



SEPTEMBER 2021

# THE GOOD NEWS

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

## Pastor's Corner – Transitions

I have lived in university towns for most of my life, and one of the constants of university towns is change. The student body changes by at least 25% every year as one class graduates and a new one matriculates. Most of the congregations I've been a member of have been on or near university campuses, and the transitory nature of that context has been reflected in congregational life as well. The good thing about that is that you have the opportunity to share the lives of all kinds of interesting people. The bad thing, of course, is that you also have to bid farewell to many of them at some point. This dynamic is intensified in the university context, but really, it's true of all congregations, regardless of context, as it is true also of all communities and families. People come and go in our lives and in our congregations. But while meeting and getting to know people is a gradual process that you barely notice, bidding them farewell is typically fairly sudden, and is felt much more acutely.

As I noted in a recent sermon, several of our more active families have moved out of town in recent months. We're going to miss them and their contribution to the Grace community. And now this month we also have a transition on the Grace staff as Caitlyn finishes four and half years as our Director of Youth and Congregational Life. She's returning to Iowa to take up a position at a Lutheran church in the Des Moines suburbs. She will be missed here at Grace, but I am also excited for her and this new opportunity so close to family and friends.

We are working hard to make Caitlyn's transition as seamless as possible, but there will be a necessary period of adjustment as we rethink and reconfigure staff duties. Part of our upcoming council retreat over the Labor Day weekend will be devoted to this.

All of these normal transitions are happening against the background of a still changing global pandemic. So much of life seems up in the air at the moment. The new Delta variant of the virus has complicated our anticipated return to normal. Vaccination rates continue to lag behind the numbers needed to achieve the "herd immunity" necessary to eradicate the virus. Wildfires and droughts are ravaging our western states. And our social and political polarization and dysfunction continue apace. Amidst all of these unsettling events beyond our control, we persist in turning to God in hope,  
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gathering weekly around God's sustaining, renewing, and life-giving gifts of word and sacrament, on the strength of which we encourage one another as signs of God's enduring presence in our lives, come what may. We rejoice in those whom God has given to accompany us in this life, and we open our hearts to welcome still others into the life of faith that we share. May God bless our transitions, and use us to be a blessing to others in these unsettled times.

+ Pastor Chris Repp

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## Thank You from Caitlyn

As Pastor Repp mentioned in his article, this marks my last newsletter as part of the Grace staff as I transition to a new position at Faith Lutheran Church in West Des Moines, IA. Also, my last Sunday here will be September 12<sup>th</sup>.

I would like to take the time to thank everyone who I have gotten to work with over these last four and a half years. All of you who have ever volunteered, or planned, or even just shown up for our events, thank you! All of you who have been on Christian Ed Committee, have been adult leaders on youth trips, taught Sunday school, participated in our multi-generational events – THANK YOU! I have learned so much from all of you, and the youth have benefited so much from your service.

It's also been quite an amazing honor to see our students grow over the last 4 years. These are an amazing bunch of kids. Not only are they an incredibly fun group to be able to work with, they are ALL true leaders in the church. Each and every one of them have incredible gifts that help the church in so many ways. This congregation is incredibly lucky to have this group of youth.

Going forward, I wish this congregation nothing but the best, and I will keep you all in my prayers! I look forward to seeing all the good work you all will do in the future as you continue to do God's work in the world.

## Invitation for Choir and Bells

Dear Friends,

I wanted to invite you to participate in the music program this fall! This is a great time to join, because we're all basically starting fresh again! While reading music is helpful, it's not required. All are welcome! We have specific needs for sopranos and tenors in the choir, but would certainly welcome anyone! I can promise to give you my absolute best for a safe and meaningful experience. See below for when, where, and what these will look like:

### **CHOIR:**

Rehearsals Wednesdays from 7-8:45PM (these actually may be shortened as we emerge from this pandemic), beginning September 1 in the sanctuary. Masked and distanced of about 3 feet.

### **BELLS:**

Rehearsals Mondays 7-8PM, beginning September 13. Masked.

Please reach out to me with any questions, and especially if you are joining for the first time so I can be prepared for you! I hope you will join us as we proclaim God's Story through music!

Andy Bruhn

[music@glccu.org](mailto:music@glccu.org)

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## Meals for St. Andrew's

Classes have started at UIUC and so have the weekly "Chat and Chow" events at St. Andrew's! Each Wednesday, Chat and Chow is a chance for students to come together and share a meal and have meaningful discussion. An easy way to help support the great ministry going on at St. Andrew's is to provide one of these Wednesday night meals. It can be homemade or not, the only request is that there is also a vegetarian options (no other specific food allergies, sensitivities, or diets are known at this time). The estimation is that there will need to be enough food for 20-25 people for the meal. If you would like to sign up to provide a meal for St. Andrew's students, you can do so here:

<https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/4wmkg5>

## Faith Circle Returns!

Faith Circle meetings the third Tuesday of each month beginning at 7PM. September 21 will be the first gathering back after taking a break over the summer. The group follows the Bible study as presented in the periodical "Gather For Faith and Action," which is a publication of the Women of the ELCA (you can find more information on it online here:

<https://www.gathermagazine.org/>). As of this writing, we hope that we will be able to meet in person, but we will follow the recommended guidelines at the time. If we decide that a Zoom meeting is in order, we will get the word out. The scheduled lesson leader for September is Kathy Bowersox, and the hostess is Helen Repp.

## Parking Lot Communion Distribution Next Sunday!

Our next Holy Communion Parking lot distribution is on Sunday, September 5th. From 10:45 to 11:15 am, Pastor Repp will distribute Communion in the parking lot in drive-thru fashion. Instructions will be in next week's Grace Notes

## Help Receiving Communion

If you are attending our communion services online but have trouble getting to church to receive communion, we can arrange for someone to bring the communion elements to you. Contact Kathy Bowersox.

## Food Pantry Update

The GLC Pantry continues to chug along like a "well-oiled machine." We are especially happy to see several fully vaccinated volunteers now being scheduled back in to help with both restocking and Thursday distributions, which is a change from the procedures during the pandemic. Before vaccinations, we worked with a "skeleton crew" of pantry leaders and a few other hearty people who felt they were at a minimum risk of infection. In recent weeks, several other volunteers have signaled a readiness to return to participate, and we are thankful.

We are still distributing via drive-through pick-up only. We realize it's not perfect in that our clients are unable to make the many choices that were available to them pre-pandemic. We are still pre-boxing foods and placing them on a table outdoors for pick-up. We will continue to assess the situation, but we are committed to being cautious given the current uptick in Covid cases in our area.



On Sunday, August 8, former GLC member Inge Knight worshiped with us. Inge has been living in California for several years, to be closer to her children and grandchildren, but she was visiting Champaign-Urbana and we were delighted to see her and catch up with her. Here are a couple of pictures taken in Fellowship Hall after worship. Many of you will remember that it was Inge who began the emergency food ministry at Grace, working with only a metal cabinet and a few volunteers in the south kitchen. That was in the early 1980s! We are blessed to be able to continue the good work that she began, a ministry that now encompasses a warehouse storage area, many cabinets in Fellowship Hall, two commercial freezers, and an additional combination refrigerator-freezer, all of which are typically full of products on Thursday mornings. Praise be to God!

We appreciate your contributions and your prayers on behalf of the work we do together.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING EGG CARTONS AND PLASTIC BAGS AT THIS TIME. WE HAVE AN OVERSUPPLY OF THESE ITEMS. WE WILL ASK FOR THEM WHEN WE NEED THEM. THANK YOU.

Your Pantry Board,

*Kathy Bowersox, Jim Fleming, Dale Herrstrom, Karen Krusa, and Royce Wilken*