



Grace United Methodist Church

August 16, 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

Come, Spirit of Christ, and uproot from within the fears that rule our choices, and transform our minds so that our spirits might be brave. Where we have grown cold to the needs of our neighbors, soften our hearts and fill us with generosity. Where pain threatens our capacities for connection, surround us with community to help us shoulder the load. Keep us on the path of liberation and let nothing lead us astray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 2:1-2

Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort in love, any sharing in the Spirit, any sympathy, complete my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, being united, and agreeing with each other.

SERMON

"One Mind with One Love"

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

"Be Thou My Vision"

Guide to Prayer and Study

Monday, August 17

Read - John 13:34-35, John 17:23

Notice - In our readings today, what is it that Jesus says will make his followers distinct? As a church, would you say that Grace is defined and made distinct in this way? What about yourself? What are the distinctive aspects of your life and personality, how are they defined and shaped by unity and love?

Pray - Jesus, help me to be continually conformed to the greatness of your grace and peace, but above all, love. Amen.

Tuesday, August 18

Read - James 2:14-18

Notice - James offers an important reminder of what a faith-filled life looks like in practical terms. We do not feed the hungry to gain God's favor, rather, we feed the hungry because our faith in God's saving favor leads us to help others be resilient in the loving spirit of Jesus. Faith does not mean sitting idle with our hands piously folded. Methodism's founder John Wesley taught that we serve God with our head, our heart, and our hands, that true faith produces good works. Working on Jesus' behalf looks different than it did before Covid-19 changed our world. What creative ways, or simple ways, have you found in the last 4-5 months to work for God and God's people in ways that show your faith? How do phone calls, letters, and checking in on your neighbors show your faith and love?

Pray - Jesus, help me to fully accept your love and grace, so that it empowers and energizes me to keep resiliently serving all the people that I can in your loving spirit. Amen.

Wednesday, August 19

Read - Matthew 7:1-6

Notice - Judging is a necessary part of life. Yet Jesus said, "Don't judge." This did not mean we should not have opinions or that we should not evaluate people's actions carefully, especially if they are harmful. It does mean that we should hold our opinions with humility, and remember that we too have fallen short of how God calls us to live. Humility requires us to admit we often don't know the entire story. Ultimately God, not us, is the all-knowing judge and justice is finally God's responsibility. (Still verse 6 made it clear that Jesus did not call anyone to be naïve or accept abusive actions.) Differences, all that we do not hold in common with neighbors, friends, or family members, are often a cause of conflict. If you've fallen into what many counselors call "negative focus" (seeing only

flaws, ignoring real strengths), what steps can you take to restore relationship health? “In the same way we are not to judge others harshly, we are to remove ourselves from relationships in which we are judged harshly.”* Are there any situations in which you need to remove yourself from someone else’s harsh judgment?

Pray - God, keep me healthily aware of my strengths while still being able to “take the log out of [my] eye” before trying to correct or “improve” others. Amen.

*Danielle Shroyer, reflection on Matthew 7 in The CEB Women’s Bible. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016, p. 1221.

Thursday, August 20

Read - Matthew 5:43-48

Notice - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached his last Christmas Eve sermon on December 24, 1967. It included these words: “Agape is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return.... This is what Jesus meant when he said, ‘Love your enemies.’ And I’m happy that he didn’t say, ‘Like your enemies,’ because there are some people that I find it pretty difficult to like.... I’ve seen too much hate to want to hate, myself... every time I see it, I say to myself, hate is too great a burden to bear.”* Jesus made a similar point with an “obvious” statement that isn’t obvious at all when we reflect on his point: “[God] makes the sun rise on both the evil and the good and sends rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous.” Jesus (and Dr. King) knew that one common way we deal with fear is to turn it into hate toward those we fear. Following Jesus’ teaching, Dr. King said there’s a better option. He told those he called “our most bitter opponents,” “We will meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will and we will still love you.... be assured that ...we will so appeal to your heart and conscience that we will win you in the process, and our victory will be a double victory....the truth crushed to earth will rise again.”** John Wesley, Methodism’s founder, said in Matthew 5:48 Jesus called us to be “perfect in love,” always growing toward loving with God’s all-inclusive love. He rejected the idea that “perfect” meant never sinning (missing the mark). Does it challenge you more, or less, to see “perfect” as about the state of your heart rather than just your outward actions? How might you live with God’s generosity toward the “unrighteous” people you know?

Pray - Jesus, make me an instrument of your peace. Keep teaching me to trust in the long-term power of love, the world-changing power that makes me a follower of Jesus. Amen.

* “A Christmas Sermon on Peace,” in James M. Washington, ed. *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Mar-tin Luther King, Jr.* San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1986, p. 256. ** *Ibid.*, pp. 256, 257.

Friday, August 21

Read - 1 Corinthians 12:3-13

Notice - We are different from one another in many ways. But Paul was convinced that those of us who follow Christ must model for the world that what connects us to one another is far greater than anything that might divide us. We all serve one Lord, we're all led by one Spirit, we're all the children of one God. With all our different backgrounds and gifts, we all form one body—the Body of Christ. It is a fact, not an opinion, that people from many different races and backgrounds love, worship, and serve the same Lord. How can that fact break down the walls of separation and mistrust that create divisions even among Christ-followers? How can that enable Christ-followers to become models and agents of healing to the larger world? What forces in you try to keep the walls in place?

Pray - God, at times I'm tempted to use the word "us" in narrow ways, trying to shut those "different" people out. Remind me that, in you, "us" is a big, inclusive word for all the people you love. Amen.

Saturday, August 22

Read - James 1:2-4, 12

Notice - James didn't write about "if you face trials." He wrote about "the various tests you encounter," for he knew trials are an inescapable part of life. He even urged us to consider trials an occasion for joy. Really? Some trials hurt so much we may find it next to impossible to even imagine joy in them. Author Glennon Doyle offers this wisdom when facing life's inevitable trials: "If you are uncomfortable—in deep pain, angry, yearning, confused—you don't have a problem, you have a life. Being human is not hard because you're doing it wrong, it's hard because you're doing it right. You will never change the fact that being human is hard, so you must change your idea that it was ever supposed to be easy."* How do you most often respond to the trials of life? With joy? With distress? The next time you face a trial, step back and remember that it's okay to be uncomfortable. This is what it means to be human. God is with you in your sadness or discomfort. What do you believe are the most characteristic marks of a mature, "tried and true" Christian? (If you're not sure, review Galatians 5:22-23 or 2 Peter 1:5-8) Do you exhibit those traits? Are there areas of your life you need to examine to lead you to the place where you are "fully mature, complete and lacking in nothing?"

Pray - God of wisdom, right now the world around me seems drastically changed, and I don't like that at all. Help me, even in this difficult season, to find ways to grow in the resilient maturity you offer to give me. Amen.

*Quote found at <https://www.popsugar.com/entertainment/quotes-from-glennon-doyle-book-untamed-47425859>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Subscribe to the Beyond the Red Doors weekly email for information on upcoming events by going to 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.

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 for information on how to access all the materials with Grace’s code.

The Grace Administrative Council has decided to continue worshipping 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 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. 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

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.

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 with questions or to arrange contactless delivery.

Our second conversation around "Dear Church" was postponed due to the derecho and subsequent power outages. Join us Wednesday, August 19 at 6 pm on Zoom for our next discussion .

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=d2dZQINsbCtTM0RXMy-9hemQyNk1OZz09>

Meeting ID: 821 5219 1002

Passcode: 558817

Member Updates

Rev. Bill Cotton died on August 3, 2020. His ashes were placed in the Grace UMC Memorial Garden in a private service on Saturday, August 15. 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 recently suffered a massive aneurysm. 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 celebrated 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.

Several groups have been meeting online this summer as and we prepare for the fall we are planning to have confirmation for youth Sunday school classes/small groups for all ages. We may even have a confirmation class for adults too! If you'd like to be connected with any of the groups that are currently meeting, contact Coreen Witke at coreenwitke@gracedesmoines.org

Grace is presenting a couple of AMOS congregational meetings with our CCC campaign. We want to Consider the past and present, Connect our stories and Create just communities. Join us either Monday, August 24 or Thursday, September 3rd at 7 pm on Zoom.(Joining instructions will come later) If you cannot join online, you can join on your landline telephone. We will ask for your concerns about our community. As Christians, we are supposed to help those in need. What kind of help would you like to see created, or changed, or improved in Des Moines? What nags you in the middle of the night? We want to collect these stories for AMOS' to share at the AMOS September 13 Delegates Assembly where we will come together with all the AMOS Institutions regarding the outcomes of the CCC campaign, and consider what comes next.

Ann Naffier, Legal Director of Iowa Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON), will be the featured speaker in our third immigration forum sponsored by Church and Society. The virtual forum will be available by Zoom or on Grace's Facebook page on August 31 at 7:00 pm. Grace United Methodist Church has long been a site for Iowa Justice for Our Neighbors monthly legal clinics. JFON provides free, high-quality immigration legal services, education, and advocacy. Ann is the Legal Director for Iowa JFON. She will be talking about JFON's critical work with refugees and asylees in our communities and some of the barriers people fleeing violence in their home countries are now encountering as they attempt to enter or legally remain in the United States. Please contact Laura Sands at laurasands@mchsi.com if you have questions about this forum.

A Message from Pastor Nate

I don't know about you, but I didn't have a hurricane on my 2020 bingo card.

It is a strange and challenging time, but God specializes in taking adversity and challenges and working through them in us. In the midst of all our canceled plans, disappointments, and dreaded thoughts of what next, it's easy to overlook the miracle of neighbors coming together to clean up their block one house at a time. There is a grace and a hope that has flowed through our community because in the midst of yet another catastrophe, love endures.

Without condition, without exception, God loves all, and if you look closely you see that love in every neighborhood right now.

As Mr. Rogers said, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"

The catch is to see the helpers, we've got to hear one another ask for help, sometimes we even have to admit that we're the one who needs help.

I know Grace is full of helpers. I can only imagine that a few of us need help right now.

If you need help, let us know, and this love and unity we share will continue to endure, no matter what comes next.

grace and peace,
Nate Nims

WORSHIP LEADER: Rev. Nate Nims;

RESOURCES USED IN THIS SERVICE:

Opening Prayer from enfleshed (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
phone: 515.255.2131
email: 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..