



# Grace United Methodist Church

August 9, 2020

## **OUR WELCOMING STATEMENT**

God's love is for all and God's grace is present in all creation. God's spirit draws us into community. We are filled with genuine care and love for one another.

Honoring the diversity of our faith journeys, our welcome is extended to all – people of all races, sexes, ethnic backgrounds, generations, physical and mental abilities, economic conditions, sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. No matter who you are, no matter where you are in your life, you are welcome here.

We are all invited to bless this church with our love, our presence, and our participation.

## **WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND GREETING ON ANOTHER**

### **OPENING PRAYER**

In the midst of all that tosses us to and fro, God gathers us together. Grounding us in our collective power, nurturing our faith, drawing upon wells of wisdom, ancient and new, our spirits are renewed with grace and peace. Holy Spirit, inspire us to take heart as we share the load together. We trust that fear will not overpower us. Courage is our inheritance and blessing; for we are graced with a legacy of the faithful. Thanks be to God. Amen.

### **SCRIPTURE READING**

Philippians 1:28-30

That way, you won't be afraid of anything your enemies do. Your faithfulness and courage are a sign of their coming destruction and your salvation, which is from God. God has generously granted you the privilege, not only of believing in Christ, but also of suffering for Christ's sake. You are having the same struggle that you saw me face and now hear that I'm still facing.

### **SERMON**

Pastor Nate Nims

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

#### **THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT**

Our Father (Creator, Mother)†, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

### **OFFERING**

### **CLOSING SONG**

"Amazing Grace"

## Guide to Prayer and Study

### Monday, August 10

**Read** - Matthew 16:24-26

**Notice** - Jesus says any who want to follow him must “take up their cross”. This would have been a visceral suggestion, comparable to saying take up your electric chair. In our reading from Philippians on Sunday, Paul wrote, “God has generously granted you the privilege, not only of believing in Christ but also of suffering for Christ's sake.” Have you ever experienced suffering as a privilege? When have you, as Jesus says in our reading today, lost your life only to find it?

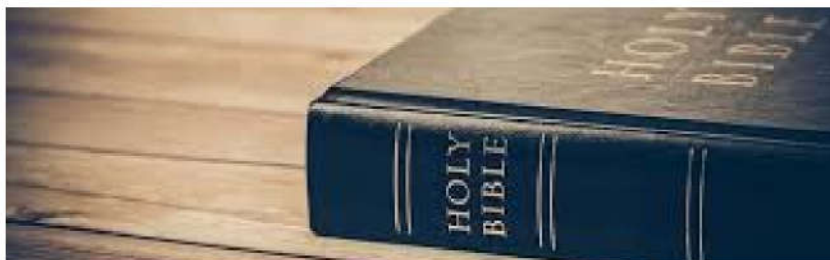
**Pray** - God, suffering as they sign of salvation seems counter-intuitive, and yet instead of abandoning us in our times of loss and struggle, your presence and power redeem and renew us. Help me to take up my cross and lose my life to your grace and peace. Amen..

### Tuesday, August 11

**Read** - Lamentations 3:18-26

**Notice** - The writer of Lamentations lived through the destruction of Babylon. Everything they had was gone, and in the reading today, they do not deny or hide the pain of their experience. In verse 23 it's written that God's love and compassion, “are renewed every morning.” Perhaps we experience this renewal every morning because we have to learn to live one day at a time, especially in times of loss. In grief, we often begin to doubt that things will ever get better. But the painful sense of loss we call grief is not a reason to abandon hope; it is why we desperately need hope. What losses are you feeling most sharply today? Where do you long to find God's love and compassion renewed?

**Pray** - God, your love and compassion are continually renewed. Help me to live with hope and expectation for your deliverance each and every day. Amen.



### **Wednesday, August 12**

**Read** - Romans 5:1-5

**Notice** - The apostle Paul sketched the spiritual process through which every Christ-follower can have a character that meets life's dark twists and turns with hope and trust, not despair. Have you ever experienced the progression Paul described bringing you to a powerful sense of God's love being "poured out" in your heart? Later in Romans, Paul wrote, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13). How close to "overflowing" is your inner supply of hope today in this crisis time? How can you open your heart and let God fill you to overflowing with hope?

**Pray** - Jesus, I like the image of overflowing with hope—but, many days, my reservoir gets pretty low. Keep me attuned to your power. Shape me into a fountain of hope for myself and those around me. Amen.

### **Thursday, August 13**

**Read** - Luke 9:1-9, 18-50

**Notice** - In answer to Jesus' penetrating question, Peter said Jesus was the Christ (Greek for "anointed one," like the Hebrew Messiah). Jesus did not reject the idea—but did say bluntly that being the Christ meant suffering, not earthly power. Peter, John, and James probably expected Jesus to descend the mountain, call in the cavalry, and drive out the Roman oppressors! They couldn't yet grasp that greatness in God's kingdom often looks very different from the world's idea of greatness. Jesus, far from pursuing status or power, served others, trusted God fully, and gave himself to save the world. How do you define greatness? In what ways do God's ideas of greatness differ from human ideas?

**Pray** - Humble Jesus, like Peter I can say you are "the Christ sent from God." But keep me from thinking that following a king like you is always easy and comfortable. Build in me the backbone it takes to serve you faithfully. Amen.

### **Friday, August 14**

**Read** - Romans 8:19-22

**Notice** - For much of human history, most people thought of the earth as "a given," assuming that the air or the rivers and lakes would remain clean no matter what we put into them. But 2000 years ago, the apostle Paul understood that not just human beings but "the whole creation" was suffering from the effects of departing from God's path. Yet he didn't write in despair. His phrase "breathless with anticipation" was "a dramatic image



of hope.”\* Economic and political factors have made scientific understanding for the causes of more intense storms or the disastrous wildfires in California and Australia controversial for some. But no matter how you understand causation, it’s hard to deny that these conditions and others fit Paul’s phrase that “the whole creation is groaning together.” How can God’s people be actively involved in relieving the suffering in our world? One recurring theme in the Bible, especially in the story of Jesus, is that of setting captives free. In what particular ways does it appeal to you to imagine not just yourself, but all of creation, “set free” by God’s power?

**Pray** - Jesus, help me to care about your creation the way you do. Show me how I can better care for your world and help me encourage the people in my life to do the same. Amen.

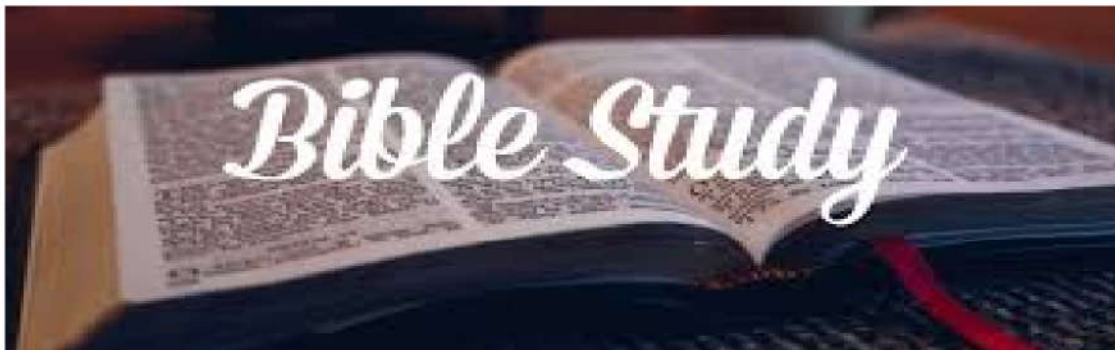
\* Michael J. Gorman, study note on Romans 8:19-21 in The CEB Study Bible.

## **Saturday, August 15**

**Read** - Matthew 14:22-33

**Notice** - Jesus says, “Do not be afraid”. It is one of the most common phrases in the scriptures, but it’s not always easy for us to not be afraid. The Sea of Galilee sat in a kind of geologic “bowl,” and was always subject to sudden, severe storms. The strong wind and waves were frightening enough. But when the disciples saw Jesus walking to their aid on the lake, these experienced fishermen “were so frightened they screamed.” Seeing Jesus walking on the lake terrified the disciples. Their own lack of power was frightening, but the idea of a power beyond their imagining was more so. Do you ever find the idea of God actually “showing up” a bit scary? In what ways does Jesus’ divine power reach beyond our usual human ideas? What gives you confidence that he always uses his power in ways that are good for you?

**Pray** - Jesus, I need your rest, your peace, your freedom from fear. Help me to hold firmly to your claim to be the great “I AM,” who is always on my side and at work for my good. Amen.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Subscribe to the Beyond the Red Doors** weekly email for information on upcoming events by going to [www.gracedesmoines.org](http://www.gracedesmoines.org). Scroll toward the bottom of the page until you see the “Beyond the Red Doors” section and follow the instructions to subscribe.

**Resources from the Upper Room** are available to all as part of the COVID-19 response. If you would like a hard copy, but are unable to come to the church to get one, call Charlene in the church office at 515.255.2131 to have one mailed or emailed to you. English and Spanish editions are available. You may also listen to the daily devotional on the phone by calling 1.877.600.7218. To see all available study and worship opportunities currently available, please go to [www.upperroom.org/covid-19](http://www.upperroom.org/covid-19).

**AMOS is launching a COVID-19 Survey** to understand how this public health and economic crisis is impacting members of our communities. This survey is another tool to hear stories of what Central Iowans are experiencing, reach out beyond our usual contacts, and invite others to act with us during this isolating time. Information received with this AMOS survey will be shared with institutional leaders to help support our community.

AMOS COVID-19 Survey Link: <https://www.123formbuilder.com/form-5369321/>

**If you know of Grace members who would appreciate receiving hard copies** of worship bulletins, sermons, and other reading materials, please call Charlene in the church office with their names. Information packets will be mailed each Monday.

**Keep growing in faith at home.** Pastor Nate (and Irene) have helped us stay in touch via the internet during this coronavirus isolation time. There is another way to supplement those efforts so we can grow in faith while we are apart. Grace currently has a membership to Amplify, a media ministry of the United Methodist Publishing House. You can look at free options at <https://amplifymedia.com/>, even without the Grace “code” for our membership. If you would like to look at other content, please email [bob.dean@iaumc.net](mailto:bob.dean@iaumc.net) for information on how to access all the materials with Grace’s code.

**The Grace Administrative Council has decided to continue worshiping online for the remainder of the year** due to continuing concerns about rising COVID-19 infection rates. We are beginning to look at some ways that we can slowly, and safely, begin to use our facility again for mission and ministry. As future decisions are finalized, with the safety of our community and congregation in mind, we will communicate it with the congregation. .

**Our church staff will continue to work primarily from home** and all in-person activities at the church remain on hiatus. If you have any questions you can contact Pastor Nate at [natenims@gracedesmoines.org](mailto:natenims@gracedesmoines.org) or call the church office. Pastor Nate checks his church voice mail a couple of times a week.

**The south doors will be open Monday through Thursday from 10 am to 4 pm.** If you need access to the building at other times, please contact the office at 515.255.2131. Charlene and Tyler are working longer hours Monday through Thursday, and are not typically in the office Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. So while we will keep the doors locked Monday through Thursday before 10 am and after 4 pm, we we will do what we can to get you into the building between the hours of 8 am and 6 pm.

**We have many regularly scheduled live-streams on Facebook and YouTube.** You can also always catch our videos at [gracedesmoines.org](http://gracedesmoines.org). Our new schedule of live stream events is:

**Sunday** - Worship at 10:15 am on the GraceDesMoines Facebook and YouTube pages

**Monday** - Bible Study and Sermon Q&A at 11 am

**Tuesday** - Guide to Prayer and Study at 9 am

**Wednesday** - Nate at Noon (soup and sermon)

**Thursday** - Spiritual Practices at 4 pm

**If you have had trouble finding the livestreams** either on Facebook or on our website, make sure that while with Grace online you 'refresh' your browser and if all goes well you should be able to join us live. If you ever miss a livestream, don't worry, you can always catch it later on 'Nate TV' at [gracedesmoines.org](http://gracedesmoines.org)

**Would you like to be a Liturgist?** As we continue to worship online, we would like to have liturgists to help with the service. If you would like to help with readings and prayers, please email Nate at [natenims@gracedesmoines.org](mailto:natenims@gracedesmoines.org).

### **Kits for the at-home Knights of the North Castle Vacation Bible School**

are ready to go! Contact Coreen Witke to make arrangements for pick up or delivery. Typically, VBS is for kids who are 3-years-old through 5th grade, but the activities will be fun for a variety of ages. Lessons are presented via videos that were produced by Cokesbury and most of the supplies are included. There are just a few household things you will need to find. Email Coreen at [coreenwitke@gracedesmoines.org](mailto:coreenwitke@gracedesmoines.org) with questions or to arrange contactless delivery.

### **If you missed the first conversation around "Dear Church" you can join us on Wednesday, August 12 and 19 on Zoom.**

The book can be found in many stores and is available from Cokesbury here. From the publisher, "Lenny Duncan is the unlikeliest of pastors. Formerly incarcerated, he is now a black preacher in the whitest denomination in the United States: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Shifting demographics and shrinking congregations make all the headlines, but Duncan sees something else at work--drawing a direct line between the church's lack of diversity and the church's lack of vitality. The problems the ELCA faces are theological, not sociological. But so are the answers. Part manifesto, part confession, and all love letter, "Dear Church" offers a bold new vision for the future of Duncan's denomination and the broader mainline Christian community of faith. Dear Church rejects the narrative of church decline and calls everyone--leaders and laity alike--to the front lines of the church's renewal through racial equality and justice. It is time for the church to rise up, dust itself off, and take on forces of this world that act against God: whiteness, misogyny, nationalism, homophobia, and economic injustice. Duncan gives a blueprint for the way forward and urges us to follow in the revolutionary path of Jesus."

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82152191002?pwd=d2dZQlNsbCtTM0RXMy-9hemQyNk1OZz09>

Meeting ID: 821 5219 1002

Passcode: 558817



# Member Updates

**Rev. Bill Cotton** died on August 3, 2020. His ashes will be placed in the Grace UMC Memorial Garden in a private service this week. Bill's family is planning a Celebration of Life service to be held at a later date. Please keep Jan, their family, and all who mourn Bill's passing in your prayers. Bill's obituary can be found at <https://iowafuneralplanning.com/obituary/rev-william-d-bill-cotton/>

**Renne Ellingson** continues to recover from a stroke and COVID-19 at Mercy Hospital. Renne is still struggling with speech, and remains paralyzed on her left side, but is responding to and following along with conversations. Renne is currently in room 763 at Mercy and is able to receive cards.

**Annette Nelson's** home caught fire recently. Thankfully, Jacob and Emily were staying with their dad the night of the fire, but sadly, in addition to the fire damage, the family dog passed in the fire. Annette stayed in the hospital for a couple days due to burns and smoke inhalation, and is going through follow-up treatments. A Go Fund Me has been created to help the family and can be found at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/foutch-family-house-fire>

**Stephanie Freier** suffered a massive aneurysm last month. Since being released from the hospital, Stephanie has recovered miraculously well. Greg Freier is thankful for all the prayers and support they have received from Grace and their friends. A Go Fund Me has been created to help Stephanie and can be found at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/freierfamilyhelp>

**Jan Mechem** will celebrate her 90th birthday on August 18. Cards and birthday greetings may be sent to Jan at 3524 Grand Avenue #608, Des Moines, IA, 50312.

**Grant McCollum** will celebrate his 75th birthday on August 15, and would love to hear from his friends at Grace. Birthday wishes may be sent to Grant at 2400 30th Street #238, Des Moines, IA, 50310.

## **Bill Cotton's Final Letter to the Editor**

Rev. Bill Cotton passed away on Monday, August 3. Throughout his life and career, Bill Cotton wrote many letters to the editor. While in hospice, Bill wrote this letter and submitted it, not knowing if he would see it published. After Bill wrote this letter, he and Jan said it may be his most pointed yet, but he didn't have time to not get to the point.

(This letter has been published in UM Insight and the Des Moines Register).

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Nine weeks have passed since my wife Jan and I, along with most of the world, watched with horror and grief as a terrible drama was played out on Memorial Day.

A white Minneapolis police officer was seen, his boot pinning a black man's neck to the sidewalk. We heard George Floyd's unheeded cries, "I can't breathe." This lasted for eight minutes and 46 seconds, and then he was dead. The (white people's) world was mesmerized watching the brutality that played out in one of our great cities, known for its fine universities, diverse culture, and progressive thinking, a defender of freedom and civility. Surely it would not stand for such horror. How could this be?

We (white people) could justify this as normal behavior in some places. We could name four little girls who were killed by a bomb in Sunday School in an Alabama church, or Emmet Till, a teenaged boy visiting his cousin, murdered and dragged through the streets in a Mississippi town.

But surely not in Minneapolis or Des Moines. How could it happen?

Eight minutes and 46 seconds! The murder was displayed for all to see, the result of 400 years of slavery, white racism, always present, sometimes hidden, insidious. Four hundred years of blind denial (by white people) is imprinted, now faced with the horror of it all

We (white people) can no longer hide from 400 hundred years of brutality visited upon a people. Many may try to deny the event. But this time, the truth cannot be hidden. We (white people) have known things were bad.

Silence can “protect” us (white people) from the truth for a while but eventually it must be faced, often starting with a whisper. Hidden, whispered, as if to say, “We didn’t know—something like this shouldn’t happen – we can’t let this get out.” When the silence is broken, even by a whisper — even that is not enough. It must be shouted in the streets and from the roof tops! This happening must not fade back into silence again.

So get those Black Lives Matter signs, until recently hidden (by white people) as too controversial. This time it will not go away. This time it must be shouted from the rooftops! We (white people) can’t and shouldn’t return to the denial and comfort/privilege of being white, complicit in the mistreatment and murder of Black people.

I think of a Black mother who spoke one evening at an AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy) listening session. Her son walks to school. She waits for the phone call that he is dead. This kind of story is played out daily in African-American homes and communities. Who among us (white people) will say, “Enough already!” and then put those words into sustained action?!

A thing conceived in silence, first heard as a whisper, now must be shouted from the roof tops!

Enough already! We white people must change!.

**WORSHIP LEADER:** Rev. Nate Nims;

RESOURCES USED IN THIS SERVICE:

Opening Prayer from enfleshed ([www.enfleshed.com](http://www.enfleshed.com).)

All music used under OneLicense A-727197

Guide to Prayer and Study modified from cor.org

† In hymns, prayers, and liturgies, use language that makes worship meaningful, enriching, and inclusive.



Grace United Methodist Church

3700 Cottage Grove

Des Moines, IA 50311

[gracedesmoines.org](http://gracedesmoines.org)

phone: 515.255.2131

email: [info@gracedesmoines.org](mailto:info@gracedesmoines.org)

***Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter at GraceDesMoines***

In-person services are suspended for the time being, Please join us online for worship.

Watch the livestream of the 10:15 am service on the GraceDesMoines Facebook page

or on our YouTube page..