

Living with Christ, Growing in Grace!

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Ministers: Everyone!

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



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Grace & Trinity Newsbites

JULY & AUGUST 2026

From the pastor's desk,

My goodness, we are heading into July and then it will be August! Summer has officially just begun and it seems closer to fall than spring. There are big decisions to be made and possibilities, mission and ministry to pray about and act together. Let's do all we do together with faithfulness, boldness and mutual love. Bishop Curry, presiding bishop of the ELCA, said to those gathered for Synod Assembly that he hoped that we would, when thinking about church conversations and decisions 'assume good intentions'. Really wouldn't that be a fine attitude for many occasions? Assuming good intentions, we could then have honest and respectful conversations, even if we realize that we may not come to agreement.

My hope for Trinity and Grace, and for the Synod and Conference, as well as for our wider church denominations is that we assume good intentions and work together for the good of God's church, the body of Christ – all of us who desire to follow on the Way Jesus led.

On my list of things to do

– VBS (Very Blessed to Serve). We aren't having traditional VBS, but this is an idea borrowed from a friend's congregation. Schedule some opportunities for local mission and ministry, fellowship and fun this summer.

– schedule a zoom meeting for folks who'd be willing to brainstorm plans for Wednesday night Christian Ed and Worship. With the changes to our Wednesday evening, I can envision evenings where there could be an adult education offerings around a table, or conversation tables and fellowship; while the younger set have class. Then worship with a broad base of multi-age leadership. We have an opportunity to invite folks who can't attend on weekends or for whom an intentional multigenerational evening of fellowship, formation and worship might be a good fit.

✓ We have a 'VBS' mystery event planned for our youth! Saturday, July 11 10-noon @Grace. Parents are welcome as well - we'll have something for you to do as well:) If you come around 9:45 there will be donuts!

✓ Maybe! VBS#1 – an idea in search of a date and core group. An evening on the parsonage deck and yard. ‘Speed weeding contest’; water balloon toss; chalk art; corn hole; make a gratitude video; bingo & barbecue. Bring your own lawn chair or blanket; sides to share; weeding tools; and small prizes for the bingo table. All ages welcome! Want to help make it happen? Contact pastor.

✓ Brainstorm plans for Wednesday nights. July 15 – noon in person in the Fireside Room and 8 PM via zoom. Zoom info will be sent out with the July 11 & 12 bulletins.

The National ELCA Youth Gathering will be in Minneapolis June 28 – July 2, 2027. Students in 8th-12th grade this school year are eligible to go; there is also a concurrent young adult gathering (18-35, though most attendees tend to be in the 18-25 range). Early bird registration and first choice of hotels begins in October so if you are interested in attending, let’s get organized. Depending on numbers, we will need 1-2 adults. A congregation from Kearney has already reached out to see if we’d like to be on their bus. Let Pastor know asap so we can get things rolling.

Check out the ‘Weaving Faith’ activities that came with the emailed bulletin.

Be faithful. Be kind. Be bold. You are blessed to be a blessing.

Traveling mercies, Pastor Priscilla

Reminder – there’s a sign-up to host fellowship at both churches. Please take a turn.

In Our Prayers this Month:

To see an updated list please contact the office.

Trinity News
July Birthdays & Anniversaries
August Birthdays & Anniversaries

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Trinity – May Financial Report – General Fund Council Minutes are posted on the bulletin board by the offices. The full financial report is available in the office.	
To see the latest report please contact the office.	

Trinity Church – Council notes

The Trinity Church Council has made several decisions that will affect our congregation moving forward.

Recently, the Trinity Council met with the Grace Lutheran Council to discuss the future of our yoked ministry agreement and Pastor Priscilla's upcoming retirement. The discussion was positive, and both councils expressed a desire to continue the relationship between our two congregations. The next topic that will require further discussion is how we will address pastoral leadership after Pastor Priscilla retires. While there are some theological differences and variations in how our worship services are conducted, the councils agreed that these should not be deal-breakers when considering a new pastor.

Another topic discussed was attendance at our Saturday evening worship services and ways to increase participation. It appears that more weekend activities—such as travel to visit family and friends, ball games, school events, and other commitments—are affecting attendance. At the same time, we have experienced very strong attendance at our Advent and Lenten Wednesday evening services, which follow the children's Christian Education program.

After careful discussion, the Trinity Council voted to move our regular weekly worship service from Saturday evenings to Wednesday evenings following Christian Education. The hope is that children will already be at church, parents can pick them up and stay for worship, there are typically fewer school activities on Wednesday evenings, and fewer people are traveling out of town during the middle of the week.

The council also discussed having meals at least once a month, with the possibility of having meals more frequently. The transition from Saturday evening services to Wednesday evening services is planned for early September 2026. Final details will be shared in August and announced during worship services.

Another significant decision made by the Trinity Council was to discontinue the annual Octoberfest Dinner. This was not an easy decision. However, after listening to feedback from several members of the congregation, the council concluded that it was time to bring the annual dinner to an end.

If you have any questions or comments regarding these council decisions, please feel free to contact any member of the Trinity Council for further discussion.

Steve Blocher

Volunteer Opportunities

Jim & Kathi Sherwood are searching for an adult who is willing to be a guardian for a 22 year old woman who lives with us. (NOT ABBIE) She is truly in need of a guardian. Your main role is to oversee her living, health and financial arrangements are being provided to her so she is not taken advantage of in any way, and she is living her best life possible. It requires attendance at one meeting annually in West Point. You can make it as involved as you want it to be. If you want any information whatsoever, please contact Jim or Kathi Sherwood. This can be a very rewarding experience for both the guardian and their client. God has truly blessed us as her caretakers in our home.

Grace News

July Birthdays & Anniversaries
August Birthdays & Anniversaries

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June 24, 2026

Greetings from the Grace Lutheran Church Council. As many of you are aware, Pastor Priscilla will be retiring in May 2027. Several informational meetings were scheduled throughout the month of June for members of Grace to discuss the future of Grace including our partnership with Trinity and the process for selecting a new pastor. We appreciate the participation and positive responses thus far. There will be one final informational meeting available on Sunday, July 12, 2026, immediately following service. This meeting will be held in the sanctuary, and members of the Church Council will be available to answer questions.

The substance of these meetings was conversation about our current partnership with Trinity and the potential processes of selecting a new pastor. Currently, the overwhelming response has been that our current partnership has been positive and allows both congregations to build community through worship services, Christian Education for youth, fundraising events, and holiday celebrations. Both congregations have also benefitted from sharing pastoral and administrative expenses, which has helped to relieve some of the financial burden for both congregations.

If a partnership with Trinity were to continue, there are two methods for selecting a new pastor available. One method is to enter the call process through the ELCA Church. This process cannot begin until after Pastor has retired and would likely take 2-3+ years before a permanent replacement is found. Several factors lead to this timeframe, with the most significant being a shortage of Pastors available in the ELCA Church. During the time without a permanent pastor, the NE Synod would assist in finding an interim or contact pastor and/or assist in finding supply preachers and help develop lay leadership as needed.

The second method is through the Methodist Church. This process is quite different from the ELCA Church and entails Trinity/Grace notifying the Methodist Church that we are in need of a new Pastor and completing a form that asks us to identify our pastoral needs. The Bishop's Council of the Great Plains Conference then prayerfully discerns the needs of each congregation and pastor. Appointments are made in early Spring, and pastors are in place by July 1st. There are currently no shortages of pastors through the Methodist Church. This process would leave approximately 4 weeks between Pastor's retirement

and the new pastor to fill with a relief pastor. The permanent pastor would be recognized in the ELCA Church and would continue to offer our services at Grace using ELCA liturgy.

A special meeting with a congregational vote has been scheduled for August 16, 2026, immediately following service and will be held in the sanctuary. We will be voting on up to two items:

1. Continuation of current partnership with Trinity Church

If a favorable vote is passed:

2. Selection of a new pastor through the ELCA call process or the Methodist process

Thank you for your participation in this important process. We look forward to hearing from you.

Grace Lutheran Church Council

Renee Schmid, President Jeremy White, Vice-President

Jeff Kirchmann, Secretary Todd Kuxhausen, Treasurer

Jamie Stigge Robin Schroeder



Friendship Circle - Monday, June 8, 2026

Attending: Fern Thorman, Linda Lofgren, Liz Luebbert, Mary VanderPol, Ruth Maresh, Sandy Boots and Mary Thomas

Friendship Circle met at the home of Sandy Boots. We enjoyed a light supper together and then Sandy led us in a lesson based on Luther's Small Catechism. We continued with a discussion of heaven based on a Bible verse that we each read aloud.

During the business portion of the meeting, we discussed the changes made to the sign-up sheet. The edited version will be sent out with the minutes.

Ruth shared a large bag of baby care kit supplies that she has been accumulating. We prayed a blessing over them and talked about what supplies we still need to put together the Baby Kits. Anyone who is out shopping is encouraged to visit the baby department and see if there are any of the baby care kit items they would consider purchasing for the kits. (list included below) We have designated the

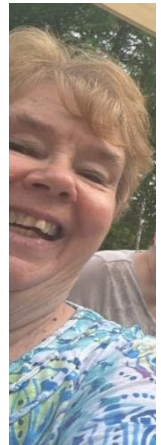
September meeting as a work night for this purpose. We also need to collect things for the Shoebox Ministry.

INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN EACH BABY CARE KIT

TWO lightweight cotton t-shirts (no Onesies ®); TWO long- or short-sleeved gowns or sleepers (without feet); TWO receiving blankets, medium-weight cotton or flannel, or crocheted or knitted with lightweight yarn, between 32" and 52" square or rectangular; FOUR cloth diapers, flat fold preferred; ONE jacket, sweater, sweatshirt or cape with a hood, or include a baby hat; TWO pairs of socks; ONE hand towel, dark color recommended; TWO or three bath-size bars of gentle soap equaling 8 to 9 oz., any brand, in original wrapping; no mini or hotel size bars; TWO diaper pins or large safety pins.

The only other topic of discussion was to make note of the informational meetings that have been scheduled throughout the month of June for members of Grace to discuss the future of Grace including our partnership with Trinity and the process for selecting a new Pastor. Many of our group committed to attend and get involved.

The meeting was closed and we adjourned to have our photo taken out on Sandy's new deck—and a selfie of Sandy!



Secretary, Mary Thomas



Grace Quilters need flat sheets (any size from twin to queen). They make great backs for our quilts. If you can donate some, thank you!



The Camp Carol Joy Holling Quilt Auction is Saturday, July 25. The camp is located at 27416 Ranch Road in Ashland, NE. The 38th Annual Auction runs from 9 am to 5 pm. It's a day filled with competitive bidding, good food, great fun, and lots of beautiful quilts. Rain or shine, the day will go on! Bring your friends and family! Admission is free.



Christmas in July.

Come to Worship at Grace Lutheran July 26th 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.

You are welcome to bring a few of your favorite Christmas treats to share at coffee hour. And just a few items for the shoebox ministry you could bring July 20th 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 the middle of September when we assemble the shoeboxes for delivery.

Reminder, Vicki Furchert is still collecting Best Choice UPC codes. Our American Legion Auxiliary gets 3 cents per code. The funds are used for Veteran's projects. There is a collection bucket in Parish Hall at Grace.

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West Point, NE 68788-1811**

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