

NOVEMBER 2021

GRACE NOTES

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highlights

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NOVEMBER 2021



*Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song. For
the Lord is the great God, the great King
above all gods. Psalm 95:2-3*

PASTOR'S CORNER

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



State of the Church

It is truly hard to know where to begin this year's pastor's report. Last year we believed that we had come through a long season of disruption from COVID-19 and that 2021 would be a season of recovery into advancement. The arch of the year that followed has included a world that is still actively dealing with the disruption of a global pandemic, political & social unrest that hasn't been felt since the 60's, the launch of some of the greatest technological advancements and the burnout of so many in the church and secular working worlds.

The end of 2020 saw the completion of our debt payoff plan and the 2013 building addition finalization. We were able to celebrate that accomplishment with a worship service that served 230 people in person and many more online. With national return to inperson worship numbers running in the 30-50% ranges, we celebrate that our numbers are consistently in the 55-75% ranges of pre-COVID and each week our online numbers bring our worship participation to just above the pre-COVID area. Like many churches, we have seen those who were our most faithful participants and leaders pass away. This causes instability with losses to leadership, knowledge, stewardship, and discipleship. In the last 2 years our membership losses have reflected about \$90,000 in regular committed giving. Through a mixture of grant funding and strategic planning we have been able to maintain our ministry output levels while bringing down our yearly budgetary need by \$50,000 over the past 2 years.

When the boiler system of the Mason building finally met it's end of life cycle space, we were able to sell our old parsonage to meet much of that financial need. 2021 has shown us that our plans may not have been met, but the faithfulness of God in providing and showing life to our church is still powerful. This said, we acknowledge that without PPP loans we would be in a deficit at the end of this year between \$25,000 and \$35,000.

2021 has been a series of sprints to accomplish shifts and changes in our church function that would have traditionally taken years to accomplish and yet today we seek to finalize a plan of updating our church governance, modernize our endowment, plant a new digital campus, expand our network of ministry partners and so much more. My goal as a pastor in this season is to bridge the needs of a church that is becoming truly multi-generational again as we focus on listening to the Holy Spirit for guidance on how we

live as a place where those who are far from Jesus become connected to him.

Though late, we recently received permission from our District Office to move into a model of Church Governance called "Simplified Accountable System" or SAS for short. This was developed for United Methodist Churches using our governance book, The Book of Discipline, and wisdom from Kay Kotan. We will have two major committees for the formal business of the church, the Leadership Board and the Nominating & Lay Leadership Committee. The Leadership board will set governance and hold the vision of the church before us. This team will fulfill the role of the Trustees, Finance, SPRC, Memorial, Endowment and Church Council teams. Though this reduces participation of persons on boards, it sets free all sorts of persons to accomplish ministries, participate in action groups and lead various projects. The Nominations & Lay Leadership Committee will act to appoint these persons and to help us in identifying and training next generations of leaders.

Since most of our new in person worship visitors find us online initially, and many members continue to worship online, we are dedicated to doing this with excellence. For this reason, we are in the process of creating an online worship specific service and digital discipleship options to accompany it. We received seed money for this project and are in the process of renovating one of the Mason Building rooms to complete this work. We know that our church family and the community we desire to serve are living in a dualistic world, one that is seeing the needs of people met in person and virtually. Instead of running from this reality, we are embracing the work that we feel is vital to sharing Christ with Pekin and beyond.

All of our work will take solid financial stewardship. In 2020 and 2021, we were able to fill in shortfalls in Operational funding through the PPP grants that were offered through the federal government. We have continued to see ways that we could reduce our operational budget in this time by nearly an equal amount. This said, we are still in need of increased stewardship from the congregation to meet our obligations to the vision we have.

In 2022 we anticipate a need of \$450,000 from congregational contributions. Through Congregational giving in 3 quarters of 2021 we have reached \$311,197 of our \$470,000 estimated need. \$51,000 more has come in through PPP but that will not be available to us in 2022. As we look at the next several years of ministry we see a need for increased membership and overall stewardship.

Vitality Signs

Worship - With all that has been happening in the world, our worship has continued to develop and grow. Our leadership in Traditional and Contemporary formats have fostered stronger teams through the past 18+ months. Though our total numbers are lower than we desire, they are still much stronger than the national and state averages for return and we continue to see new faces.

Children & Youth - Who knew that in a time when kids have to wear face masks and parents are cautious with letting their children participate in many extra things, you could grow? Emmy and Greta have continued to invest heavily in our children and youth. In UNITEkids we have seen a major bump in our reach to the neighborhood and we are excited with the number of kids we get to invest in.

Outreach - With all of the struggles so many of us now know and face, we have seen solid levels of commitment to the missional outreach of our church. We see it in the dedicated crews that run our feeding ministries. I have sat with persons who have made extra donations to benevolence giving. I have seen people offer support to those that many shrug off. Our church models the heart of Christ!

Our Ask

We are asking that you prayerfully consider your role in our shared ministry. We ask that you consider what ways God is calling you to support our church. Could you commit to one or all of these three focus commitments?

1. **Commit** to inviting two new persons to worship (online or in person) per month & come with them to that service.
2. **Commit** to increasing your financial stewardship to the church. Consider taking a 1% (or more) step up in your goal to tithe, this makes a huge impact.
3. **Commit** to participate in two ministry programs, one discipleship and one mission program per year.

Eri Swanson



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

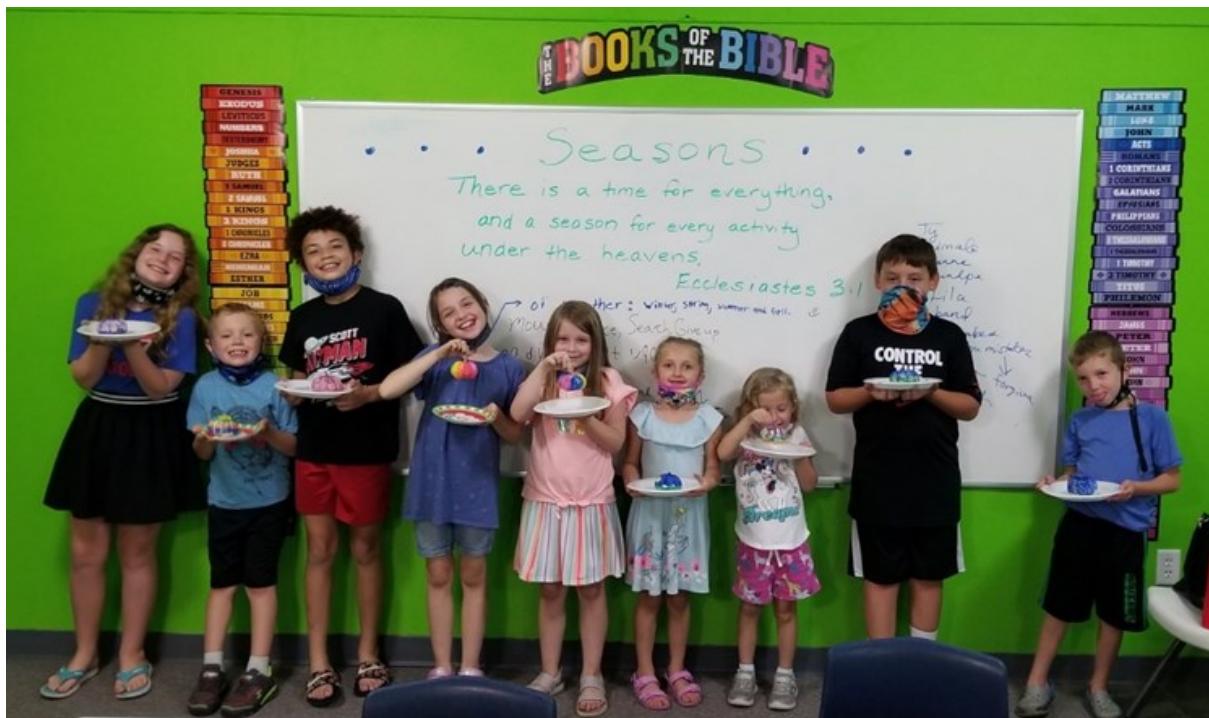
Emmy Thies
Director of Children & Family Ministry

**UNITEkids is meeting back at Grace UMC from 5:30-6:30 on
Wednesday nights!**

In October, the kids worked on fall-themed artwork to send to friends. They sent out reminders that “Jesus loves you!” and to “Shine with His Light”. **The kids and adults prayed** over the artwork with the hope that people would feel God’s love through receiving it.



Pray for Children's Ministries leaders to use the wisdom in the Bible to teach the children how to follow Jesus, how to love God, and how to love the people around them.



*"There is a time for everything, and a season
for every activity under the heavens"*
Ecc 3:1 NIV

UNITEkids pondered this bit of Scripture and the different "seasons" of life. The kids determined that God is with us through every season, happy seasons all the way to seasons of grief.

Upcoming UNITEkids Events

- November 3: UNITEkids 5:30 PM
- November 5: Camp-in 6:00-10:00PM
- November 10: UNITEkids 5:30PM
- November 17: UNITEkids 5:30 PM
- November 24: Cancelled for Holiday
- November 28: Advent kit pick up at church

UNITEkids Upcoming Event

The whole family is welcome to camp “in” with us at Pekin First. We will focus on a prayer time activity. We’ll also be enjoying s’mores, crafts, and a movie. Bring those sleeping bags and pillows to get comfy for the movie!



If you are feeling God nudging you to help out at UNITEkids or Children’s Church, please contact Emmy Thies via email: ethies@pekingrace.org.

RADICAL

Greta Long
Youth Ministries Director



Upcoming Events:

November 14: Mission Trip Info Meeting, 7PM, Upper Room

November 21: Friendsgiving 5-7PM, at the church

December 29: Lock-In at church 5PM-8AM on the 30th, GFFLC

January 7 –9: Winter X-treme Retreat (Camp Timber-Lee)

Please pray the following prayer over these teens and leaders.

We lift up these teens to grow spiritually in You amid school, family, and social pressures. You often called great men and women in their teens to follow You into their destinies. From David being crowned King as a teen, to Esther saving her people as a young adult, to Mary being bestowed the honor of carrying Your Son, Jesus, as a teen You often have a tender spot in calling youth to their journeys. We pray that during this time between childhood and adulthood that they would come to know You more Spiritually. That it would not merely be religion in the sense of rules to be followed, but a deeply rooted relationship where they come to know the character and heart of God. We pray in these years they embrace You in their hearts, and that seedling of faith will grow into gardens of splendor in Your Kingdom, full of fruit and life. We pray against attacks of the enemy or influences that are seeking to corrupt them. We speak against such spirits in Jesus name, for as You said in Matthew 18 that those who seek to lead a child into sin come in offense against You. We pray for Your Spirit protecting and leading them into true communion with You, growing in truth and Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

United Methodist Women
Barb Berardi

PEKIN-GRACE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN DRIVE-THRU SALE
DUE TO THE RESTRICTIONS OF COVID-19
THE GRACE UMW will NOT be holding their Fall Bazaar again this year.

They will be selling:

- *16 ounce packages of Mascot Mammoth Pecan Halves - \$12.00
- *12 ounce packages of Chocolate Covered Pecans - \$12.00
- *10 ounce packages of Cinnamon Glazed Pecans - \$12.00
- *7-Way Tins - \$30.00



Christmas Ornament

FRONT

\$10.00

BACK



*RADA Products - website radakitchenstore.com to shop, get product no. & price

You can call the Church Office @ 309-347-7131 on Tuesdays and Thursdays; Barb @ 309-253-3139 or Carol @309-256-0075 to preorder.

Item Pick Ups are 9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 13th and Saturday, November 20th,
At Grace United Methodist Church, 601 N. 4th Street, Pekin,
on a Drive-thru basis on the Henrietta Street side of the church.

PLEASE HAVE THE EXACT AMOUNT WHEN PAYING.

If you are paying by Check, make it payable to:
GRACE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

ALL PROCEEDS WILL BE USED TOWARD THE MISSION NEEDS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

CHURCH NEWS

November Altar Flowers:

November 7

In loving memory of Carolyn Jackson given by her daughters

November 14

Given by Brenda Nelson in loving memory of David Nelson



Email

We send out a weekly email. If you are not receiving it please let the office know. They can check to see if you are on the list. If you are on the list and still aren't receiving it you or your provider could have marked our email as junk. If you would like to receive the email you will need to first make sure you have marked notifications@onrealmmail.org as a safe email. If the above email address has been marked as junk and you cannot figure out how to remove the junk notification, then we will need a different email to use.

Lost and Found

Check our lost and found. Items will be donated to Goodwill if not claimed.

New Group: We want to invite the parents of our UNITEkids and other similarly aged and interested persons to join us in a new small group. It meets in the Mason Building on the second floor in the Youth room. The group will discuss faith, life, current events, and be a safe place for people in any stage of the faith journey. This is a place for you to belong.

Angel Tree

The Angel Tree display will be put up this month! Look for it the 4th week in November. Gifts will need to be returned to the church by December 12. The delivery of gifts will happen on December 19. If you would like to help deliver the gifts please contact the office .

Calendar

Make sure the office is aware of the activities your group plans that will be held here at the church. It helps for planning ahead and eliminates some facility usage conflicts.



Financial Commitment Due November 14

Altar Flower Changes

We have been notified the cost of altar flowers will be going up to \$50.00 effective November 1st. Also, because of the rising cost of certain flowers, we will not be able to select the type of flowers for each arrangement.

After much prayer and discussion, the decision was made to use our seasonal silk flower arrangements. You may still sign up to honor a special occasion or in remembrance of loved ones. It has been suggested that a \$15.00 donation be made to the "altar flower fund" to help cover the expense of replacement silk arrangements as needed.

If you still desire to have a fresh flower arrangement placed on the altar, you may call Marggie at The Greenhouse (347-5921) and make the arrangements for the week you have selected. Please let the office know if this is your choice.

The 2022 Altar Flower Calendar will be available on the stand outside the church office the first week in December.

We are sorry to have to make this change and thank you for your understanding.

Worship/Altar Committee

Dennis Green

Linda Garman

Kendra McDaniels



Thank You!

Thank you for your consideration in sending me the monthly devotions and input on what's going on at church.

Much appreciated,
Shirley Moore

Thank for a (anonymous) generous gift of a large amount of various kinds and colors of yarn. It will be used for prayer blankets/shawls or whatever anyone wants to use for a mission. Please feel free to take what you can use and please sign out for what you take and hope to use it for.

Thanks,
Judy Icenogle



Prayer Concerns

Please contact the office when a name should be removed or added to the prayer list. Your help in keeping this current and timely is appreciated. When the names are shared the office isn't always aware of the reason.

November Birthdays:

Pat Moser	1	Sidney Graffis	19
Patty Onken-Pfeiffer	1	Miles Wilson	21
Fred Vogt	3	Ben Bruns	21
Anna Soupos	3	Kaylee Toon	21
Nancy Ridgeway	3	Catherine Engelbrecht	21
Chuck Hall	3	Drew Hannan	21
Nancy Kriegsman	4	Ashley Stilling	22
Kate Wyman	5	Kathy Manz	22
Ann Vogt	6	Eloise Feuchter	23
Peg Gorsage	6	Bryn Golden	24
Holly Hoffman	7	Jaclyn Mulvey	26
Joyce Antonini	8	TJ Orrick	26
Cole Stoner	9	Robert White	26
Daniel McKenzie	10	Judy Icenogle	27
Melissa Troutman	10	Katelyn Tassart	27
Derek Stout	10	Jarrod Vaupel	28
Nola Booher	11	CJ Booher	28
Larry Crouch	11	Charles Dancey	28
Kennedy Bremer	12	Irma Sharp	28
Naomi Comstock	13	Mitch Slock	28
Luke Spicher	14	Kai Bermijo	28
Grace Wyman	14	Jason Kennemer	29
Benjamin Clark	14	Nanette Mulvey	30
Mallory Ingles	14	Rebecca Onken	30
Clyde Smith	14	Austin Downey	30
Kitty Robinson	15		
Scott Kimzey	16		
Morgan VonDoehren	16		
Addy Stone	17		
John Troutman	17		
Sharon Danner	18		
Chris Bergstrand	18		
JJ Tassart	18		
Pat McMullin	19		
Marshall Stoner	19		



Connect!

**601 N. 4th St.
Pekin, IL
309-347-7131
secretary@pekingrace.org
pekingrace.org**

**Worship Times
Saturdays 5:30pm
Sundays 9:00am & 11:00am**

Thursday, November 11
Drive-through Food Pantry at 4:00 PM

Saturday, November 30
Drive-through Food Giveaway, 11:00AM—Noon

Monday, November 11 Office Closed

Saturday, November 13 and 20 UMW Pick-Up
9:00 AM—12:00PM



*"Let us not become weary in doing good,
for at the proper time we will reap a har-
vest if we do not give up."*

Galatians 6:9



Prayer Concerns

Arlen Booth
Ron Doyle
Jane Evans
Tony Fulk
Jack Hall
Duane & Barb Hill
Joyce Hill
Wes Icenogle
Jerry Klopfenstein
Roberta Moussalli
Paul Pearson
Nancy Ridgeway
Damien Segovia & family
Brittany Sharp
Fred Vogt
Bradley
The family of Mabel Seed on her passing
The family of Lois Eertmoed on her passing