

APRIL 2023

GRACE NOTES

No. 4 pekingrace.org



highlights

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Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

John 11:25-26

PASTOR'S CORNER

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



On April 9th we at Grace as well as Christians from around the world are going to gather in our places of worship and proclaim that the tomb did not hold our Savior. That Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises of God. That in Jesus we have life, now and eternal. On April 9th we will hold most holy the message of love that God has for all of creation.

Easter is the day for us. Easter has more power than Christmas, more significance than any other tradition, and more importance to our lives than any actions we can make. Easter also hits us right between the eyes. When the followers of Jesus had given their lives to follow him, they thought that a preferred version of their futures was coming true. It was, just not as they had envisioned it. Between the crucifixion and Easter morning was a wild and painful period of waiting and learning about oneself. The followers of Jesus did not awake like you and I do on our Easter mornings.

On the first Easter morning, the followers of Jesus didn't have the painful choice of what pastel shirt and tie combo would look best in the family photos at church. They woke scared, alone, tired, angry, and hurt. They would hear of the resurrection with the most profound hopefulness and skepticism that anyone could mix together. They woke that first Easter morning having heard but not understood Jesus.

I share all of this because I truly feel that today this wild mixture is just as relevant to us as it was to the first disciples of Jesus.

We have a world that is profoundly hurt, afraid, confused and almost everyday feels like it is simply not going as we had dreamed it would. This gives me hope. This gives me hope because this is exactly where Jesus meets those whom he calls. Jesus meets us in the mess of this life and in a way that is more profound than any of us can make any singular worship experience. Jesus transforms our fear, anger and, doubt into joy, love and relief.

So, if this is how powerful Easter is, then what are we doing with it?

What are we going to do with the most important message that the world has ever known? I don't know about you, but I don't want to treat it just like another day, one where I get to eat too large of a dinner and try and look my best for others. I want to treat it like the profound opportunity that it is. I want to have it hit me in ways that never leave me the same. I want to share it with the same conviction that the first followers of Jesus did, with conviction that was unafraid of the consequences of the world and instead celebrating in the already felt resurrecting love of Christ.

Friends, Easter is coming... indeed it is here with us. Let us live like this message is hitting us afresh each day!

Eric Swanson

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Emmy Thies

Director of Children & Family Ministry



UNITEkids
Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 8th
at Grace UMC, 601 N. 4th St, Pekin

7:30 p.m. Nursery-Preschool Egg Hunt
8:00 p.m. K-5th Grade **Glow-in-the-Dark** Hunt

Hop on over to the lawn by 7:30 p.m. to hunt Easter eggs with the youngest UNITEkids.

Stay for games and the glow-in-the-dark hunt for K-5th graders.

Everyone is welcome!

SAVE THE DATE!

JULY 31 - AUG 4

VBS 2023

It's not too early to start thinking about VBS 2023!

VBS is open to all kids in preschool through 5th grade.



PARENTS – unite at Leaves & Beans in Pekin on Saturday, April 15th at 9:30 a.m. We'll have time to chat, encourage each other, and pray

April 5th Unitekids will **move to First UMC** (1315 Court St in Pekin)

They will stay there for the rest of the school year.

RETREAT



So excited to be sharing a weekend at East Bay with your kiddos!
Student Cost is \$50.00. We need it a.s.a.p.

We will enjoy a weekend of nature, games and time with God.
We have reserved the indoor swimming pool, so be sure to bring a swimsuit.

Booher & MO



The retreat will be April 21-April 23. The youth will depart from the church at 4:30pm on Friday, April 21 and return to the church at noon on Sunday, April 23. Payment for the trip will be \$50 and it will cover the cost of food for the weekend.

The Youth Mission Trip that had been planned for this year has been cancelled as the group is going through many changes. The church is still considering other ways to offer service and growth through our youth this summer. Please pray for this ministry and the leaders.

The church would like to thank Chris Booher and Marianne Oltmann for doing a phenomenal job leading the youth during this transition time of hiring a Youth Ministries Director.

APRIL 5
CRIME SCENES FROM THE BIBLE
WEEK 1

APRIL 12
CRIME SCENES FROM THE BIBLE
WEEK 2

APRIL 19
CRIME SCENES FROM THE BIBLE
WEEK 3

APRIL 26
CRIME SCENES FROM THE BIBLE
WEEK 4

APRIL 21 - 23
SPRING RETREAT
EAST BAY CAMP
DEPARTURE TIME 4:30 PM RETURN TIME NOON
STUDENT COST \$50.00
MAKE CHECKS OUT TO GUMC

april
RADICAL SCHEDULE





Who are the Grace Readers? (Miriam Circle)

In 2010, a group of women from Grace United Church decided to find a service project. Since many of them were retired teachers and several had taught at CB Smith they contacted the school principal there to find ways to help students. It was decided to focus on kindergarten students and encourage reading.

The women met with the teachers for suggestions. From that meeting came the idea to make a colorful child-like fabric book bag for each child in kindergarten. It was also decided to have a fundraiser at the church annually to make money to provide each teacher with a check for Scholastic books in the fall and again in the spring. The teachers would use it to get books for each child both times.

These Grace Readers also were invited to come and read individually with kindergarten students with books provided by the teachers. They went once a month. Since COVID, they have not been able to go and read or listen to the kindergartners, but they continue to make the book bags and provide funds for a fall and spring book for each child.

During the years they also volunteered to be “grandparents” for students who didn’t have any to come to Grandparents Day, as well as helping when the PTA used to have a Christmas store for students to buy inexpensive Christmas presents.

During the years that we were not allowed in the school, we made a monthly card for the kindergarten classes encouraging them to read.

We returned to the kindergarten classes in January this year to read with the kindergartners. We would love to have more members who are willing to read with kindergarten children and to sew book bags. We meet once a month at CB Smith School the third Wednesday of the month from 10:55 to noon. The dates we have left this school year are April 19 and May 17. If you are willing to sew book bags, please call Connie Disney at 309-347-4416. If you would enjoy reading to kindergarten children, please call Mary Myers at 309-353-2849

Holy Week

Come to church and celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus into the city. This week will be full of special services that lead up to Easter. Thursday we will remember the last supper with the Maundy Thursday Service and on Friday we will hold a Good Friday service. At this service, we remember the death and crucifixion of Jesus. Please take Saturday to reflect and think upon all the things God has done for you...then come on Sunday to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. God is good....all the time.....all the time.....God is good!

Holy Week Activities

April 2 Palm Sunday

April 6 Maundy Thursday, 6pm, First UMC

April 7 Good Friday Service, 7pm, Grace

April 8 **No Chapel**

April 8 Unitekids Egg Hunt at Grace,

7:30pm Nursery- preschool hunt

8:00pm K-5th Grade Hunt

April 9 Easter Services

Sunrise service, 6:30am, State Street patio

Contemporary Service, 9:30pm, GFFLC

Traditional Service, 11:00am, Sanctuary

Easter Lilies

The Easter lilies are
in memory of

Frank and Gladys Dale

from their son, grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren:

John & Jean Esther Dale

Esther & Steve Scarpello

Barbara & Jeff Wild & family

Wendy Dale & Family

Julia & Michael Tye & family

Family Photos

Easter photos will be taken by Ginnette Soupos on April 9, for the Sunrise service and the 9:00am service. The Easter backdrop will remain up after the 9:00am service for people to take their own pictures. The photo link will be sent out so that the families can save their digital pictures.

Join the Saturday Servants

Saturday Servants - At church we have a little more than a handful of folks who like to help us keep up on the chores that need to be done around the church. As we have had an influx of new persons to church, we have dreamed up a way to connect our historically faithful teams with some new faces. We are working on creating a one to two times a month regular Saturday Servants gathering. We plan to meet at the church in the morning (8-noon) and people can come as they are able and help us knock out various tasks around the facilities. Sometimes we will be changing lights; other times, it could be lawn care related. Pastor Eric is creating a first list for this and if you are interested in this team, you can join its chat thread in our church app or email the office. This should be a fun way to keep our facilities fresh and functional for our growing future.

Sermon Series

The sermon series in April is a three part series entitled, Back to Life. Easter reminds us that though we may have been dead in sin, Jesus calls us back to life. Come and learn some of the ways Jesus calls us back to life at Grace.

Book Club

Book club will meet Tuesday, April 11, 10:00am at the library of Pekin Estates. All are welcome! This time they are reading Atomic City Girls. If you need more information or have questions, call Sandy Isenburg 309-241-1411.

Thank you

Thanks everyone for their donation of candy for the egg hunt. It was awesome to see the abundance of donations that were given. Anyone who would still like to help can come the evening of the egg hunt to stuff the eggs with lights and talk with the children and their parents. Helpers need to be to the church by 6pm.

Thanks again,
Emmy

Sign-Up for Community Rewards

Just to let you know we have 22 households entered into the Kroger community rewards program! These families have earned Grace Church \$53.91 for their purchases from October 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.

If you shop at Kroger's and you have a Kroger's card, please take a few minutes to sign up for this program. Every little bit helps. Our organization is listed under GRACE UMC (EJ122). This program does not take away from points earned towards fuel points or their other programs.

You can sign-up:

www.krogercommunityrewards.com or use the Kroger app to link up your Kroger Card. In the [Kroger app](#), you will touch the three lines at the top of the home page, go to rewards and then select community rewards. Under community rewards type in Grace UMC. This enrolls you in their program. This is also where you go to remove enrollment.

Kroger calculates the rewards after every quarter.

Quarter 1: January 1-March 31
Quarter 2: April 1-June 30
Quarter 3: July 1-September 30
Quarter 4: October 1-December 21

Thank you for taking the time to enroll! If you are aware of other programs like this, please let the office know.

Amazon Smile

Pekin Grace United Methodist Church was issued a \$17.69 donation from the AmazonSmile Foundation as a result of AmazonSmile program activity between October 1 and December 31, 2022. The church received an email saying this program would be ending. We thank everyone who participated in this program.

Foster Parent Opportunities

The church received a call from the Lutheran Social services saying there is a serious shortage of foster parents in this area. They asked if we would be willing to get the word out for the need of foster parents. Please contact Jenna Frazier, if you are interested in becoming a foster parent and helping minister to children.

Have you ever wondered who can become a foster parent?

- Anyone over 21 years old who is stable, law-abiding, responsible, and mature.
- Either a single person or married couples. LSSI welcomes same sex couples or LGBTQIA+ individuals who want to become foster parents.
- People with the ability to provide care, which will be determined by an evaluation of a prospective caregiver's health, strength, and mobility.
- For additional qualifications, visit LSSI.org/FosterCare

Make a Difference in the Life of a Child.

BECOME A FOSTER PARENT

Learn more:

LSSI.org/fostercare



 Lutheran Social Services of Illinois



Jenna Frazier
Licensing Supervisor - Peoria
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
3000 W. Rohmann Ave
West Peoria, IL 61604
309-620-0073

Friends,

At the beginning of 2020 our church was gifted what is known as a Level 2 energy audit. This was through one of the faith-based energy and environmental advocacy groups that has partnered with United Methodist Churches in the Midwest. They gave us a great report on changes we could make that would quickly lower our energy usage without really affecting our programs. Some of these were really small (our hot water heater was actually over the level temp, so a reasonable lower rate would be safer and cheaper). Some were to get free and reduced pricing for LED upgrades that we have done throughout our buildings. A major one that we are nearly complete with is the application for a Grant through the Illinois Solar For All program. This program is funded by the energy producers to help them meet their required renewable energy development in what are known as Environmental Justice and Economic Justice areas. In either of those areas, the Illinois Solar for All program will review requests for grants to install solar systems on not-for-profits and other similar organizations. The organizations then do not have upfront costs, they see between 60-85% reductions in their electrical costs and participate in a "win, win" situation.

Our church applied for this grant as our facilities qualify as an Economic Justice area Congregation. We learned that we have received the grant and will have a solar system installed on the Family Life Center steel roof in the fall of 2023. We don't anticipate much savings in 2023 but we are looking forward to this work that will begin in August and conclude by the beginning of November. We will be helping create more renewable energy in our area as well as benefiting from that energy creation. The system that they are installing will generate an estimated 116kW (that's a lot) and go a long way in helping Grace fulfill its mission for many years to come.

This system will be like any other traditionally purchased system in that it will be insured and supported by warranties. The work will be done by professionals in a timely manner. It will be installed only over our steel roof so the sanctuary tile roof will not be touched. We feel that this is a very promising program and potentially the entry way for us to Partner with Illinois Solar for All in other ways that uplift our congregation and the people of Pekin.

Peace + Grace,

Rev. Eric N. Swanson

Board Members

Alisha Dault
Brian Garman
Mason Tennel
Michelle Hunt
Greg Ranney
Rich Kriegsman
Dale Golden
Marj Oesch
Eric Swanson, Pastor



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Scott Kriegsman	1	Garrett Williamson	16
Nick Bruns	1	Diane Aupperle	16
Alicia Marsden	4	Ray Long	17
Mariah Teaney	5	Charles Hanley	18
Chuck Shields	8	Jill Crouch	19
Diane Ingram	10	Drew Hicks	21
Judy Gordon	10	DJ Hicks	23
Rachel Doan	11	Wilda Carlton	23
Jennifer Otey	11	Carol Groch	24
Sam Neff	11	Brennan Jacobson	24
Angela Hannan	12	David B. Johnson	30
Peggy Golden	13		
Nancy Spencer	13		
Matt Bloom	15		
Carol Gustoff	15		



Connect!

601 N. 4th St.

Pekin, IL

309-347-7131

secretary@pekingrace.org

pekingrace.org

Worship Times

Saturdays 5:30 p.m.

Sundays 9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Office Hours

M-TH 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Closed 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

Prayer Concerns

Ann Vogt

For the family of Brittany Sharp on her passing

Carol Gustoff

Carol Moorhouse

For the family of Debbie Dial on her passing

Dave Champlin

Grant Golden

Judy Warner

Kellen Norman

Margarete Hall

Mark Weber

Paul Pearson

Sharon Robinson

For the family of Vicki Farson on her passing

April 2

Palm Sunday

April 5

UNITEkids changes venue
at First UMC, 5:30 p.m.

April 6

Maundy Thursday Service at First UMC, 6
p.m.

April 7

Good Friday Service at Grace, 7 p.m.

April 8

Egg Hunt at Grace

7:30 p.m. Nursery Preschool Hunt

8:00 p.m. Kindergarten-5th Grade Hunt

No Chapel-Celebrate Easter Sunday

April 9

Easter Sunrise Service, 6:30 a.m., Patio

Easter Purpose Service, 9:00 a.m., GFFLC

Easter Faith Service, 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary

April 10

Office Closed for Holiday

April 13

Grace Food Pantry, 4 p.m.

April 21-April 23

Youth Retreat at East Bay

April 29

Food Pantry, 11 a.m.