



Grace United Methodist Church

September 13, 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

Holy Wisdom, we bring into your presence the fullness of who we are. The hurting parts. The regrets. The murky and the messy. We have been wounded and we have wounded others. With courage and humility, we seek your guidance in the mending of the worlds between us and within us. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 2:14-16

Do everything without grumbling and arguing so that you may be blameless and pure, innocent children of God surrounded by people who are crooked and corrupt. Among these people you shine like stars in the world because you hold on to the word of life. This will allow me to say on the day of Christ that I haven't run for nothing or worked for nothing.

SERMON

Rev. Nate Nims

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE and THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT

Gracious God, what makes a community loving is not a lack of mistakes or complaints. It is what we do after we inevitably wrong one another that makes a difference. A loving community is honest. It learns and grows. It seeks to mend through truth and justice and change. God, by your Spirit, help us to keep these practices in place. May we make a sacred investment with one another as we strive to be a community of grace and peace. Guide us through our struggles, calm the worries and anxieties that weigh down our souls, for your love is with us and we will be with one another. For all the prayers that are on our hearts and minds, give us and those we love your comfort and peace. All this we pray through Christ who taught us to pray saying **Our God (Father, Mother, Creator)†, 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

"Hymn of Promise"

f Guide to Prayer and Study

Monday, September 14

Read - Mark 14:22-26, Psalm 118:1-6, 28-29

Notice - Jesus and his disciples sang “songs of praise” at the end of their Passover supper just before Jesus’ arrest. We know Psalm 118 was the last hallel (hymn of praise) Hebrews usually sang at Passover. Jesus, just before his crucifixion, probably sang, “The LORD is for me—I won’t be afraid. What can anyone do to me?” and “Give thanks to the LORD because [God] is good, because [God’s] faithful love lasts forever.” The Psalmist asked simply and profoundly, “The LORD is for me... What can anyone do to me?” To what extent are you able to trust and be grateful that God is always “for” you? How much stronger is your level of gratitude on a beautiful, sunny morning when all is going well than on a cold, gray day when something left you sad or disappointed? How can you carry the gratitude into the gray days?

Pray - Jesus, I offer you my gratitude because you are good, because your faithful love lasts forever. Well, honestly, I don’t always do that yet, but it’s my goal. Please keep teaching me. Amen.

Tuesday, September 15

Read - Matthew 5:13-16

Notice - The current pandemic crisis has given us a chance to focus on who we are, why we are here, and what our goal is as Christ followers. Jesus said God calls us to be “the light of the world,” people through whom God’s love shines to light up the dark, hurting places around us. We are here to live lives led by the Holy Spirit in which God’s light reaches beyond the walls of our church. On a personal level, who has been a light in your life? What have you learned about living as a channel for God’s reordering light and hope from their example? Who do you know whose world you have an opportunity to brighten? Pray about this and choose one specific step you can take to bring the light of God’s love and hope into their life this week.

Pray - Jesus, sometimes my love for you stays all too hidden. Help me to live like that city on a hill, not so that I look good, but so that you do. Amen.

Wednesday, September 16

Read - Psalm 4:6-8, Isaiah 12:2-6

Notice - We don’t know all the details, but Psalm 4 clearly came from a time when both the psalmist and his nation faced trials and danger. And the prophet Isaiah wrote on the heels of stern warnings of coming judgment (cf. Isaiah 1:10-17). The phrase “on that day”

meant this song of praise was a song of hope for a future Isaiah might not (and did not) live to see. Their joy was rooted, not in any earthly, material prosperity, but in the presence of God with God's people. Scholar John Goldingay said, "Providing the people with a song that they will be able to sing one day is another way of inviting them to live in hope. ...they're virtually praising God for fulfilling his promises before the fulfillment happens. Wherever they are, they're invited to see that they have come this far by faith and can continue in hope, not because their faith or hope is big but because the God they trust and hope in is big."* How do you maintain your trust and hope in our big God at times of disappointment, sadness, and loss?

Pray - God, I find joy relatively easy on sunny days when everything goes my way. Teach me to focus more on you, and less on everything going my way, so that my inner joy is more deeply rooted and durable. Amen.

* John Goldingay, *Isaiah for Everyone*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015, p. 53.

Thursday, September 17

Read - John 1:6-14

Notice - The "man named John" in verse 6 was not who wrote this gospel, but the preacher/prophet known as John the Baptist. He lived out a calling to "testify concerning the light." The gospel writer clearly defined what he meant by "light." Jesus, he said—the Jesus he had seen, heard and known—was the light who broke into the world's darkness. As darkness couldn't put out light, so Jesus could deliver us from the darkness of our world, and within ourselves. Then we, like John the Baptist, could "testify" to the light. Greek thinkers like Plato said the "logos" (Greek for "word") was too pure to enter the corrupt material world. Hebrews usually saw God as so awesome and distant that they feared to even say the divine name. John drew on both those thought worlds, yet boldly wrote, "The Word became flesh." How can it help you realize how much God values you to believe that he "became flesh," like us, rather than just wishing you well from afar?

Pray - Jesus, I choose you as the Lord of my life. Help me, even when it challenges me, to always keep my heart open to welcome you. Amen.

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Friday, September 18

Read - Ephesians 5:8-14

Notice - What are some thoughts or acts in which God has moved you from darkness to light? How can recalling those past advances give you hope and trust for God's leading in the future? Doing God's will on earth as it is in heaven starts with our individual lives. Have you ever intentionally "tested" parts of your life, as verse 10 suggested, to discern light from darkness? What is one change you will make in your life to live more fully as a "child of the light"? Verse 8 did not say, as we might expect, something like "You belong

to the light.” It used a stronger phrase: “Now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.” What is the source of the light that shines from your life in your best moments? Can you recall one or more times when you realized Christ’s light shining through you had brightened another life?

Pray - God, creator of light, keep illuminating the darkest corners of my life. Keep guiding me as I test habits and practices, seeking to live every day as a child of your light. Amen

Saturday, September 19

Read - Philippians 2:14-16

Notice - When we complain, we think we are just making observations about reality. But constant complaining creates an alternative reality that leads us to shirk responsibility and blame others for our discontent. Wesley called us to ask ourselves and one another this question, “Do I grumble or complain constantly” so that we can replace negative with positive thoughts, and start developing new habits marked by hope and optimism. Do you think you are optimistic or pessimistic by nature? What kind of feedback have you received from people in your life about this aspect of your personality? Do you believe it is possible to reframe your approach to circumstances to view them in a positive vs. negative light? What could help you do this? Think about any constant grumblers you know. What choices might be driving their negative outlook? Who do you know who is consistently a “glass half-full” person? Observe closely what decisions and practices seem to help them live their lives this way. When have you made a conscious decision to be more positive about a particular situation, or about your life overall?

Pray - Holy God, you always work for my good. May I honor you by avoiding complaining and replacing it with rejoicing, even when things do not go my way. Amen.

Member Updates

Renne Ellingson has moved to Iowa Falls, where she continues to recover from a recent stroke. Cards and letters can be sent to Renne at Scenic Manor Assisted Living, 1409 N. Fremont Street, Iowa Falls, Iowa 50126.

If you would like to share an update in our weekly email, please let the church office know!

Please continue to keep your Grace friends and family in your prayers. Think about the persons that you often sat by in the sanctuary or the people you'd share a cup of coffee with. Could you send them a letter this weekend or even make a call to check in on one another? If you need help finding a phone number or address, please contact the church office.

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 or call the church office. Pastor Nate checks his church voice mail a couple of times a week.

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.

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.

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.

UMCOR School Kits

Together with United Methodists around the world, we will work with the United Methodist Committee on Relief to provide school kits for children in need. Please start collecting the following supplies and be on the look out for more information in the future on when and how we will collect and assemble school kits for UMCOR. Supplies may be dropped off at the church office.

- 1 subject spiral 8'x10 ½'
- 1 pencil eraser 2" or larger, remove package
- 1 pair of student round tip scissors
- 1 pencil sharpener 1", remove package remove package
- 1 box of 12 colored pencils
- 1 ruler 12" long with metric
- 6 unsharpened pencils 6 unsharpened pencils –no advertising
- 1 box of 24 crayons

Amplify Membership

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.

Free Meals with Lucky Horse

Since we have not been able to host the Tuesday free meal at Grace due to Covid-19, Grace has partnered with Lucky Horse to give free meals to the community. Lucky Horse is a new restaurant in the Drake neighborhood and we are excited to have this new opportunity to provide meals to those that need them.

If you need a meal, please let us know and we will get you a card that can be redeemed for a free meal at Lucky Horse.

You can also thank Lucky Horse for their support in our community by ordering a meal to-go or eating in if you are comfortable doing so.

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

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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..