

GRACE NOTES

FEBRUARY 2026 ISSUE 84-02



Dear Friends,

Nearly a year ago, a friend mailed me a mystery package. Inside it was a red T-Shirt with "Love is an Action Word" in white lettering. It's a curious thing, distinguishing love from the feelings we so often associate with the word and the actions that demonstrate it. The way it can so casually be said but be so hard to live.

I often say at weddings, "love is the action you take in the million choices that you make." That can be difficult enough with someone you choose to make a commitment to. Now expand that to reflect Jesus' teachings, one of his greatest commandments, to love your neighbor. Someone who can be a friend, a stranger and your enemy. It becomes a different kind of commitment and choice. That requires intentional thought and reflection. How do my actions demonstrate love? How do we decide what love towards someone looks like?

When Paul wrote to the community in Corinth, he was writing to a community in turmoil. A community of people who were fighting over who had the best gifts/skills and who was more important. With this context and not that of a joyful wedding

the love hymn of 1 Corinthians 13 is written. It breaks down what love is and what love is not. It reads differently when you know it is directed toward a community in conflict. "[Love] does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered ... Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth." Paul teaches that whatever our gifts, accolades or status, it means *nothing* if we do not love.

We struggle and strive to love, even if imperfectly, because God first loved us. Because God is love. The love that comes from God is sacrificial, merciful, and full of grace. It is not limited to one person, community, tribe, or nation.

If we replicate or become a conduit for God's love in this world, it can leave people perplexed. I've heard folks struggle. Unable to imagine that someone might give of their time or risk their own income, social status, or safety for another without personal incentive. To them, it doesn't make sense. Which is why Jesus' love remains so radical, scandalous and even offensive to some.

Many of these sentiments, I wrote a year ago. The need has not lessened; if anything it has become even more pronounced. Your voice, your actions, your love are needed in this world.

Your witness to God's love must be as loud as the voices rooted in fear and hatred. As the old hymn goes, they will know we are Christians by our love. More importantly, they will know God because God's love is perfected in us.

God's Peace
Pastor Stephanie



ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

February 18, 7pm

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. Lent asks believers to set aside a time each year to mark an intentional season of focus on Christ's life, ministry, sacrifice, and resurrection

MIDWEEK LENTEN WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

Begins Wed, February 25, 7pm

Jesus' forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage.

This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.



Story of Paul Bible Study

Led by Pastor Stephanie | **Thursdays, 11:00am** (final class is Wednesday, Feb 11)

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.



How You Can Help

If you'd like to help with the **Green Bag Project**, you can join the Social Ministry committee on February 1, between services to learn more about the project and pack one of the bags. We invite the congregation to donate food from the list below or you may donate money to purchase food by marking your offering Green Bag Project. For further information, contact Paul Lewellan at paullewellan@mac.com. **Items we are collecting (any brand is welcome):**

- Jars of Spaghetti sauce (please no glass jars)
- Boxes of pasta or spaghetti
- Boxes of macaroni & cheese
- Cans of tuna
- Cans of chicken
- Cans of soup that include meat (beef stew/chicken noodle soup)
- Cans of green beans
- Cans of corn
- Cans of fruit (pears, peaches, mandarin oranges, etc.)
- Individual servings applesauce
- Packets of oatmeal
- Packages of individual cereal boxes
- Granola bars and Protein Bars
- Peanut butter sandwich crackers

What is the Green Bag Project?

At the beginning of this school year, Garfield Elementary asked Grace if we would consider helping some families who needed additional food on the weekend. Up until this school year, River Bend Food Bank had provided food for kids to take home over the weekend. This program was no longer available, and they needed Grace to fill in this gap.

Under the leadership of the Social Ministry Committee, we have been delivering bags of food for eight to nine families every week. Originally conceived as an eight-week project, it has now become ongoing. The contents of the bag are governed by three things: weight (light enough for a child to carry home), cost (the amount of food we can buy for \$6.00-\$7.00 dollars a bag), and balance (the basis for two meals, breakfast items, fruit, vegetables, and healthy snacks).

The food has been purchased through a Thrivent Grant, donations, and Social Ministry funding. The food is delivered (as much as possible) in green canvas bags, thus the name of this ministry was created!

GRACE FEEDS FOLKS

Join Social Ministry for coffee in PBH
between services on February 1.

Learn about Brick House meals, Thanksgiving baskets, Safer lunches, our milk ministry, and other ways Grace feeds folks. Help pack meals in Green Bags to send home on weekends for students living with food insecurity. And remember it's food pantry Sunday. ~~Grace~~ YOU can feed folks.



Pictures into Memories

February 8 | Between Services

Did you find a photo of your first dog Queenie? Or stumble across a snapshot of your 7th grade friend Jim? Do you have a memory you want to capture before you lose it. Join Joel Lorentzen and Paul Lewellan between services. Come whether or not you've attended prior sessions. Don't let your memories get lost.



Council Corner

- Council welcomed new members Dan Carney and Becky Kelly, along with Laura Toland, beginning her second three-year term.
- Paul Lewellan was elected President, Deb Gustafson Vice-President, and Gail Walton Secretary. Along with Treasurer Dawn Matthews and Pastor Stephanie Wood, they will constitute the Executive Committee.
- Council reviewed the financial reports. Dawn noted that income in January was \$10K above anticipated.
- Council discussed financial benchmarks and ways to monitor the unbalanced budget. After our February meeting, Council will report to the Congregation on March 1, between services to update members. Paul will approach Finance and other committees asking what modifications they might make if cuts become necessary.
- Strategic planning was discussed. The Executive committee will meet to formulate options to present to Council.
- Pastor Stephanie spotlighted the upcoming Spiritual Growth event on February 7, with Rev. Melinda Pupillo, campus chaplain and director of spiritual development at Augustana College.
- Pastor Kristen Lee is looking forward to the Kids Epiphany Party on January 30, and Pray & Play on February 2. She was especially appreciative of all the volunteers who've signed on.

THE ILLUSION OF PERFECTIONISM

A Journey Toward Wholeness

Saturday, February 7 | 9am-Noon

Location: Grace Lutheran Church
1140 E High St, Davenport, IA

To register call 563-322-0769 or complete our online form at gracewelcomesyou.org

Struggling with perfectionism?

Discover a new way of living

Society pushes us to continually excel, improve and be better. While these can be positive aspirations, they also can spiral into us thinking our worth is proven only through our capacity to do things and our ability to constantly better ourselves. Can we pause and find another way? Can we ever see ourselves as enough? Can we mute our inner critic?

Discover how at **"The illusion of perfectionism: a journey toward wholeness,"** a free retreat featuring the Rev. Melinda Pupillo, campus chaplain and director of spiritual development at Augustana College, Rock Island.

This event is free and refreshments will be served.

OUR SPEAKER



Rev. Melinda Pupillo,
campus chaplain and
director of spiritual
development at
Augustana College,
Rock Island, Illinois

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.

Prayer Shawl, Prayer Square, and Baby Blanket Ministry Opportunity

We are in need of volunteers as we offer prayer shawls, prayer squares, and baby blankets to members of our congregation. In the past, Grace had a team of knitters and crocheters who were able to contribute to the inventory on hand. We are looking for new members to join our team. We have patterns available to share and ask you to consider joining us to supply these items for outreach from our congregation. Please contact Sherry McCarty crosseyed26@mchsi.com or Chrissy Hartman CandM61877@aol.com to access pattern information. We need your help to continue this ministry.



Immigration: Fact, Fiction and Solutions

Friday, February 13 | 1:30-2:30pm | Rock Island Library (Watts-Midtown Branch, 2715 ~ 30th St)
Free Community Forum: What has been our country's history with immigration? What is the role of immigration and what are possible solutions to today's immigration issues? Featured speaker will be Peter Kivisto, Ph.D., the Richard A. Swanson professor of social thought emeritus at Augustana College. (If you are reading this online, click [HERE](#) to view the flyer and press release for more info.)



Lutheran Day on the Hill Thursday, February 26 in Des Moines

Registration is now open! This free event, is open to anyone who wants to learn more about citizen advocacy and engage with issues impacting our communities. Visit LSIowa.org/LDH for info about these issues and to register. **This year's legislative focus includes:**

Food Insecurity Goal: Invest in farmer education and local food markets to promote sustainable food systems that encourage food equity, provide opportunities for small business development, and improve the health of Iowans.

Iowa's Mental Health System Goal: By fostering a more inclusive mental health system that prioritizes equity and accessibility, Iowa can pave the way for a brighter, healthier future for all its residents.

Refugees LSI supports policies at the local, state, and national levels that lead to greater inclusion and integration of immigrants into our workplaces and communities. Goal: We must continue to invest in the services that support new Iowans with skills, education, and training to leverage their skills and entrepreneurship in Iowa communities.

Lutheran Day on the Hill is LSI's biggest advocacy event of the year.

Over 400 participants gather at a local downtown church to learn about critical issues Iowans, children, adults and families are facing. After learning about advocacy and LSI's mission in action, the group heads to the Iowa State Capitol to talk directly with legislators.



Junior Bible Study During Lent

During Lent, we will be learning about communion during our JBS time. The kids will learn what is communion and why we receive communion during worship. This time will take the place of a first communion class.

If you have a child who you feel is ready to take communion, please speak with either one of the pastors. Participating in the class is not required to receive communion, but is helpful as we all grow in understanding. We will begin learning about communion starting Sunday, February 22 thru Sunday, March 30.

leadership skills, and confidence. I was a kid who did not always like going to camp, but as I look back on those weeks, I can pick out moments that formed my understanding of God and myself. My confidence grew leaps and bounds while away from my parents and home and I remain grateful for those opportunities. God meets our children at camp and shows them life in a new way. ~Pastor Kirsten

Please don't let the cost of camp deter you from attending. At Grace, we have funds to offset the expense of camp through a scholarship program. Paper forms are available at church or can be emailed to you.



People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." ~Luke 18:15-17

Save the Date for VBS Summer Camp!

Join us for fun in the sun at our summer day camp! June 15-19. We will gather at Grace and then take a school bus to Trinity Lutheran Church in Pleasant Valley. Camp EWALU will lead us in a week of learning about God, building relationships with one another, and growing in confidence. I would love for your children to join! Register by April 14th to save \$10. See Pastor Kirsten with any questions.

**Learning,
Crafts,
Games,
and More!**

Ewalu Bible Camp Staff will lead us in our own local camp experience with all the fun of a park-like setting surrounded by nature

**Register
Online at**

bit.ly/GraceVBS2026
or scan the QR code



Open To

Children ages 4 through Grade 6

Cost*

- \$40/child: register by April 14
- \$50/child: after April 14
- **Registration ends June 1**

Grace Lutheran Church | 563-322-0769
pastorkirsten@gracewelcomesyou.org

Ewalu Camp | 563-933-4700 | camp@ewalu.org/day-camps

Questions?

* Talk with Pr. Kirsten about scholarship availability - no child will be turned away for financial reasons

Summer Camp Scholarships!

Did you know that Grace has a camp scholarship program?

A week at camp offers kids and youth an opportunity to grow their faith,



Page Turners

Saturday, February 21, 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!) **February Book:** [We Are All Guilty Here](#) by Karin Slaughter
Host: Sally Haugen 563-514-9335 **Location:** TBD



Naomi Circle



Next Mtg: February 17, 9:00am Naomi Circle meets the third Tuesday of the month September-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



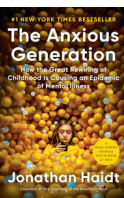
Next Meeting Dates: February 10 & 11 The quilters meet the second Tuesday & second Wednesday 9am-Noon each month. The quilts made are donated to the community and Lutheran World Relief. In recent years we have made LWR school bags. Questions? Contact Gloria Lange 563-271-1542 or langejg1@msn.com or Kathy Miller kathyk1679@aol.com or 563-676-0914.

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.

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! **We are meeting on various Tuesdays - please contact Pastor Kirsten for the next meeting date.**

Grief Support

Next Meetings: Feb 4 & 18

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

FEBRUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
New Office Hours Monday-Thursday 8:30am-3pm						
1 Food Pantry Sunday 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:30am Grace Feeds Folks 10:30am Contemp. Worship	2 Pray & Play 8:30am-4pm 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer	3 10am Pastor's Text Study 1:30pm Personnel Mtg 5pm Property Mtg 6:16pm Book Study	4 12pm Men's Lunch Group 5:30pm Grief Support Grp 6pm Confirmation at St. James 7pm Choir Rehearsal	5 11am Paul Bible Study 12pm Prayer Group	6	7 9am Illusions Retreat 1pm Praise Band Practice
8 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:30am Pictures into Memories 10:30am Contemp. Worship	9 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer	10 9am Quilters 10am Pastor's Text Study 1:30pm Social Ministry Mtg 2:30pm Outreach Mtg 6pm CYF Mtg 7pm Worship Mtg	11 9am Quilters 11am Paul Bible Study 12pm Men's Lunch Group 6pm Confirmation at St. James 7pm Choir Rehearsal	12 Pr Stephanie Vacation →	13 1:30pm Immigration Forum in Rock Island	14 1pm Praise Band Practice
15 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:30am Coffee Hour 10:30am Contemp. Worship Pr Stephanie Vacation →	16 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer 6pm Sweet Arts Club	17 9am Naomi Circle 10am Pastor's Text Study	18 Ash Wednesday 12pm Men's Lunch Group 5:30pm Grief Support Grp 6pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Worship	19 11am Council Reports Due	20	21 8:30am Page Turners 1pm Praise Band Practice
22 8:30am Healing Worship 9:30am Coffee Hour 10:30am Contemp. Worship	23 10:30am Staff Meeting 4:30pm Centering Prayer 7pm Council Meeting	24 10am Pastor's Text Study	25 12pm Men's Lunch Group 6pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm Lenten Worship	26 Lutheran Day on the Hill	27 5:15pm Dinner Service at Hope at the Brick House 5:30pm Kid's Winter Party	28 1pm Praise Band Practice



New Office Hours

Beginning the first week of February we will have new office hours: 8:30am-3:00pm Monday-Thursday (same) and **Closed Fridays**. If you have an event on a Friday, please contact the office beforehand to schedule a pick up for a building key.

Worship Volunteers Needed

Worship is central to the Christian faith and is an essential way to connect with God. Grace is in need of a few more volunteers to help with our worship services. **Most needed are acolytes, crucifers, and assisting ministers.** If you feel called to serve in any of these capacities (or even as an usher, greeter, bread baker, sound system monitor, making coffee, bringing treats, etc) please talk with Pastor Stephanie or contact the office at office@gracewelcomesyou.org.



- 2 Ainsley Miller
- 4 Kyle Jewel
- 6 Denise Eads
- 8 Mike Savely
- 9 Laura Cornish
- 15 Christine Giorgio-Cahalan
Sadie Hamerlinck
Gail Walton
- 16 Roe Edinger
Anne Pacha
- 23 Anne Lange
Tim Wahlig
- 24 Becky McVay
- 25 Carol Bayles
- 27 Hannah Savely

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

ADMIN STAFF

Pastor Stephanie Wood
pastorstephanie@gracewelcomesyou.org

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

Annie Nau, Office Administrator
office@gracewelcomesyou.org

Jason Halkias, Custodian
custodian@gracewelcomesyou.org

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
Gail Walton Secretary
Dawn Matthews Treasurer
Jackie Cain
Dan Carney
Lori Haugen
Becky Kelly
Laura Toland

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Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America



Luther Properties Annual Meeting Delegates Needed

Grace is looking for interested members to serve as a delegates to the Luther Properties Annual Meeting. The meeting is held on **7:00pm Monday, March 16, 2026** at Luther Manor (3118 Devils Glen Rd, Bettendorf). Delegates have no voting responsibilities. **Your responsibilities are:** attend the meeting, listen to the property management reports, enjoy some light refreshments, and if willing,, assist in creating awareness of Luther Properties in the congregation. A maximum of six delegates will be selected on a first come basis. If interested, contact the office at office@gracewelcomesyou.org or 563-322-0769.



FAIR TRADE CHOCOLATES & MORE!

Wondering what to get for a special valentine? We have wonderful Fair Trade chocolate bars and hot cocoa, along with olive oil, coffee, & tea. Check out our supply in the narthex and pick up a special gift. Prices are listed and payment can be made by cash or check (memo: Fair Trade) in the offering plate or leaving it in the office, or online. Additional products can be ordered at shop.equalexchange.coop.

Food Pantry Weekend

Our next Food Pantry Collection is Sunday, February 1

Bring your non-perishable food donations in a bag, and leave at the altar before the service. **With grocery prices soaring the need is greater than ever!** Go to localfoodbank.org/what-do-food-banks-need-but-dont-ask-for/ for 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.), broths, neutral cooking oils, vinegars, powdered milk, powdered eggs, wooden spoons, hand-held can openers, aluminum foil pans, cake mixes for special occasions

