



2026

GRACE NOTES

Volume 78, Issue 7

Out of the Office, Into the World

**Grace**

Lutheran Church

Lead Pastor
Shane Koeppke**Deacon**
Jessie Camp**Financial Director**
Marsha Smith**Music Director/IT**
Aaron Bartz**Office Manager**
Deb Attig**Building Supervisor**
Darin LaFrance**Engagement Director**
Jenny Campos**Office Hours**
Monday - Thursday
9:00 am - 2 pm
507-373-6496**Worship Services**
Sunday Morning
9:00 am**Sunday School**
Sunday Morning
10:00 am
Sept. through Maywww.gracealbert.org[www.facebook.com/
GraceAlbertLea](https://www.facebook.com/GraceAlbertLea)

Time away is a gift.

I've been away for a couple weeks in June and now the beginning of July. Two weeks of vacation and two weeks of continuing education. I've never done it like this before, so I think it's important to share what I'm doing.

Deacon Jessie will lead worship while I'm gone. As you know, she is gifted, grounded, and ready. My being away gives you an opportunity to hear from her and know her in a new way.

As for me: I think learning is important. I learn best by experiencing the world, seeing God at work in all kinds of places. One week I'm serving as a guest pastor at a summer camp in Michigan, where my son is on staff as a counselor. I wanted to take the opportunity to help the camp and maybe get a couple moments to see my son in his role. It's ministry in a completely different way: kids, campfires, and the Gospel in a setting that is different from Grace. I hope it inspires me to see a hopeful future in the church as I watch these young folks in action.

The second continuing education week I'm spending with creative people, studying how they think, how they process the world, how they make things that matter. Creativity isn't a hobby for me. It feeds how I preach, how I lead, and how I see God moving in unexpected places. I've always seen that Investing in being creative is two fold: it deepens my creative process and let's me bring back ideas and thoughts for Grace.

Here's what I want you to know: a church that can thrive for a month without its pastor is a healthy church. Grace is healthy. For that, we are blessed to be in this together.

See you mid July-

Pastor Shane



Deacon Jessie

This summer, our sermon series is centered on the stories found in the Spark Children's bible. Children's bibles are always so fun: the art they include and the ways they frame these stories give an element of childlike wonder that too often gets lost as we grow older. While written to be accessible to children, story bibles and other children's resources have much to offer to the adult reader, too.

Don't believe me? Next Sunday, go ahead and flip through the story bible in the pew. In the table of contents, you might find stories you aren't so familiar with, like the stories of Deborah, Hannah, Elijah, Elisha, Tabitha, or Lydia. Read up on them! Learn about who these people are and the vital role they all play in God's mission for the world.

Our normal, adult bibles also don't often give us the details our modern ears crave. The biblical writers leave things like people's emotions and tone of voice out. Children's bibles, though? They paint these characters in a way that helps bring them to life. King Nebuchadnezzar gets so angry his face turns purple; Jeremiah is shaking because he is nervous; a man who is healed shouts his praises to Jesus so loudly that the birds flew off the trees.

Sometimes people think I'm kidding when I tell them the bible can actually be really exciting. It's exciting because there are so many of these stories that give us an opportunity to use our imaginations, to actually humanize the people on the page. These stories are made to be spoken aloud: they are made to be told. The bible is full of real people, with real emotions, and with real reactions. I find the children's bibles can help remind us of that fact.

Blessings to you as you continually explore the Word with that childlike wonder.
Deacon Jessie

Gifts of Love

Altar Guild

Altar Flowers Given In Memory Of:

Lu Ryan given by Faith Ryan

Backpack Food Program

Gift Given By:

Kent Jasperson

Dale & Dorothy Baldwin

Baby Kits

Gift Given By:

Wendi Schmidt

Don & Melody Munden

Ball Scholarship

In Memory Of:

Jason Westcott given by Bob Ball &

Laura McKibben

Building Fund

In Memory Of:

Donnie & Pat Johnson given by Debbie Christensen

Gift Given By:

Kent Jasperson

Kitchen Remodeling Fund

In Honor Of:

Joan Holt on her birthday given by John Holt

Gift Given By:

Greg & Marsha Smith

David & Jeanne Lundak

Dale & Dorothy Baldwin



Remember your coins for Sunday's noisy offering!

Fair Trade Coffee

We will be selling coffee before and immediately following worship service on **Sunday, July 5, 2026**.



LOVE

In Memory Of:

LaVerne Hauge given by Dell & June Claussen

In Honor Of:

Father's Day given by Mary Harriman

Gift Given By:

Shari Van Wey

Prayer Garden

In Memory Of:

Clifford Engbretson, Happy Father's Day, dad, given by Jason & Dayna Saltou

Butch Harves given by Kent Jasperson

Loved ones given by Mary Harriman

Prayer Shawl

In Memory Of:

Donnie & Pat Johnson given by Debbie Christensen

Youth Ministry

In Memory Of:

Sue Barber given by Stephen & Mary LaBelle

Sue Barber given by Bill Barber

Sue Barber given by Jerry & Gerry Vogt

Generosity at Grace

May 2026

Average
Attendance
in person was:
158 per worship

Giving
\$54,149.36

Expenses
-\$49,616.50

Year to Date Giving vs Expenses:
\$247,577.26
-\$265,674.39
-\$18,097.13

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.

PLEASE NOTE that any additional "Gifts of Love" recorded by the church office after **June 15, 2026** will appear in the next issue. If you have given a gift and your name has not been recorded, please call 507-373-6496.

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June 9, 2026

Present at meeting:

Pastor Shane Koepke, Deacon Jessie Camp,
Doreen Pontow, Jerry Dahl, Gerry Vogt,
JD Carlson, Adele Rosnow, Robert Jacobson,
Philip Lonneman, Erica Samp, Cleo Moller,
Jennifer Zoller, Dave Drommerhausen

Opening Devotions (Gerry Vogt):

Devotion centered around trusting God in storms, that He will guide us safely into the harbor. From Acts 27, "...for many days and the storm continued raging... But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost..." and from James 1:2-3, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."

Open Forum: None

Approval of June Council Agenda

Motion made by: Jerry Dahl

Seconded by: Robert Jacobson

Approved

Approval of May Council Minutes

Motion made by: Robert Jacobson

Seconded by: Erica Samp

Approved

Financial Report (Dave Drommerhausen):

- Year-to-date (through May, five months) extrapolated budget: \$268,000; actual spending: \$264,000 – essentially at budget target
- Moving from heating season into cooling season may create variable future months; team will monitor summer cooling bills
- Cash flow is being actively managed; no unexpected “white elephants” in the budget were identified

Motion made by: JD Carlson

Seconded by: Jerry Dahl

Approved

Food For Backpacks (Dave Drommerhausen):

- Program stable but menu adjustment planned to diversify entrées
- Hawthorne-specific fund remains healthy; giving has covered shared expenses with Zion
- School social workers will provide updated enrollment and need-based information for the upcoming school year
- Fiscal year for the FFB program closes June 30 and resets July 1

Old Business (Pastor Shane):

Kitchen remodel & Fundraiser Updates

- Kitchen construction reported 95-96% complete; a few cabinets/drawer inserts and trim plus a table base remain outstanding (tabletop is complete and on site)
- Status of Kitchen Campaign and budget:
 - Appreciation for a contribution donated after the recent Blessing of the Kitchen
 - Remaining contractor bills are expected to be minimal, tied to electrical/AC hookups for the Chapel and Youth Room units
 - Youth Room unit also has a drying feature as this area is typically damp
 - All told, the budget landed around \$3-5k over
 - We have until the end of the calendar year to raise remaining funds

New Business:

- Discussion regarding the ramp behind the stairs next to the kitchen; location makes usage difficult. The boiler room door on the west wall cannot be blocked nor relocated, so plans for another solution for the ramp will be explored.
- A request was made recently to Pastor Shane regarding updating/replacing the lighting in the Narthex. The concrete ceiling will call for contracted work, not just a fixture swap. Project exploration to take place; Darin LaFrance has begun some initial legwork on the scope of the project.

Continued on page 5

"TREE OF HEALING" Ecumenical Vacation Bible School

Faith was planted, friendships were strengthened, and lots of fun was shared during Tree of Healing VBS! Thank you to the volunteers, families, and partner churches who made this week possible. We are grateful for the opportunity to grow together in faith and community.

"I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth."

3 John 1:4



"TREE OF HEALING" Ecumenical Vacation Bible School



JULY

Caring and Sharing

Chairperson available

Annette Besco
JoAnn & Steven Bracker
Tammy & John Bryand
Sharon & Mark Christian
Becky & Mick Hanson
Jeannie & Scott Jackson
Amy & Jeffery Kelley
Jody & Brad Kirchner
Christma & Todd Lange
Kari Matson
Judy & Jim Munyer
Jean & Larry Nelson
Sandra Norby
Analynn & Scott Peterson
Linda Pierick
Jeanne & Gary Schindler
Jennifer Swenson
Erika & Eric Youlden

Thank you to everyone who helped in June!
We're grateful for all who volunteered.

If you're looking for a way to get involved,
there's still time to sign up as a co-chair,
your support makes a real difference.

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 great discussion &
fellowship.

Grace WELCA Women's Circles

Mary Circle meets every 1st Monday of
the month at 4:30 pm in the Fireside
Room.

New members are always welcome!

Call the church office for more
information at 507-373-6496.

CARING & Sharing

Co-Chairs Needed:

**July • November
• December**

**Sign up today in
the Narthex**

Pastoral Acts for June

Internment for Muriel Hoeg

Announcements

YOUTH BONFIRE

FRIENDS • SMORES • FELLOWSHIP

NO SIGN-UP REQUIRED.

OPEN TO
YOUTH
6TH-12TH
GRADE

SMORES &
FELLOWSHIP

JULY 9
AUGUST 13

8-9 PM
WEATHER
PERMITTING



GRACE IN ACTION

SERVE OTHERS
LIVE YOUR FAITH
BUILD COMMUNITY

SIGN UP TODAY!

<https://gracelutheranchurch2.flocknote.com/signup/261988>

OPEN TO YOUTH
IN 6TH-12TH GRADE

JULY 16
9 AM - NOON



QUILTING GROUP Donations Needed

Our quilting group continues to create quilts that provide comfort and care to those in need.

Financial donations are needed to help cover the cost of fabric, batting, and other supplies.



AMERICAN
LEGION POST 56

BREAKFAST FUNDRAISER

8 AM-12 PM

THE BREAKFAST IS TO RAISE FUNDS FOR VARIOUS YOUTH CAUSES



JULY 26

FOR EACH PERSON WHO SIGNS IN
AS A MEMBER OF



Grace Lutheran Church

WE WILL RECEIVE **\$1**

TO SUPPORT OUR YOUTH GROUP



PARTICIPATING GROUPS
RECEIVE BREAKFAST
PROCEEDS

SUMMER OUTDOOR WORSHIP

EVERY WEDNESDAY
THROUGH AUGUST 26

6:30 PM

CENTRAL PARK

Bring a lawn chair



Grace
Lutheran Church

A JOINT COLLABORATION BY



FIRST
LUTHERAN

Salad Luncheon

*Includes a make-your-own Salad Bar

THURSDAY, JULY 23
11 AM - 1 PM



Grace Lutheran Church

Fellowship Hall

918 Garfield Ave., Albert Lea

Cost: \$10 | Children 12 & Under: \$5

All proceeds benefit the Kitchen Remodel Project.

2nd Wind

Willows
in New Richland

• July 9th • 5 pm

Carpool from Grace Lutheran at 4:30 p.m.
Questions? Text Dave at (507) 438-0790

JULY 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 9:00 am Quilting Grp. 6:30 pm Worship Central Park	2 7:30 am Early Morning Bible Study 1:30 pm SAIL	3 Building and Office Closed	4 Building and Office Closed
5 8:30 am Fair Trade Coffee 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship	6 9:00 am Staff Meeting 1:30 pm SAIL 4:30 pm Mary Circle	7 10:00 am Women's Bible Study	8 10:00 am Thorne Crest Communion 6:30 pm Worship Central Park	9 7:30 am Early Morning Bible Study 1:30 pm SAIL 5:00 pm 2 nd Wind Willows Youth Bonfire	10 Building and Office Closed	11 Building and Office Closed
12 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship	13 9:00 am Staff Meeting 1:30 pm SAIL	14 10:00 am Women's Bible Study 2:30 pm Sr. Towers Communion 6:30 pm Council Mtg.	15 9:00 am Quilting Grp. 6:30 pm Worship Central Park	16 7:30 am Early Morning Bible Study 9:00 am Youth Summer Service 1:30 pm SAIL	17 Building and Office Closed	18 Building and Office Closed
19 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship	20 9:00 am Staff Meeting 1:30 pm SAIL  Newsletter Deadline	21 10:00 am Women's Bible Study	22 6:30 pm Worship Central Park	23 7:30 am Early Morning Bible Study 11:00 am Salad Luncheon	24 Building and Office Closed	25 Building and Office Closed
26 9:00 am Worship with Baptism 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship	27 9:00 am Staff Meeting 1:30 pm SAIL  HS Youth Trip	28 10:00 am Women's Bible Study	29 6:30 pm Worship Central Park	30 7:30 am Early Morning Bible Study 9:00 am Grace Notes Mail Prep 1:30 pm SAIL HS Youth Trip	31 Building and Office Closed HS Youth Trip	

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

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Albert Lea, MN
Permit No. 208



Sunday Worship Service

Youtube (youtube.com/@gracealbertlea)

Will be held at Central Park *Bring a lawn chair*