

AUGUST 2021

# GRACE NOTES

No. 8 pekingrace.org



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AUGUST 2021

## God's Grace Fulfilled Celebration!

Sunday, August 8

One Church Service at 10AM

Lunch Will Be Served

RSVP's Appreciated



# PASTOR'S CORNER

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



Friends,

## **August 8<sup>th</sup> Celebration Sunday:**

I want to remind everyone of the celebration worship on August 8<sup>th</sup> at 10am in the Family Life Center. Please note that this is the only worship service that will happen on that weekend. Persons with each of our worship styles are leading us. We will give thanks to God for helping us accomplish our work on the new addition and the ten years of work that it required. We will also look forward to the work we hope for in the next ten years. At the end of the service, we will burn the mortgage and then enjoy a cookout celebration. All are welcome and encouraged to come to this Celebration Sunday.

As I write this, we have been working on plodding our way through some of the minor prophets as we do the greater work of reading through the Bible in a year. There is a lot of struggling that happens in that area of the Bible. People are not doing particularly glamorous work, but they are still doing required work.

I know that I am often tempted to lift up only the best and the brightest news. With VBS, our Radical Mission Trip, August 8<sup>th</sup> Celebration Sunday and a good list of re-occurring visitors to our church, I could stick with the good news. I am tempted to do so. Yet the work of those prophets compels me to remind us that not all our work is glamorous. As you will see in several of the articles in this month's newsletter, we are slogging through required work that in some cases has not been done for years because it wasn't glamorous. Nevertheless, we are doing this work because we care for the future of our church. We desire its well-being more than our current comfort. We believe in the mission of Jesus more than anything else.

When you are working on things that don't lead to praise and things that might even lead to frustration, take heart. You just might be doing the work of today that brings salvation to many in the work of tomorrow. Your rippling impact, your patience, and your persistence is a sacred gift; and it, like these minor prophets, prepares us for the gospels and some really good news!

### **Church Governance Re-Structure:**

Over the past year or so, I and the Church Council have been looking at a Church Governance structure that was developed by and for the UMC called Simplified Accountable System (SAS). This system is one that desires to lean into the vision of the church and minimize the steps to achieving our goals while increasing the corporate knowledge of “why” in each decision.

This would endeavor to move the Church Council, Board of Trustees, Staff/Parish Relations Committee, Endowment Committee, Memorial Committee, and Finance Committee into one single board model. The only formal committee with church governance roles would be the Nominations and Lay Leadership Committee. The Nominations and Lay Leadership is a separate group because the new governance body cannot and should not self-nominate. That committee would also have active work on recognizing and cultivating new leadership for future generations within the congregation.

If we move to this model, we will see that there are going to be some of the same needs we have had. We will still need a team to help with VBS, a team to care for the buildings and grounds in various ways, do adult discipleship and so forth. The difference we will see in those areas is in the requirement to serve within a long term (3+ year) commitment. Each of our serving areas will be identified and mobilized as the need arises. A great example is our existing gardening team. They gather for a season a year. Many do repeat, but there is always someone new and someone who has left the team, and it is fluid. That same type of fluidity should be evident in our other detail works.

For those who commit to serve on the new church governance board, you will see the historic three-year terms. You will be committing to serve within a new board covenant that we will establish with our first team of representatives. These persons will have a yearly retreat in the fall to establish goals and plans for the coming year in light of our vision. The chairperson will be the chair of each of the historic committees as well as the formal Lay Leader. This new board will have a large responsibility for the life of the church, but they will also have the tools for accountability to help us move forward. In many ways it will provide a healthier version of how we worked through the majority of our COVID season.

To move to this model, we will need to hold a church vote. The date for this is not yet established, but we will be communicating more about this system and the time to vote toward movement or not, as soon as we can. If you have any questions about this, please reach out to me or our Council Chairperson Brian Garman.

**Endowment Re-Structure:**

Over the course of the past year, we have been looking into the way our Endowment has been invested. We began to see a lack of regular and consistent communication from our investment team at Busey Bank as well as returns that were below the market average we had hoped to experience. While looking into those issues, our team concluded that it was in our best interest to move to another Bank, Morton Community Bank, to do our investing. We also noticed that we were limited in how our funds are managed due to the structure of our Endowment document that has remained largely unchanged from its creation in the mid-1980's.

From this investigation, we feel that it is in our corporate best interest to substitute our existing by-laws for a new set. This will formally change us from a Trustee model to one that gives greater investment guidance back to our board. This would allow us to invest in vehicles that were not available to us as a Trustee model while still holding a conservative growth model of investment. The document would also give us better clarity on the intent of each gift, endowment fund area, and how to share that wisdom with future generations of the church so that the intents of these gifts are meeting the current needs of the congregation.

There are copies of the existing and proposed documents at the church office for anyone who wishes to spend time exploring these documents. We encourage you to take time to do so. Once we get a date from our District office, we will include a vote to move to this new document as a congregation. Please forward any questions to the church office.

**Mason Building Updates:**

For the last several years our Mason building has been struggling to remain operational and has been working in ways that either overheat the building or require us to turn the system off to let the building cool before re-firing the system to heat again. Our boiler system is the original system to the building at 60+ years of service. We are collecting bids at this time for replacement. We want to use funds from the sale of the old parsonage to help fund this. Our first round of quotes is telling us that this will require more funding than we had in the house sale, and so we are considering a mixture of using some of our reserve funds and a general appeal for gifts toward this work.

We desire to get this work accomplished by the end of fall and the true start of our heating system. We want to thank our Trustee team and especially Arlen Booth for his work on making sure we get a system that meets our needs for future generations of ministry in the Mason building here at Pekin Grace.

**Budget Update:**

Between 2020 and 2021 we worked to reduce our church budget by roughly 10%. We were able to accomplish this with the help of changing one full-time staffing position to two part-time positions as well as a reduction in our conference claims. This reduction, as well as the help from receiving a PPP grant for the church has helped us greatly this year. This said, we also note that even with these shifts we are still running at a pace where our expenses are going to outpace our receipts. As our church has experienced the loss of many members in the last three years (50 since 2018), we have seen those membership losses reflected in our operating budget to the tune of about \$85,000 in yearly gifts.

In one moment, we want to express so much thanks for the gifts we receive and the way that they empower our ongoing work. We want to celebrate the historic gifts that this \$85,000 a year represented. We also want to lift the great commitment and trust that was seen in the past two years to pay off the dept on our building through our Endowment and from each of your personal contributions. These are all faithful expressions of our passion to see the ministry of Christ move in Pekin. As we give thanks, we also want to be transparent that the ministry needs to be active in seeking support and when needed, right sizing our ministry vision to the funds available to make them real.

We ask that you pray about your commitment to the church. Consider what your yearly gifts might mean to our continued ministry work. Look into making Grace a regular part of your monthly budget through re-occurring automatic online bank withdrawal giving options. Also consider how any gifts towards our endowment will empower future generations to receive a part of your faithfulness and support indefinitely.

We always want to be transparent about our church finances and welcome anyone to come in and ask about our work through Nanette in the office.

Peace and Grace

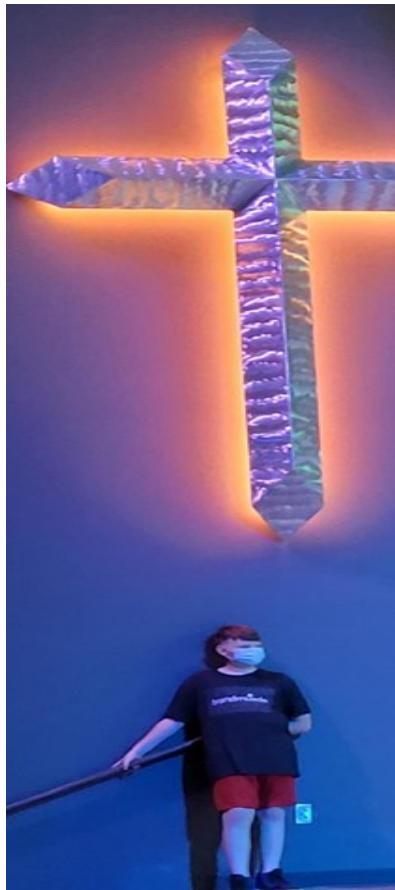
Pastor Eric

# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Emmy Thies  
Director of Children & Family Ministry

**Wow, wow, wow – Faith over Fear VBS was so full of joy, movement, creativity, people, and JESUS!!**

The kids explored the book of Hebrews while studying FAITH. And, there were many opportunities to lean into faith over fear and try new things. The kids made a music video, touched a snake, manuvered an obstacle course in the dark, and some even ziplined for the first time, all while making new friends!



V



B



S



The Faith over Fear VBS Finale was a family event at Great Oaks Camp in Lacon, IL. 54 people joined us, many of them were older siblings and parents/grandparents. The adults had as much fun as the kids! Kids and adults faced their fear of heights at this event; they ziplined or were flung into the air from the “blob.”

Thank you to everyone who donated their time, talents, and resources to make VBS 2021 a success!

We gathered enough supplies to make 24 Birthday Blessing Boxes as our VBS mission project. These boxes will be distributed to families that need a little help to make their children's birthdays special. It was heart-warming to hear the kids comment how lucky the recipients of the boxes would be and hear the kids pray over the boxes for the kids that would receive them.

**Faith over Fear Memory Verse: Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1**



## AUGUST EVENTS



The whole family can join us for the UNITEkids and ROC Kids **Dragonland Night** on Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup> at 6-8 PM

**UNITEkids Parents Night Out** – drop your kiddos off for a night of swimming at Pekin Country Club Pool on Saturday, August 28<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 PM. Lifeguards will be on duty and Miss Emmy will be there to entertain the kids while parents get some time to themselves! (Please send a floatie or lifejacket with your child, if needed, and a towel)

**UNITEkids will kick-off the school year on Wednesday, August 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:30-6:30 PM**



# Free Garage Sale

Coming up is a “free” garage sale at Pekin Housing hosted by ROC Kids of Pekin First. At the garage sale, attendees will be given two paper bags to fill with items. The goal is to help children get ready for school. The request that the organizers would like to get out right now is that donations are needed! Specifically, the biggest need is kids’ clothing, especially boys’ clothes. Coats, clothes, shoes, socks and underwear, teen clothing, backpacks, and school supplies are all needed (these can be new or gently used). They also need paper grocery bags for the families to fill. Grace United Methodist Church has been invited to be a part of this ministry. The cut-off for donations is August 10th. Items should be given to the Grace Church office or placed in a corner of the Grace nursery.

“Thanks for any help!” Emmy



**August Altar Flowers:**

**August 8**

In Honor of our 60th Wedding Anniversary  
Claire and Jeanette Hammond

**August 15**

In Honor of our 56th Wedding Anniversary  
Phil and Judy Icenogle

**August 22**

Happy Birthday to Everyone Born in August  
Dean and Betty Allen

**A celebration of the life of Pat Petty  
will be held at 11:30 AM on Sunday,  
August 1, at Pekin Country Club.**



**Thank you** so much for your generous donation to Midwest Food Bank. We are committed to use it wisely as we work to alleviate hunger and provide relief from disaster. Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed. Proverbs 19:17

Blessings,  
Tom Rieker, Treasurer  
Midwest Food Bank

Dear Grace Church, I wanted to thank the church and those responsible for reviewing my scholarship application and deciding to support my future endeavors with the scholarship. I am grateful to be part of a church that supports their youth and future path. I am excited for my first year of college, and am positive God will lead me in the right direction. Thank you again! Grace Wyman

Thank you to the Grace Garden Club Volunteers for making our gardens look so beautiful:  
Barbara Berardi, Keith Bonnett, Duane Bruninga, Jed Bruninga, Jill Crouch, Sue Crowell, Jan and John Darnell, Tammy Hicks, Margaret Kelly, Lisa McKenzie, Joanne Miller, Greg Ranney, and Fran Stroemer.





## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Cyrus Polhans	2
Jane Giddens	2
Rob Bucher	2
Lauren Russell	3
Lucas Bloom	3
Don Bevenour	3
Paul Pearson	3
Emmy Thies	3
Dennis Dietrich	4
Daniel Powell	4
Josie Wendling	4
Zach Behrends	5
Olivia Myers	5
Amanda McDuff	7
Christy Burks	7
Carla Germann	7
Kenny Crawford	9
Fred Block	10
Clayton Powell	10
Josie Weidner	12
Jerry Witt	12
Bill Killus	13
Keri Behrends	13
Steven Clark	13
Gracie Wernowsky	13
Marian Reid	13
Terry Weiss	14
Megan Hinrichsen	15
Lydia Butler	15
Grace Meron	16
Michael Englebrecht	16

Liz DeSchepper	17
Jeff Allsup	17
Amy Ries	17
Brian Cox	18
Betty Allen	18
Emma Wyman	19
Lucy Scott	19
Phil Icenogle	19
Lucia Nelson	19
Zoey Collins	20
Avery VanDyke	21
Jan Herbig	21
Jessica Geiman	21
Gary Towne	22
Darrell Becker	22
Cooper Herberger	22
Nathan Mulvey	23
David Bauman	23
Tristen Sunderland	24
Kelly Cole-Bloom	25
Carol Booth	26
Ben Bucher	28
Danielle Clark	28
Emma Cole	28
Hannah Martin	28
Lisa McClain	28
Michelle Rogers-Sinisi	28
LeAnne Slock	28
Hadley Swanson	28
Duane Hill	29
Sofia Myers	29
Georgia Brown	30
Sophie Hinrichsen	30
Denise Johnson	31

# Connect!

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[pekingrace.org](http://pekingrace.org)**

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



*Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you;  
love her, and she will*



**Sunday, August 8**  
God's Grace Fulfilled Celebration at 10:00 AM  
Grace Country at 6:30 PM

**Tuesday, August 10**  
Last day to donate to Free Garage Sale

**Thursday, August 12**  
Drive-through Food Pantry at 4:00 PM

**Sunday, August 15**  
Church Committees at 1:00 PM  
Church Council will follow at 2:30 PM

**Wednesday, August 25**  
Communion at Pekin Estates, 2:00 PM

**Saturday, August 28**  
Drive-through Food Giveaway, 11:00AM—Noon



## Prayer Concerns

Judy Doyle  
Lois Eertmoed  
Jane Evans  
Tony Fulk  
Jack Hall  
Joyce Hill  
Wes Icenogle  
Jerry Klopfenstein  
Paul Pearson  
Brittany Sharp  
Jo Trombini  
Marie Zaayenga

The Family of Pat Petty on her passing

**Please check the table of unclaimed funeral dishes in the Hospitality Area. Your favorite cake pan may be there.**