

*Living with Christ, Growing in Grace!*

**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church**

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**Missionary:**

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**Ministers:** Everyone!

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Teala Connealy



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

**Trinity Church UCC/UMC**

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# *Grace & Trinity Newsbites*

## SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2026

Many of us know the quote from the book of Joshua, “As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15) For Joshua and his household that meant, in particular, not engaging in worshipping other gods; a difficult task in his era, in a culture comfortable with polytheism. What does it look like for us, to serve God, to be good stewards of that which God entrusts to us? How do we hold ourselves accountable? Are we clear about who (what) we worship? How do we ‘refuel and recharge’ so that we are the best stewards we can be? How do we support and challenge one another in serving God? Three questions for reflection -

Is the work of the church being supported through your time, talent and treasure? Is your giving ‘pay as you go’ or regular, generous support to the congregation so that we might do the work of the church in the world?

Is the congregation being supported and upheld with your presence? We are better together; we are able to do far more together than we could ever do by ourselves. We all are better selves when we engage with others, pray for one another, worship together and wrestle with the Gospel, together. Together we are the body of Christ, each part essential for the whole.

As we move into another season, fall and school, are worshiping and serving God on your schedule? For most of us, creating habits and patterns of behavior does not come easy. If we don’t include faith practices, service, prayer, worship, Christian Education on our calendars, and include a tithe in our budget; chances are they won’t become habits.

### ON SABBATH KEEPING

What does it mean to be a Sabbath keeper? What’s the sabbath for and why do we want to keep it? Observant Jewish believers welcome the sabbath as a delightful gift from God; with candle lighting and special prayers and celebratory meal. Christians come together on the Lord’s Day to celebrate Christ’s resurrection, to hear the word, and for many, to gather around the table. Other faith traditions have various practices

around days for rest, renewal and prayer or contemplation. We humans know our bodies, minds and souls need rest. Jesus said, ‘Come to me all who are weary and you will find rest for your souls.’ For many of us the pattern for sabbath keeping is Sunday morning worship and a day of rest, with family and friends. A fine tradition. For many others, the requirements for work or belonging to a team or family commitments, don’t permit abiding by the traditional pattern. Wednesday night education, supper and worship is an attempt, a bold experiment to provide a non-traditional space and time. Will these times work for everyone, every week? No; and having said that, I also want to challenge folks to be willing to discern whether the activities that are not ‘one offs’ could be missed in order to keep a time of ‘sabbath’.

I would also suggest that sabbath keeping is an approach to life that takes cultivating. If we believe that Jesus is our rest and our sustenance, that our worth comes from our identity as a beloved child of God, and our salvation is pure gift of grace; then we can take time to just be and not do. We can stop and remember that we are more than what we do or produce or make. We are enough as we are, beloved. We can do what we do with our whole selves, to the best of our ability; we can work hard to perfect our skills and utilize our gifts, and know that our dignity and worth are not dependent on being first or having the most. We are enough, beloved.

So, take a day, or an hour, or a weekend, say no; sleep late; eat joyfully; delight in doing nothing; unplug from everything and read a book, take a walk, play a game; make a new recipe; take a nap; laugh, do something completely different; take a breath. Pray awhile, be kind to someone, do some good, be grateful, gather somewhere for word and table; give glory to God and be sent out refreshed to serve the LORD and one another. Trust that God wraps you with grace and that God’s grace is sufficient.

Jesus says the sabbath was made for us, not we were made to keep sabbath. It is a gift and delight in which we remember who we are and to whom we belong. Cultivate the habit of sabbath keeping, for the well being of your soul and the glory of God. It’s not about rule keeping, but about living life abundantly.

Traveling mercies,

Pr. Priscilla

## Movie Night at Grace

**Tuesdays, September 29<sup>th</sup> and October 27<sup>th</sup>!**

**Meal starts at 6:00 p.m. and Movie starts at 6:30 p.m.**

STEVE COOGAN

### *The* **Penguin Lessons**

Based on a true story



### **September 29<sup>th</sup> featuring “The Penguin Lessons”**

Plot: During the 1976 coup in Argentina, an English teacher rescues a penguin and brings it to his school. His life begins to change when the bird's presence starts to have a positive effect on the school.

(2024, PG-13, CVLI #505515038)

### **October 27<sup>th</sup> featuring “Kangaroo”**

Plot: A disgraced TV host teams up with an 11-year-old Indigenous girl to rescue and rehabilitate orphaned kangaroos in a remote community.

(2025, Not Rated, CVLI #505515038)



### **Drive – Thru Lasagna Supper**

**Sponsored by the Women of Grace, WELCA with help from the Trinity Women & Christian Ed. Kids**

We are again having a "drive-thru" Lasagna Supper. Mark your calendars for Monday, October 26. The meal will be lasagna (beef or chicken), dinner roll, salad and dessert. Serving from 5:30 - 7:00. We will be selling tickets for \$12.00. We will be limiting the number of tickets sold, so buy your tickets earlier rather than later. There will be no meal available without a ticket. You may purchase tickets beginning October 5<sup>th</sup> from a "Friendship Circle" member or call Mary Vander Pol at 402-372-5090 or Teala at the church during office hours at 402-372-2050. The proceeds from our supper will be disbursed to further the work of the church missions, local needs and projects, and help maintain church needs.

If you would be willing to help with preparing and/or serving, please let Mary Vander Pol know.

Grace Lutheran is sponsoring a new missionary, Deacon Erin Brown.

Erin received a B.A. in Spanish and Global Service with a Minor in Theology at Valparaiso University in Indiana and a M.A. in Latin American & Caribbean Studies at Indiana University in Indiana. She loves Latin dancing (salsa, bachata, cumbia) and performed at the International Salsa Congress in New York City. She is also an avid hiker and loves exploring God's creation and spending time outdoors. A language nerd and loves learning new languages. Professionally, before taking this role, she lived in New York City working at the Lutheran Office for World Community, a joint advocacy ministry of the ELCA and Lutheran World Federation.

Deacon Erin Brown was called to serve as ELCA Regional Representative for South America in February 2026. Her call to global mission has grown through years of accompaniment with Lutheran communities across Latin America and in multicultural ministry settings in the U.S. As a Deacon, her faith has been shaped by walking alongside migrants, local congregations, and global partners—whether accompanying Venezuelan families in Costa Rica, serving in a bilingual congregation in New York, or representing the ELCA and Lutheran World Federation at the United Nations. In each of these contexts, she has witnessed how the Gospel takes root differently in every community and how we are transformed when we listen, learn, and serve together. These experiences deepened her commitment to the ELCA's model of accompaniment.

As a regional representative, Erin stewards the ELCA's relationships with global companion churches and partners through deep engagement and presence in their lives and ministries. In her own words, "My theological formation and intercultural work have affirmed my call to serve in roles that bridge local contexts with the global church, supporting companions as they lead ministry in their own communities. This sense of vocation—and the joy I have found in cross-cultural ministry—has led me to discern a call to global mission service."

There are many pieces of Erin's work with ELCA Global Mission. She is responsible for grant-related planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME), supporting the Latin America team and global personnel in the region (connecting with missionaries in the different countries of the region), providing contextual analysis and mission interpretation to ELCA Global Mission, and connecting with ELCA synods and congregations with their companion churches in South America. This work is fully informed by the perspective of companion churches and partners in South America and the theological lens of accompaniment.

You support Erin's ministry as she accompanies 5 companion churches and 2 faith-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in South America.

As part of her ministry, she oversees and supports companions as they implement grant projects with funds from ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response. Grant projects range from supporting ministries like migration accompaniment and women's empowerment, to emergency disaster response, to theological and leadership formation.

In terms of the five diaconal images, my work encompasses a bit of all of them.

- Storyteller
  - Much of my work is listening to the stories of the local churches-- listening and learning about the work they are doing in their contexts and then translating those stories back to various people and communities in the ELCA. It might be ELCA Global Mission, Companion Synods, or congregations that are connected to the churches in South America.
- Foot washer
  - In my work, I might not always be washing feet directly but can support the local congregations as they wash the feet of the communities around them. I am able to listen about the work they are doing and offer suggestions or advice so that they are able to best tend and care for the communities they abide and work in.
- Table Server
  - A large piece of my work is project monitoring and evaluation. There are several grants from ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response that sponsor a variety of ministries in the region (from education to gender justice to climate justice). I work in collaboration with the local churches and think about what gaps can be filled with the work being done. We think about who might be missing at the table, and how we can ensure they have a seat waiting for them.
- Light bearer
  - During my work, I am able to visit local churches both in South America and in the US, and occasionally, I have the opportunity to preach about the work being done in the region. In my sermon, I am able to share about how the Gospel is vibrantly alive in South America and how the Spirit is moving in the region.
- Door keeper
  - This work requires working between and across various cultures, languages, and customs. It means moving between different doorways but also helping translate what is across the various thresholds. This sort of accompaniment might happen when guests come to visit the local churches (ELCA Churchwide Staff, Synod visits, etc.). This work is to ensure that the visits are positive, that the various communities are able to communicate effectively with each other, and that the visits are always based in a theology of accompaniment, not with a hierarchy.

**In Our Prayers this Month:**

To see an updated list please contact the office.

**Trinity News**

**September Birthdays & Anniversaries**

**October Birthdays & Anniversaries**

To see an updated list please contact the office.

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| <b>Trinity – July Financial Report – General Fund<br/>Council Minutes are posted on the bulletin board by the offices.<br/>The full financial report is available in the office.</b> |                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>To see the latest report please contact the office</b> |

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## Update on CCJH Quilt Auction

The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Camp Carol Joy Holling Quilt Auction raised \$121,820.00 to help campers! Grace Quilters sent 12 quilts of assorted sizes and those quilts garnered \$2,345.00!

“Blessed are the quilters; for they keep you in stitches.”



Friendship Circle - August 10, 2026

In attendance: Fern Thorman, Mary VanderPol, Linda Lofgren, Mary Thomas, Vicki Furchert, Ruth Maresh, and Sandy Boots.

Ruth served our evening meal and then led us in a lesson on “The Fruits of the Spirit.”

Mary VanderPol opened our business meeting and we reviewed the minutes from the last meeting. We were reminded of the Women of ELCA October 10 Autumn Renewal to be held at St. Paul’s Lutheran

Church in Grand Island. A registration page was circulated.

Next, we discussed dates and details concerning the Lasagna Drive Through Dinner. A suggestion had been made to offer a dine-in option but we were not in favor of that citing the lack of help and congestion it would cause in our serving area. We also decided to stay with our 2 lasagna menu choices: beef and chicken. Again, we will cap our ticket sales at 250. We do not have enough oven space to prepare for more.

Previously our Lasagna Drive Through Dinner was held on a Wednesday evening. Now that Trinity Church will be having Wednesday night services, we looked for a new date to schedule our dinner. We have tentatively set it for Monday, October 26. Mary VanderPol will be checking with the Chamber to see if there are any conflicts with that date.

Next order of business was in regard to the Spring Gathering in 2027. Grace Lutheran Women have agreed to host but finding an open date proved to be challenging. Two possible options will be pursued: April 24 and May 1.

Linda reported that an inventory of supplies for the Baby Care Kits had been made and there would be enough to put together 35-36 kits. We will use our September meeting as a work night to assemble these kits.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 14 at 5:30. Linda Lofgren will be coordinating the Baby Care Kit assembly and Vicki Furchert is our hostess.

Secretary, Mary A. Thomas

## Upcoming Events at Carol Joy Holling:



**October 3 – 3 to 7 pm**



**October 10-11  
Adult Retreat**



**November 6-8  
Intergenerational  
Retreat**



**November 13-15  
Youth Retreat**



**December 4-7  
Adult Retreat**

**For more information or to check out other  
events, please scan the QR code or visit**

**<https://www.nlom.org/events/>**



### **Application for Endowment Grants**

*Applications are due in the church office by **October 15<sup>th</sup>**.*

Dear friend,

Please use the Grant Request form on this page to submit Endowment requests. Provide a concise summary of need, and the anticipated benefit provided to recipients. You may attach additional information to this form as necessary.

The Endowment Committee will meet in late October or November to consider your request. You will be contacted in early January as to whether your request was granted. (Investment returns were low this past year, so applicants be mindful that you may not receive as much this year.)

Thank you for your submission. We pray that God will bless your ministry with every success!

Yours in Christ, The Endowment Committee of Grace Lutheran

The Endowment Fund was established by the congregation in the early 1900s. It is a vital component of the ministry of Grace and provides a way for members and friends of Grace to make special gifts to carry on the ministry of the church. A gift to the Endowment Fund is a gift that keeps on giving. The funds are used to support projects that the general fund can't support.

(Grant Request Form is in a separate document and paper copies are available in Grace's Fellowship Hall.)