



## highlights

SEPTEMBER 2023

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## Vacation Bible School 2023

*These words that I am commanding you today must always be on your minds. Recite them to your children. Talk about them when you are sitting around your house and when you are out and about, when you are lying down and when you are getting up.*

***Deuteronomy 6:6-7***

# PASTOR'S CORNER

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



*Psalm 78 : NIV. O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth, what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done.*

Grace has been blessed with a long history... 175 years this year. But how does a church like Grace, or any other organization, make it this far? What are the things that must be done to ensure that there is a long and healthy life for the congregation and for the community that it serves?

The Psalm speaks to us to tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD.

This seems to be a very straight forward message to us. It makes some sense. If we desire to have a long and healthy life in the relationship that we have with God, then we are going to have to live what was taught to us from generations before and then we are going to have to teach the generations that follow what it means to follow Jesus. This means that there is a rhythm to our life of faith. There is both eb and flow.

In many times of life, where I must make a choice, I often think back to the people who first taught me of Jesus and who influenced my ministry today. I wonder what they taught me and what it has to say to this situation. It brings me comfort to know that someone else had lived enough of a shared experience that I could use it to make wise choices today. Then, as a pastor and as a person, I have been blessed with the requirement to teach this message to others. I do this when I pray with my children before bed. I do this when I sit in someone's back yard and listen to their story and offer my faith experience.

We are all called to live into this eb and flow. But we are also called to do this actively, not passively.

With our 175th Anniversary, we are setting up the active part for our church. We are going to raise \$175,000 for the future work of the church. We plan on preparing our spaces for the next generation by restoring the Sanctuary and better equipping the Family Life Center. We will set aside a majority of these funds for the "telling" part, making intentional plans over the next three years to tell the story of Grace in new ways. To tell the story of Grace so that we might do what the church has always done, offer new space for more sisters and brothers in to call Grace home.

Anniversaries like this are prime opportunities to remember what had been done for us and remind us of our obligation for others. So, we would be honored to have you join us in this work. To celebrate the 175th on October 15th. To invest into our future. To lift up the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD.

# UNITEKIDS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

**Emmy Thies**  
Director of Children & Family Ministry

Vacation Bible School was a high-energy, Jesus-filled week! **80 children** attended over the week, **21 youth group kids** assisted, and **30 adults** served in different roles – AMEN and THANK YOU! Shout out to everyone coming together to provide soda boxes for the 4 mega-Jenga games we were able to create, and appreciation to those who donated supplies. When the body of Christ unites for a common goal, GREAT things happen. Please enjoy these glimpses into the Twists & Turns of VBS 2023!



## Vacation Bible School



# UNITEKIDS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

**Emmy Thies**  
*Director of Children & Family Ministry*



**VBS 2023**  
Food, games, dancing, & crafts with Jesus!



# UNITEKIDS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

**Emmy Thies**  
Director of Children & Family Ministry



**UNITEkids,  
get ready to unite!**

**Weds, Aug 30 ~ 5:30-6:30  
at Pekin First UMC**

**UNITEkids is NOW PreK-2nd grade only**

**UNITEkids is back  
starting ..  
August 30th!**

The games and activities will be adjusted to meet the specific needs of PreK - 2nd grade students starting this school year.

**UNITEkids and Bible Buddies will meet at Pekin First through the end of September, then move to Grace UMC for the months of October through March.**

**UNITE Bible Buddies starts the week of . . .  
Sept 11th!**

Spots are available for all three groups, so sign -up today by contacting Emmy Thies at:

**309-267-0595**

Bible Buddies is created for the growing needs of 3rd - 5th grade kids.

Kids will learn Bible stories through art activities, science devotions, and workbooks. There will be small group friendship-building time and games, too!

*We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about his power and his mighty wonders.  
Psalm 78: 2-4 (NLT)*

**UNITE Bible Buddies  
will kick-off in Sept!**

**Open to all kids in 3rd-5th grade**

**Sign-up for which Bible Buddies group fits your schedule, each group will be limited to 10 kids:**

**Mondays 5:30-6:30  
Mondays 6:30-7:30  
Wednesdays 6:30-7:30**

# YOUTH MINISTRIES

Jill Stoner-Crouch and Brionna Goodin  
Co-Director's of Youth Ministries



Potato Head  
skit practice!



## Radical Grace Youth September Updates

We are excited about starting our new curriculum in September! Our first month is a series based on friendships. What an amazing way to start up our year together right after school started, and the kids are building new friendships! Below is just a quick overview of the series.

### Important Dates:

**9/9-9/10 Radical Grace Potato Bar-Youth are encouraged to volunteer for 2 time slots since the fundraiser is for their Missions/Retreat Trips**

**9/16 Pray for our Radical Grace Youth during Sunrise to Sunset Day of Prayer - Rescheduled so we can focus on the Marigold Festival**

**10/13 MercyMe Concert in Bloomington \$45 per person**

**1/5-1/7 Camp Timber-lee in Wisconsin**

## Series Overview

Our friends are some of the most important people in our lives. **Our friends know us best.** They're the people we've spent countless hours with telling stories, laughing, and creating memories together.

We all know having great friendships means a lot more than just having people to hang out with, but how do you find friends like that? How do you build the kinds of friendships that last? And what do you do if you feel like your friendships aren't everything you'd want them to be?

In this four-week series from the Gospels, we'll take a look at how Jesus treated the people he cared about in order to learn how we can better treat our friends. Through Jesus' example, we'll discover that friends don't miss a chance to care for each other, aren't afraid to challenge each other, don't let differences divide them, and aren't afraid to talk about what they believe.



Recording time . . .  
with some laughs!



**WinterXtreme** is Timber-lee's winter retreat program for youth groups. Weekends are set up with the goal of taking care of every detail so that youth leaders and sponsors can maximize their time with students. They cover the details of food, a speaker, the worship band, community-building activities, and staff. The junior or senior high students come to play, eat, sleep, facilitate discussion, and warm up by the fire after the outdoors! WinterXtreme will allow our youth to strengthen the relationships in our group and see lives develop and grow.

**Total Cost: \$200.00 per person**  
**Sibling discounts available**

You can make your check payable to:

Grace United Methodist Church

**A one-time payment can be made or choose to make four \$50.00 installments:**

October 15  
November 15  
December 15  
Balance Due: January 1

9/6 Friends don't miss chance to care for each other.

9/13- Friends aren't afraid to challenge each other.

9/20- Friends don't let differences divide them.

9/27- Friends aren't afraid to talk about what they believe.

Youth Activities

9/9-9/10 Radical Grace Potato Bar

9/16 Pray for our Radical Grace Youth during Sunrise to Sunset Day of Prayer

10/13 MercyMe Concert in Bloomington

## Radical Grace Youth September Plan

# GOING PLACES



### Town Hall Meeting

We had a Town Hall meeting on August 24. The presentation was lead by Alisha Dault and Pastor Eric Swanson. They talked about the installation of the Solar panels, and looking forward to how these will impact our ability to do ministry in the Pekin Area. The 287 panels should significantly impact our money going towards utilities and free up these funds for ministry in the Pekin Area. These panels need to be inspected by Ameren and then they should be scheduled to be turned on. Current outlook is around September 6 we should see the system working.

The painting was delayed because the best plasterer was not available. The work started on August 28. The work should maintain the 4 week schedule. It will be two weeks painting in the sanctuary and two weeks painting in the stairwells. If all goes well we should see the completion of the painting the week of September 25.

It was also discussed how the process works with the new board for onboarding new programs, concerns, or projects. First, approach one of the board members or Pastor to talk about your idea, plan, or concern. If you'd like to present it to the whole board at the same time, you may. Let someone on the board know and schedule the discussion. This discussion could be in person and formal or it also could be informal and in the form of an email. Email Pastor or someone on the board your idea. In the event more information is needed beyond the original email, you may be asked to appear before the board. The board will then talk about the idea, vote, and will let you know.

The nominations committee has met. They are putting forth names for the new openings on the board.

The nominations committee will also be suggesting names to lead up the different teams. We have not had leaders step up to lead these teams. As a result, Grace Church is moving towards an appointment type leader for each team.

The nomination committee will be looking to approach people who are gifted in the different areas to provide leadership/support for the team. If you are asked, please pray over the request. Next Town Hall meeting will be November 10th at 10:00 a.m. Hope to see you then!

### Scholarship Thanks

Dear Grace Scholarship Committee,  
Thank you very much for the generous scholarship that you have given me. I am so thankful to the church and the opportunities that I have had. This scholarship will help me to further my education, and I am so grateful.

Thank you! Sincerely, Madison Dunn

Dear Grace UMC Family,  
Thank you so much for the scholarship. It will be a big help in covering cost of school this semester!!

Thanks, Ryan Trantham

### Worship Marigold Festival Weekend

For Marigold Festival Weekend Grace United Methodist Church will not have worship services here at Grace, including no Saturday chapel service. That weekend Pastor Eric will be sharing the message for the Marigold Festival worship service at the Showcase Stage. The stage is located next to the statue of Everett Dirksen in Mineral Springs Park. The service will start at 9:00 a.m. Some seating will be available. In the event of rain and a cancellation of the park service, plans are being made to hold an impromptu service at Grace at 11:00 a.m. Follow social media for cancellation notifications.

### **Painting of Sanctuary**

Painting got started a little late due to the availability of our painters. Painting started on August 28. It has been scheduled to take four weeks to complete. Currently, the painting should finish up on September 25. All services will worship in the Gary Ford Family Life Center while painting is being completed. The tentative schedule to resume worship in the Sanctuary will now be October 1. This is a tentative date as it is hard to gauge how long the painting will take. We will do our best to keep you updated as we find out more.

### **Get Involved: All are Welcome!**

#### **Choir/Brass**

Our Choir will be back for rehearsals starting **September 6th** from 6:00-6:45 p.m. and continue every Wednesday. On Sunday, September 17th, the choir will begin sharing at the 11:00 a.m. service. Grace Brass will play the 2nd Sunday of each month.

#### **Bells**

Soon it will be time to begin Grace Bells rehearsal. They will begin their rehearsals the first Monday after Labor Day, **September 11th**, and will continue to rehearse from 4:45 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. each Monday. The Bells will play the first Sunday of each month, starting with October 1st at the 11:00 a.m. service. In addition, Grace Bells will also play on October 22nd during the combined service in celebration of our church's 175 years. This should be a wonderful worship event.

#### **Youth Group**

Resumes after summer break on September 6 from 6:30 p.m –8:00 p.m. The group meets on the youth floor of the Mason Building.

#### **Volunteer**

Help with the weekly UNITEkids, Food Pantry, Hospitality, or maintenance/Saturday servants and congregational care. Let the office know if you are interested, your name and contact information will be passed along.

### **175th Memorial Garden**

It was suggested to develop a Grace Church 175th Memorial Garden to be in between the Mason Building and Sanctuary under the beautiful stained glass windows. Currently it is an open space where utilities are exposed. We look forward to the garden framing those beautiful windows.

This area will contain perennial plants in a rock bed. Lee Oltmann has done a beautiful design for the garden. Lisa McKenzie estimates the cost for the garden around \$2,500 with funds for the garden to be donated by individuals who would like to give toward the project. Individuals can support the purchase of a plant or several plants and material to remember friends, family, and foundations of our church. Keith Culp and Duane Bruniga will help supervise the planting of the garden along with members of our congregation. The Matheney Family will be donating a commemorative stone from Abel Monument.

There is a poster and sign up for plants for the garden in the hospitality area. There will not be individual signs for plants or who they are in memory of. We appreciate your donations for the garden as we remember the people that are the foundations of our church. We are truly blessed that we are still going strong thanks to our past, present, and future congregation. If questions, please contact Lisa McKenzie at 309-253-9938.

### **Gardening Installation Opportunity**

On September 16th you are welcome to join the planting team to plant, lay a barrier, and add rocks to the Memorial Garden. We will be meeting at 9:00 a.m. to start work.

Thank you for all you are doing through support buying plants and materials for this beautiful 175th Grace Memorial Garden. Call Lisa McKenzie, 309-253-9938, if interested in helping. Thank you.

### Grace Notes Articles

Interested in letting the church know about your group? If you take pictures of an activity your group is having and are interested in having it put in the Grace Notes or onto Facebook, please send the pictures and brief information about the activity to the secretary's email, (secretary@pekinggrace.org). Make sure you communicate clearly how you would like the article shared. **The deadline for the Grace Notes is always the 3rd Tuesday of the month before.** Send a variety of pictures, but be aware that not all pictures may be used if space is limited.

### Grace Food Pantry

Just a reminder that the Grace Food pantry will now be open on the 2nd and last Saturday of each month. The month of September, the schedule will change to accommodate the Marigold Festival. The dates in September will be September 16 and September 30. Volunteers should arrange to come at 9:30 a.m. on food pantry days. Thank you Grace Church for supporting this ministry!! We also would like to thank the volunteers and leader who help make this possible. Truly organizing this is a full time job.

### Notify Church Office of Events

This is a reminder to please make sure your group's events are on the calendar. The office is able to see and work out conflicts of most activities when these events are on the calendar.

All notifications need to be in writing and include group name, area used, and times needed. Christmas activities are starting to be scheduled and placed on the church's calendar. In addition, Union Mission would like to use our facilities again. The office cannot **protect** the times of your events if they are not on the calendar.

### Book Club

Book club meets at 10 a.m. on the second Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be September 12 in the library of Pekin Estates. All are welcome! If you need more information, have questions or want to know what book they are reading, please call Sandy Isenburg at 309-241-1411.

### Saturday Servants

The next Saturday Servants will meet September 16 from 8 a.m. –12. Different projects will be worked on around the church. If you are interested in helping, all you have to do is show up. Pastor Eric will have various projects you can help with. This ministry will continue through the winter months.

### United Women in Faith

*General Meeting*-The United Women of Faith will have a general meeting on September 14 at 1 p.m. All women are invited. The program for this meeting will be "Taking Care of God's Garden". It will be held in the Hospitality Area of the church. The speaker will be Nicole Flowers Kimmerle, Horticulturist with the U of I extension. Come meet the women of Grace and get involved!

### Potato Bar Sign Up

The sign-up for the potato bar is located in the office. Please sign-up to work the booth for two hours this Marigold Festival. Your help is really appreciated and it helps lighten the load for the organizers. If you cannot help serve in the booth you may help defray the cost of the booth by donating a 50 lb. bag of potatoes. All you would need to do is make out a check for \$35.00 with "potato bar" donation in the memo. Everyone can help by praying for this event or by buying a potato. Thank you!

### Directory

The office is working towards updating personal contact information. Just a reminder the office needs your birthdate, phone number, address and email in our system.

## Prayer list new procedure

To make the prayer list easier to maintain and manage, we will be moving towards a new procedure. To be put on the prayer list, you will still need to contact the office and let them know you would like to be on the prayer list. You can contact the office by phone, email, letter, or the app. Once the office has been notified, they will put you on the list. We will be going back to listing only first and last names on the prayer list, so that the congregation can send out encouraging cards and reach out to those needing extra support. The office will be careful when sharing personal information, especially medical.

The office will also be maintaining a staff only prayer list. If you would only like to be on this list, please make this known and clear when the prayers are requested. The prayer list is automatically posted to the closed prayer list group on Facebook. If for some reason you do not want your prayer posted to this group, you will have to make that clear upon request.

The names will automatically be removed from the list after four weeks. If you still need prayers after those four weeks, please notify the office again and you will be kept on the list.

Hopefully this procedure will help the office keep in contact and identify those members needing extra care and support.

## Shirts available to purchase

In celebration for our 175th year the church will be selling t-shirts (\$15), hoodies (\$25), and polos (\$20). The sign-up sheet will be at the information station on Sundays or in the office during the week. We are taking pre-orders at this time. Cut-off for pre-ordering will be September 25. All items must be paid in full to be ordered. Make checks payable to Grace UMC, with "t-shirt" in the memo line. Pick-up will be October 8.

## Bible Presentation Sunday

The children will be give their Bibles from Grace United Methodist Church on September 3. Please be in prayer for these children as they are furthering their faith and getting their very own Bibles.

Benjamin Bruns  
Avery Dault  
Hunter Dault  
Carter Garthaus  
Hunter Plunkett

## Charge Conference

The office is getting ready for the Charge Conference that will take place on October 8th. This means compiling information for the district office on all plans, hopes, and dreams of the church. The leadership board and the Pastor are busy reviewing our budget se we can use the church's resources in the most effective way. Getting ready for the charge conference also means looking at the parsonage and making sure it does not need any major work. All of these documents are presented at the charge conference and voted on.

All members who attend the church conference will be given a copy of this report. For those wanting to view the documents but cannot attend the October meeting, you may pick up a copy in the church office after the charge conference on the 8th.





Sue Crowell	1
Ron Robinson	2
Eric Swanson	3
Tom Patterson	4
Morgan Turner	4
Laura Swearingen	5
Ron Garman	5
Barbara Wright	6
Alice Cakora	8
Jay Zimmerman	10
Barbara Trimble	11
Kevin Stark	12
Robyn O'Shaughnessy	12
Ken Bradshaw	13
Marv Brown	14
Sarah McKenzie	16
David Stone	16
Ed Mulvey	17
Barbara Harper	18

## September Birthdays

Jim Stallwitz	18
Tracy Parkin	18
Nick Patterson	20
Linda Smith	20
Zach Bruns	21
Cindy Carlton	21
Vera Byrd	21
Linda Stoner	24
Sara Golden	25
Ann Tunis	25
Chris Onken	25
Judy Warner	25
Tammy Lynn Denning	26
Shannon Tebben-Sandoval	26
Brady O'Shaughnessy	29
Gerry Zuercher	30

# 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**

**Office Hours**  
**M-TH 8:30am-4:30pm**  
*Closed 12pm-1pm*

## Prayer Concerns

Bev Harrison

Carla Terry and Mom, Norma Terry

Dean Albertson

George Melloy

Grant Golden

Jim Rimington

Les Seman

Mark Weber

Melissa Troutman

Nancy Ridgeway

Paul Pearson

Ron Robinson

Sharon Robinson

**September 3**  
Bible Presentation Sunday at 9:00 a.m.

**September 4**  
Labor Day, Office Closed

**September 6**  
Radical Fall Kick-Off, (6th – Seniors)  
Youth Room, 6:30 p.m. -8:00 p.m.  
Sanctuary Choir Resumes 6:00 p.m. -6:45 p.m.

**September 8**  
Potato Bar Prep, kitchen, 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.

**September 9-10**  
No Services at Grace

**September 10**  
Marigold Festival Worship Service,  
Sound Stage at Mineral Springs Park, 9:00 a.m.

**September 11**  
Bible Buddies Kick-Off at First  
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.  
Bell Choir Resumes, Lower Level, 4:45 p.m. -5:30 p.m.

**September 13**  
Bible Buddies Kick-Off at First, 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

**September 14**  
United Women in Faith General Meeting,  
Hospitality Area, 1 p.m.

**September 16**  
Grace Drive-Thru Food Pantry, 11:00 a.m.  
Saturday Servants, 8:00a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Installation of Memorial Garden, 9:00 a.m.

**September 17**  
Pekin Estates, Communion, 2:00 p.m.

**September 19**  
All Charge Conference Forms are due

**September 30**  
Grace Drive-Thru Food Pantry, 11:00 a.m.