



GRACE NOTES

AUGUST 2026

VOLUME 78, ISSUE 8

Lead Pastor

Shane Koepke

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 May

www.gracealbert.org

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

Pastor Shane

August never quite decides what it wants to be. The garden is still giving us tomatoes and zucchini even as the first winter squash starts to harden on the vine. The pool towels are still drying on the line, but the school supply lists have already gone up at the store. We're finishing one thing and starting another at the same time — and this month, our church calendar is doing the same. Sunday school rosters, fall Bible studies, confirmation schedules, committee kickoffs — the planning for the next program year is already underway, even while summer hasn't officially let go.

It would be easy to treat all of that as pure routine, but the Bible has something sharper to say about planning than just "get it done."

In James 4:13-15, the author talks to people who sound a lot like us this time of year: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit.'" Ok, plan, make money, got it. But James follows it with a correction: "Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.'" Not an excuse to leave the calendar blank. It's about who is in control (hint: It's God).

Proverbs puts it even more plainly: "The heart of a person plans their way, but the Lord establishes their steps" (16:9). We do the planning. We don't control the outcome. That's a hard pill for us to swallow when we are the one staring at a blank fall calendar — but it's also a relief. The success of Sunday school, the fruitfulness of a new Bible study, start of a new school year or even a new season of life — none of that rests on getting the spreadsheet and planning exactly right.

Paul says something similar about the church at Corinth: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). Our committees can plant. Our volunteers can water. But growth was never ours to produce. That should take some of the pressure off August — and I pray it keeps us from mistaking a well-run church for the actual work of the Holy Spirit.

None of this is permission to coast. Paul also writes, "Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). The planting still has to happen. The classes still need teachers. The calendar still needs filling in. Faith doesn't excuse the labor of preparation — it helps us to see the relocation of our confidence. We plan because it's faithful work, not because the outcome depends on our getting it perfect.

So as you close up the garden beds, harvest what's left of summer, and start pulling together backpacks and school supplies, take that same posture into the church's planning season. Do the work. Hold the results open-handed. The growth is never going to be ours to give anyway.

Pastor Shane

Deacon Jessie

“On the sixth day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.”

– Genesis 2:2–3

Sabbath is something we’ve all heard of. It’s that day of rest: God created for 6 days, rested on the 7th. The word Sabbath comes from the Hebrew shabbat (שַׁבָּת) literally meaning “rest”. We hear about it in Genesis 2, and then again in Exodus 20, when God commands that we “Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy”.

And yet, how often do you find yourself actually taking that Sabbath day as rest? For the last handful of weekends, I have found myself excited for it to be Saturday, because then, I’ll have time to do the litany of household chores that I’m behind on, or finally get outside to weed the garden, or mow the lawn...you get the idea. I imagine many of us might feel similarly. When we find ourselves excited for the weekend, not because we can actually take a break, but because then we can get more things done.

It is so deeply ingrained in us that if we are not productive, we are not useful. That if we don’t have a busy schedule, we aren’t as beneficial to society. If we have an empty spot on our calendar, it must be available to be filled. We’re told being constantly busy is good. But if our lives become a never-ending series of to-do lists, we no longer hold space for simply living in and among this beloved creation.

Being busy—at times—can be good. But being busy without any time for respite is not. It is a sure-fire way to burn out. God doesn’t just ask us to take Sabbath: God commands it. A full day of it. Each week. And yet, I fear it is the most overlooked command. Sabbath is just as important as having only one God and not stealing from each other. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy is not just telling us we should go to church. It tells us the importance of rest. Because rest is holy.

Through rest, we have the opportunity to reflect on our identities as beloved children of God. Through rest, we can find joy and love through the things that draw us closer to our Creator. The Sabbath is a blessing.

Sabbath is also counter-cultural. That’s why it is so difficult. To rest in the presence of God is a beautiful thing that is very possible, as long as we remember to take the time to do it.

Deacon Jessie

A Moment to Reflect

Letting Go of What I Can't Control

I realized recently how much energy I spend trying to control things I can't control.

I like to have plans and know what's coming next. I like it when life makes sense. I like it when the people I care about are making good decisions. When things feel uncertain, my brain immediately starts trying to figure out how to fix it.

Lately I've been thinking about the phrase, "Let them." At first, I didn't really like it. It sounded cold, like I just shouldn't care.

But the more I think about it, the more I've realized that's not what it means. It's not about giving up. It's about realizing that not everything is mine to carry.

Life is always going to have things I can't control. Plans change. People make choices I wouldn't make. My kids are getting older, and they're going to make their own decisions. I can give advice and support them, but I can't live their lives for them.

And that's hard.

Waiting is hard too. I want answers now. I want to know how things are going to turn out. I want life to make sense today instead of six months from now.

But worrying doesn't change the outcome.

Most of the things I've spent the most time stressing over have eventually worked themselves out. Maybe not the way I expected, but they still worked out.

I'm still learning this. I still catch myself trying to control things that aren't really mine to control. I still want everything to be figured out.

So, maybe patience isn't about liking waiting. Maybe growing in patience means loosening our grip a little. Doing what we can, letting go of what we can't, and trusting that tomorrow will take care of itself when it gets here.

We don't have to have all the answers today. Maybe that's what 'let them' really means: not caring less, but carrying less.

Jenny

Church Council Minutes – July 14, 2026

(continued on page 5)

Present at meeting

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

Opening Devotions: Jerry Dahl

Devotion centered around a focus from the book of John with an emphasis on sharing Christ's peace and leadership, marked by wisdom, humility, and compassion

Open Forum

None

Approval of July Council Agenda

Motion made by: Jerry Dahl

Seconded by: Gerry Vogt

Approved

Approval of June Council Minutes

Motion made by: Robert Jacobson

Seconded by: JD Carlson

Approved

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Financial Report: Dave Drommerhausen

- Current bottom line, year-to-date (through June, six months): short \$16,000
- Overall spending described as following the budget with few overspends on line items
- Leadership expects to continue fiscal stewardship and avoid a larger year-end deficit

Motion made by: JD Carlson

Seconded by: Jerry Dahl

Approved

Food for Backpacks: Dave Drommerhausen

- Fiscal year reset on July 1
- Cost per backpack returned to roughly the same as two years ago (about 10 cents less than last adjusted cost), despite adding two meal items
- Partner churches cover about half of meal costs and grant funds can fill gaps
- Logistics: 12 pallets of food arrive in early August (exact date TBD), made up of 768 boxes to be repalletized into 7-8 groupings for distribution
- Volunteer needs: shifts of 2-3 hours for repalletizing; volunteer names to be gathered and scheduled when exact date is known
- Outlook: 16 weeks worth of food secured; team expects sign-ups to improve via online registration, with the assistance of school social workers

Report: Pastor Shane

Out of office

Report: Deacon Jessie

- Reminder of Wednesday Evening Worship @ 6:30pm in Central Park, in partnership with First Lutheran. In case of inclement weather, Worship will be held indoors @ First.
- Salad Luncheon — Thursday, July 23
- Grades 6-12: Summer Bonfires & Yard Games
 - August 13 from 8-9 pm @ Grace Prayer Garden
 - June and July events were fun-filled evenings with several youth attending
- Youth Trip
 - **July 26:** Blessing during Worship
 - **July 27-31:** staying at an Airbnb in Duluth; combination of indoor and outdoor activities, exploration, faith formation and fellowship with 11 Grace Youth
 - Trisha Whelan and Deacon Jessie to serve as adult leaders
 - **August 2:** Youth to present a trip recap during Worship, and a Forum afterwards

Continued on page 5

Committee Reports

Altar Guild

None

None

Library

- Completed review of pre-school-young adult/teen books; Erika Youlden assisted
- Two new books: "The Year of Goodbyes and Hellos" by Kelly Irvin, and "Bayou Refuge" by Joshua Powell

Mission

Becky Tennis-Hanson met with Jean Eaton about needs in the community.

- Possible service ideas:
 - Visiting Angels (helping people who are alone/isolated),
 - Rolling Hills (providing safe rides for elderly), lawn mowing, snow removal, light housekeeping, light carpentry/handwork.
- A volunteer list of those interested will be generated and shared with coordinator; assistance would be on-call and as-needed
- Considering a one-time service effort to pack kits for the unhoused or newly housed populations; distribution would be through Semcac

Music

Report to be given at August meeting

Personnel

None

Scholarship

Committee to meet yet

- report to be given at August meeting

Sunday School

- Rally Sunday — Sept. 13
- Upcoming year's plans to be shared at August meeting

Ushers

None

Visitation

None

Youth Ministry

Youth Committee meeting to be held in early August

Prayers:

- Prayers for the wellbeing of Grace Christian Church, with their recent structural damage;
- Prayers for safe, enjoyable, and Christ-filled travels on upcoming trips.
- Prayers of healing for an upcoming surgery.
- Prayers for restoration of the Boundary Waters, due to recent wildfires.

Roundtable:

- Praise for Deacon Jessie's work at Grace.

Next Meeting

August 11, 2026 | 6:30 pm in the Fireside Room

Adjournment

7:18 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Zoller

Grace Lutheran Council Secretary

Committees:

Goal: Council member(s) will connect with committee(s) at Grace and bring quarterly reports to Council meetings

<i>Altar Guild</i>	Doreen Pontow	<i>Scholarship Committee</i>	Deacon Jessie
<i>Building, Equipment, & Grounds</i>	JD Carlson	<i>Sunday School</i>	Deacon Jessie
<i>Library</i>	[submitted report]	<i>Ushers</i>	Jerry Dahl
<i>Mission Ministry</i>	Gerry Vogt	<i>Visitation</i>	Pastor Shane & Doreen Pontow
<i>Music</i>	Adele Rosnow	<i>Youth Ministry</i>	Erica Samp & Jen Zoller
<i>Personnel Committee</i>	[only as needed]		

Grace Prays

Prayers of Healing

For those with new or ongoing health diagnoses

For **Margie Kirchner**, mother of Brad & Robert Kirchner

Prayers for those Grieving

For the family and friends of **Erik Seavey**, son of Barb and Steve Olson

For the family and friends of **Ray Loberg**, father of Rick Loberg

For the family and friends of **Ray Pedersen**

For the family and friends of **Terri Peterson**, wife of Donald Peterson and daughter-in-law of Lowell & Barb Peterson

For the family and friends of **Diane Potteroff**, grandmother of Christie Ness

Prayers for Safe Travel & Growing Faith

Bless the youth and leaders on their journey.

Keep them safe, deepen their faith, and guide them in all they do.

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 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

AUGUST

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

1. Dexter & Janet Henschel
2. Scott & Jeannie Jackson
 - Mariah & Jaslyn
3. Cindy Nguyen
4. Mary Peterson
5. Roy Page
6. Lorelei Stevens & Isaiah Apland
7. Mark & Karen Sanderson
8. Fran & Solveig Sunblad
9. Paul & Tonya Matson
 - Alyssa & Jacklyn
10. Amy Woitas, Makenzie & Mason
11. Pastor Milton Ost
12. Sue Smith
13. Brandon Miller, Carter
14. Hans & Elizabeth Schafer, Adelaide
15. Larry & Lanae Thorstad
16. Ryan Walters
17. Margie Kirchner
18. Vince & Danielle Wertman
 - Kaitlynn & Andrew
19. Brady & Katelyn Flatness
 - Emma & Grahm
20. Jeremy Brue, Jazmin & Jadin
21. Donald Hamberg
22. Judy Menssen
23. Chris & Shannon Paulsen, Wyatt
24. Mark & Andrea Stotts
25. Michael & Cynthia Severson
26. Adele Rosnow, Alden & Adele Hellecksen
27. Tony & Tina Strom, Jocelyn & Hailey
28. Sharon Westcott
29. Ona Meyer
30. Ronald & Carol Johnson
31. Tom & Angie Nelson
 - Katelynn & Kameron



Caring and Sharing

Chairperson: Becky Tennis Hanson

Peggy & David Anderson
Dawn & Melvin Gilbertson
Nancy & Rollin Hoium
Sharon & Wayne Jahnke
Liz & Troy Johnson
Janelle & Shane Koepke
Elaine & Cecil Learn
Jeanne & David Lundak
Myrna & Jerald Montag
Stacy & Josh Pfennig
Jenny & Phil Scott
Cynthia & Mike Severson
Sally & David Skrlin
Virginia Sorenson
Rex & Lois Stotts
Marlene Tasker
Sandra & Gary Thompson

Thank you to everyone who helped in July!
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:

November • December

**Sign up today in
the Narthex**

Pastoral Act for July
Funeral for Ray Pedersen

Gifts of Love

Altar Guild

Communion Bread & Wine Given In Memory Of:

Mary Lou Jacobson given by Bob Jacobson
Andy Munyer given by Jim & Judy Munyer

Altar Flowers Given In Memory Of:

Cathy Perschbacher given by Lester Perschbacher

Baby Kits

Gift Given By:

Jerry & Gerry Vogt

Food for Backpacks Program

In Memory Of:

Donnie & Pat Johnson given by Debbie Christensen

Gift Given By:

Kent Jasperson

Vacation Bible School Participants

Dale & Dorothy Baldwin

Ball Scholarship

In Memory Of:

Shawn Tibbs given by Bob Ball & Laura McKibbin

Building Fund

Gift Given By:

Kent Jasperson

Kitchen Remodeling Fund

In Memory Of:

Ray Loberg given by David & Jeanne Lundak

Paul Anderson given by Wayne & Sharon Jahnke

Sue Barber given by Kent Jasperson

Gift Given By:

Larry & Lanae Thorstad

David & Jeanne Lundak

Joe & Deb Attig

Carroll & Mavis Hanson

Love

In Memory Of:

Mary Lou Jacobson given by Robert Jacobson

Gift Given By:

Richard & Darlene Jordahl

Ed & Julie Groeneweg

Richard & Darlene Jordahl

Lu Ryan Memorial Scholarship

Gift Given By:

Faith Ryan

Martin Luther

Gift Given By:

Richard & Darlene Jordahl

Memorial

In Memory Of:

Diane Skelley given by Patti Madrigal

Music Ministry

Gift Given By:

Mary Harriman

Dex & Jan Henschel

Parish Nurse

Gift Given By:

Mary Harriman

Prayer Garden

In Memory Of:

Loved ones given by Mary Harriman

Gift Given By:

Kent Jasperson

Mary Harriman

Richard & Darlene Jordahl

Gifts of Love

Prayer Shawl

In Memory Of:

Donnie & Pat Johnson given by Debbie Christensen

Youth Ministry

Gift Given By:

Richard & Darlene Jordahl

Quilting

Gift Given By:

Joe & Deb Attig
Dexter & Janet Henschel
Shirley Pearson
Sharon Jahnke
Jane Madson
Dale & Dorothy Baldwin

Please Note

Any additional "Gifts of Love" recorded by the church office after **July 20, 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.

Fair Trade Coffee



We will be selling coffee before and immediately following worship service on Sunday, **August 2, 2026**.

Noisy Offering



Remember your coins each Sunday!

Generosity at Grace

June 2026

Average
Attendance
in person was:
113 per worship

Giving
\$59,644.52

Expenses
-\$45,438.06

Year to Date Giving vs Expenses:
\$307,221.78
- \$311,112.45
-\$3,890.67

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.

Announcements

Mission Opportunity

Help our neighbors remain living independently in their own homes.



LAWN CARE
OR SNOW
REMOVAL



LIGHT
HOUSEKEEPING
OR CHORES



HOUSEHOLD
CHORES



PERSONAL
VISITS OR
PHONE CALLS



HELP WITH
SHOPPING
OR ERRANDS



CARPENTER
CARES



VOLUNTEER
DRIVING

For questions please contact: Becky Tennis Hanson (507)391-2770

Sign up by August 16th.

Jesus told Peter, "feed my lambs", "take care of my sheep", "feed my sheep." - John 21

2nd Wind

Mystery Picnic • August 13th • 5 pm

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

GriefShare®

A GriefShare support group is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief.

Mondays, 2:00-3:30 pm • Fireside Room
September 14th - December 7th

Grace Lutheran Church
918 Garfield Avenue, Albert Lea, MN
507-373-6496 • www.gracealbertlea.org



Please go www.griefshare.org/groups/297923 or scan the QR code to sign up.

YOUTH BONFIRE

FRIENDS • SMORES • FELLOWSHIP

NO SIGN-UP REQUIRED.

YOUTH
6TH-12TH GRADE

SMORES &
FELLOWSHIP

AUGUST 13

8-9 PM
WEATHER PERMITTING



ADULT FORUM

Fireside Room | 10:00 AM

August 2nd Youth Trip Recap

August 9th



August 16th God and Creativity

August 23rd Grace Listens

August 30th Secret Societies
of Freeborn County

Presented by Gary Schindler

GRACE EDUCATION

2026-2027

SIGN UP BY 9/9



CONFIRMATION

BEGINS 9/16



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Teachers needed

RALLY SUNDAY 9/13



YOUTH BIBLE STUDY



NEW GROUP FOR YOUTH IN GRADES 6-12

Each Sunday after worship in the Youth Room

BEGINS 9/13

IMAGINE more

2027 ELCA
Youth Gathering
Minneapolis, MN
June 28-July 2, 2027



Road to Minneapolis



October 11,
2026

Parent/Youth Meeting 11:00 am | Youth Room
Learn about the gathering, costs, and expectations.

Oct 21-Nov 11
2026

Registration
• \$175 Deposit Due | \$450 Total due by April 30, 2027

Fall & Winter

Fundraisers & Meetings | Dates TBD
(*Meeting attendance & participation in fundraisers is mandatory)

February 26,
2027

BINGO Fundraiser
*Attendance & participation in fundraisers & meetings is mandatory

June 28-July 2
2027

ELCA Youth Gathering
Minneapolis, MN

to God - whose power now at work in us can do
IMMEASURABLY MORE
than we ask or imagine. - Ephesians 3:20 (inclusive)

imagine more...
COURAGE Joy LOVE
GRACE WELCOME

August 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2 8:30 am Fair Trade Coffee 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:00 am Adult Forum Youth Trip Recap Youth Team Mtg.	3 9:00 am Staff Meeting 1:30 pm SAIL 4:30 pm Mary Circle	4 10:00 am Women's Bible Study 10:00 am St. Johns Communion	5 9:00 am Quilting Grp 6:30 pm Worship Central Park	6 7:30 am Early Morning Bible Study 1:30 pm SAIL	7 Building and Office Closed	8 Building and Office Closed
9 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:00 am Adult Forum TRIVIA	10 9:00 am Staff Meeting 1:30 pm SAIL	11 7 am-8 pm Election Primary 10:00 am Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm Council Mtg.	12 10:00 am Thorne Crest Communion 6:30 pm Worship Central Park	13 7:30 am Early Morning Bible Study 1:30 pm SAIL 5:00 pm 2nd Wind Grace Fdn. Meeting Youth Bonfire	14 Building and Office Closed	15 Building and Office Closed
16 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:00 am Adult Forum God & Creativity	17 9:00 am Staff Meeting 1:30 pm SAIL  Newsletter Deadline	18 10:00 am Women's Bible Study	19 9:00 am Quilting Grp 6:30 pm Worship Central Park	20 7:30 am Early Morning Bible Study 1:30 pm SAIL	21 Building and Office Closed	22 Building and Office Closed
23 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:00 am Adult Forum Grace Listens	24 9:00 am Staff Meeting 1:30 pm SAIL	25 10:00 am Women's Bible Study	26 6:30 pm Worship Central Park	27 7:30 am Early Morning Bible Study 9:00 am Grace Notes Mail Prep 1:30 pm SAIL	28 Building and Office Closed	29 Building and Office Closed
30 9:00 am Worship & baptism 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:00 am Adult Forum Secret Societies of Freeborn Co.	31 9:00 am Staff Meeting 1:30 pm SAIL					

Grace Lutheran Church
918 Garfield Avenue
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Phone: 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 ([@gracealbertlea](https://youtube.com/@gracealbertlea))

Outdoor Worship Service

Wednesdays at 6:30 (Now - August 26)
Will be held at Central Park *Bring a lawn chair*



SUNDAY SCHOOL
• Teachers needed •
 **RALLY SUNDAY 9/13**





CONFIRMATION
 **BEGINS 9/16**





YOUTH BIBLE STUDY
NEW GROUP FOR YOUTH IN GRADES 6-12
Each Sunday after worship in the Youth Room
 **BEGINS 9/13**