



Grace News

SUNDAY SERVICES

8:00 am & 10:30 am

Pastor Kent Umbarger
1st, 3rd, & 5th Sundays

Pastor James Batchelor
2nd & 4th Sundays

SUNDAY SCHOOL & ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Sundays @ 9:15 am

Adult Bible Study in Grace Hall
Women's Bible Study in
Meeting Room #1.

OFFICE HOURS

M-Th 8am to 3pm
Friday - Closed

Office will be closed
every Friday in February.

Lent: A Season of Repentance and Renewal

Each year the Church enters the season of Lent with ashes on our foreheads and the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Lent is not a time for earning God's favor or proving our devotion, but a season that calls us back to the heart of the Gospel: repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

From a Lutheran perspective, Lent is firmly rooted in God's grace. We do not observe Lent in order to make God love us more. In Christ, God already loves us fully and completely. Rather, Lent is a gift of the Church—a time set apart to reflect on our sin, our need for a Savior, and the immeasurable mercy God has shown us through the cross.

Throughout the forty days of Lent (excluding Sundays), Christians are invited to examine their lives in light of God's Word. Luther reminds us that repentance is not a one-time event, but the daily life of the Christian. Lent gives us space to hear again God's Law, which shows us our sin, and God's Gospel, which declares forgiveness through Christ alone.

Many people associate Lent with "giving something up." While self-discipline can be beneficial, Lutherans emphasize that outward practices are never ends in themselves. Fasting, prayer, and acts of charity are meant to turn our hearts away from ourselves and toward Christ and our neighbor. Any Lenten practice is valuable only insofar as it draws us deeper into God's Word and trust in His promises.

At the center of Lent stands the cross. As we journey toward Holy Week and Good Friday, we are reminded that Jesus willingly bore our sin, suffering, and death. Lent prepares us to see more clearly the cost of our salvation—and therefore to rejoice all the more fully in the victory of Easter morning.

Ultimately, Lent is not about gloom, but about hope. It leads us through honest confession to the assurance of forgiveness, from sorrow over sin to joy in Christ. As we walk this Lenten road together, may we be drawn again to the mercy of God, who "shows us His steadfast love in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Return from Exile: A Lenten Journey

Fellow Redeemed,

Once again we prepare to enter into the Lenten season as we journey through the Church Year. Lent, however, is its own kind of journey. Lent is the journey we make as we travel with Christ from the Mount of Transfiguration to Jerusalem where He will face the cross and the grave for our sakes. It is a very sobering trip, a journey that often struggles to find joy. But there is Easter!

This year our theme for our Lenten worship will focus upon the journey, but perhaps not in the way we usually walk it. Our overall theme will be "Return from Exile: A Lenten Journey." All journeys must have a starting point; and in the preaching and teaching this Lenten season, we will consider our starting point a land of exile.

The land of exile from which we begin our journey is the wilderness of sin and death. Sin came into the world when our first parents were unfaithful and disobedient, eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve sinned, and we have inherited from them not only the sin itself, but also the result of that sin—separation from our Lord and God. From the first sin in the first garden, we have been exiled into the wilderness where we have wandered without any ability to find our way out.

This is the beginning of our journey: exile. But every journey also has a destination, an ending point. Our return from exile brings us into the promised land. Our relationship with our God is restored by Christ's sacrifice. Our destination, then, is the perfect place, the new garden, the courts of heaven—the ultimate destination which was established for us by His death and resurrection. There is great joy in the journey as we see where our returning brings us; but there is also a somber attitude when we consider what Christ faced on account of our sin.

All journeys consist of many events that take place between the journey's beginning and its end. Our Lenten journey is no different. Each leg of our Lenten journey begins in the Old Testament and then continues into the New Testament, pointing us to the joy that is ours in Christ Jesus. Do not be surprised to discover that from the very beginning, even outside the gates of the Garden of Eden, it is Christ who travels with us. He has always been our guide, from the very beginning, and He will journey with us to the very end. Indeed, He has even gone before us to prepare a heavenly dwelling place.

Life is full of journeys. Life itself is a journey. We enter this Lenten season contemplating the reality of our earthly journey but with eyes fixed on its destination—the empty tomb and the open gates of everlasting life. What joy there is in knowing that we do not walk this way alone!



Ash Wednesday

February 18th
11:00 am & 7:00 pm

Lenten Worship

February 25th
March 4th, 11th 18th, 25th
11:00 am & 7:00 pm

Maundy Thursday

April 2nd @ 7:00 pm

Good Friday

April 3rd @ 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday

April 5th
8:00 am & 10 am

**Lenten Meal Schedule
Wednesday's @ 5:30 p.m.
Free Will Donation**

<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Board</u>	<u>Serving</u>
February 18, 2026	Board of Christian Ed	
February 25, 2026	Camp Board	
March 4, 2026	Board of Outreach/Choir	
March 11, 2026	Board of Elders/Preschool	
March 18, 2026	Youth Board	Turkey & Dressing Sandwiches
March 25, 2026	Finance Board/Trustees	Tacos

IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Verlene Mona Reid of DeWitt, Iowa, was born December 21, 1928, in Gamaliel, Arkansas to Robert and Nancy (Gillett) Hathcock. On May 10, 1947, she married Bernie Reid of Wasola, Missouri. Together they raised five children and made farming their way of life, with Verlene working alongside Bernie for many years.

She is survived by her children, Mike Reid of Evans, Georgia, Dennis Reid of Ft. Madison, Iowa, Linda Sinclair of Anchorage, Alaska, and Robert Reid of Richmond, Virginia. She has 9 grandchildren, 20 great grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild.

Once most of her children were grown, Verlene took up bowling and greatly enjoyed the friendships she formed and the friendly competitions as her teams traveled all over Iowa. Building lasting relationships was important to her, whether through bowling or time spent with her cardplaying friends.

Verlene was a devoted member of Grace Lutheran Church in DeWitt for many years. One of her greatest joys was serving at Grace Camp, where she and a group of wonderful ladies prepared meals during summer camps. Hundreds of children passed through those camps to study God's Word and hear about Jesus. Her butter horn rolls and cinnamon rolls became their favorites. Most meaningful to her was watching those children grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Having accepted Christ at a young age, Verlene instilled a foundation of God's love and grace in her children and grandchildren. Her greatest hope was that her steadfast faith and example of God's unconditional love would lead them to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Verlene was preceded in death by her husband, Bernie, her son, John Lee Reid, her sisters Betty Jo Ketelsen, Gladys Billingsly, and Valita Crawford, and her brothers, Herman and Hayden Hathcock.

SERVING THIS MONTH:

The Elders: Sunday's 8:00 AM Alan Ruggeberg
10:30 AM Jon Betz

The Organist: Diana Baetke

The Acolytes

February 1st

8:00 AM Larry Oronzio
10:30 AM Austin Nolin

February 8th

8:00 AM Isaiah Sunday
10:30 AM Zach Yutelsler

February 15th

8:00 AM Zane Burzlaff
10:30 AM Brody Lawrence

February 18th

7:00 PM Kinnick Meyer

February 22nd

8:00 AM Jaren Nebel
10:30 AM Collin Oliver

February 25th

7:00 PM Carter Paarmann

Special Gifts Given Include:

In loving memory Dennis Stutzel \$20 was given to Grace Lutheran Preschool.

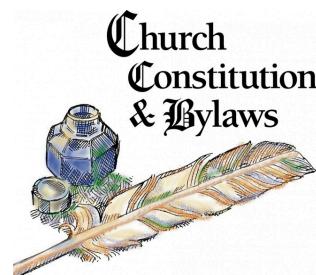
In loving memory of Betty Ketelsen \$575 was given to Summer Camp.

Endowment Grant

The Endowment Committee for Grace Lutheran Church will be accepting grant through March 15, 2026. Applications for projects which provide support to missions, education, youth, worship, and music and/or capital projects will be considered.

Referral Center Donations

We will continue to collect monthly donations for the Referral Center as the need is great. The referral center can always use kid friendly cereal, crackers, dish soap, shampoo, canned soup, canned vegetables, canned fruit. All donations can be left in the shopping cart located in the foyer.



The Church Constitution and By Laws have been approved. Printed copies of this document can be found on the Welcome Center.

Altar Flowers

The 2026 Altar Flower calendar is on the Welcome Center. Bouquets can be donated in honor of or in memory of persons or events. Each bouquet is \$30 and there are two bouquets available each week. Please sign up for your preferred dates and place your payment in the secretary's door. You may purchase one or both bouquets.

We hope that we have flowers every week, but we know that there are Sundays when the arrangements have not been spoken for. It is these Sundays when you will not see arrangements on the altar. To assist the church in having arrangements every Sunday there is another way you can help. Donate money to our flower fund. We will then use the money in the flower fund, to cover the cost of flowers when they have not been spoken for.

*** Remember we can only provide flowers when there is money in this fund. If you do not see flowers on Sunday that means they were not sign up for and the Flower Fund does not have money in it.

YOUTH'S FAMOUS LASAGNA DINNER

Our Youth Lasagna Dinner will be held on Sunday, March 1st. We will begin taking reservations on Sunday, February 15th. There will be only one reservation time: 5:30 pm. To register, please contact the church office or sign-up at the table in the foyer. Also this year, we are taking orders for a pan of our famous lasagna that you can take home and put in the freezer until you need a quick, delicious meal with little prep. Cost is \$25 per pan which will serve 6 – 8.

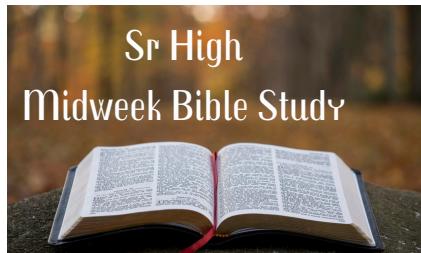
CLUB345 EVENT

Our next event will take place on Sunday, February 22nd. Please watch your email and the News & Notes for more information.

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH NIGHT

Attention all 6th – 8th graders. Join us Sunday, February 22nd from 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm for our first Youth Night of the new year. We will meet at the G*Y*M Building at Grace Camp.

RSVP to msperry@gracedewitt.org by February 15th.



**Wednesdays - 7:00 pm
at the Sperry's**



SUPER SNACK SALE FUNDRAISER

The Jr. & Sr. High youth will be selling snacks on Sunday, February 8th between services to make your party complete. Please consider purchasing some snacks and supporting Grace Lutheran Youth Ministry plans.



Youth Fundraiser - Order Due Feb. 1st
Forms are on the Welcome Center.



The three year old preschool class is learning about the cold February month indoors. We will be talking about snow and ice, animals in winter and arctic animals. Our Bible lessons are about some of Jesus' miracles, when he calms the storm, feeds thousands and walks on water! Our class is also going to have fun with a Valentine's Day party!



We can't believe it's February already. Our preschoolers are working hard on learning their letters and letter sounds, shapes, and so much more. We will be learning about transportation, Dr. Seuss, community Helpers, and Valentine's Day.

Raffle Item Contributions

Grace Lutheran Preschool is busy preparing for the Trivia Night Fundraiser. They are putting together 3 baskets to raffle off. If you would like to contribute to a basket, please see the display on the bulletin board in the foyer. Take the basket item you would like to donate, purchase, and leave in the basket located on the back of the Welcome Center. Return items by February 27th.



Grace Lutheran Preschool 2026-2027 Class Schedule

4s M-F 8:00 - 11:00 am (16 spots)
M-F 12:00 - 3:00 pm (16 spots)

Please note that there is NO 4s classes on Fridays.

3s M W F 8:15 - 10:45 (10 spots) \$160 monthly
T&TH 8:15 - 10:45 (10 spots) \$120 monthly

Please note that all 3s must be potty trained. There is a \$40 registration fee due with the registration form, which is non-refundable.

The 3s Registration form will be available Feb. 3rd on the Preschool page of the website www.gracedewitt.org. The registration form along with the registration fee may be dropped off at the church office or mailed to PO Box 156, DeWitt, IA 52742.

Registration for the 4s Preschool Program will be available on the Central DeWitt Community School District Website on Monday, February 17th.

Grace Lutheran Preschool
2026-2027 Class Schedule

4s M-F 8:00 - 11:00 am (16 spots)
M-F 12:00 - 3:00 pm (16 spots)

Please note that there is NO 4s classes on Fridays.

3s M W F 8:15 - 10:45 (10 spots) \$160 monthly
T&TH 8:15 - 10:45 (10 spots) \$120 monthly

Please note that all 3s must be potty trained. There is a \$40 registration fee due with the registration form, which is non-refundable.

The 3s Registration form will be available Feb. 3rd on the Preschool page of the website www.gracedewitt.org. The registration form along with the registration fee may be dropped off at the church office or mailed to PO Box 156, DeWitt, IA 52742.

Registration for the 4s Preschool Program will be available on the Central DeWitt Community School District Website on Monday, February 17th.

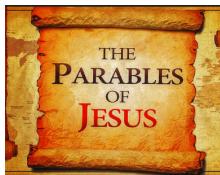
TRIVIA NIGHT & RAFFLE

SATURDAY MARCH 28TH

MURPHY'S EVENT CENTER
2430 12TH ST COURT, DE WITT

DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 PM TRIVIA STARTS AT 6:30 PM
\$80 PER TABLE / TABLES OF 8 PLAYERS
BRING YOUR OWN SNACKS/CASH BAR AVAILABLE

Reserved for teams of 8 players (18+ YEARS)
Contact KERRY: phone 563-659-9153 / preschool@gracedewitt.org



**Join us in February
for Adult Bible Study
Sundays at 9:15 am
Led by: DCE Mark Sperry**

Jesus often taught using parables—simple stories that reveal deep truths about God's kingdom. Join us for an adult Bible study on the Parables of Jesus as we explore what our Lord teaches through these familiar accounts. Together we will hear Christ's Law that exposes our sin and His Gospel that comforts us with forgiveness and grace. All adults are welcome—no prior preparation needed. Come and grow in faith as we listen to our Savior speak.

2026 Grace Camp Board Members

Craig Paarmann
Duane Hansen
Dave Schneider
Wendy Proctor
Danny Burzlaff
Jason Hill
Terry Meyer
Jesse Spain
Netty Schneider
Allison LaFevers
Carole Dunkin
Mary Garlough

LWML Mites

**Mites Collection
Sunday, February 1st**

Please leave your donation
inside the box located on the
table in the narthex.

**IMPORTANT - Deadline for
submitting articles for the March
Newsletter is February 15th.**

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who donated toward the purchase of the vacant lot next door. Through your thoughtfulness and generosity, we collected \$13,500.00 to offset the purchase price.

Members of Grace:

As many of you were not here on Sunday, 12/28/25, I wanted to take one more opportunity to say thank you. Thank you for the many Christmas cards with gifts. Thank you for the collection that was taken up for me at Christmas. These gifts will be used to help finance the trip Lois and I are making to Florida, and we will think of you with each purchase. With God's help we will return in early May, and I already look forward to coming back. If you don't have a new pastor yet when I return, I will take up the vacancy reins once again, if you want. If you have a new pastor, I will rejoice with you and come for a visit on a Sunday. God be with you in my absence. God bless each one of you. Once again, thanks for the love you have poured out on me.

Pastor Merle

Dear Saints of Grace Lutheran Church,

From my family to you all: Thank you! Your generosity towards us over the last several months has been a great encouragement to us. I count it a great joy and privilege to serve your homebound members with Christ's Word and Sacraments. We are particularly grateful for the recent outpouring of gifts and cards to us to commemorate the birth of Christ-- Though I must say that even more heartening are the many occasions in which I have gotten to see your love and care for one another in Christ. You look out for one another (especially for the weak and needy among you) and have in mind the souls of your fellow saints above all. That is a great encouragement to me in my work and life. God's peace be with you, in the Name of Christ who was born, died and rose for you.

-Pastor Dolde



February 19th Victory Center Service Event

Once again, thank you to everyone who contributed to the meal, helped serve and prayed for our January service event at the Victory Center in Clinton. Our next service event meal will be on February 19th. If you haven't volunteered to help with some part of one of these meals, please prayerfully consider being involved in some way. Men are encouraged to join us in this mission, especially with serving the meal.

*All food needs to be prepared and brought to the church
by 4:00 PM on Thursday, February 19th.*

Main Dish 3 Volunteers

Prepare a Misc meat dish/casserole of your choice. Bring in hot crockpot or in 9x13 pan wrapped well so food can stay warm.

Desserts 3 Volunteers

Prepare a dessert that serves 15 people.

Drinks 2 Volunteers:

- 1 gallon of white milk
- 2 gallons of chocolate milk

Side Dish 4 Volunteers

Bring a salad or side that serves at least 15 people.

Deliver & Serve 5 Volunteers

Needed to help deliver and serve the meal.

A sign up sheet is located on the Welcome Center. Please contact Kristy Engelkes at 563-210-2462 or the church office if you have any questions.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

The dates are June 22nd – 25th. This year's program will again be held during the evenings out at Grace Camp. Join us for Emerald Crossing, where children will discover the life of the shepherd-king David and learn how to cross from anxiety to peace. In a world filled with worry and confusion, kids need to know the God who cares for them.

Eyeglass Donations

Donate your used glasses, sunglasses and reading glasses, to the Lions Club. A collection box is located in the foyer coat area. These glasses are picked up by a member of the Lions and then sent to a facility who will refurbish for others who may not be able to afford glasses. (Please, re-member they can not accept glass cases.)

Cards

Looking for cards? There are a variety cards, including Easter, and napkins available for purchase next to the Welcome Center. Please take a moment to see the wide assortment of cards displayed in the foyer.

Miles of Dimes

Grace Camp was purchased in 1988. The Miles of Dimes project was started in 1990 as an effort to help pay for the facilities which everyone enjoys. There is a "Miles of Dimes" collection jar located on the Welcome Center. Leave your "dimes" or any donation you may want to make and your donation will be used to benefit the camp facilities. Thank you for your continued support.

Greeters & Ushers

Greeters are needed to help welcome members and guests before worship services.

Ushers are needed to assist the Elders during worship services.

Please, look at the sign-up sheet on the Welcome center and sign up for a date that works for you.



1st Lauren Stowe
3rd Janeen Meyer
4th David Hall
Rebecca Gisel
5th Madison Burke
6th Lauren Hansen
Mitch Krukow
7th Wyatt Jensen
Audra Seifert
9th Christine Greve
Abigail Johnson
11th Raymond Myers
12th Isabella Nolin
13th Scott Steffens
14th Bill Dies
Myrle McWilliams
Raegan Spain
15th Jared Dies
Keli Runge

17th Barbara Dies
Madison Lawrence
David Schneider
Lavonne Martin
Shannon Jans
19th Cole Tobey
23rd Kitt Converse
Cade Converse
24th Jon Betz
26th Allan Anderson
Kerry Good
Kathy Ketelsen
27th Kathi Lieving
Valerie Erps
28th Amanda Hoepner
Angela Wagner
Patricia Niemann

Happy Anniversary

12th Cody & Crystal Baines
23rd David & Vicki Thomas
24th Greg & Kristine Anderson

Grace Ev. Lutheran Church—February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 "Mites" Sunday 8:00am Traditional Worship w/ Communion 9:15am Sunday School & Adult Bible Class 10:30am Traditional Worship w/ Communion	2 1:00pm 500 Card Club 6:00pm Board of Discipleship 6:30pm Elders Meeting	3 6:00pm Preschool Board Meeting	4 5:30pm Confirmation 7:00pm Choir Practice 7:00pm High School Bible Study	5 9:00am Tops Meeting 9:30am Stay Active Senior Exercise Group	6 Church Office Closed	7 10:00am Snack Sale Set-Up
8 SUPER SNACK SALE 8:00am Traditional Worship 9:15am Sunday School & Adult Bible Class 10:30am Traditional Worship	9 6:00pm Council Meeting	10	11 7:00am Board of Finance Meeting 9:00am Sewing Ladies 5:30pm Confirmation 7:00pm Choir Practice 7:00pm High School Bible Study	12 9:00am Tops Meeting 9:30am Stay Active Senior Exercise Group	13 Church Office Closed	14
15 Newsletter Deadline 8:00am Traditional Worship w/ Communion 9:15am Sunday School & Adult Bible Class 10:30am Traditional Worship w/ Communion	16 1:00pm 500 Card Club 7:00pm Youth Board Meeting	17 6:30pm Camp Board Meeting	18 11:00am ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP 5:30pm Confirmation 7:00pm ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP 7:45pm Choir Practice	19 Preschool Yoga in Grace Hall 9:00am Tops Meeting 9:30am Stay Active Senior Exercise Group 4:00pm Victory Center Service Event	20 Church Office Closed	21
22 8:00am Traditional Worship 9:15am Sunday School & Adult Bible Class 10:30am Traditional Worship 2:00pm CLUB345 4:00pm Middle School (6th-8th) Youth Night	23 6:30pm Board of Christian Education	24 Preschool Stem Night	25 9:00am Sewing Ladies 11:00am Lent Worship 5:30pm Confirmation 7:00pm Lent Worship 7:45pm Choir Practice	26 9:00am Tops Meeting 9:30am Stay Active Senior Exercise Group	27 Church Office Closed	28 10:00am Lasagna Dinner Preparation 1:00pm Lasagna Take & Bake Pick-Up