

*“Serving all people by sharing God’s Word
and Gift of Grace”*

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

332 Vance Avenue

Post Office Box 204

Erskine, MN 56535

Pastor Pam Thorson

Phone: 218-687-4035

Email: gracelc@gvtel.com

Pastor Email: pastorglc@gvtel.com

*Return Service
Requested*

Non-Profit Org.

U.S. Postage
Paid Permit No. 12
Erskine, MN

The Scroll

Grace Lutheran
Church

September 2023

PASTOR'S CORNER

Dear Friends,
It's September--back to school month! It's an energizing time of year. It means shopping for new clothes, shoes, backpack, and school supplies. Well, parents don't enjoy shopping for all those supplies. But I think the best part for many is seeing friends again! And then there's HOME-WORK! No fun.

But it can also be tough worrying about bullying. Parents and other adults, talk to your children about getting along and treating one another with kindness. No one appreciates being made the center of a mean joke. Jesus calls us to love one another.

"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, (for this is the Law and the Prophets). Matthew 7:12 ESV In other words, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

We used to call this the golden rule. It tells us how to act, but more than that, this rule calls us to consider our own self-interests and how others are impacted. We ought to look at others for their own good. Martin Luther's describes this in his catechetical understanding of the 7th commandment - You shall not steal. What does God require? We should help our neighbor in every need. That means spiritual, physical, and emotional.

Let's remember to pray for our kids, teachers, and all in the school system to include bus drivers. We have a great treasure in our school systems. For this and all things, we thank our Lord God.

Tak time to enjoy the goodness of God in all things,
In ministry together,
Pastor Pam

Inside this issue:

WNALC Meeting	2
Attendance & Offerings	2
Circle Meetings	2
Council Meeting	2
Prayer Concerns	2
Financial News	3
Thrivent News	3
August Grace Council	4
Highlights	
2023 NALC Convocation Report	5
Church Orchestra	5
Grace Council continued	6
Say Something Assembly	7
Youth News	8
Prayers for Teachers and Students	9
Grace Council Members	9
September Readings	9
Release Time Update	9
NALC Youth Convention	10
Rally Day	11
September Calendar	insert





The Grace Lutheran Church Council will meet in regular session on Wednesday September 13th at 7:00 PM. A reminder that all regular council meetings are open to all members of Grace Church.



- July 30th:**
Attendance~ 60
Offering~\$1,430.00
- August 6th:**
Attendance~ 73
Offering~\$1,340.00
- August 13th:**
Attendance~67
Offering~\$3,685.00
- August 20th:**
Attendance~ 43
Offering~\$1,634.00
- August 27th:**
Attendance~53
Offering~\$1,860.00



The Grace WNALC will meet on Thursday September 14th at 2:00 PM. Group #8 will serve.

Hope Circle: September 27th at 9:00 AM at the church.

Rebecca Circle: September 28th at 6:30 PM at the church.



REMINDER – Please save your grocery receipts from Groceries Plus in Erskine and Jered's Grocery in McIntosh. Both stores are donating one percent of the total purchases to the youth group. There is a container for the receipts at the church in the hallway by the coat racks.



- * Paul Mahlen
- * Carr Smeby
- * Wendy Smeby
- * LeRoy Johnson
- * Maci Smeby
- * Allen Jenson
- * Steve & Linda Evenson
- * Becki Haugen
- * Judy Boucher
- * David E. Hamre
- * Dianne Hamre
- * Dan Salvhus
- * Jesse Hickman
- * Dustin Close
- * Greg Kaster
- * Jolene Bradley
- * Torrey Erickson
- * Shut-ins and Nursing Home members
- * Ukraine



Sunday School
9:15 AM



Worship
10:30 AM





WE BELONG

"I KNOW MY OWN AND MY OWN KNOW ME"

**NALC CONTINENTAL
YOUTH GATHERING
JULY 1-4, 2024
held in Boerne, Texas!**

This four-day gathering will provide opportunities for NALC youth to grow in faith and relationship with others as the body of Christ. It will be a time of worship together, studying God's Word, being equipped through large and small group sessions, outreach to the community through mission events, and engaging in fellowship and fun!

Who is invited to attend:

- ✦ **YOUTH:** Ages 12-18
- ✦ **LEADERS IN TRAINING:** Ages 19-24
- TEAM LEADERS:** Ages 25 & up

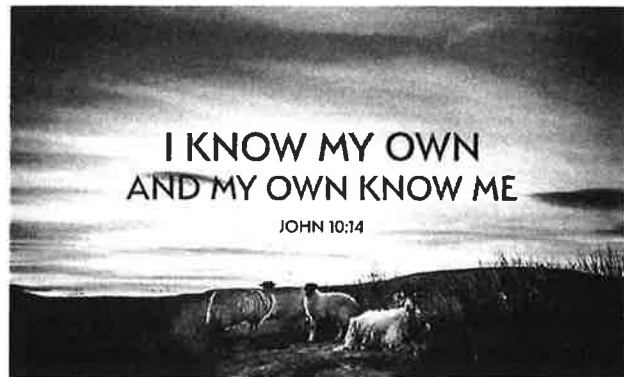
The theme for this gathering is "**We Belong**" — because we belong to Christ, to the church, to our communities, and to each other!

Grace Church is having an info meeting Sunday, September 17 promptly at 9:15 as Sunday school begins.

We have to get our registration in early because it will fill up. Reg. starts in October.

Tentative plans include driving down spending a night each way at a Lutheran church.

Come and see!



Electronic Fund Giving

Giving Options

Not only can you give through your offering envelope on Sunday morning, but our church offers other options to receive your offering:

- Automatic Giving – You can set up monthly or weekly automatic deductions from your bank account. Contact the church office (218-687-4035) for a form to complete.
- Online Giving – There are several links throughout our website (www.gracechurcherskine.org) that will allow you to give a one-time or regular donation from your bank account, credit card, or debit card.
- Mobile Giving – You can utilize your mobile device and scan the following code –



Benevolence Ideas

Our church has several special funds to meet needs that can't be met through our General Fund. Currently, these special funds are: Building Maintenance/Improvements, Vacation Bible School, and Samaritan's Purse Shoeboxes. In addition, our church houses the Grace Community Food Shelf and we ask for donations on their behalf. Finally, our church is a part of the Grace Cemetery Association and we ask for donations on their behalf for the maintenance of the Synod, Pioneer, and Fairview Cemeteries in rural Erskine. Please contact Jim Ferden if you have any questions.



July 2023 Financial Summary

Congregational Offering to the General Fund - \$15,647.00

Expenses:

- Administrative - \$6,894.04
- Education - \$67.76
- Mission Outreach - \$800.00
- Pastoral - \$7,899.94
- Worship - \$1,206.95
- Total Expenses - \$16,868.69

thrivent

Did you know? If you are a Thrivent member, you are eligible to receive money to help support events you or others

are having. Simply gather a team of friends, family or neighbors to put on a fundraiser, educational event or service activity. We'll provide the resources you need to get started – including up to \$250 in seed money. Clients with benefit membership are eligible to lead two Thrivent Action Teams per calendar year, and clients with associate membership are eligible to lead one per calendar year. There are many examples on the Thrivent website @ [Thrivent Action Teams Hub \(cotribute.co\)](http://ThriventActionTeamsHub.cotribute.co). Some ideas: Grandparents Day, Vacation Bible School, Fish Fry, Easter Festival, Food Shelf, Disaster Response Buckets/kits, K9's for Mobility, Quilts for Others, or Yarn for Prayer Shawls. Let's get together and figure out how we can use these benefits for the work of ministry.

~ Pastor Pam



COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS
 GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
 COUNCIL MEETING
 August 16, 2023
 7:00 P.M.

'Serving all people by sharing God's Word and Gift of Grace'

Present: President John Carlson, Pastor Pam, Nick Walk, Hollie Stewart, Yvonne Halvorson, Gene Haugom, Lori Hole, Gary Walter, Ann Brekken

Devotions: John opened with prayer. He asked us to share memories of church, why we joined, how did you get here? Colossians 3: 16 & 17 was a verse to live by. Discussion regarding how we can serve others and be fed in the word and our own journey. Pastor Pam closed with prayer.

Treasurer's Report: Jim submitted the report, but was unable to be present.

Cash Flow Report

Undesignated funds available to be used for July's General Fund expenses totaled \$15,840.02. This amount was only slightly less than the month's General Fund expenses totaling \$16,868.69. Congregational giving to the General Fund was \$15,647.00. The monthly budget goal is \$20,221.69.

Budget Report

We ended the month at approxi-

Budget Report

We ended the month at approximately 11.6% or \$28,300 under budget.

History of Regular Giving to the General Fund Report

July giving was up significantly from June. July giving was the highest so far in 2023!

In comparison to giving for July in other years, this is the highest since 2011.

Other Information

The library flooring got replaced last month!!

The lease on the office copier expired in July. I am recommending that the council approve a new agreement with Liberty. I will provide some information separate from this report for council's review.

I called Fertile Oil and got the propane rate set for the upcoming heating season. It is down from last year and will be \$1.35 this season. This will be a savings of \$0.54 per gallon from last season!!

Pastor's Report: Pastor Pam submitted the report.

Pastoral Care – I have made home as well as nursing care visits.

Nursing/Assisted Living services:

A new item is monthly communion service at Poplar Meadows, the 3rd Wednesday at 10:30.

Leslie Tradewell has coordinated this for me. Mac Sr. Living next Wed. Aug 23 at 9 for a worship service & Fair Meadow Fri. Aug 18 at 10.

Education: Working with Nancy and Ann to choose curriculum for Released Time and Sunday School.

NALC Lutheran Week was out-

standing. It is good to a congregation in an doctrinally orthodox Lutheran church. We have reelected Bishop Dan Selbo. I was not elected to the NALC Executive Council, but did make it to the 3rd ballot. We have excellent pastors who are willing to serve. Check out the videos at www.thenalc.org.

Vacation Kevin and I will be gone for a week to Texas to see our son and family. Mike Sletto will be pulpit supply on September 3.

Worship: We will stay with our current setting through September but probably change one piece of it. I'd like feedback. We will return to LBW setting 2 as well as Blue book.

Healing service Seems to have been well received. We will work out pattern of flow. There are options.

Committee Reports:

Education: Ann reported. VBS was very successful. 45 to 55 students each night. School supplies drive very successful. Sept 10 first day of Sunday School. Need one teacher for 5th & 6th grade. Sept 10 during church service there will be teacher installation, blessing of backpacks and giving out of bibles. Thank you to Hollie, Nancy and Pastor Pam for organizing Released Time. It will begin with the elementary students on Sept. 13.

NALCW: Hollie reported. Met last Wednesday. Group 7 served. Mavis Finseth played several piano selections. Reminder about kits for disaster relief--there is

Continued on Page 6

GRACE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Pr. Pam Thorson	Pastor	270-872-8269
John Carlson	President	
Nick Walk	Vice President	637-2219
Yvonne Halvorson	Secretary	687-5190
Dorothy Sandberg	Financial Secretary	687-3575
Jim Ferden	Treasurer	563-2377
Gary Walter	Deacon	687-3074
Gene Haugom	Trustee	563-3292
Paul Mahlen	Trustee	687-5343
Ray LaBrecque	Trustee	
Ann Brekken	Superintendent / Education	687-2205
Sarah Strom	Education	687-3488
Pam Walk	Education	637-2219
Shar Hill	Education	
Hollie Stewart	Pres. WNALC	687-3730
Lori Hole	Stewardship	687-3585
Tyler Brekken	Stewardship	687-2205
Becky Lindseth	Stewardship	

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
 September 3, 2023

First Reading - Jeremiah 15:15-21
 Psalm - Psalm 26:1-12
 Second Reading - Romans 12:9-21
 Gospel - Matthew 16:21-28

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
 September 10, 2023

First Reading - Ezekiel 33:7-9
 Psalm - Psalm 32:1-7
 Second Reading - Romans 13:1-10
 Gospel - Matthew 18:1-20

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
 September 17, 2023

First Reading - Genesis 50:15-21
 Psalm - Psalm 103:1-12
 Second Reading - Romans 14:1-12
 Gospel - Matthew 18:21-35

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
 September 24, 2023

First Reading - Isaiah 55:6-9
 Psalm - Psalm 27:1-9
 Second Reading - Philippians 1:12-14, 19-30
 Gospel - Matthew 20:1-16



Release Time Begins In September

Our plans for the year are coming together for another year. Every year around the country children and youth are released from school to attend religious education for 1 hour under the guidance of a federal law. Grace Church is a partner with the Win-E-Mac schools. We provide a team of dedicated teachers and assistants who nurture the young ones in the community, many of whom do not attend any church.

Here's what you can do:

- Please pray for this ministry: the youth, the teachers, and assistants.
- Consider substituting every other week.



Confirmation NEWS

CONFIRMATION REGISTRATION

Confirmation begins Wednesday September 20th 6-7 PM. Parents come at the beginning for 15 minutes as we discuss the year and get the 7th grade youth registered. If you'd like to pick up a registration ahead of time, stop in the office.

A Prayer for Our Students

Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of education in every form. As our children prepare to start a new year, may confidence be their foundation, may grace be their guide and may hope be their compass toward a bright future. I pray they would have eyes to see the needs of those around them and a heart to love well. May they face each day with positivity knowing that no matter what comes their way, they don't have to face it alone. In Jesus' name, amen.



A Prayer for Our Teachers

Dear God,

Thank you for the amazing teachers who have given their lives to serve our children. As they prepare for the new year fill them with strength to lead, grace to guide and hope to thrive in their classroom. Bless them beyond measure for their willingness to pour into the next generation through education. In Jesus' name, amen.



NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023 NALC Convention Report

The annual North American Lutheran Church (NALC) convention was held at the Oklahoma City Omni Hotel on 8-11 August. There 469 delegates in attendance. Approximately 2/3 of the 490 NALC congregations were represented. Grace Lutheran Church was represented by Pastor Pam Thorson, Gary Walters and Kevin Thorson. The 2024 NALC convention will be virtual. In 2025, the convention will be in Pittsburgh. The theme for the convention was "Missio Dei: The Work and Mission of God. The business of the convention was routine. Bishop Dan Selbo was re-elected. The convention was broadcast live on FaceBook. Videos of each session are available at: <https://www.facebook.com/thenalc/>

While Pastor Pam attended theological lectures, I attended the Faith Formation Festival. I was pleased to see it placed a great emphasis on youth. Rev. Teresa Peters (NALC's Director of Youth and Family Ministry) led lay and clergy participants in numerous workshops designed to inspire youth faith in Christ. The guest speakers did not focus on educating or teaching youth; instead they sought to share their and other participant's techniques used to inspire youth in their care. The featured speaker was Heather Ruesch, author of Sexual Mentality, Creating a Culture of Biblical Identity. I was particularly inspired by two quotes from her presentation/book.

*In a culture that insinuates that parents are powerless and communicates that as a parent your values and input are meaningless and will have no impact, you need to hear the voice of truth, The truth is, Mom and Dad, **YOU MATTER.***

Don't let the message of 'Do what feels good' be the only voice our youth hear. We must find our voice and fulfill the calling that God has given us as parents, pastors, teachers, youth workers and those who care about teens. We must help our youth to maturity in each component of their life: physical, mental, emotional, social and spirituality.

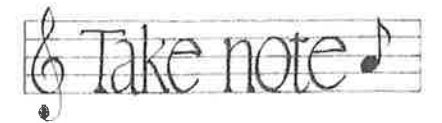
During the convention, I attended the breakout session led by the Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen to discuss seminary and discernment a call for ministry.

The NALC seminary (hub at the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) in Pennsylvania with spokes at six seminaries in other states/province) appears to be working well.

The NALS has 3 new professors and a new Director of Vocational Discernment (Rev. Jeff Morlock).

In the last year, 26 congregations have called a pastor, but there are still 41 congregations still seeking a pastor. There are 37 pastors seeking a call and 30+ people discerning a call or attending seminary.

Yours in Christ, Kevin Thorson



Church Orchestra

On 20 August, the Grace Lutheran Church orchestra completed its summer rehearsal season. There are currently eight musicians that enjoy making music together and are planning to enhance our worship services. Kevin Thorson has reached out to several other musicians in the church to see if they are interested in joining the orchestra in the future.

Our current repertoire includes a few Bach chorales and hymns from the Lutheran Book of Worship. As we move forward, we have identified some contemporary praise and worship songs i.e., *Amazing Grace*, *My Chains Are Gone* to add to our catalog.

The orchestra's next rehearsal will be on 21 September from 7:00 to 8:00 pm and continue on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month. Any other people interested in participating should contact Kevin for information and/or attend the first rehearsal.

Please pray for this up-and-coming ministry.

Kevin Thorson, 270-872-8268, kevint@kthorson.net

GRACE COUNCIL, continued

still time. Auction will have Patti Hamre doing the computer work at the auction. Announcement: Wade Farrell is making another corn hole set for the auction. Hollie will have the bible study next month. The new study is just excellent.

Trustees: Gene reported. Lance did some repairs on the front door to stop the leaking. Gene caulked the window above the door and did some work on the air conditioning unit. Still having some roof issues. We'll see what the building committee recommends.

Deacons: Gary reported. Usual duties of giving rides and helping others. Had wonderful visits with several members that were blessings to all involved.

Video Tech: Nick reported. Good news! Things are going well!!

Food Shelf: Gene reported. (Report by Mavis Haugom) Cleaned, painted, and worked on the double garage at the

parsonage. Plans are to move in the end of August or beginning of Sept. Serving 39 households in one month should be a first. We have definitely seen the increase in people coming to the food shelf. Last week had 24 households helped in one day. Tomorrow 8 of the Honor Society students work.

Old Business:

Building Committee Update: Meeting with an architect from Mpls on Monday Sept 21st.

Summer Picnic (summary): Positive feedback. Next year we will try to do more personal connection and provide rides for

for some who can't drive.

Usher Team: Need updated list for office. John will send a note and meet with the head ushers: Wade, Daryl and Ogden.

Youth Ministry: There was a planning meeting before today's council meeting. August 27th we will have the first Win-E-Mac Community Youth Ministry event. October they are planning to attend a concert in Bemidji. Can collection went great! Brought bags to Fertile but we don't have a total dollar amount yet.

Outdoor sign: Pastor Pam gave us an informational sheet from one of the vendors that had some good questions we may want to consider regarding an electronic sign. John will look into it further.

Oil contract: Gary read part of the lawyer report regarding a question about the will we have giving us the oil rights to a piece of property that we have not been able to collect. Gary will report back on questions we had.

New Business:

Approve New Copier Lease with Liberty: Yvonne made the motion to accept the agreement for new copier with Liberty. Nick seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of dual (or single) wireless pulpit/lectern microphones. Nick recommended we purchase dual microphones. Yvonne made the motion to accept the quote and to purchase dual microphones. Hollie Seconded. Motion carried.

Calendar:

Council Meeting: September 13, 7:00 p.m.

August 27: WEM Youth Ministry Event

September 10: Sunday School Starts

September 20: Confirmation starts 6:00 p.m.

Announcements:

Next summer is the national NALC Youth Conference. Need to have a meeting to start planning. There is a deadline with limited space.

There is also a youth gathering coming up in Winnipeg. Pastor Pam has the information. This would involve a very small group.

Adjourn

Pastor Pam closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Yvonne Salvason

You would not, could not,
should not miss...
a Say Something event
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 10th!

SUNDAY,
SEPT. 10
2023

BETHEL
CHURCH
FOSTON, MN

5PM
Free-Will Sloppy Joe Supper
6PM
Caleb Monson presents

At 6PM, Caleb Monson will share,
Say Something's purpose, we declare.
The 2024 School Tour is beyond compare!

WWW.SAYSOMETHINGASSEMBLY.COM

Proceeds to be invested in the Say Something Assembly 2024 Spring Tour.

We are asking local citizens and churches to share this event. It is evident our youth are challenged by troubling life situations, many of them, out of their control. Desiring to educate, encourage and equip our youth, we are sponsoring a kick-off event for the upcoming Say Something Assembly School Tour coming to our area next spring.

Petitions will be gathered and letters sent to area schools and school boards, inviting them to book a spot on the School Tour. Say Something Assembly tackles tough topics like: bullying, addiction, exploitation and suicidal ideation among others-- in an upbeat, engaging format which connects with students.

September 10th, Caleb Monson, who coordinates Say Something Assembly School Tours in our region, will be joining us to share about their outreach and mission. We ask you to join us in educating, encouraging and equipping our area youth.

Proceeds will be used to provide matching funds to schools who book assemblies on the tour. Each assembly is \$1200. A school who books for both Middle School and High School would need \$2400 for the day. We want to match up to half of the fee of each assembly. Schools will be awarded matching funds on a first-come, first-serve basis.

As a group of concerned individuals, who recognize a need in our area, we welcome volunteers to come alongside us in this endeavor. Would you forward this information to others you feel may be interested?

Thank you,

Alison Opdahl & Theresa Voxland