing, sacred work of listening, to every voice at the table, so that, choice by choice, we become more integrated, more whole, more truly *ourselves* in Christ.

This year's retreats and courses puts in conversation various members of that inner committee: our desires, our freedom, our conscience, our imagination, our history. We'll ask what it looks like that God is in these, in our community conversations, and with curiosity rather than judgment.

The truth is none of us chairs that committee alone. We are being led in the Spirit to wonder with more expansive imaginations, with our heads and hearts. We do it in relationship, with God, with each other, and with the communities we're called to serve.

We can't wait to gather alongside you this year, to wonder together about this timely and important and necessary question, who is God calling us, if not challenging us, to be?



WHAT IS LiVE?

*A Networked Learning
Community for Lay Leaders*

*Theologically Thoughtful,
Culturally Responsive, &
Communally Engaged.*

*LiVE (rhymes with "give"):
a lay ministry of the NW WA
Synod- ELCA, forming Christian
leaders able to make sense of
our place in God's world.*

LiVE: is a hybrid-style learning
community, including: in-
person retreats, courses and
cohorts via zoom.

Scan me



CONTACT



Reach Out or Say Hi!

E: live@lutheransnw.org



Instagram

@the.live.project

LiVE PROJECT OFFERINGS

Retreats & Courses | 2026-2027

“Called to be Human”

FALL | 2026

FINDING OUR VOICE: SHARING OUR STORIES

One-Day Retreat | Sat Oct. 3, 9am-3pm

In-Person & Online via Zoom | Location: TBD

Collaboration between LiVE & EO (Evangelical Outreach) Team

Before we can talk about how we are to show up in the world we also need to remember that God is already showing up in our stories. Stories matter, the particular, ordinary details of our lives are not a distraction from faith, but the very material God works with. This retreat is an invitation to slow down, to tell and to explore our lives in the company of others. Our lived experiences are the ground we build self and other awareness.. To show up as a whole human being in the world is to share and explore our stories where God is present and moving.



FAITH AND CIVIC LIFE: FOR THE WELL-BEING OF ALL

Online Course via Zoom | **Wednesdays 7pm-8:30pm, Sept 30th - Nov 11th**

Facilitators/Social Statement Team Members:

Dr. Laurie Jungling, Dr. Kyle Pasewark, Dr. Carmelo Santos, and Dr. Samantha Bise

Our first online course, Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-Being of All expands our personal stories, and the natural next question, how does our humanity connect to the voices of others? This course considers the ELCA social statement on Faith and Civic Life and asks what does it mean to bring our whole selves into public and civic space, and not to retreat from a world, nor also to be absorbed by it. If our Fall retreat asked us to tell our story, this course asks us to bring that story into the room where our neighbors' well-being is also included.



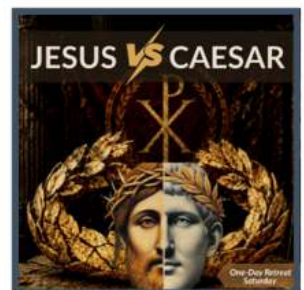
JESUS VS. CAESAR:

One-Day Retreat | Sat Nov. 14 from 9am-2pm

In-Person & Online via Zoom | **@United Methodist Church (Edmonds)**

Facilitator: Dr. Joerg Rieger

Our second retreat, Jesus v. Caesar: For People Tired of Serving the Wrong God, explores the ways our lives have become intertwined with the empire of Capitalism. We end up serving false gods, of nation, of party, economy, and to the endless exhaustion and demand. This retreat is for anyone tired of quietly serving gods and looking for something practical to do as people of faith. Dr. Rieger introduces us to the practice of solidarity circles, and with neighbors and communities, and where we can build power for resistance in the temptations to follow the Caesars in our day.



WINTER/SPRING | 2027

AUGUSTINIAN WISDOM FOR THE DIGITAL AGE



Dr. Autumn Ridenour One-day Retreat | Sat Feb 6
Location: TBD, 9am - 3pm

If Caesar's Roman empire is the classic case for systems of domination and subjugation, another empire most of us live inside today is digital, algorithmic, attention-hungry, endlessly forming our desires whether we notice or not. Augustine spent a lifetime thinking hard about rightly ordered loves, about what happens to a soul that loves the wrong things and in the wrong order. We turn to his wisdom not as ahistorical archive removed

from our world, but as a genuinely practical, and deeply theological approach, for living faithfully inside a digital world that never stops demanding our attention, our time, and our loyalty.

BETWEEN MYSTIC & PROPHET

A Lenten Journey with Søren Kierkegaard & Howard Thurman

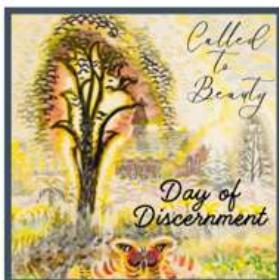
Facilitators: Dr. Angela Parker and Dr. Carl Hughes

Zoom Course | Thursdays 7pm-8:30pm, Feb.19 -Mar. 18



This year's Lenten course, Between Mystic and Prophet: A Lenten Journey with Søren Kierkegaard and Howard Thurman, slows us down to reflect on how we can strengthen resilience to live resistant to the empires around us. Two companions, each in their own century and particular experience, found ways to be human in light of their Christian faith. Kierkegaard's fierce insistence to resist following the crowds that deny our particular individuality and Thurman's deep well of contemplative, prophetic presence, and reclaiming of subjugated identities. Together they both point

to a life in Christ where we can balance interiority and public faithfulness all in the same body. This is Lent we will deepen an understanding for what it means to give up something by setting aside the powers clamoring for our attention, and to welcome a renewing life only God in Christ gives.



CALLED BY BEAUTY

A Day of Discernment

One-day Retreat | Sat April 17

Location: TBD, 9am - 3pm

Our fourth retreat, Called by Beauty: A Day of Discernment, invites us to remember that life comes through movement and creativity. We close our LiVE program year not with more analysis, but with aesthetics. Beauty is God's way of calling us

back to ourselves without demanding anything first. In this final retreat we celebrate our callings in the beauty of music, art, dance and poetry. Leaders throughout our synod will share their gifts of creativity in a variety of artistic mediums. We will celebrate how the Spirit brings them, and each of us, to life. This Spring retreat is not an ending, but a sending. It is an opportunity to recognize and discern our various gifts of beauty God is calling from us, and continue to fill and sustain us with joy for the journey. What is your gift?

WAYS TO ENGAGE

Lay Leaders have multiple ways they can participate in this ministry and grow faithfully

→ One-day Retreats

Curated In-Person retreats to communally engage with one another and learn together

→ Multi-Week Courses

Approx 7 week long series on a given topic lead by rotating facilitators/ speakers. 1 Fall Course and 1 Lenten Course

→ Cohorts

Groups that meet regularly around one of three affinities listed below...

→ Lay Ministry Formation (LMF)

2-year cohort-based, certification program for lay leaders.

This is our third year of engagement with our Northwest Washington Synod through the Live Project. The spiritual growth and formation opportunities are wonderful. This is one of our core ways to deepen in discipleship together. Theologically thoughtful, culturally responsive, and communally engaged – great ways to accompany one another.

As part of our partnership, you can sign up for any retreat and class for FREE. Yes free. When signing up, simply enter our Live Bundle code –

Promo code not available at time of publishing. Please check with the church office for our church code.

Here is the link: [The LiVE Project | Ministries | Northwest Washington Synod](#)

Get out your calendars, get signed up, and shoot Pastor Chad an email note pastorchad@gotgrace.com or Diane Nelson diane@gotgrace.com and we can plan for shared transportation to and from the retreats. For any online course, we will see you there on Zoom.

Faith and Everyday Life

by staff members of Lutheran Counseling Network

September

We boast in our afflictions ... (Romans 5:1-5)



In this passage God turns affliction to endurance, endurance to character, character to hope. ***“And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Romans 5:5).***

The way God can transform affliction into hope is a mystery, one we glimpse from time to time in our lives and in the lives of others. A man I know has been through two very serious cancer treatments, and appears to be in remission. He is the only one who knows the suffering he has experienced — being bedridden, chemotherapy, bone cell transplant, pain, isolation, fear — but he always maintained hope that he could be healed and restored to his loved ones and his work. Today he is back to his family and his career. And he has a depth of moral and spiritual character that only seems attainable by someone who has endured the kind of suffering he has.

What affliction do you bear? How might God be turning your affliction into endurance? Your endurance into character? Your character into hope?

October



I wait for the Lord; my whole being waits, and in his word I hope. (Psalm 130:5)

The Psalmist in Psalm 130 cries from “out from the depths (v. 1)” of pain, anguish, alienation. Despairing over his own sin. Many of us know what that’s like. We look inside and all we find is emptiness, brokenness, failure. Focusing inward this way can lead to hopelessness, despair, depression. It’s easy to get stuck there. No way out, no hope, no escape.

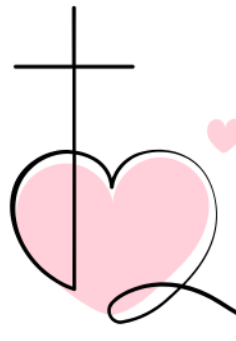
But God meets us in this place of hopelessness. In fact, God is

the answer to this hopelessness. The Psalmist understood this. In the Psalmist’s view, God is coming as surely as the morning (v. 6). The Psalmist waits for God in faith, with his whole being (v. 5) — body and soul.

And what does the Psalmist do while he waits? He reflects on God’s promises: to be in Covenant relationship with us (Leviticus 26:12-13); to love us no matter what (1 Chronicles 16:34); to be near whenever we pray (Deuteronomy 4:7); to give us comfort in our trials (2 Corinthians 1:3-4); to give us new life in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). And these are just a few of the many promises of God recorded in Scripture!

When we wait for the Lord and trust in God’s promises the way we trust in the coming of morning, we regain our focus. Instead of getting stuck focusing on the ways we don’t measure up, we refocus on God’s love for us. The transforming power of God’s love fills up our emptiness and takes us out of ourselves. We can’t stay stuck. Our cup overflowing with God’s love and grace, we shift out of ourselves to share this love and grace with others.

November



Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God. (Psalm 42:11)

This verse describes a state of depression: Cast down, disquieted within. The depressed person looks down, not up; his inner emotional state is disturbed, sad, and hopeless. In depression, there is a kind of giving up on life, of learned helplessness.

Like other psalms, this passage is one that demonstrates the intersection of good psychology and good theology. We use the principles and strategies of psychology and medicine to treat depression. Sometimes we see relief of symptoms through cognitive therapy, grief and loss therapy, problem-solving or healing of a relationship. Then there is positive psychology—what one writer has coined “learned optimism.” It is revealed in the statement, “I shall again praise him, my help and my God.” Good psychology, good theology!

Fall Fest + Halloween Trick or Treat Path

Fall Fest

Join in on the festive fun at this year's Fall Fest on Saturday, October 31

1:00 - 4:00 pm! Wear your costume and join in our annual festival celebrations, fun for all ages! Festival games, snacks, popcorn, and a chance to spend quality time together as a community with participants across our campus and across our community.

As always, we're on the hunt for anyone who would like to participate in this year's Fall Fest. If you would like to participate in this year's Fall Fest, contact Kristin Pann - kristin.pann@yahoo.com

After enjoying the afternoon at the Fall Fest, join GLC at our booth at Des Moines Trick-or-Treat Path!

Des Moines TRICK-OR-TREAT PATH

JOIN THE HALLOWEEN MAGIC IN DES MOINES at the Trick-or-Treat Path!

4:30 - 6:30 pm on Saturday, October 31

Get ready for one of the most festive nights of the year! Families will fill Marine View Drive for safe trick-or-treating, music, and Halloween fun. Local businesses, community groups, and volunteers will line the path with candy, costumes, and smiles. Bring your little ghosts and goblins and enjoy a spooktacular evening of community spirit!

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Safe trick-or-treating for kids of all ages
 - Festive booths, decorated storefronts, and candy galore
 - Crossing guards and volunteers helping families along the route
- Fun photo ops and Halloween cheer in the heart of Des Moines

If you would like to support GLC's booth at Des Moines' Trick-or-Treat Path by being present or donating candy, reach out to Kathy Shackelford - kaejohnson@gmail.com



GCC Holiday Bazaar



Grace Children's Center

☆☆ 30th Annual ☆☆

Holiday Bazaar**ATTENTION ALL SHOPPERS!**

The Grace Bazaar is celebrating its 30th year. This *all craft bazaar* is sure to make a hit with those on your Christmas list. Come find **unique gifts** for the holidays. Support our fabulous vendors and our wonderful Children's Center. This event is very festive and a great way to get in the holiday mood. You will not want to miss this!

Mark your calendars now. **November 21 from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm.**

Interested in being a vendor? Want more information? Are you available to help that day? Let me know by email at diane@gotgrace.com

Diane Nelson, Bazaar Coordinator

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 21, 2026
9AM *until* 3PM
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
22975 24TH AVE S
- DES MOINES WA -
 EMAIL FOR MORE INFO
diane@gotgrace.com

ENJOY HANDMADE GIFTS
RAFFLE ITEMS
SILENT AUCTION
HOLIDAY DECOR
Delicious breakfast, lunch and coffee cart items for purchase.
PICTURES WITH SANTA
SHOP EARLY FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

Upcoming Events at Grace | Des Moines Food Bank Needs



SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, December 5
Women's Candlelight
Dinner
Details coming soon!



All Saints Sunday

On November 1, let's pray for those have passed recently. Please submit family and friends names to the church office at info@gotgrace.com or at 206.878.2460.

Names will be read at both services.

Thank you.

Vintage Band Concert

Saturday, November 7

2:30 pm

Everyone welcome to attend this free concert!
Dinner follows concert - donations are graciously accepted.

Help Support Des Moines Food Bank



September needs... EASY MAC or other single serve main meal and SOUP (canned)

October needs... EASY MAC or other single serve main meal and dry cat food

November needs... Granola bars, olives, pickles, yams/sweet potatoes, Jello, canned corn, salad dressing, oil, spices, and paper grocery bags.

Servant opportunities available.
For more information call 206.878.2660.



Grace Lutheran Church
22975 24th Avenue South
Des Moines, WA 98198

Address Service Requested

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Fall Schedule...

Sunday Worship 8:30 am, 11:00 am & (Spanish) at 12:15 pm
Online Worship 10:00 am

Monthly calendars and weekly bulletins are available at: gotgrace.com/announcements

ALL IN Sunday

September 13

Worship & Backpack Blessings 8:30 & 11:00 am
Breakfast @ 9:45 am



SAVE
the
DATES

grace in ACTION Ministry Showcase

Sunday, September 20

Worship at 9:30 am; Showcase follows in the Fellowship Hall.
Use your unique talents and skills to serve God and the church
by supporting Grace's various outreach and ministry efforts.

Flourish Focus Sunday

October 11

Fall Fest

Saturday, October 31

All Saints Day

Sunday, November 1

Grace Children's Center Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, November 21

Commitment Sunday

November 22

Share a piece of pie and prayerful conversation.

First Sunday of Advent

November 29