



## **We Are Surrounded**

I locked the door of the church and was ready to get in my car and head home. It was a beautiful day and the sun shone down on my shoulders. I felt warm and at peace. As I walked toward my car I looked down and my eye caught several of the recently cleaned and rejuvenated Commemorative Bricks along the church stone retaining wall and sidewalk. I decided to read all the names and memories of those who have been honored and thanked by members and friends of Grace Lutheran Church. I made my way along the row of bricks and reflected that some of the people whose names have been inscribed on the bricks have died and some are still living. All bricks are given in thankfulness and appreciation for lives well lived.

I recalled Hebrews 12:1 – “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

As we enter and as we leave our church building, we are reminded by these Commemorative Bricks that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. These witnesses are saints – alive and deceased. These are the holy ones of God who are witnesses to God’s promises and grace. Their lives strengthen our lives as we remember their contributions to our congregation, to our families, and to our world. Their faith is an example for us. We are grateful for this “cloud of witnesses” that surrounds our church building and our worshipping congregation.

On Sunday when we proclaim our faith in the words of the Apostles’ Creed we say: “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints....” The Holy Spirit calls us through the Gospel, enlightens us with gifts, and sanctifies and keeps us united with Christ in the true faith. We are a holy communion. Yet we are sinners. We are saints and sinners at the same time.

I have a daily practice of praying Morning Prayer. I use a resource entitled “Give Us This Day – Daily Prayer for Today’s Catholic.” It is published by St. John’s Abby in Collegeville, Minnesota. Although it is produced by and for Catholics, it is not only for Catholics. I find it to be very accessible and meaningful in my spiritual life. One section of this daily prayer guide is entitled “Blessed Among Us”. The author, Robert Ellsberg, writes a one-page reflection each day on a person who has lived an exemplary life. These people include the gospel writers:

Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and other Biblical persons like Peter and Noah and Mary Magdalene. I have enjoyed reading about other saints: the Peace Pilgrim, Dorothy Day and Flannery O’Conner. I was surprised to read about Mr. Rogers as one of those “Blessed Among Us”.

The “cloud of witnesses” that I was reflecting upon that recent sunny afternoon are the “Blessed Among Us”. Some are saints alive, and some are the saints of heaven. They surround us and support us in our life together. Thanks be to God. – In Christ, Pastor Larry

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**The Sign of the Cross** – Sometimes during worship you may notice that some of us make the sign of the cross upon themselves. I am one of those people. I haven’t always done this. I learned this practice in seminary from professors and other seminarians. I learned that signing myself with the cross is a ritual action which recalls and proclaims Christ’s death on the cross and my union with Christ through Baptism.

I learned that tracing the sign of the cross upon myself, others, and things has been a common Christian custom since at least the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. It was first conferred on a person during Baptism. We follow this ancient ritual today when a person is baptized by the Pastor who marks the sign of the cross upon the forehead of each of the baptized and says, “....child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.” (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, page 231)

For the first several centuries the sign of the cross was made upon the forehead, but eventually Christians signed themselves by tracing a cross from the forehead to the chest, then the left shoulder, then the right shoulder and finally back to the center chest. This was and is a way to remember that we are baptized. It is a sign of who and whose we are. We are Christian and we belong to Christ.

During the Reformation, Martin Luther encouraged Christians to continue this ancient practice and included directions in his Small Catechism that the sign of the cross can be used to begin and end each day. (See the Small Catechism on page 1166 of Evangelical Lutheran Worship.)

During worship, the sign of the cross may be made at the following times:

- at the beginning of worship when the Pastor says, “In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
- when the Pastor repeats these words at the end of Confession and Absolution,
- at the announcement of the Holy Gospel;
- at the Creed when toward the ending reference is made to eternal life or the resurrection;
- during the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) as “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” is sung;
- before and after receiving the Holy Communion;
- and as the Pastor concludes worship with the Benediction and making the sign of the cross over the congregation.

As citizens of the United States of America we stand and remove our hat and place our hand over our heart (a ritual action) as we say the Pledge of Allegiance or sing the National Anthem. As Christians we express our joy, reverence, and identity as baptized Christians in various actions and words. Making the sign of the cross is filled with meaning for Christians. If you aren't already doing so, "try it, you might like it!" – Pastor Larry

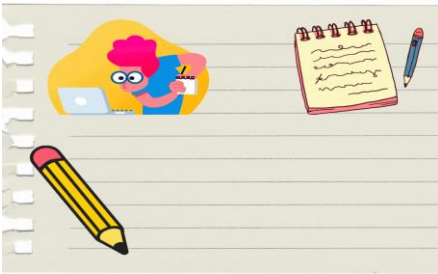
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**The following are the updated procedures/guidelines for Worship Safety. If you have any questions please feel free to speak with anyone from council or Pastor Larry.**

**In Person Worship Guidelines and Information**  
**Effective January 19, 2023**

1. If you are sick, have symptoms, or may have been exposed to someone who is positive for covid, please stay home.
2. Frequent use of hand sanitizer is encouraged
3. Masks are optional but encouraged throughout the church. Please be considerate of others

Council will revisit and/or reinstate various safety measures at church if risk level for the county and/or Ely rises back to the high level, according to CDC and MDH metrics.



**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church Council**  
**July 20, 2023**

**Mark your calendars:**

**Worship in Whiteside Park** in the pavilion on August 27th at 9:30am. Mike Frazier and the Cornerstone worship band will be providing the music for the service.

- Bring your own chair
- Bring your own drink
- In case of rain, worship at the church

**Grace Committee Meeting Schedule:**

Any changes/questions talk with committee leader/s

**Building & Grounds Meeting:** August 7<sup>th</sup>, 5:00pm

**Choir Practice:** August 3<sup>rd</sup> through 24<sup>th</sup> Choir will be rehearsing on Thursday nights at 5:00. Return to Wednesday rehearsals on August 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Council Meeting:** August 17<sup>th</sup>, 4:30pm

**Education Task Force Meeting:** August 7<sup>th</sup>, 3:30pm

**Finance Meeting:** August 17<sup>th</sup>, 3:00pm

**Outreach Meeting:** August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2:00pm

**Stewardship Meeting:** at Flesvig's home at 5:00pm, a pot luck meeting

**Sunday Worship 9:30am:** Sunday, August 6 10th Sunday after Pentecost – Pastor Sue Smith / August 13<sup>th</sup> 11th Sunday after Pentecost – Pastor Rebecca LeMenager / August 20<sup>th</sup> 11th Sunday after Pentecost – Pastor Eric / August 27<sup>th</sup> Worship at Whiteside Park (NOT at Grace)

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**The June Noisy Change Offering** will go towards the purchase fabric to make the School Kit Backpacks

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**Livestream Tech Volunteers are needed!** Pastor Eric and the Worship and Music Committee are seeking interested individuals who might like to help with running the livestream for worship. Volunteers would be trained on how to run the livestream and given opportunities to learn with those who have already run livestream. Those who run Livestream services will be paid \$25.00 per Worship Service. Please contact Pastor Larry if you are interested or have questions.

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**More Communion Servers Are Needed** - Any member of Grace Lutheran Church is invited and encouraged to help serve the wine and bread for communion on Sundays. No special training is needed (learn by doing). Talk to Pastor Larry if you need some assistance. Sign-up sheets are posted on the office glass.

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**WELCA is preparing for the Fall: *Lutheran Social Services School Kit.*** With all the sales coming up we wanted to alert the congregation of the items that will be needed and if you are out and about shopping you may be able to find some good sales on the items needed. So here is the list of items needed for the School Kits:

- 4- 70 sheet spiral notebooks
- 1- 30 centimeter ruler with inches on the other side
- 1- pencil sharpener
- 1- blunt scissors
- 5- unsharpened #2 pencils
- 5- ball point pens [NO GEL INK]
- 1- box of crayons, 16 or 24 count
- 1- back pack [WELCA members will make these]

Thank you for your donations in advance: WELCA

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**Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord. Ephesians 5:19b,** Grace Choir will be rehearsing on Thursday nights at 5:00 starting on July 13 until August 24. Please join us if you can! They will return to Wednesday night rehearsals on August 30. Questions? Call or text Patti at 218–929–3214.



**Prayer Chain Information** “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” 1 John 5: 14

Following is information about Grace Lutheran’s Prayer Chain:

1. Prayer Chain is completely separate from the list of people needing prayer that is seen in the weekly bulletin and included in the prayers during the church service. However, a person can be included in both.
2. Anyone can become a Prayer Chain Partner and is most certainly welcome!
3. When a request comes, the Prayer Chain Chairman emails the other partners of the Prayer Chain and lets them know who they should pray for and any specifics that they have been given. Prayer Chain Partners add that person or situation to their list and say prayers. The Prayer Chain chairman will be in touch with the contact person monthly to see if there are any changes to the request. –OR- if you are the contact person and wish for a request to be removed or there is a change you can reach out to the chairman.
4. Prayer requests can come from the person needing prayer or from a family member or friend in their behalf.
5. If you request prayers for another person, you **MUST** have that person’s approval to make the request.
6. All requests are **CONFIDENTIAL** and shared only with Prayer Chain partners, Pastor Larry and Brian at the church office.

We always would like to have more Prayer Partners! To join the Prayer Partners or to request prayers, please contact the chairperson, Jane Ott, via phone call, text or email. 218-235-1854 [genejane@packsackcanoetrips.com](mailto:genejane@packsackcanoetrips.com)

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**The Stewardship Committee** has been busy meeting and planning its program for 2023. This year we will be holding three events. We wanted to give you all advanced notice of dates and times so you can be sure to mark your calendars:

**October (dates to be determined) – Annual Stewardship Campaign** We will kick-off our annual Stewardship Campaign in mid-October on Stewardship Sunday. Pledges for 2023 will be dedicated in early November. More details this fall.

**Our Plan-** Our plan this year and into the future is to encourage and celebrate a more “expansive” stewardship at Grace. Watch for some small ways this may unfold during the year.

## **Christian Education Task Force**

A few months ago, Sarah Sponholz, representing the Christian Education Committee asked the Church Council for some immediate action and support to revitalize the committee and the Sunday school program in particular. A Task Force has been formed to come up with ideas and make short term plans. The task force met on July 7th to organize and begin discussion. The group includes, BJ Kobierski (chair), Sarah Sponholz,, Rachel Brophy, Peggy Stolley, Pat Merfeld, Dick Flesvig, and Larry Mischke.

Grace Lutheran is experiencing the problem that many small churches have. small class with even smaller, unpredictable attendance of 1 to 7 one class (ages 4-11), making curriculum and teaching a challenge frustrated teachers a dedicated Christian Education committee that is burned out.

The Task Force is faced with this challenge. How can we make learning about God fun and effective with such a small number of kids? We've decided we need to think outside the box. Maybe even get rid of it! Sunday school is the box. It's not the prize. We don't want to ruin the prize by shoving it in the wrong box or throwing the box away.

The Task Force comes with enthusiasm and a plan for a new box. We will need your enthusiasm and support. Join the task force, participate in the plan, share your ideas, be a "teacher" bring grandkids, neighbors, and friends to Sunday school.

What might the new box look like? Given our limited resources, we have decided on a simpler approach. Sunday school will be a short music ministry on Sunday mornings, following the gospel and children's sermon. Children will return for communion and then to sit with their families. Dick Flesvig has agreed to facilitate this program. He will be looking for other musicians to help out. This program will run from September through May.

To support this music ministry program, we are discussing initiating a monthly intergenerational action plan. Peggy Stolley and Pat Merfeld will be the leaders to facilitate, schedule, and plan. Ideas are starting to flow. It might include a variety of activities... scripture, skits, art and crafts, videos and movies, Bible stories and faith stories, games, food lessons, gardening/plant lessons, Mr. Science, hikes and outdoor activities, guest speakers. We have no set day or time, but we are looking for all ages to participate. Can we take a risk and do something outside the box? ~ BJ Kobierski

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## **The New Digital Directory-A Work in Progress**

Hopefully, by now most of you have been contacted by a member of the Outreach Committee regarding your preferences and correct information for the directory. If we have missed you and you would like to be included, contact the church office or Bj Kobierski. We have started the process of typing this information into the Instant Church Directory website. We hope to be able to allow person's listed in the directory

access by September 1, 2023. There is no cost to you for this digital directory. You will be able to enter a password using your computer or mobile phone app.

Adding photos to the directory will be the second phase of this project. We think this will be easy. It is your choice whether you want your photo in the directory. Only digital photos will be accepted, but you have two choices. Submit your own digital photo or have your photo taken at church. Tom Kobieriski has volunteered to be the photographer using his I-phone. Photos will be taken at church. Could be inside or outside. If you have a special request, talk to Tom. This will be a point and shoot, quick and easy process.

### Photo Dates-Pick One

There will be no appointments or scheduling.

After church- August 13, 2023

Tuesday- August 29 3:00-6:00

After church-September 17, 2023

Wednesday-September 20, 2023

Phase 3 is offering a printed directory from a local printer. This would be for those of you who want both digital and print form and for those who do not have a computer or mobile phone. Individuals would have to pay for the cost of the printed version. ~ BJ Kobierski

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**The Ministry Minute:** Each Sunday we will be presenting the weekly offering to the altar as was done in prior years before the pandemic. Following the presentation, either the pastor or a member on one of our ministry committees will give a 60 to 90 second reflection on a ministry of the church (the Ministry Minute). The topics for these highlights would alternate between ministry that happens at Grace or in Ely, throughout the NE MN Synod, around the ELCA, and the global church, as 10% of our offerings go beyond our congregation and community. These brief “minutes” describe the ministries that are supported by our time, talent and resources.

In July, Ministry Minutes were:

- Grace - Confirmation Ministry
- Synod – Seaman’s Ministry
- Global Church – Lutheran World Federation
- Grace – Communion Bread

In August the Ministry Minutes will cover ministries at Grace, The NE MN Synod and In the Ely Community:

- August 6 – Ava Skustad and Carmen Nelson – Young Life Service Trip to Puerto Rico

- August 13 - Beck Sponholz and Katie Brophy – Camp Vermilion Experience
- August 20 – Worship Committee – To be Determined

### **August Birthdays**

**8/3** Rebecca Sponholz  
**8/6** Jim Beals  
 Amy Soderberg  
**8/8** Warren Nikkola  
**8/9** Ernest Seliskar  
 Gavin Marshall  
**8/10** Sarah Jonas  
**8/11** Josh Larson  
 Kiersten Schoonover  
**8/20** Madison Jonas  
**8/21** Chase Eilrich  
**8/22** Brooke Pasmick  
**8/24** Courtney Eilrich  
 Laura Pasmick  
**8/27** Zach Smith  
**8/28** Kathy Ojala  
 Dan Litchfield  
**8/29** Joan Edman

**8/31** Virginia Pointer

### **August Baptisms**

**8/1** Jude Jalonen  
**8/4** Marge Haugen  
**8/6** Walt Leino  
**8/9** Jean Erickson  
 Dale Filson  
 Craig Tikkanen  
**8/10** Heidi Mann  
**8/16** Sharon Anderson  
 Galen Kayute  
**8/17** Kaylin Visser  
**8/18** Chris Eilrich  
**8/22** Julianna Schmidt  
**8/23** Kiersten Schoonover  
**8/24** Joel Edman  
**8/30** Amy Soderberg  
 Hunter Halbakken

### **Amazing Grace Schedule:**

#### **August**

**Alison Arver and Curt VanDeen-  
LEADERS**

Jim & Carol Dayton  
 Joel & Kathy Edman  
 Shirley Ronn  
 George Nieman  
 Larry and Sue Mischke  
 Dianne Thunhorst  
 Dave and Lynn Horwath

#### **September**

**BJ & Tom Kobierski- LEADERS**

Duane & JoAnn Bird  
 Paul Johnson  
 Roger Laine  
 Tom & Arlene Today  
 Greg & Heidi Mann Family  
 John and Dorothy Esse

**\*Attention: Amazing Grace leaders & volunteers** please make sure that coffee and donuts are set up, served, and kitchen cleaned up. If any questions, please contact Dolores Delaney. Thank you.



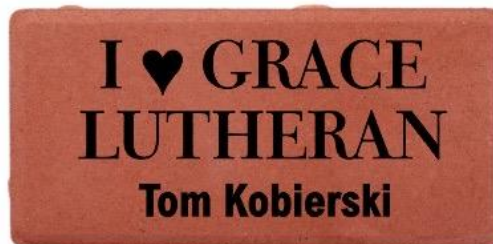


**SURROUNDING GRACE WITH LOVE** Have you noticed the current media trend where people are using their hands to form a heart? It's all over photos and TV programs and awards shows. It's the latest interpretation of how people are visually showing their love for an endless array of reasons. That idea goes way back and transcends all barriers - from the famous, "All you need is love" to the bumper stickers that read "I ♥ Ely," and our own church motto "To Love as God Loves."

This year, let's adopt that idea and put it to use in our own brick-fundraising project. If you love to be back in church "live"; love to watch those Sunday School children come bounding up the aisle to receive their communion blessing; love the idea that our choir is back in action, even the idea that our potlucks are back, or for whatever other reasons, then here is your chance to honor Grace with a simple gesture of a purchase of a brick that proudly states, "I ♥ Grace Lutheran." In fact, this year, we want to "Surround Grace with Love." How many of our blank bricks can we replace with that simple statement that means so much!

We continue to treasure those permanent statements in brick that honor family members, births and deaths, service to our country, and legacies. We always will. But, for some members who have found it difficult to think of something to write on a brick, and have been hesitant to participate, this is an easy way to get involved - a simple phrase with your name helps extend our legacy garden. Can we possibly even turn the corner and start replacing bricks towards the side entrance? How many will "love" the idea and buy a brick? It depends on you!

You may order a small or large brick starting now through the end of the year. Installation will be in the spring of 2024. The brick brochure and order forms are available in the lobby of the church. Click on the link below to view the brochure and order form, or you may also contact Sue Flesvig (365-2253) and the forms will be mailed. The easiest way to order is online at: <https://polarengraving.com/gracelutheranchurch> . Bricks cost \$125 for a 8 x 4 inch brick including 3 lines of text and selected graphics, or \$275 for a 8 x 8 with 5 lines plus graphics. The profit is going to the Fellowship Hall Fund. Ordering is simple - either by submitting this form or by ordering online at: <https://polarengraving.com/gracelutheranchurch> . All payment is made direct to Grace Lutheran Church.



**It was another fun picnic in the park for 34 Graceful Diners on Tuesday.** The picnic food was varied and yummy. Besides eating, the participants had the opportunity to take part in conversation, a walk to check out the Farmer's Market, and a chance to listen to the City Band. Thank you to Linda and Dave for bringing the chicken over from Zup's in Babbitt:













## TREASURER'S CORNER

Monthly offerings for June were \$6,452 under our expected budgeted amount. This is the second month that offerings have been down considerably. Total expenses were below the expected monthly budget amount, so that was a plus. Our Y-T-D figures still look good. Let's do everything we can to keep it that way. Thanks to those who gave donations in June. We are mid-way through the year, if you are not up to date with your pledges, please do so as soon as possible.

Keep sending your Offerings to church by mail or try Simply Giving as an easy on-line option. For in-person worship an Offering plate is at the entrance to the Sanctuary. Leave your Offering envelope in the plate as you enter for worship. Also remember to bring your loose bills & change for Noisy Offering.

### JUNE

	<b>June Activity</b>	<b>Actual Y-T-D</b>	<b>Budgeted Y-T-D</b>
<b>Receipts:</b>			
Monthly Offerings	7,899	92,739	86,100
Other Revenues	228	1,041	1,560
Thrivent Dollars	38	3,870	2,400
Korpi Funds	--	7,500	7,500
	<b>8,165</b>	<b>105,150</b>	<b>97,560</b>
<b>Disbursements:</b>			
Operating Expenses & Benevolences	<b>14,936</b>	<b>102,574</b>	<b>106,691</b>
<b>Net Difference:</b>	<b>(6,771)</b>	<b>2,576</b>	<b>(9,131)</b>

# August

# 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Stewardship Meeting @Flesvigs 5pm Cross of Glory Lutheran Church staying the night at Grace →	2 Worship & Music Meeting, 4:00pm	3 Choir Practice 5:00pm	4	5
6 10th Sunday after Pentecost – Pastor Sue Smith Parish Visitor Meeting after Worship in Fireside Room	7 ECR Cooking class 9 – 1:30pm Education Task Force Meeting, 3:30pm Building & Grounds Meeting: 5:00pm	8 Outreach Meeting 2:00pm	9	10 Choir Practice 5:00pm	11	12
13 11th Sunday after Pentecost – Pastor Rebecca LeMenager	14	15	16 WELCOME BACK! Pastor Eric back in office  Small PEO Meeting 10:00am – 11:00am (will have table set up for tomorrow)	17 Finance Meeting 3:00pm Council Meeting 4:30pm Choir Practice 5:00pm PEO Meeting 6 – 9:30pm	18	19 Funeral Service for Helen Marie Huovinen Visitation 10:00am Funeral 11:00am
20 12th Sunday after Pentecost – Pastor Eric	21	22	23	24 Choir Practice 5:00pm	25	26
27 Worship in Whiteside Park 9:30m (NOT at Grace, unless rain)	28	29 Northwoods Partners Meeting 12 – 1pm	30 Choir Practice 5:00pm	31 Ely Watercolor Club 5 – 8:30pm		