



GRACE NOTES

Volume 14 Issue 8 August 2026

Pastor Laura's Ponderings

Last August, I went on my first weekend getaway to Galena with my two best friends, Tracey and Alicia. It was a glorious time away. While we were there, we decided we wanted to make it a yearly tradition and chose Mackinac Island for our next trip, since none of us had ever been there. I even reached out to Jean and Mike Lucas, knowing they had visited, to ask a few questions. They were so kind to give me a beautiful folder filled with brochures and ideas for Mackinac Island.

Shortly after our trip, Tracey was diagnosed with Stage 3B triple-negative breast cancer and began the fight for her life. As she started treatment, we talked about how, when she beat cancer, we would take our long-planned trip to Mackinac Island to celebrate. We started calling it the **"Folder of Hope."** It became a symbol that there would be life after this difficult season—that this battle would not have the final word.

Throughout Scripture, God's people often used symbols to remember God's faithfulness and to provide "strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow" (a lyric from *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*).

In 1 Samuel 7:12, after God gave Israel victory over the Philistines, Samuel set up a stone as a memorial:

"Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and named it Ebenezer; for he said, 'Thus far the Lord has helped us.'" (NRSV)

That stone became a visible reminder of God's faithfulness. It marked not only what God had done but also gave God's people confidence for whatever lay ahead.

What are your symbols of hope? Where do you need reminders of God's faithfulness? Is there someone in your life for whom you can be a "holder of hope" when they are unable to hold onto hope for themselves? Sometimes faith means borrowing hope from someone else until you can hold it again. May we all be holders of hope for one another.

I'm excited to share that I won't be here the weekend of August 23 because we will be on Mackinac Island celebrating my friend Tracey, who is now cancer free. 😊

Standing in hope with you,

Pastor Laura Barkley



Summer of Love SUMMER BASH

FUN • FELLOWSHIP • GOOD VIBES



JOIN US FOR AN
AFTERNOON OF
SUMMER FUN!



FREE
ICE CREAM
SUNDAES!



FUN OUTDOOR GAMES!

-  CORNHOLE
-  GIANT JENGA
-  KICKBALL
-  JUMP ROPE
-  AND MORE!

BRING YOUR
ROLLER SKATES!



WEDNESDAY,
AUGUST 5, 2026
4:30PM – 6:30PM



Grace
United Methodist Church

1718 Avalon Avenue
Joliet, Illinois 60435



**ALL ARE
WELCOME!**

Lakota Indian Mission Trip

On Saturday, August 1st a team of five volunteers will travel to Mission, South



Dakota to work with the Lakota Indians on the Rosebud Indian Reservation. The volunteers are Mautise Boswell, Jacob Jurczyk (a friend of Mautise), Chris Bluhm, Steve Meister, and Ben Meister. This mission was started in 2001 and will be our 25th trip (they were shut down in 2020). They always look forward to Grace's donation of underwear. We look forward to either working in the warehouse sorting donations, working in the resell store, helping in the soup kitchen, or construction jobs on the reservation. We will be the hands and feet of Grace UMC during this mission. A big "Thank You" to the members of Grace Church for their generous and continuous support of this mission trip.



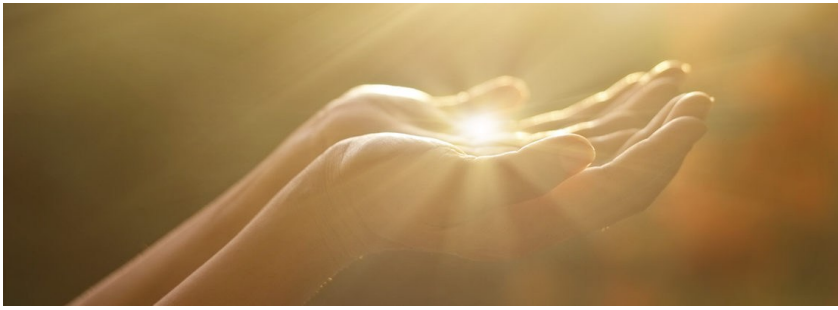
Looking ahead to FALL

September 6th **last** 10am summer worship service

September 13th **RALLY DAY** 9:00 am **SUNDAY SCHOOL &**
10:30 am worship resumes

September 15th **LUNCH BUNCH** resumes

October 19th & 20th **DAYBREAK** resumes



"Carry the Light" Visitation Ministry

"We were glad to share not only God's good news with you but also our very lives, because we cared for you so much."

—1 Thessalonians 2:8

Jesus calls us to care for one another. As United Methodists, we believe in the priesthood of all believers—the understanding that every person is called to ministry and that God works through both laity and clergy to share Christ's love.

If you feel called to care for others through presence, prayer, and compassionate connection, you are invited to attend the **"Carry the Light" Visitation Ministry Training on Sunday, August 9, 2026, immediately following worship.**

During this training, participants will learn about the purpose of this new ministry and the role of a visitation minister, including prayer, serving Holy Communion, maintaining confidentiality, healthy ministry boundaries, and offering Christ's presence to those who are unable to join us for worship.

This is an opportunity to explore whether this ministry is a good fit for your gifts and graces. Attending the training does not commit you to serving—it is simply an opportunity to learn more and prayerfully discern whether God is calling you to this ministry.

I believe that when members of our church family are no longer able to come to the church, we have both the privilege and the responsibility of bringing the light of Christ to them. Through a caring visit, a shared prayer, or the gift of Holy Communion, we remind one another that no one walks alone.

If you have questions or would like to sign up for the training, please contact Pastor Laura.

On July 12th our church assembled 200 Blessing Bags after church! Each bag was filled with a water bottle, crackers, fruit, a granola bar, a meat stick, chapstick and a face/body wipe. We also included a card saying "YOU MATTER! We just want you to know that we care for you and you matter to God. We are praying for you and hope that this bag will be a blessing to you. Love, Your friends at Grace United Methodist Church." The bags were then prayed over by our group and everyone was encouraged to take several to hand to those they see on the streets in need. We still have several bags left. Feel free to pick some up on Sunday or during the week from 9-2 Monday-Thursday. We are also still accepting donations to cover the cost of the supplies.

A Big THANK YOU to all who participated assembling the bag as well as:

- Pat Meyers who donated some of the water bottles as well as baked the cookies for our fellowship over making the bags. Also to Kathy Downey who helped her.
- Nancy Murphy for the donation of cookies (they also fed the kids for VBS and enough leftover for our End of Summer Bash!)
- Eileen Hicks for being my Holy Shopping Partner and for a generous financial donation towards our blessing bag items
- Cathy Dubois for the donation of the chapsticks for our bags

Let's continue to show God's love through our faithful actions!

Pastor Laura



A Time to Celebrate

8/2 ~ Jeffrey Deardurff

8/5 ~ Debra Macias

8/6 ~ Patricia Bell

8/7 ~ Gracie Barkley

8/7 ~ Maddalynn Butler

8/7 ~ Kara Hocking

8/13 ~ Jonah Barkley

8/13—Benjamin Dow

8/15 ~ Jim Knudson, Starla Robinson

8/19 ~ Chloe Anderson, Linda Meister, Kay Ray,

Lauren Fahnstrom

8/20 ~ Derk Forkal, John Renzi

8/23 ~ Don Kazak, Mary McBride, Lillian Ray

8/26 ~ Mike Lucas

Jeffrey & Adrienne Page

August 6, 2005

Frank & Jamie Citarelli

August 11, 2012

Jay & Lori Wait

August 17, 1974

Josh & Meghan Dolph

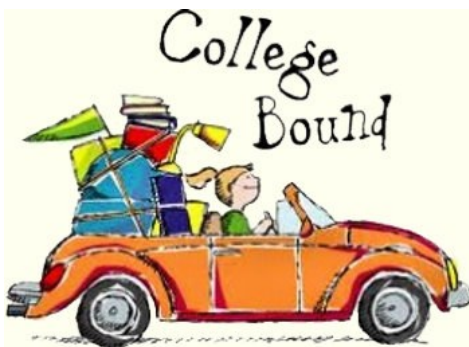
August 18, 2007

Mike & Jean Lucas

August 26, 1989

GRATITUDE CORNER

Grace UMC is a praying community, and we are very grateful for our Prayer Connections Team who devote time in prayer for our many requests for prayer support.



Heading to college!!!

Please send your college address to the church office so we can keep in contact with you while you are away at college. Send your name and college addresses to

gracejoliet@comcast.net



JULY ATTENDANCE	9:30AM
July 5	84
July 12	69
July 19	67
July 26	78

AUGUST 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Lakota trip
2 10 am worship/ Communion	3	4 10am Book Study	5 4:30– 6:30pm End of Summer Bash	6 7 am Men's Breakfast	7	8 Lakota trip return
9 10 am worship 11:10am Congre- gational Care	10 6:30pm SPRC	11 10am Book Study	12	13 7 am Men's Breakfast 6:30p Finance ZOOM	14	15
16 10 am worship OUT DOOR Blessing of Backpacks	17	18 10am Book Study 6:30p DayCare mtg	19 Food Pantry September Grace Notes Deadline	20 7 am Me's Breakfast	21	22
23 10 am worship Pastor Tim Rhodes	24	25 10am conclusion of book study	26	27 7 am Men's Breakfast	28	29
30 10 am worship	31					

