

Living with Christ, Growing in Grace!



*Rooted In Christ - Growing in Love -
Branching out in Service*



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

104 S. Colfax St.

West Point, NE 68788

402-372-2050

gracewpn@hotmail.com

www.gracewpn.org

Missionary:

Rev. Linda Johnson Swyenkulo

Ministers: Everyone!

Pastor: Rev. Priscilla Hukki

402-841-0220

pjhukki@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant:

Teala Connealy

Trinity Church UCC/UMC

900 E. Decatur St.

P.O. Box 156

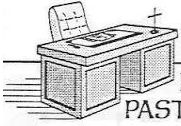
West Point, NE. 68788

402-372-2271

trinity.church.ucc.umc@gmail.com

Grace & Trinity Newsbites

JULY & AUGUST 2023



FROM THE
PASTOR'S DESK

It's summer time – how's your faith life? I mean, I hope you are enjoying the sun, perhaps some time off, family reunions and visiting, barbecues, traveling, ball games, golf, ... But really, how's your spiritual life? How are you and God getting on? Check your schedule, is God included? Of course, God is with us always, everywhere – there really is nowhere to hide (Psalm 139). Now I'm guessing that most of us don't consciously try to hide from God, but do we look for God active in our life and acknowledge his presence?

At the Nebraska Synod Assembly, we wrote down God moments on a slip of paper and those became part of a banner – and this idea came from a congregation making a paper chain of God moments. Pam and I were so taken with this that Pam cut some strips of paper and we are ready to begin our chain at Grace; and will soon be ready to begin one at Trinity. The first weekend in July we will get started. Everyone will be invited to write at least one God moment/encounter from the previous week. Every week after – throughout the year there will be reminders and opportunities to keep adding to the chain. Let's be attentive to the presence of God in our midst. We will find a way to display them throughout our buildings. I wonder how long our chains will be next July?

The ELCA theme for assembly was 'Go and ...' It is the beginning of a word/phrase a month for the next year – Go and pray (June); Listen (July); Share your story (August). The Great Plains UMC conference theme was "Clay in the hands of our Creator. I didn't get to the UCC meeting; but here's a question I found on the UCC NE/SD/IA webpage: The United Church of Christ (UCC) Board would like every setting in the denomination to begin prayerfully discerning this: In your setting for ministry, how do you and your worship family live out their call to build a just world for all?

I think all of these are good for us in our discerning together the mission and ministry we are called to do in this place, for these times. If we

think of ourselves as clay in the hands of our potter God – what shape are we being molded into? What is God creating through and in us? What is our purpose? We are clay and we are disciples, As we go with Jesus, and are sent out by Jesus, discipling the nations, how are we building the realm of God – the just world for all? Where everyone has enough and all know themselves beloved by God and there is peace that flows out into the world from every heart?

How are we encouraging & inspiring one another to be faithful disciples? How are we continuing to tend to our faith and spiritual life? How are we creating hospitable, safe, and attractive spaces for worship, prayer, fellowship and service?

Nothing is impossible for God and with God much more is possible than we could possibly imagine ourselves. Let's be bold, fearless, courageous as we walk forward together and let us not get stuck in the past nor worry about the future. Today is it folks!! Let's go, and love and pray and wonder at the beautiful, diverse creations God has made us to be.

Traveling mercies, *Pr. Priscilla*

Don't forget the Progressive Supper on July 9 at 5:00 p.m.

Here's a prayer practice idea from the Great Plains UMC website. It goes well with these other ideas from the NE Synod 'Go and ...' page. I know, July is 'Go and listen' but part of prayer is listening; and prayer is a good foundation for any other listening that we do.

Mindful of others prayer.

Prayer: Almighty God, let me follow and abide by your lead today. Let me be humble to lead and serve as Jesus showed during the Last Supper.

Scripture: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." **John 13:34**

Prayer Practice: Be mindful of all the ways you help someone else today. Share your gratitude for a co-worker's help. Write a

thank you note that has been long overdue. Go out of your way to listen to someone who needs to be heard.

At the end of the day, write down the ways you believe you have lifted others up today. Pray that each of those persons might feel the love and presence of Jesus in their lives because of your actions as Christ's follower. [From greatplainsumc.org; under resources –prayer practices.]

Coloring Prayer Postcards

Connect with God and others through the physical act of coloring and spiritual act of prayer.

Have you ever felt yourself knowing you need to pray for someone, but you can't seem to find the words? If you enjoy coloring or find yourself "doodling" this may be the prayer practice for you! This is also a meaningful activity to do with Sunday School Kids, Youth Groups and in Adult Bible Studies! To get ready, print any of the downloadable pdfs on cardstock (2-sided) and gather some colored pencils or crayons.

As you begin this prayer practice, choose a name of God from the list below. With each stroke of color, repeat the name silently and think of it simply as a call to God.

Almighty, Alpha, Amen, Anointed One, Author of Life, Beginning, Bishop of Souls, Branch, Bread of Life, Chosen One, Christ, Comforter, Cornerstone, Creator, Dayspring, Day Star, Deliverer, Emmanuel, End, Everlasting Father, Foundation, Fountain, Great Shepherd, Great Physician, Guide, Holy Spirit, Horn of Salvation, I Am, Jehovah, Jesus, King of Israel, King of Kings, Lamb of God, Light of the World, Lord of Lords, Majesty, Master, Mediator, Messiah, Omega, Prince of Peace, Purifier, Redeemer, Refuge, Rock, Savior, Servant, Shepherd of Our Souls, Teacher, Vine, Wonderful Counselor, Yahweh

Next choose a name(s) of family, friends or others. As you fill in spaces with color, offer the name(s) silently to God. Repeat as often as you like. If more words of prayer come to you, pray them in silence. If not, enjoy the quiet time with God.

There are many other ways to "Pray in Color." Use your imagination and create your own designs – make coloring pages, big cards, mini cards,

bookmarks, etc! Another helpful resource for ideas is the website, Praying in Color. Or prefer coloring digitally? Use an app such as Freeform.

As you pray and color remember this...

“God is the best listener. You don’t need to shout nor cry out loud because He hears even the silent prayer of a sincere heart!”

– Author unknown

You can download the post cards at the link below and then click on Download Prayer Practice:

<https://nebraskasynod.org/go-and/share-your-story/>

Or pick up a printed copy in the office.

Other things to pray and think about?

An idea that came up in conversation at Trinity was a service project held at a laundry mat. It got me thinking about the ELCA September 10 ‘God’s work. Our hands’ Sunday. Some congregations gather at the usual worship time, pray together and then engage in community wide service projects.

Wouldn’t it be a great witness if Trinity and Grace offered two opportunities for service and prayer – out in the community that weekend? Laundry mat quarters, snacks and prayer? Yard work? Pick up trash? Serve rolls and coffee and offer prayer at the park? Go and sing or ring bells at St. Joe’s and the Villa? Someone feeling called to take ‘ownership’ of a project like this and get a planning group together?

We have several joint service weekends this summer. July 29 is the one that’s been on the schedule -it’s a weekend with a 5th Saturday and a 5th Sunday. We are at Trinity on Saturday July 29; Brad Ramp will be here again! He and pastor will co-lead the service. Pot-luck cook-out to follow. Hamburgers and hot dogs & soft drinks will be provided; please bring a side dish and/or dessert to share.

Two additional joint service weekends have been added in August.

Fair weekend – there will be a **5:30 Saturday service at Trinity on August 12** and no Sunday service at Grace on the 13th. This way you can attend both 'in house' church and the fair service or one or the other.

The last weekend of August, the 26th and 27th, **Table Grace will be at Grace on Sunday morning August 27th**. They will be leading the music and preaching and their food truck will be here serving breakfast. Pay as you are able at the food truck. No service at Trinity on the 26th.

By the time the next newsletter is printed school will have started up for the fall! So now is the time to be praying and planning for the 2023 Christian Ed year. How is the 5:30 start time working for folks? Do we need to change it to 5 or 6? Do we need to provide snacks or just come in and get started? How many students will we have in the fall? There will be registration forms available at both churches or you can have Teala email you one. We are a pre-school through 8th grade program on Wednesday night. Is your little one ready to begin? We are eager to know so we can plan accordingly. Adults – what gifts would you like to offer and share with the Christian Ed program?

Mark your calendars for **Wednesdays August 23 & 30 and September 6 & 13**; for all ages, especially families with pre-schoolers through 8th grade and high school students. We are going to start our school year program with lots of fun and learning - think intergenerational VBS, music and food! All activities will be in the time range **5/5:30PM - 7/8 PM**; with the opportunity to leave a bit early if you have younger children. We really want the whole family together for at least these 4 Wednesdays and hope that everyone's coach will understand that these are church night activities.

For all of us - remember those Baptismal promises made for our children, to our children and for ourselves. To have in our hands the scripture, to worship, pray, learn and serve together. These 4 Wednesdays are one way to live into and out of these promises. The more folks we have, the more fun it will be! Let's go big, be bold, and encourage one another to participate; and invite friends as well!

This summer we have a group reading through the Bible in 90 days. It's a rigorous, but doable reading schedule. In the fall we will be offering an Introduction to the OT class. It is a required class for Nebraska Synod Parish Ministry Associate students; but it will be open to anyone who would like an in-depth introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures. There is a textbook along with the Bible with required reading, DVD and group discussion. I will be working on finding some textbooks on loan or used at reasonable prices. The course includes approximately 20 hours of class time in addition to the reading. Likely these classes will be on a Sunday afternoon; 2-, 3- or 4-hour blocks of time; depending on student schedules. Let Pastor know if you are interested.

A committee that means a lot to me is the Social Ministry committee. I have told Pastor that it surprises me how much I enjoy this ministry. As a committee we take turns visiting our shut ins and taking them communion. We usually go in pairs for this. We visit with our members in their homes and take them communion. They appreciate Pastor and our committee members with grateful hearts. I appreciate them! We also go to St Joseph's Retirement Home, Hillside Villa, and Colonial Haven in Beemer. We go the first and third Thursday of the month. We start at St Joes then go to the Villa. St. Joe's is at 10am and the Villa is at 11. Pastor and at least one or two of us attend these services. Pastor has everything prepared, just like a mini service. We volunteers read the lessons and the prayers and assist with communion. We also TRY to sing! If nothing else we can say we are a joyful noise. The afternoon service is at Beemer at 2pm, same scenario. We are usually done in less than 30 minutes. What a great way to spend 30 minutes of your month! This is a very heartwarming ministry, please consider volunteering and giving it a try. You don't have to do every first or third Thursday, we take turns and try to accommodate your schedule. Contact Pastor to volunteer or give me a call with any questions.

Vicki Furchert, 402-380-0665

Grace & Trinity Ladies, please join us for lunch at the Bing Bed and Breakfast in Oakland on Tuesday, July 18th at noon. We will have a delicious lunch and tour their gardens. Bev Wieler and Vicki Furchert will be hosting. The lunch cost is \$15 and you will need to RSVP and prepay to Vicki Furchert by Thursday, July 13! We will meet at church to share rides at 11:00 a.m. Any questions, please contact: Vicki, 402-380-0665.

Pastor is having a rummage sale to support her participation in the Synod Vision trip to Tanzania in January/February of 2024 where we will be visiting our partner synod. Trinity is hosting- so it's rain or shine. **Thursday, September 7 from 4-7 PM; Friday, September 8 from 8 AM to 1 PM & 4-7 PM; Saturday, September 9 from 8 - 10 AM.** Items to sell are welcome; small things can be brought to Trinity during regular office hours or arrange with Pastor or a Trinity member to get in. We ask that larger items wait until the week of the sale. You are also invited to be part of the work crew - Pastor will plan to be working at Trinity Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday day time for set up. For the actual sale it would be great to have 4-6 people for each shift. In August there will be a sign-up sheet. Pastor appreciates any and all support with this venture. Think of it as a wonderful way to clear out some of your clutter which may become someone else's treasure!

Wednesday, July 19 Salem in Wakefield is visiting Tri-Faith in Omaha which brings together a synagogue, church, mosque, and interfaith center. We are invited to tag along. More info to follow.

In Our Prayers this Month:

**To see an updated list
please contact the office.**

Trinity News

July Birthdays & Anniversaries

August Birthdays & Anniversaries

**To see an updated list
please contact the office.**

Trinity – May Financial Report – General Fund	
To see the latest report please contact the office.	

Trinity's May Minutes are posted on the bulletin board outside the office. If you would like a copy of the minutes, please contact the office.

As the Octoberfest supper team gets together, it's time to prayerfully discern where the money we raise is to be given. There is a container in the fellowship hall for you to add your ideas. Please get them in before the July 19 council meeting. Speaking of the supper team getting together, is God calling you to be part of team 2023? Inquiring (council) minds want to know. Please let Steve Blocher know if you are able to serve. Watch for more info in the weekly emails, bulletins and on the bulletin board.

An idea came up in one of our community conversations to offer free drive-through coffee and prayer at Trinity. We do have a great drive way for this. It's a really interesting and creative idea. Do we have folks feeling called to get a group together to figure out how to do this?

Grace News

July Birthdays & Anniversaries
August Birthdays & Anniversaries

**To see an updated list
please contact the office.**

Grace's May Minutes are posted on the bulletin board outside the office. If you would like a copy of the minutes, please contact the office.

Grace Lutheran Church - Financial Report	
---	--

General Fund – May 2023	
--------------------------------	--

To see the latest report please contact the office.	
--	--

<p align="center"><u>Keith Lutz turns 80 Celebration!</u></p> <p>Date: August 5, 2023</p> <p>Time: 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.</p> <p>Place: Keith's home,</p> <p>(Please no gifts!)</p>
--

High school youth – we are working on setting up the criteria for the Grace Lutheran scholarship for active and involved youth. Essentially, Grace members will be eligible for a \$500 scholarship for each year of high school you are active in church. So, anywhere from \$500 (active one year) to \$2000 (active all 4 years). We'd like to hear what youth members think are appropriate guidelines for what constitutes 'active and involved'. Email the church office with ideas.

<p>I am writing on behalf of our church to humbly ask you to join the Memorial Committee. We are a group that helps disperse funds given as memorial gifts in honor of deceased members. We have donations made to the funds for projects for the good of the church. We don't meet often, quite often we communicate through emails. It is an important committee to serve on. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Priscilla or Vicki Furchert</p>
--



Christmas in July.

Come to Worship at Grace Lutheran July 23rd and learn about a ministry we all can contribute to, and bring Christmas joy into a child's life. Go to www.samaritanpurse.org for more information and ideas on items you could contribute.

Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, an international relief organization. Their mission is to provide local partners around the

world with **shoeboxes** filled with small toys, hygiene items, and school supplies as a means of reaching out to children in their own communities with the Good News of Jesus Christ. We ship these simple gifts outside the United States to children affected by war, poverty, natural disaster, famine, and disease; and to children living on Native American reservations in the U.S.

Shoebox gifts go to the ends of the earth to children in some of the hardest-to-reach places—whether deep jungles, city slums, steep mountainsides, or one of 1,000 remote Pacific islands. Many of these areas are resistant to the Gospel, for cultural or religious reasons, and are home to numerous unreached people groups, some of whom have never heard the Name of Jesus Christ.

Just a few items you could bring July 23 would be: school supplies (that fit in a shoebox), simple children's crafts, hats, gloves, scarves, fashion accessories, quality toys, stuffed animals (small). We have plenty of shoeboxes at church...we just need lots of fun items to fill them.

We will gather items until Sunday, Sept 25 when we assemble the shoeboxes for delivery.

Thrivent members - there are several possibilities for Thrivent Action Teams this summer and fall. Please let Pastor know if you would like to form a team. There are several of us who can help you apply.

Camp Carol Joy Holling Quilt Auction

You're invited to the 35th annual quilt auction on Saturday, July 29th. The auction begins at 9:30 am and usually winds up by 5:00 pm. You can enjoy your lunch which is available there. Grace Lutheran Church has provided 11 quilts this year.



Friendship Circle met on Monday evening, June 12 at 5:30 pm. Linda Lofgren served as hostess and Bible Study Leader for our meeting.

Sandy Boots, Mary VanderPol, Ruth Maresh, Nancy Petersen, Fern Thorman,

Mary Thomas, and Linda Lofgren attended the meeting.

After we enjoyed our evening meal, Mary VanderPol led us through the business portion of our meeting. She shared a thank you note from one of our high school graduates, thanking us for the cupcake and sandwich reception we served in honor of the 11 high school graduates who are members of Grace Lutheran. There also was a thank you note to WELCA thanking our group for the donation made to provide protein and dairy products in the food distribution program. In addition to the thank you cards, there was a flyer from Lutheran World Relief that was passed around so we could all see the map

showing where the LWR quilts and kits are distributed around the world. The latest edition of Expressions featured an article about quilts and kits made and donated to LWR by First Lutheran in Blair. A suggestion was made that we submit a photo and write up about our quilts and kits. Nancy told us about how impressed other organizations have been when our kits and quilts are delivered to the Norfolk collection site. Several people had remarked about the large number of kits and quilts our church prepares and brings.

Mary updated us on the status of the Spring Gathering next year, which our church will be hosting. No dates have been set yet and the theme will be announced soon. Once we know the dates, we will be able to proceed with reserving program and meal venues. Hopefully there will be more information available by our next meeting.

Linda gave us a report on her card-sending mission. She sends out birthday cards to those 65 years of age, and other notable years, and anniversary cards for those celebrating 25 years, 50 years and other special anniversaries. In the last year, Linda sent out 36 birthday cards and 6 anniversary cards. Thank you, Linda, for this kind gesture.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 10 at 5:30 pm. Nancy Petersen has signed up to be the hostess. There is no one designated for the lesson.

Linda led us in a scripture lesson which involved having us read a Bible passage and making a list of Biblical truths. We made a list of seven, but as the lesson indicated, the list could go on and on. We were encouraged to find them and treasure them for they speak of God's love for us.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Thomas



Baptisms at Grace
on Sunday, June 25,
2023

On the left:
Ronnie Jean Johnson

Parents: Brent & Chelsea Johnson with son, Weldon

On the right:

Emerson Gene Meyer

Parents: Justin & Kristen Meyer with daughter, Addi



Catching up graduate info -

Keaton Persson

Future Plans: To attend UNO and graduate in business, focused on finance.

Parents: Kevin & Lori Persson