



Fall Ministry Update

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. (2 Corinthians 4:6–7)

From one angle, Church life kinda looks like a frail clay jar these days. The building isn't hopping with activity like it normally would be this time of year. Our festivals and conferences have all been put on hold. You have to work hard to give and receive smiles on a Sunday morning. And Karen Cowen's blue camping chair (her substitute for our aluminum chairs in the gym) looks like its seen better days. But from another angle, you notice that the Church is still full of life. I've seen it every Saturday night, going all the way back to April (while the rest of us were in full shut-down mode!), when many of our ladies circle up in camping chairs in the parking lot to catch up and encourage one another in the name of Christ. I see it every time I walk into the gym which has been transformed thanks to set-up crews, tech guys, children's workers, and other volunteers who are eager to serve the Church family however they can. I've been upheld by it personally through the care packages and numerous expressions of love, prayer, and concern sent my way. I hear it when people mention how they feel convicted to pray with their neighbors. I see it when I gather with Grace Groups (in person or in those Brady Bunch boxes on my screen) to share joys and challenges all in the presence of the Spirit. And I deeply enjoy it when worshipping alongside my brothers and sisters, young and old, in our socially distant confines on Sunday mornings. In other words there is a real treasure yet in this frail jar of clay. The life of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ by the power of His Holy Spirit is alive and active among us! And if anything, that treasure has become all the more sweet to me during this time when the usual programs and activities have been stripped down. I'm reminded that the treasure is *NOT* the events or the bullet items that will fill out this newsletter, in and of themselves, but the presence and very active mercy of God who meets with us when we gather, however we gather. If you've been missing out on this treasure or are looking for new opportunities to enjoy it deeper, now's a great time to connect in whatever ways you are able. Read on!



Fall Worship

Grace Vision and Purpose: Our vision is to be a church that honors God in everything we do. We will share the saving message of Christ with others, introduce them to a personal relationship with Him, and equip and encourage them to continue the good work that He has begun. Directed by the Holy Spirit, we will do this by: Worshipping Him Publicly and Privately, Strengthening Believers through Fellowship and Discipleship, and Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ by Sharing Christ with Others and Extending His Kingdom in Love and Mercy.



New Sermon Series - 1 Samuel

On Sunday mornings, we will be camping out in 1 Samuel for the foreseeable future, looking at important themes such as waiting on the Lord, God's favor towards the weak and humble, relying on day to day grace in uncertain times and situations, relinquishing our kingdoms to God's purposes, avoiding worldly means to good ends, the horror of being abandoned by God in the end, etc...and in all things, seeing Christ as the climax of the story and ultimate source of life and faith.

Join us IN-PERSON at 10am

We plan to continue meeting in the gym this fall. We will continue to set the chairs with distance between families and to wear masks for everyone's health and safety. Additionally, we hope to meet outdoors once a month as weather permits (planning for Sept. 20, Oct. 11, Nov. 1)

Please **REGISTER** in Advance (preferably by Friday)

GRACEBFC.ORG / REGISTER

Children are encouraged to attend with their families. We will provide kids bulletin as well as playmats in the gym for younger kids. There is also an escape space available adjacent to the gym that parents can use as needed.

Join us ONLINE at 10am

We will continue to offer a Live Stream of our worship service on YouTube on Sunday mornings for those not able to join us in person.

After worship join us for our Online Gathering on Ring Meeting where you can catch up with other people from Grace each week.

Get the Link to our YouTube and Ring Meeting

GRACEBFC.ORG / STREAM

You can also call into both worship and the gathering from any telephone. See above page or contact Pastor Mark



Grace Groups

Walking Through Life Together in Grace Groups: Each person walking closely with 4-6 others through the joys and struggles of life – praying, encouraging, searching Scripture, serving, and reaching out together - growing as disciples of Christ. (From Grace Strategic Plan)

Join a Grace Group this Fall!

Grace Groups meet throughout the week, some in person, some online, some in both ways. They are places for:

- **Community** - Places where individuals can know others on a deeper level and also be known, where weak and struggling sinners can come for prayer, support and accountability. Places where each person's spiritual gifts are developed and used for the benefit of others. Places for shepherding and Christ-like love to shine.
- **Worship** - Times where we are drawn into the presence of Christ and together respond in worship. Times where we hear and take notice of how God is at work in our lives and encourage one another in faithful participation with that work. Times where we will listen both for what the Spirit has to say to us through the Scriptures together and how He has spoken separately to us through the Word during the week.
- **Mission** – Groups will be on mission in their neighborhoods. Groups will pray for their friends and coworkers, discussing ways to serve and reach out to those in group members lives. Groups will look for ways for the group to grow in Christ by following Him in mission together into their neighborhoods.

IN-PERSON Grace Groups

- Simmons ~ Sundays at 1pm
- Cowen ~ 2nd & 4th Sundays at 5pm
- Kessler ~ Mondays at 7pm
- Evans ~ Mondays at 7:30pm (also online)
- Susek ~ Wednesdays at 6:30pm
- Biermaas ~ Thursdays at 7pm

Other IN-PERSON Small Groups

- Ladies Fitness and Fellowship ~ Mondays at 6:30 pm

ONLINE Grace Groups

- Bickel ~ Sundays at 7pm
- Evans ~ Mondays at 7:30 pm (also in person)
- Women's Bible Study ~ Wednesdays at 9:30am

Other ONLINE Groups

- Theology Discussion ~ Wednesdays at 8:30 pm

For More Information

Contact Group Leader or Pastor Mark



Fall Outreach

Serving Those Around Us: Individually and as a body serving as Christ's hands and feet, bearing witness to those around us - friends, neighbors, coworkers, and classmates – including internationals, people with special needs, the poor, and those hurting from life in a fallen world. (From Grace Strategic Plan)

Focus on Your Neighborhood

One of the results of Covid-19 has been that larger events like our International Festival and Carnival have had to be canceled. But that just means we have to be more creative and find smaller, more local ways to reach our neighbors! To that end we are shifting our focus to neighborhood service and outreach. Do you have an idea for a way to meet or serve your neighbors? Does your Grace Group have thoughts for group outreach? We would love to help you develop that, providing planning, equipment, supplies and financing where needed. Just let us know!

In addition, we are continuing a number of our regular outreach and service-oriented ministries, some in person and some online. As always our Deacons are also here to help with practical needs within and outside our congregation.

IN-PERSON Ministry Groups

- **Mom Matters** ~ Select Thursdays
 - Daytime Playdates at local parks
 - Evening Meetings at Grace
 - Contact Justine Bellandi
- **DivorceCare** ~ Thursdays at 7pm
 - Meeting at Grace
 - Contact Pastor Tim

ONLINE Ministry Groups

- **GriefShare** ~ Wednesdays at 7pm
 - Meeting on Ring Meeting
 - Contact Sue Bickel

Crisis Response Team

- Grace has formed a team to aid individuals, families, and the community. If you know of anyone in need, or a place our church could serve our neighbors, contact Pastor Mark
- One initiative we are researching is a way to support parents and students doing virtual classes, contact Fuzzy for more information

Outreach Resources

- **Christianity Explored / Life Explored**
 - Online or In Person video and discussions for groups or 1 on 1
- **Free Tracts, Booklets, Bibles ...**
 - Contact Pastor Mark



Kids & Youth

Raising Up the Next Generation of Christ

Followers: Reaching out to and grounding children and youth in the Word of God, helping them to discover their gifts and equipping them to serve, empowering parents to disciple their children, and connecting parents and kids to the larger church. (From Grace Strategic Plan)

Children's Ministry

This fall, elementary school students will have online Sunday school classes weekly, a fun children's church video published on YouTube weekly, and some family events scattered throughout the fall. All ages are also welcome to join us weekly for our in-person Sunday service. Toys, crafts and play areas are set up for preschool students and crafts and children's bulletins are available for those in grade school. We will keep you informed as the opportunity arises for more in-person meetings.

Youth Ministry

The youth staff has set up a diverse fall plan so that as many teens as possible can be a part of our group. Middle school and high school students will be meeting in one combined online class for Sunday school each week and will divide into age appropriate groups for part of the class time. Youth group will meet in person (and outside whenever possible) on Wednesday nights in our normal MS and HS groups. We will also be setting up some events that will be scattered throughout the fall.

GRACE KIDS

In Person:

- **Sunday Worship** (kids with family)
 - Kid's bulletin and crafts
 - Playmats in the Gym
 - Escape Space (Fireplace Room)

Online:

- **K-3 Sunday School** ~ Sunday 1:00 pm
- **4-5 Sunday School** ~ Sunday 8:45 am
- **Children's Church** ~ Video on YouTube

Find out More:

Contact Fuzzy – dphillips@gracebfc.org

GRACE YOUTH

In Person:

- **Wednesday** - Middle School and High School meet separately at 6:30 pm Outside Grace (in the Gym with Masks during inclement weather)

Online:

- **Sunday School** - Combined class Sundays 6:30 pm

Find out More:

Contact any youth leader or Fuzzy (youth admin) – dphillips@gracebfc.org

devote yourselves to PRAYER

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

COLOSSIANS 4:2-3

Prayer & Faith

Trusting God for Growth: Seeking the Lord together in prayer, trusting God to deepen our life as a community and draw people to Himself through Grace Church, publicly and privately waiting on the Lord and seeking to follow His Spirit's leading. (From Grace Strategic Plan)

Need for Revival

As we look at our country, and our world, we see the great need for a work of God to transform people, and then through His people to transform our society. As we look at our church, and at our own hearts, we see the desperate need for the forgiving and empowering work of God's Spirit. All of these should lead us to pray, to pray urgently, and to pray with purpose. Scripture calls us to devote ourselves to prayer. It also promises that God will hear when His people cry out to Him. Whether you gather online or in person, with a few friends or with your Grace Group or with others throughout the Community, God calls us all to seek His face. In this day, and in this hour, we should gather together to pour out our hearts before the Lord, but also to wait on the Lord with eager expectation of what God can do in and through us. Join one of the groups below or start a new one. If you want to invite others to join you, contact Pastor Mark and he will get the word out.

GRACE PRAYER

ONLINE Prayer Groups

- Wednesday at 2pm
- Thursdays at 7:30pm
- *go to gracebfc.org/online for connection info*

NEW: Revival Prayer Meeting

- Are you interested in praying specifically for God to move in this country and in our neighborhoods? Pastor Mark is looking to start a new prayer group, possibly early morning before people go to work.

Contact Pastor Mark for more information

COMMUNITY PRAYER

Morton Community Prayer

- Rebecca Fiorentino leads a group from the community that gather to pray every Tuesday @ 7pm at Jacob's Park (Harding Ave and Newell St.) Please bring a mask.

Strath Haven Mom's Prayer

- Amy Susek hosts a neighborhood mom's prayer gathering on Thursday mornings (9:30 AM on her patio) specifically aimed at the needs of the Strath Haven school community. Contact Amy if interested.

Let Pastor Mark know of other groups!