



2025

Grace Notes

Volume 77, Number 11



Grace
Lutheran Church

Lead Pastor

Shane Koepke

Financial Director

Marsha Smith

Music Director & IT

Aaron Bartz

Office Manager

Deb Attig

Building Supervisor

Darin LaFrance

Engagement Director

Jenny Campos

Office Hours

9:00 am—2:00 pm

Monday—Thursday

507-373-6496

Worship Services

Sunday Morning

9:00 am

In-person & online

Sunday School

Sunday Morning

10:00 am

Sept. through May

www.gracealbertlea.org

[www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/GraceAlbertLea)

GraceAlbertLea

“So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.”

– Romans 12:5

At Grace, we often say that *belonging comes before believing*. Before you have everything figured out, before you know all the hymns or where we keep the coffee, you already have a place here.

Our new member gathering isn't a test, it's a table. Over a coffee and treats, we'll talk about what it means to be part of Grace Lutheran Church: how we worship, serve, and walk together as people of faith. We'll share stories, talk about the heart of Lutheran theology, and look for ways your gifts can find a home here.

We'll meet in the **chapel**, where we will see each other more closely. People with real questions, real hope, and real community. Whether you've been attending for years or are just beginning to explore, this class is a great way to connect more deeply and discover how your story fits into ours.

Grace isn't perfect (thank God for that), but we are striving to be a place where everyone can experience welcome, purpose, and grace that spills out beyond Sunday morning.

If you're interested in learning more or would like to join the next class, please contact the church office or talk with Pastor Shane after worship. Bring your curiosity and your questions—we'll bring the coffee and treats.

~ PShane



Music

For the Love of the Thing

Down in my basement there's a small museum of enthusiasms. Spools of plastic filament lie atop one another beside a partially modeled bracket by the 3D printer. The garbage bin is full of prototypes, glue, cardboard, and painted objects. In the garage, an engine hoist awaits its duty to drop in the still-plastic-wrapped 60,000-mile Prius engine sitting beside it, while the disorganized tools face a still-boxed garage organizer. In the family room, a newly exposed unfinished concrete floor supports several boxes containing its new flooring, patiently waiting their turn as the impassioned maker works through the queue of projects. At first glance, life at home is chaos. For me, this is where creativity and learning thrive.

Starting is easy. "All-in" is second nature and it's made easier in today's world by surprisingly effective free tutorials, access to manuals, specifications, guides, and even AI-assisted walkthroughs. It's easy to get lost in the work; to have your whole world narrow to a line of code, tweaking specifications, understanding how materials behave, etc. I love the feeling of being lost inside a thing for its own sake—not for likes, or praise, or to prove competence—just for the love of learning.

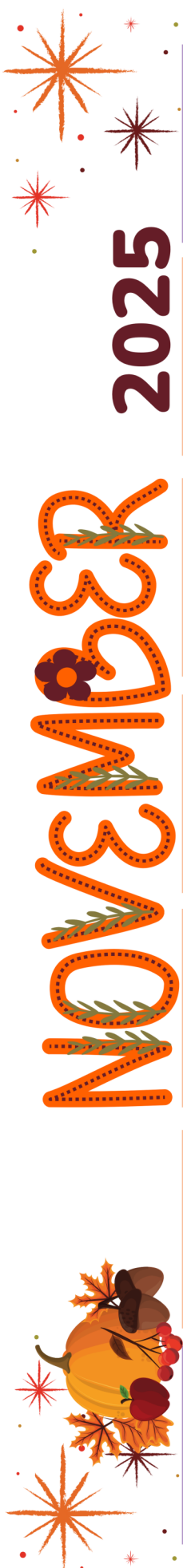
Of course, there's a downside. The first warning sign is the scarcity of a premium commodity: horizontal surfaces. It's the earliest hint of a drift into incomplete projects. It's not laziness, but rather unchecked tangential learning—too many good bites at once. As time passes, I try to tap back into the unfinished projects and most of the time I'm successful. When I'm not, I mutter, "What in the world was I thinking?" and call for a therapist and an archaeologist.

Regardless, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart." (Colossians 3:23) feels like permission to care about a thing so much that surfaceskimming won't do. A wise friend once told me that, to live life, you need to dive deep under the surface. Let curiosity run, share the excitement with anyone who will listen, and learn the theory—not just the trick. I tell my kids that I absolutely love making mistakes. Mistakes are the best teachers, not verdicts. They exist along the path of learning and apply in life just as in music: practice until you get it right, then practice until you can't get it wrong.

If you're like me—too many projects, too much curiosity—choose one artifact from your museum and move it a notch toward completion. Maybe it's something that is "basically finished" or "good enough", or maybe something that "is all there, I just gotta put it together." However big or small, do it with your whole heart. Not to be seen, not to be safe from mistakes, but out of the love for the craft and the people it will serve. I'll be doing the same and give gratitude to my family for their patience and support that make the work possible.

~Aaron





NOVEMBER

2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
 2 All Saints Sunday 8:30 am Fair-Trade Coffee 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Sunday School	3 1:30 pm SAIL 2:00 pm Grief Share 5:00 pm Mary Circle	4 9:00 am Staff Meeting 10:00 am Women's Bible Study	5 9:00 am Quilting 5:45-6:15 pm Chew & Chat 6:00 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm 7th & 8th Grade Confirmation 7:00 pm Adult Choir	6 7:30 am Early Morning Bible Study 1:30 pm SAIL	7 Building and Office Closed	1 Building and Office Closed
9 3rd & 4th graders get bible 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am 3 rd & 4 th Grade meeting 10:00 am Lofstrom Visit	10 1:30 pm SAIL 2:00 pm Grief Share	11 9:00 am Staff Meeting 10:00 am Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm Council Meeting	12 10:00 am Thorne Crest Communion 5:45-6:15 pm Chew & Chat 6:00 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm 7th & 8th Grade Confirmation 7:00 pm Adult Choir	13 7:30 am Early Morning Bible Study 1:30 pm SAIL 5:00 pm 2 nd Wind Wedgewood	14 Building and Office Closed	15 Building and Office Closed
16 Youth led worship 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:00 am New Member Meeting 10:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Sunday School 5:00 pm Friendship	17 Newsletter Deadline 1:30 pm SAIL 2:00 pm Grief Share 	18 9:00 am Staff Meeting 10:00 am Women's Bible Study	19 9:00 am Quilting 5:45-6:15 pm Chew & Chat 6:00 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm 7th & 8th Grade Confirmation 7:00 pm Adult Choir	20 7:30 am Early Morning Bible Study 9:00 am Grace Notes Mail Prep 1:30 pm SAIL	21 Building and Office Closed	22 Building and Office Closed 8:00 am Lefse Making Event - All welcome
23 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Trivia	24 1:30 pm SAIL 2:00 pm Grief Share	25 9:00 am Staff Meeting 10:00 am Women's Bible Study	26 6:30 pm Thanksgiving Eve Worship at Grace	27 Building and Office Closed 	28 Building and Office Closed Decorate for Christmas please sign up for a time that works for you	29 Building and Office Closed Decorate for Christmas please sign up for a time that works for you
30 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship						

Church Council Minutes

October 14, 2025

Present at meeting: Pastor Shane Koepke, Doreen Pontow, Gerry Vogt, Jerry Meyer, Jerry Dahl, Dave Drommerhausen, Philip Lonneman, Jennifer Zoller

Introduction: New Council member Philip Lonneman shared his background and was introduced to Council members.

Opening Devotions: Given by Doreen Pontow talking about "The Gift of Laughter," about glorifying God and His goodness through keeping a joyful heart, celebrating His blessings, and sharing laughter to spread happiness to those around us.

Open Forum: None

Approval of Today's agenda

Motion made by: Jerry Dahl

Seconded by: Gerry Vogt

Approved

Review of Last Months Minutes

Motion made by: Gerry Vogt

Seconded by: Jerry Dahl

Approved

Financial Report: We are down a bit as we were over budget in September. Recent monies spent on the boiler as well as binding (archival) of bulletins, which had not been done for several years. Offering fluctuations are flatter due to the consistency of online giving. We have budgeted for an associate pastor for next year.

Motion made by: Gerry Vogt

Seconded by: Jerry Dahl

Approved

Food for Backpacks: Overall number of meals needed is down, from about 29% to 25%. Each school, covering grades PreK-7th, is "hosted" by

a local church. Meal pack contents have been tweaked this fall.

Old business:

Kitchen Campaign: The Kitchen Campaign slogan & theme are "Open Doors, Warm Ovens: Make room, Make meals, Make community." The accompanying Bible verse is 1 Corinthians 10:31 – So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God. Pastor Shane shared an overview of what kitchen renovations will look like. Also included in the fundraising campaign will be A/C units in the Chapel and Youth Room, epoxy floors in the basement hallways, and painting the hallway walls in the basement and main level. Gerry Vogt emphasized the importance of maintaining sanitation in the kitchen and adjoining storage space. Council requested a fundraising thermometer as a visual in the Narthex; Pastor Shane will ask Jenny Campos to create one.

New/other business: None

Lead Pastor's Report Pastor Shane:

Pastor Shane attended a Pastoral Conference in Wisconsin on Oct. 12-14, and he shared that valuable connections were made during this time with his colleagues. John Holt preached in Pastor Shane's absence on October 19.

Our nine 9th grade Confirmation students have met with Pastor Shane and leader Matt Moller, covering Baptismal Promises, over the last several Sundays.

Continued on page 5



Church Council Minutes (continued from page 4)

Confirmands worked on their Faith Projects, to be shared in the Chapel before the Confirmation Service, which was on October 26.

The first and third Sundays in November (11/2 & 11/16) will be hosted by Milt Ost, presenting "Stone Theologians," a book he wrote about our church building. Both signed (\$50) and unsigned (\$10) copies of the book will be available, with all proceeds going to the Kitchen Campaign. The second Sunday in November (11/9) will be hosted by the Mission Team and the Loftstroms, sharing stories of mission work and selling wares.

Committee Reports:

Altar guild: Looking for new members; contact Jane Madson or Pastor Shane if interested.

Building and grounds: None

Call Committee: Meeting as needed as we continue our search for an associate pastor.

Education: Sunday School is going well, with several kids attending each week. We are thankful for and appreciative of our leaders and helpers: Christie Ness, Jess Hatland, Markey Samp, Scarlett Samp, Payton Earl, Evelyn Koepke, and Nora Smith. Look for Sunday School projects on the back wall of the Narthex, which will rotate seasonally.

The Snack Board & Board Game event on Oct. 12 was a hit, with some great treats and a fun game of Telestrations.

Upcoming events → Serve & Play Day (11/8), Friendsgiving (11/16), and Lefse-making (11/22 – congregation members welcome). Youth leaders are working with Pastor Shane on planning a Youth-led Sunday worship service.

Library: Continuing to catalog library books, working with Jenny Campos (Engagement Director) on book lists, and will work with Jennifer Zoller (Sunday School Coordinator) to make books more accessible to Sunday School kids.

Mission team: Baby kits have been shipped. Campus Ministry from Winona visited on October 12, and our congregation donated about \$650 towards the rebuilding of their Lutheran Campus Center.

Music: None

Usher: None

Visitation Group: Visitation teams are going strong and enjoying their visits.

Round Table:

Positives from congregants: General consensus was that the pre-recorded music during the Oct. 12 worship service worked, but was not ideal. Jerry Meyer shared appreciation for the good work done on our weekly bulletins and the monthly Grace Notes.

Tasks for next council meeting: None

Prayer Intercessions: The Lord's Prayer

Next meeting time and date: November 11, 2025, 6:30pm

Adjournment: 7:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Zoller (sub. for Adele Rosnow)
Grace Lutheran Church Council Secretary



Grace Prays

Prayers of Healing

For **Ellen Miller**, daughter of Pat & Al
Arends

For Jeff Olson

For Greg Henderson

For Siglind Kleih, daughter-in-law of
Gerhard & Irmi Kleih

Prayers of Joy

For the Sunday School students &
leaders

For the Confirmation Class of 2025

Prayers of Hope

For God to guide the **call committee** with
wisdom, unity, and hope as they search
for a new associate pastor.

GRACE PRAYS: We are honored to pray with
and for you. To keep our list current, names
(shared with permission) remain for two weeks
and may be renewed. Please contact the church
office to add or remove a name. Thank you.

PASTORAL CARE

To assist the pastor in providing pastoral care for
those hospitalized or homebound, please notify the
pastor of pending surgeries, overnight hospital
stays, or individuals who would like a home visit.

Please call 507-373-6496

November

(Remember to pray for our Grace family on these dates.)

1. Terry & Julie Stahl, Christopher & Tyler
2. Dale & Dorothy Baldwin
3. Donna Rye
4. Preston & Heidi Robeck, Jacy & Brennan
5. Shawn & Lisa Prihoda, Tyler, Michele,
Jacob, Ava, & Derek
6. Lowell & Barbara Peterson
7. Travis & Jill Olson, Nicholas
8. Donna Oakland
9. Gary Anderson
10. Arlis Hanna
11. Benjamin & Kristin Schreiber, Elizabeth
12. Margaret Schow
13. Bruce & Jill Hagen, Rachael
14. Phil & Pat Blake, Tayler & Kimball
15. Amy Busall & MaKenna
16. Ronald & Merilynn Linde
17. Kevin & Cary Levorson
18. George Gerdes & Carter
19. Lee & Jodi Walters
20. Connie Wadding
21. Dell & June Claussen
22. John Delle & Wesley
23. Linda Ferguson
24. McKenzie Besco
25. Steven Nelson
26. Bill Sager
27. Derek & Sarah Nelson, Kaylie
28. Paul & Denise Andersen, Anna
29. Hillary & Jacob Stockwell, Claire & Grant
30. Paul & Annette Godtland



Caring and Sharing

Chairperson: Becky Tennis Hanson

Sue & Bill Barber
Mary Beese
Marlene & Gary Bergeson
LaJean & Roger Bjorklund
Jessica & Nick Bremer
Jane & William Buege
Mary Carlson
Dolores Gavle
Adrienne & Philip Gehring
Natasha Grove
Tammy Hamberg
Joyce & Ross Hansen
Angie & Alex Johnston
Kimberly & David Moen
Stacie & Philip Neal
LeAnn Olson
Doreen Pontow
Diane & Lester Shaunce
Lynn & Randy Stay
Jessica Waters

STUDY OPPORTUNITIES for Adults at Grace

We invite you to join any of our regular Bible study groups at Grace Lutheran.

Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study 10:00-11:00 am

This study for women offers fellowship and great discussion.

Thursday Morning Bible Study 7:30-8:30 am

Consider joining this group for an opportunity for good discussion and good fellowship.

Grace WELCA Women's Circles

Mary Circle (meets every 1st Monday/5:00 pm)

New members are always welcome! Call the church office, 373-6496, for more information.

Please consider signing
up for co-chair.

You can choose a month
that works for you. We are
in need of co-chairs for
the month of **December**.

The sign-up sheet is in the
narthex.

Caring & Sharing

Pastoral Act for October

Baptism for Everett Braund

Baptism for Evelyn Schumacher

Thank you to Doreen Pontow for chairing October! We're grateful to all who helped or provided food. There's still time to sign up as a co-chair, your support makes a difference!



Gifts of Love

Altar Guild

In Memory Of:

Mary Lou Jacobson given by Robert Jacobson

Backpack Food Program

In Memory Of:

Daniel Madson given by Jane Madson

Gift Given By:

Kent Jasperson

Ray & Carol Pedersen

Jerry & Gerry Vogt

Debbie Christensen

Dale & Dorothy Baldwin

"Soup & Dessert Lunch" at Central Freeborn

Lutheran Church

Donna Oakland

Grant Given By:

Albert Lea Noon Kiwanis

Freeborn County

Ball Scholarship

In Memory of:

Tom Phillips given by Bob Ball & Laura McKibbin

Building Fund

Gift Given By:

David & Jeanne Lundak

Kent Jasperson

Food Shelf

Gift Given By:

Carroll & Mavis Hanson

Kitchen Remodeling Fund

In Memory of:

Bill Romig given by Kevin Tufte & Stacy Stauss (Stacy's uncle)

Sean Flaherty given by Kevin Tufte & Stacy Stauss

Gene Lundak given by David & Jeanne Lundak

Gift Given by:

Dale & Dorothy Baldwin

Jerry & Gerry Vogt

Mildred Jensen

LOVE

In Memory of:

Tom Dziura given by Dell & June Claussen

Gift Given By:

Kevin Tufte & Stacy Stauss

Richard & Darlene Jordahl

Ed & Julie Groeneweg

Memorial

In Memory of:

Delores Nasby given by Suzanne Moore

Jerry Johnson given by Karen & Darrel Wolff & family

Gift Given By:

Richard & Darlene Jordahl

Music Ministry

Gift Given By:

Mary Harriman

Parish Nurse

Gift Given by:

Mary Harriman



Gifts of Love

Prayer Garden

In Memory Of:

Grandma Gladys Gulbrandson's birthday

given by Erick Gulbrandson & Michelle Thompson

Steve Johnson given by Kent Jasperson

Gift Given By:

Kent Jasperson

Debbie Christensen

Richard & Darlene Jordahl

Winona Lutheran Campus Center

Mary Harriman

Sunday School

In Memory of:

Delores Nasby given by Sherri & Ed Twohey

Undesignated

Gift Given By:

Ed & Julie Groeneweg

World Hunger

In Memory Of:

Steve Johnson given by Ross & Shelly Peterson

PLEASE NOTE that any additional "Gifts of Love" recorded by the church office after October 28, 2025 will appear in the next issue. If you have given a gift and your name has not been recorded, please call 507-373-6496.



Generosity at Grace

**September
2025**

Average
Attendance
in person was:
150 per worship

Giving
\$36,534.14

Expenses
-\$49,268.79

**Year to Date
Giving vs
Expenses:**
\$399,155.53
- \$426,813.13
-\$27,657.60

Thanks for your attendance In Person or Live Streaming as we continue to be the church apart and together.

The Finance Ministry Team and Church Council appreciate your generous support. Your faithful Stewardship is essential for us to continue to support our ministries at Grace Lutheran.

FAIR TRADE COFFEE

We will be selling coffee before our worship service on Sunday, November 2, 2025.



Remember your coins for Sunday's Noisy offering!



Announcements

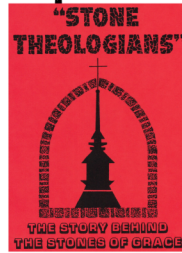
Congratulations Confirmation Class of 2025



Dylan Bakkedahl Cleo Moller
Tyler Citurs Bryxlie Paulson
Thomas Hanson Ryker Paulson
Aurora Helms Kyra Sigman

Holden Whelan

Adult Forum By Milt Ost



Part 1: November 2nd
Sanctuary, 10 am

Part 2: November 16th
Sanctuary, 10 am

Books available to purchase: \$10/book or \$50 for a signed copy
All proceeds go towards the Kitchen Remodel Fund

Milt Ost is turning 90!

Join us for an Open House style celebration!
Saturday, November 8 | 1-3 PM

Grace Lutheran Church
Fellowship Hall

Feel free to bring friends & family!

Please, NO gifts!

Cake, cookies, and coffee will be served.

THE LOFSTROMS

Sunday, November 9th

10:00 AM

Fireside Room

The Lofstroms, representing International Health Partners, will visit Grace after several years.

They will share updates on their new hospital project in Tanzania and have African merchandise for sale.

Please stay for their presentation during the Adult Forum.



New Member MEETING



For those who have recently joined or are thinking about joining Grace.

Join Pastor Shane on

Sunday, November 16th at 10 am in the Sanctuary for conversation and connection.

DECORATE THE CHURCH FOR

Christmas

Please sign up in the narthex!

Dates available to decorate are November 28th & 29th

Joint Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service

Wednesday, November 26th at 6:30 pm

Grace Lutheran Church
918 Garfield Ave.

Please join us for pie & coffee in Fellowship Hall after worship!

If you are willing to donate a pie or help serve, there is a sign up sheet in the narthex.



Several items have been left behind at church and are now on the card table in the narthex.

Please take a moment to check and see if anything belongs to you.

LOST & FOUND



Announcements

Library Corner

Are you hungry for some "Chicken Soup"? Check out our collection of Chicken Soup for the Soul book series. Each book provides a collection of heartwarming and motivational true stories. The other featured book this month is the "Church Suppers" cookbook which contains 722 recipes from churches across the country.

*These books are located on the bookshelves in the Narthex.



Grace Lutheran Church

Parents and 3rd & 4th graders, please stay after worship for a short meeting in the chapel

Please join us for worship on: Sunday, **November 9th at 9 am**

Our 3rd & 4th graders will be presented with a bible!



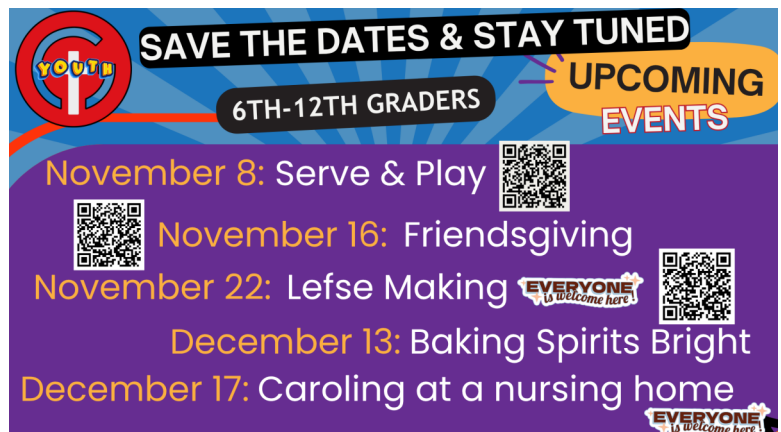
Serve & Play Day!
for youth in grades 6th - 12th

SIGN UP
by Sunday, Nov. 2nd

- We'll pack meals to **Feed My Starving Children**
 - Wear tennis shoes & comfortable clothes
- Then, we'll game & have snacks at **Dave & Busters**
 - Bring spending money for the arcade & snacks

Saturday, November 8th
Church Parking Lot
Depart - 10:15 am
Return - between 6:30-7 pm

Scan the QR code to sign up or go to:
<https://gracelutheranchurch2.flocknote.com/signup/228686>



SAVE THE DATES & STAY TUNED
6TH-12TH GRADERS

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 8: Serve & Play

November 16: Friendsgiving

November 22: Lefse Making **EVERYONE is welcome here!**

December 13: Baking Spirits Bright

December 17: Caroling at a nursing home **EVERYONE is welcome here!**



Join US FOR Friendsgiving

All 6th-12th graders are invited to join us for a Friendsgiving celebration!

Bring a friend (or two!) as we share food, fun, and fellowship.

Please bring (last name):
 A-G: Dessert
 H-N: Salad
 O-Z: Side Dish

This event is open to all friends, so spread the word!

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16 AT 5:00 PM
 918 GARFIELD AVE., ALBERT LEA
 FELLOWSHIP HALL

Scan the QR code to sign up or go to:
<https://gracelutheranchurch2.flocknote.com/signup/229494>



Lefse Day
For adults & youth!

Please join us for a morning full of fun and laughter as we make lefse together!

Saturday, November 22nd 8:00 AM Kitchen

Scan the QR code to sign up, use the paper signup in the narthex or go to:
<https://gracelutheranchurch2.flocknote.com/signup/231366>



SUNDAY School

needs your help on the following days!

November 9th, 16th, and 23rd
December 7th and 14th

Christmas Program:
Sunday, December 21st
during the 9 am worship service

2 classes:
PK-2nd Grade
3rd-5th Grade

Sundays at 10:00 am!

please sign up in the narthex or message Jen Zoller



Chew & Chat

You pick the day and the meal!
 Days available:

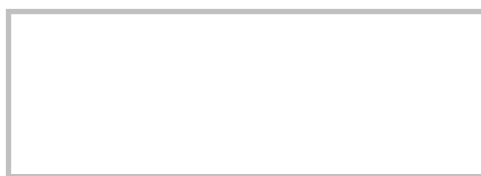
- November 12th
- December 3rd
- December 10th

Scan the QR code to sign up to prepare & serve a meal or go to:
<https://gracelutheranchurch2.flocknote.com/signup/221589>

Grace Lutheran Church
918 Garfield Avenue
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Telephone: 507-373-6496
Email: office@gracealbertlea.org

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Worship Schedule

Sunday Worship Service

Time: 9:00 am

Options: In person and online

Watch: Facebook (facebook.com/gracealbertlea)

YouTube (youtube.com/@gracealbertlea)



Sign up for updates from
Grace Lutheran. Receive
announcements via text
or email. Scan QR code to
sign up for FlockNote!

Sunday School

Time: 10:00 am

Confirmation

Chew & Chat: Serving from 5:45 - 6:15 pm Wednesdays

7th & 8th Grade: Wednesdays, 6:30 pm

