

JULY 2021

GRACE NOTES

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highlights

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***Live as people who are
free, not using your
freedom as a cover-up
for evil, but living as
servants of God.***

1 Peter 2:16

PASTOR'S CORNER

Thoughts, dreams, and ramblings of someone who just wants to connect you to Jesus



Updates to the Endowment:

In the early to middle 1980's, the people of Grace UMC had a vision of building an Endowment for the long-term financial stability of some of our specific ministries as well as the broader church. This has empowered us to give out scholarships to college and seminary students. We provided a radio ministry that now sustains our live streaming of worship. We have provided financial resources for projects both great and small.

While this Endowment has done many great things for us, it was built at a time when many of the investment tools and strategies people and modern Endowments utilize were not yet created. For the last few years, we have seen our Endowment funds not keeping up with the growth curve that other similar investors have seen at comparable investment risk levels. For that reason, we began talking to other investing firms and reading about other Endowments. Our Church Council Chairperson, Brian Garman, and Pastor Eric Swanson utilized a 2020 Endowment from the Northern Illinois UMC Conference to create a draft of a new Endowment by-law structure.

This document has been reviewed and affirmed from our Finance team through our Church Council. For us to begin to live in this new document, we need to approve the changes through a Charge Conference. We are proposing to hold a Church Charge Conference to vote on this item and the Simplified Accountable Church Governance model that is in our other article in this newsletter. We are looking to have this be a late summer/early fall vote after we have had time for everyone who wishes to have a copy of all documents watch some videos that explain our "why" in these issues and our hope for the future of our church together.

We believe that our work has been able to do great thing in the past, and with intentionality we will see more great things in years to come.

Updates to Church Governance:

When we are doing the work of the church, it is always important to be intentional and thoughtful. It is imperative to be in tune to the work of the Holy Spirit and knowledgeable of the resources of the church. It is the ideal that the movement of work through the church be fluid, well communicated and then matched with resources. Though this is the ideal, the systems we have in the church are not always in this mode. Because of how our teams are structured in the UMC, it can often be an experience that slowly grinds new ministries to a halt and makes decision-making a slow and confusing process. For many of us, this and the 40-80 persons who make up all of the church leadership teams are simply a part of the normality of the church.

Within our Denominational governance document, *The Book of Discipline*, there is a provision for churches to change their model of governance for local missional context. As a part of that, our Annual Conference has sent Pastor Eric as one of five clergy to get coaching training on moving local churches to what is known as the Simplified Accountable System of Church Governance.

For the last three months, our Church Council has talked about this model in pieces about what would be needed to move towards this model and what would be the consequences for moving into this model. In short, this model would move the required five committees of the UMC into two. We would align the Church Council, Trustees, Finance and Staff Parish Relations Committee into one Governance body. The Nominations and Lay Leadership Committee would remain outside of this body so that the body is not self-nominating. The other committees of the church would shift into action teams that can be fluid in participation membership and time of service.

The New Church Board would then not have representation from each of those other teams, but instead be members who are doing all these things together. This is so we might have a deeper holistic understanding of all the issues that are going on around us and then a faster ability to respond. We would also see yearly leadership meetings for that governing body so that with each decision we make, there is a unity to the vision of the church.

To make these changes we would need to approve them at a Church Charge Conference. This and the Endowment changes are intended to come before us this late summer/early fall, and the time between will be intentional time with documents, videos and occasions for questions and answers so that everyone can be informed and secure in our decision-making processes. As always, please feel free to reach out with questions, concerns, and celebrations.

Peace and Grace,
Pastor Eric

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Emmy Thies
Director of Children & Family Ministry

UNITEkids Update

Quotes from our end of the school year celebration –

“Does this [Bible] teach how to share the Gospel?? I watch TikTok ‘Share the Gospel’ challenges and I want to do that!”

“Can I be a mentor for the younger kids next year?”



When the K-3rd graders were asked what they learned this year: “God loves us and is always with us”; “we can pray and ask for forgiveness”; “we learned things we should do and things we should not do”; “we learned the books of the Bible”; “God is in your heart and your soul!” There were more quotes, and I wish I had been writing them all down to remember them! I think it’s safe to say, the kids grew this year and connected to God and each other – which is our goal at UNITEkids!

I, personally, am thankful for UNITEkids because this school year was uncertain and sometimes filled with anxiety. I knew Wednesday nights would be a time of joy and comfort and some “normal.” I think the kids felt the same way. We created our own little community when it was difficult to be in community with others. I felt God with us, and I feel God moving through UNITEkids out into the Pekin community. I cannot wait to charge full steam ahead into the 2021-2022 school year. UNITEkids will be back weekly on Wednesday nights starting August 25th. I’ve already had one UNITEkid tell me that’s his birthday week, and he’s looking forward to having us sing Happy Birthday and getting his birthday candy at the first UNITEkids of the school year!



UNITEkids met up for fellowship and fun in June to play water games.



There's still time to register for VBS!!!

Join us for a VBS adventure to face our fears with the strength and courage God provides!



Mon, July 12 @ 5:45-8 PM - Pekin First UMC, 1315 Court*

Music, dance, and making music videos!

Tue, July 13 @ 6-8:00 PM - Pekin First UMC, 1315 Court*

Forest Park Nature Center will be bringing creepy crawlies!

Weds, July 14 @ 6-8:00 PM - Grace UMC, 601 N 4th St*

Flashlight obstacle course challenge!

***Please note the locations for each night**



Scan this QR code with your phone's camera, and you will be directed to the VBS registration form

In addition to the Monday – Wednesday VBS, we are also offering a family-friendly VBS outing on Saturday, July 17, from 1-7:00 PM at Great Oaks Camp in Lacon, IL!! Parents and siblings are invited and ENCOURAGED to join us! At Great Oaks, the whole family (ages 8+) can attempt heights challenges, including a zipline and rock wall. There will be a modified heights challenge for kids ages 5-7, so everyone can get in on the action! We will also be having dinner together.



YOU CAN REGISTER FOR THIS EVENT EVEN IF YOU WERE UNABLE TO DO THE REST OF VBS – PLEASE JOIN US!!



Scan this QR code with your phone's camera, and you will be directed to the Great Oaks Camp registration form

If you need help with registration for either event, please reach out to me and I'll be happy to help you!

**Emmy Thies
309-267-0595**

ethies@pekingrace.org



Thank you!

Just a note to say **“Thank You”** for remembering me all through this virus year. I not only enjoyed the weekly Bible reading, but also working on those brain teasers.

Enclosed is a check to apply to either the Children’s Bible Study or Children’s Church.

Thank you, too, for the birthday cards. They mean so much.

All this in His love,
Shirley Moore

Jeanne really appreciated receiving the beautiful shawl. Thank you very much for thinking of her. God bless.

Gene Harmon, Father

Pastor Swanson and Grace UMC Members,

Thank you for your recent donation to us for our tires. Thanks to generous gifts like yours, we have replaced and repaired all tires and our trucks are back on the road. We are humbled and encouraged by this support. I cannot thank you enough. May God bless you all.

In Christ,
Marica Scherer
Midwest Food Bank

Pekin Park Band Concert Schedule

July 11, 18 & 25; August 1
Sunday evenings at 6:30 PM by the Pavilion

Delavan Veterans Park
July 13, 20 & 27; August 3
Tuesday evening at 6:30 PM

All concerts are free to the public
Bring your lawn chairs.

July Altar Flowers:

July 4 John and Jan Darnell

July 18 Lila Beth Hoffert





JULY BIRTHDAYS

Abbey Carroll	1	Larae Muselman	15
Helen Dietrich	1	Barbara Berardi	16
Cori Swanson	1	Peyton Pier	16
Mike Wilson	1	Lila Beth Hoffert	17
Tyler Stewart	2	Stuart Holder	17
Jeremy Clark	3	Noah Steger	18
Eric Towne	3	Maci Taylor	18
Emmie Meron	4	Dominic West	18
Janni Harrison	4	Alex Farris	19
Todd Parkin	4	Norma Bell	20
Margaret Kelly	5	Amira Bashary	21
Eric Myers	5	Jami Burks	22
Chloe Ranney	5	Alisha Dault	22
Ben Steger	5	Rex Hough	23
Trey Tennell	6	Dane Wallace	25
Joanne Miller	7	Stacey Melloy	26
Julie Wallace	7	Bonnie Hulting	27
John Darnell	8	Vicki Garman	28
Parker Huse	8	Wayne Holly	28
Sean Hyde	8	Rich Kriegsman	28
Thomas Jacobson	8	Nick Stoner	28
Kyle Allsup	9	James Beard	30
Julia Oltmann	9	Christina West	30
Lee Oltmann	9	Keith Bonnett	31
Amy Meron	10	Debbie Cather	31
Chase Simpson	11	Mary Clinebell	31
Dennis Crowell	12	Mary Johnson	31
Sam Poole	12	Gloria Ranney	31
Steve Knight	13	Pat Stark	31
Greta Long	15		

Connect!

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Worship Times
Saturdays 5:30p
Sundays 9:00a & 11:00a



Time for some good ole country music!
Grace Country
Sunday, July 12
6:30 PM
GFFLC

Prayer Concerns

Judy Doyle
Lois Eertmoed
Jane Evans
Tony Fulk
Linda Garman
Jack Hall
Joyce Hill
Wes Icenogle
Jerry Klopfenstein
Paul Pearson
Gloria Ranney
Brittany Sharp
Jo Trombini
Marie Zaayenga
The family of Neal Johnson
on his passing

Sunday, July 11
Church Committees at 1:00 PM
Church Council will follow at 2:30 PM

July 12, 13, and 14, 6:00-8:00 PM
Vacation Bible School

July 17, 10:00AM—3:00 PM
VBS at Great Oaks Camp

Thursday, July 15
Drive-through Food Pantry at 4:00 PM

Saturday, July 31
Drive-through Food Giveaway, 11:00AM—Noon