

GRACE NOTES

JANUARY 2026

ISSUE 84-01



Dear Friends,

In January, I often find myself in the mood to organize and purge! I try to take advantage of the desire because I'm often the one who thinks, "I might use this one day." The kicker is, I sometimes really do end up using something I haven't touched in years.

Clothing is no exception. I tell myself, "I might wear that one day." Who knows when I'll be too busy to do laundry and that one shirt I haven't worn in two years will save the day. It might even be a piece that I loved and used so much that it now looks shabby and faded. Which means I avoid wearing it. I can't donate it, I don't need any more rags, yet it feels wasteful to throw away.

I'm trying to reframe my mindset.

Annual Reports Due January 5

Annual Reports are due to the office no later than Monday, January 5. Please email or call the church office with any questions.

Annual Meeting January 25

The annual meeting will take place January 25, following joint worship at 9:30am. A quorum is required for voting, so please plan to attend.

Everything, even shirts, have a limited length of time of which they are useful. If I haven't used a piece of clothing in a year and it's in good condition, time to donate it so it can be useful for someone else. If it's shabby and I haven't chosen to wear it in a year, it's served its purpose. If I'm wise, I might begin the practice of when I add a shirt to my closet, I take one out.

I wonder, if this approach would be useful in more areas than just sorting the stuff in our lives. Might it also have application to how we spend our time and who we spend it with.

Are there activities that just don't fit us? Though they seemed good at the time, they just don't suit us like we thought they would. Are there things that served us for years but no longer make sense for who we are today? Commitments, hobbies, and relationships that have served us well and brought us great joy. Yet, you can't help but notice, you no longer look forward to them. They just don't make sense for where you are in your life today.

As you add new things to your life, what might you need to remove to make room for it? There is only so much of ourselves available to give to others and our activities.

Sometimes we need to acknowledge something has served its purpose but now needs to end to make room

for a new thing.

These aren't always easy questions to ponder for yourself or conversations to have with others. It's not uncommon for there to be some grief as one let's go of a hobby or tradition to adapt to how one's life and abilities have changed.

As we approach a birthday or a new year, it is an opportunity for prayerful reflection. We can take time to ponder where God has shown up throughout the year. We can ask the Spirit to guide us as we look ahead. We may ponder 'what might we need to give thanks for and let go of'? What might we need to make room for in the year ahead? Where does God fit into the ways we spend our time?

I practice this each year as I approach my birthday, and I create a list of things I want to try in the year to come. The list isn't intended to become one more thing I must accomplish. Instead, it allows for intentionality. It invites God into the conversation. As we enter a new year, I invite you to have this conversation with yourself, your family, and most especially, with God.

Happy New Year!

God's Peace
Pastor Stephanie

20 + C + M + B + 26



Chalking the Door: An Epiphany House Blessing

Adapted from Darryl Moresco

The family gathers to ask God's blessing on their home and on those who live in or visit the home. It is an invitation for Jesus to be a daily guest in our home, our comings and goings, our conversations, our work and play, our joys and sorrows. A traditional way of doing this is to use chalk to write above the home's entrance, 20 + C + M + B + 26. The letters C, M, B abbreviate the Latin words *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, "May Christ bless the house." The "+" signs represent the cross and 2026 is the year.

Instructions for Blessing the Home on January 6

Using the chalk, mark the lintel of your front door (or front porch step) as follows: 20 + C + M + B + 26 while saying: *The Magi followed the star of God's Son who became human two thousand and fifteen years ago. May Christ bless our home and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.*

Then offer the following prayer:

Visit, O blessed Lord, this home with the gladness of your presence. Bless all who live or visit here with the gift of your love; and grant that we may manifest your love to each other and to all whose lives we touch. May we grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of you; guide, comfort, and strengthen us in peace, O Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.

"Chalking the Door" is a way to celebrate and literally mark the occasion of the Epiphany and God's blessing of our lives and home. With time the chalk will fade. As it does we let the meaning of the symbols written sink into the depths of our heart and be manifest in our words and actions the Latin words, *Christus Mansionem Benedictat*, "May Christ bless the house."

Happy New Year



THANK YOU to the following ladies that helped with the Tuesday Safer Lunches in November and December: *Kathy Higgins; Karen Jewel; Gloria Lange; Marilyn Schreiber; Ruth McAndrews.* If you would like to be a part of this vital ministry for the Safer youth at JB Young, please contact Hollie Swain or the church office. We serve four meals at each session that they hold.



Story of Paul Bible Study

Led by Pastor Stephanie | Classes resume January 15, 11:00am

Discover how Paul went from someone who persecuted Christians to being a significant early church leader. Anyone can join at anytime. Pastor Stephanie can answer any questions.



Page Turners

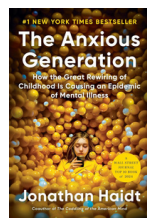
Saturday, January 17, 8:30am

Come join the Saturday Morning Page Turner's Club! We meet at 8:30am the third Saturday each month at different locations for breakfast, book discussion, and great fellowship. (Haven't read the book? No worries, Join us anyways!) **January Book:** [The Hidden Life of Trees by Peter Wohlleben](#)
Location: Tony's Pizza (2297 Falcon Ave, Bettendorf)
Host: Janice Gibbs 563-332-6791

Altar Guild Opportunities

A very important part of our worship experience relies on members to prepare communion, set the altar table, and manage worship supplies like candles and wine. Please consider signing up to help with altar guild in 2026 - you can serve for two weeks or one month at a time. A sign-up sheet is on a clipboard in the narthex. This is a wonderful way to support worship here at Grace and is a great "behind-the-scenes" job if you prefer not to be in the spotlight. Contact the church office with any questions.

Book Study: The Anxious Generation



The Anxious Generation studies the epidemic of teen mental illness, including why children need play and independent exploration to mature into thriving adults. Anyone is welcome at anytime - this study is open to the community, so please invite your friends and family! **We are meeting on various Tuesdays - please contact Pastor Kirsten for the next meeting date.**

Naomi Circle



Next Mtg: January 20, 9:00am Naomi Circle meets the third Tuesday of the month Sept-May for refreshments, fellowship, devotions, and bible study. All are welcome to join us! Questions? Joyce Marinaccio gsgopher50@gmail.com or 563-343-3404.

Service Day Quilters

Next Meeting Dates: January 13 & 14 The quilters meet the second Tuesday & second Wednesday 9am-Noon each month. The quilts made are donated to the community and Lutheran World Relief. In recent years we have made LWR school bags. Questions? Contact Gloria Lange 563-271-1542 or langejg1@msn.com or Kathy Miller kathyk1679@aol.com or 563-676-0914.



Grief Support

Next Meetings: Jan 7 & 21

The Grief Support Group meets the first Wednesday and third Wednesdays, (first Wednesdays only in June, July, and August) 5:30pm in Pat Bell Hall. Please join us! Anyone is welcome at anytime, and please be assured our conversations are kept in confidence. **Questions?** Cindy Lee 563-370-5386.

Centering Prayer

Mondays 4:30pm via Zoom (excluding holidays)

In the Christian tradition, Contemplative Prayer is considered to be the pure gift of God. It is the opening of mind and heart-our whole being to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words, and emotions. With grace we open our awareness to God whom we know by faith is within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than choosing; closer than consciousness itself.

Centering Prayer is a method designed to facilitate the development of Contemplative Prayer by preparing our faculties to receive this gift.

Cheryl Kritsch is the facilitator. Periodically the group will meet in person in the Grace Church Choir Room providing the ZOOM option, as well. Please contact Cheryl 563-343-0135 with any questions and to verify the location (zoom or in person).

Click [HERE](#) to enter Zoom for Centering Prayer.
 Meeting ID: 392 407 7028
 Passcode: 2020



Council Corner

- Pastor Stephanie's housing allowance for 2026 was approved.
- The Finance Committee updated members on the 2026 budget. A shortfall is likely. Council voted to hold a special meeting January 7th at 6 p.m. to give final budget approval.
- Coffee Conversations on the two Sundays prior to the January Annual Meeting will be held for discussion of the Annual Report. Council members and Dawn Matthews will be present to answer questions.
- Dawn reported that endowment funds are valued at \$470,338.72. In 2025 we have received \$11,707.60 in dividends and interest.
- The Nominating Committee reported that Laura Toland and Becky Kelly have agreed to serve on council. A third candidate is considering. Laura will be our delegate to the 2026 Synod Assembly.

Men's Lunch & Conversation

Men's "Lunch & Conversation" meets every Wednesday at Noon at church. You can bring a lunch from home or pick something up from a local restaurant.



Questions? Contact
Dennis Boehme at
563-320-2661 or
boehmed@aol.com.

Social Ministry Mitten Tree



The Grace Social Ministry Team is collecting hats and gloves (all sizes) for our local elementary schools. These items can be new or very gently used, should be unwrapped, and can be placed on or under the tree in the narthex. **We will collect items through the first week of January. Thank you for helping with this important ministry!**



Coffee with Council

January 11 & 18 | Between Services | PBH

You are invited to join members of the Church Council and Treasurer Dawn Matthews in Pat Bell Hall between services. This is your chance to examine the Annual Report prior to the Congregational Meeting on January 26. Review the 2026 Budget, talk about your vision for 2026, ask questions, share your joys and concerns. Celebrate all Grace has accomplished in 2025.



Pictures into Memories

January 4 | Between Services

Join Joel Lorentzen and Paul Lewellan for the fourth installment. You're invited whether or not you came to prior sessions. Bring a photo that captures a notable event, treasured person, or moment in time. We'll share stories and collect pieces of writing. Help us add to Grace's Memory Book. Don't let your memories get lost.



Puzzle Exchange

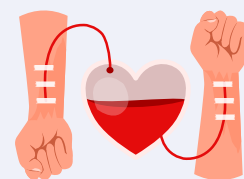
Greetings all! These first few months of the year can be a bit dreary. To help pass the time, we invite you to participate in a puzzle exchange! **You can bring your puzzles starting Sunday, January 11 thru February 8** and placing them on a table outside the Sanctuary for others to pick up and take home.





Blood Drive

Thursday, Jan 15 | 2-6pm



Every day, patients who need blood are in crisis and you can help by volunteering to donate. To book an appointment contact Mark Jepson at majepson55@netscape.net or visit bloodcenter.org.

ALSO, did you know that you can earn SWAG by donating with ImpactLife? Go to the blood center website and click on "View and Shop our Rewards Store" to see what's available.



REFLECTING

ON THE ILLUSION OF PERFECTION

SAVE THE DATE: The Grace Spiritual Growth Mission is excited to host the retreat "Reflecting on the Illusion of Perfection" with speaker Pastor Melinda Pupillo on **Saturday, February 7, 9am-Noon**



HOPE

anchors the soul



hebrews 6:19

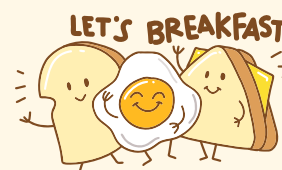
SAVE THE DATE

Dinner Service

Hope at the Brick House

We will serve dinner at [Hope at the Brick House](#) on Friday January 30. Watch for the sign-up board in the Narthex to see how you can help.

We'll serve breakfast for dinner so we will need three breakfast casseroles that serve twelve, along with a fruit or vegetable, a dessert, a half-gallon of milk, and a couple of servers. Any questions contact Karen Jewel at 563-323-0322 or kcjewel21@gmail.com.



LUTHERAN DAY ON THE HILL

Lutheran Day on the Hill

Save the Date

Thursday, February 26,

Updates and registration information will soon be available at LSIowa.org/LDH.

SAVE THE DATE | 02.26.2026

This free event, sponsored by LSI and the three Iowa synods of the ELCA, is open to anyone who wants to learn more about citizen advocacy and engage with issues impacting our communities. We hope 2026 Lutheran Day on the Hill shines a light on the critical issues facing individuals and families across Iowa. Last year was a record-breaking year for attendance, and we hope you'll join us as we aim to beat it again! Thank you for using your voice to amplify those of our neighbors.



Junior Bible Study is offered for children after the children's sermon during worship at both services. We will return from our time together before communion begins. Once again, we will use The Story as our guide for our learning. We will read the stories of Abraham, Moses, and Joseph. We will learn alongside these characters to trust in God, listen to God, and practice forgiveness. We would love for your children or grandchildren to join us!

Grace Lutheran Church | 1140 E High St | Davenport, IA

KIDS WINTER PARTY

Friday, January 30 | 5:30-7:30pm

Children ages 3 & older are invited for a meal, Bible story, and fun games - Adults: You Get a Break!

RSVP w/ Pastor Kirsten or sign up to attend at bit.ly/KidsWinterJan30 or scan this QR Code.



*Children's
Christmas
Program
December 21*



JANUARY

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | | | 1 New Year's Day Office Closed  Pr Kirsten Vacation → Pr Stephanie Vacation → | 2 Office Closed | 3 1pm Praise Band Practice |
| 4 Food Pantry Sunday 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:30am Pictures in Memories 10:30am Contemp. Worship Pr Stephanie Vacation → | 5 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer | 6 10am Pastor's Text Study 1:30pm Personnel Mtg 5pm Property Mtg 6pm Book Study | 7 12pm Men's Lunch Group 5:30pm Grief Support Grp 6pm Special Council Mtg 7pm Choir Rehearsal | 8 | 9 9am LSI Holiday Party - FH | 10 1pm Praise Band Practice |
| 11 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:30am Coffee w/ Council 10:30am Contemp. Worship | 12 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer | 13 9am Quilters 10am Pastor's Text Study 1:30pm Social Ministry Mtg 2:30pm Outreach Mtg 6pm CYF Mtg 7pm Worship Mtg | 14 9am Quilters 12pm Men's Lunch Group 7pm Choir Rehearsal | 15 11am Paul Bible Study 2pm Blood Drive | 16 9:30am PEO (Private Event) | 17 8:30am Page Turners 1pm Praise Band Practice |
| 18 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:30am Coffee w/ Council 10:30am Contemp. Worship | 19 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer 6pm Sweet Arts Club | 20 9am Naomi Circle 10am Pastor's Text Study | 21 12pm Men's Lunch Group 5:30pm Grief Support Grp 7pm Choir Rehearsal | 22 11am Paul Bible Study | 23 11am Council Reports Due | 24 1pm Praise Band Practice |
| 25 9:30am Joint Worship 10:30am Annual Meeting | 26 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer 7pm Council Meeting | 27 10am Pastor's Text Study | 28 12pm Men's Lunch Group 7pm Choir Rehearsal | 29 11am Paul Bible Study | 30 5:15pm Dinner Service at Hope at the Brick House 5:30pm Kid's Winter Party | 31 1pm Praise Band Practice |

Office Notes

New Office Hours

Beginning Monday, February 2, we will have new office hours: 8:30am-3:00pm Monday-Thursday (same) and **Closed Fridays**. Annie will occasionally come in on Fridays during busy times (ie: Easter, Christmas, etc.), however, the office will still be considered closed on those Fridays as those instances will be sporadic and unscheduled. If you have an event on a Friday, please contact the office beforehand to pick up a key.

Office Hours

Mon-Thur 8:30am-3pm
Fridays 8:30am-Noon

New Office Hours

Beginning February 2
Mon-Thur 8:30am-3pm

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Karee Patterson | 16 Louise Link |
| 2 Sally Flesch | 17 Derry Spotten |
| Janet Lopez | 18 Susan Senn |
| 3 Rachel Kelker | 19 Emily DaRosa |
| Jonny Swarm | 21 Karen Jewel |
| 5 Kathy Bargmann | 22 Jane Krumwiede |
| Tom Castro | 24 Kathy Barber |
| 6 Kathy Miller | Dax Kanwischer |
| Sarah Peterson | Adallyn Ralfs |
| 10 Mary Rossmiller | 25 Rich Barber |
| 11 Michael Dohrmann | Suzanne Johnson |
| 12 Jim Neumann | 27 Casey Allbee |
| 13 Aubree Harman | Matt Montford |
| Brooks Rock | 31 Laura Toland |
| 15 Berniece Asplund | |

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

ADMIN STAFF

Pastor Stephanie Wood
pastorstephanie@gracewelcomesyou.org

Pastor Kirsten Lee
Director of Outreach & Youth Ministries
pastorkirsten@gracewelcomesyou.org

Annie Nau, Office Administrator
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Jason Halkias, Custodian
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Dawn Matthews, Treasurer
treasurer@gracewelcomesyou.org

Vey Rodriguez, Worship Tech
worshiptech@gracewelcomesyou.org

MUSIC STAFF

Sally Meier - Adult Choir Director
Kathi Parrish - Accompanist
Susan Senn - Organist
Vey Rodriguez - Praise Band Leader

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Paul Lewellan President
Deb Gustafson Vice-President
Janice Gibbs Secretary
Dawn Matthews Treasurer
Jackie Cain
Lori Haugen
Laura Toland
Gail Walton

Grace Notes is published monthly by Grace Lutheran Church, Davenport, IA 52803 A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America



GRACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
1140 East High Street
Davenport, IA 52803

**Scholarships are available upon request: no child will be turned away for financial circumstances.*

PRAY & PLAY

Join us for fun when school is out!

at Grace Lutheran Church | 1140 E High St, Davenport

For kids ages 5-10 | Cost* \$10 per session

8:30am-4:00pm each program day.

Lunch and snacks provided. Close supervision provided by screened and qualified staff. Space is limited.

Activities Include: Games, Playground Time, Arts & Crafts, Music, Dancing, Bible Stories, Educational Programming, and More!

SPRING 2026 DATES

February 2 | April 6 | June 1

Registration Required

Register Online at: bit.ly/PPSP26

OR Scan the QR Code OR request a paper copy from your school counselor OR email office@gracewelcomesyou.org



Questions? Please feel free to contact Pastor Kirsten Lee at 563-322-0769 or pastorkirsten@gracewelcomesyou.org

Food Pantry Weekend

Our next Food Pantry Collection is Sunday, January 4

Bring your non-perishable food donations in a bag, and leave at the altar before the service. **Let's make this our best year yet!** Go to localfoodbank.org/what-do-food-banks-need-but-dont-ask-for/ for info about if you need ideas.

Donations Needed: nonperishables - especially canned fruits and vegetables, canned & dry beans, canned meats, pasta, pasta sauce, rice, breakfast items (cereal, oatmeal, etc.)

Always Appreciated: peanut butter, jelly/jam, canned chili, boxed potatoes, protein bars, whole grain bread, fresh fruits & vegetables (donated directly to the pantry), items for baking (flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, etc.)

Consider: simple spices (salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, etc.), neutral cooking oils, vinegars, powdered milk, powdered eggs, wooden spoons, hand-held can openers, aluminum foil pans, cake mixes for special occasions

