

MAY 2024

GRACE NOTES

No. 5 pekingrace.org



highlights

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What **i**S your gift?



As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1 Peter 4:10

PASTOR'S CORNER

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



We are in the season of planting.

As Midwesterners, we know that the season to plant corn and beans is upon us. The ground is ready to receive this first bit of hard work from the farmers. It's an amazing thing to witness, no matter our age, because we see the hopes of the farmer buried under the soil. Then, the farmer has to wait, watch, and tend. He won't know the results of that work until the fall comes. There will be things that are within the farmer's control and others that are beyond it. All of these things will influence the crop and so the farmer does his work, knowing that the outcomes are not guaranteed.

This spring, the leadership of the church has been talking about what our hopes and dreams are for the church. These too are like the seeds that the farmer is planting. We will plant it into the ground of the church and do the basic tending that needs to happen. Things will happen to us because of our work. They will influence the outcomes we desire, but we must start in this planting season.

What we are planting most at this time, is a revival of what I'll call Christian Education and fellowship.

We have seen some great growth in our children's programming and UNITEkids. We have seen a few groups continue to grow (Journey, Thursday women's group, and the Tuesday men's group). But, we know that our spiritual formation is a need in the community and so the dreams and plans for it are what we are working on.

We are planting these seeds now because the summer is a season when most of those kinds of programs are dormant. But the church mirroring the academic year of our schools means that the work of producing seeds will be required throughout the summer to make this a reality. This summer, we will plan both short-term and long-term groups. We will ask many to step up into leadership. We pray over each plan and we will make the invitation to the work of the harvest this fall with all of you who call Grace home.

So, pray for our summer of preparation and for those who will join in that faith journey together this fall at Grace.

Pastor Eric Swanson

UNITEKIDS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Emmy Thies
Director of Children & Family Ministry

Little and big kids alike celebrated the Resurrection and the Light of Jesus on Holy Saturday! The youngest kiddos had an egg hunt while it was still light outside, and the kindergarten through 5th graders enjoyed a glow-in-the-dark hunt once the sun sets. THANK YOU to all who donated candy, eggs, prizes, and their time to make this piece of Holy Week so special



EASTER 2024

EV2LEB 5054

UNITEkids and Bible Buddies

will meet on May 1, 6, and 8

before the end of the school year celebration,

for all UNITE groups, on Tuesday, May 14th



**ALL AGES!!
FAMILY GAME NIGHT**

**Friday, May 10
6-7:30 PM
Pekin First UMC**

Games, snacks, & drinks provided



Every ONE is invited!

**Join UNITEkids for a picnic
Tuesday, May 14th from 6-7:00 PM
Blenkiron Park (601 Park Ave.)**

Sub sandwiches & drinks provided.
Please bring a side dish to share.

**SAVE THE DATE:
VBS 2024 is July 22-26**

Whenever I am afraid, I put my trust in you
— Psalm 56:3





Our relationships with our families can sometimes feel a little bit like a way-too-competitive game night. With our families, sometimes it's fun . . . but other times, we might fight for first place, gang up on each other, betray each other, and walk away with frustration and hurt feelings. Families can be sources of joy and laughter but also stress and tension. But what if our families could be places where we could all help each other win?

In this four-week series from the New Testament, we'll look at how the earliest followers of Jesus created a new kind of community as God's family. Through their example, we'll learn that there is enough when we share what we have— and if there isn't enough, God provides. We'll also learn that our actions can speak when words aren't enough, and that God's love is always enough.

- May 1st- There is enough when we share what we have
- May 8th- Where there isn't enough, God Provides
- May 15th- Our actions can speak when words aren't enough
- May 22nd- God's love is always enough
- May 29th- Make a difference Wednesday. Community project with a sweet ending

Still looking for volunteers for the youth program. Please see Brionna or Jill. Asking Youth to start thinking about helping at VBS this summer.



RADICAL YOUTH MINISTRY

Jill Stoner-Crouch and Brionna Goodin
Co-Directors of Youth Ministries



We're encouraging the youth to go to Jensen Woods Camp this summer to strengthen their relationship with God. Please reach out to Brionna or Jill with any questions or concerns.



The youth were asked to help with snack packs one evening. What a wonderful way for them to get connected with others here at Grace Church! Thank you, youth, for making a difference in our church community and making a difference in the community at large.



Grace Softball

Schedule may vary in inclement weather

Games at Diamond #2

April 29 vs First Presbyterian at 6 p.m.
May 6 vs PFN at 9 p.m.
May 13 vs Minier Assembly of God at 7 p.m.
May 20 vs First UMC at 7 p.m.
June 3 vs Faith Baptist at 8 p.m.
June 10 vs CBC at 8 p.m.
June 17 vs North Pekin Nazarene at 7 p.m.

Games at Diamond #1

June 24 vs First Presbyterian at 9 p.m.
July 1 vs PFN at 6 p.m.
July 8 vs Minier Assembly of God at 7 p.m.
July 15 vs First UMC at 7 p.m.
July 22 vs Faith Baptist at 9 p.m.
July 29 vs CBC at 7 p.m.
August 5 vs North Pekin Nazarene at 9 p.m.

Hope you can go to at least one of the games this season to support our team!

Program Changes

Many programs are ending for the summer break. The programs will resume in the fall. We hope you all have a wonderful summer, and we cannot wait to see you again in the fall.

Please double-check with your program leaders to see what your summer schedule will be.

Grace 5 Star Mission Church

We were recognized as a 5-star missionary church. This means we paid 100 % of apportionments. These apportionments go to support the programs around the world that the United Methodist Church funds. Thank you to Grace for being generous so that this may be accomplished.

Directory

You may pick up your directory at Grace. The directories will be at the table by the prayer pallet on Sundays. You may also pick up your copy in the office during the week. Remember office hours are 8:30 a.m. –4:30 p.m. The office is closed 12 p.m. –1 p.m. for lunch.

Graduating? Notify the Office

Graduates or graduates' families, please let the office know who is graduating from high school, higher education, or tech school. The church would LOVE to celebrate this important milestone with you! Please send three pictures along with a short write-up on your plans to secretary@pekingrace.org for the secretary to use in publications. The church does not want to miss anyone, so please don't assume the office is aware of your graduation.

We will recognize and pray for all the graduates on the weekend of May 19 at all worship services. Pictures and write-ups need to be received by May 6 to be included in the service.

Volunteers for Gardens/Outside

Looking for a way to get involved at Grace? Summer is upon us, and we always need help with maintaining the outside of our facility. There are so many things you could help with including weeding flower beds, mowing, edging, mulching, or picking up trash. If you would like to become involved, let the office know, and we will get you connected.

Kroger Giving

Please keep in mind that Grace Church can earn donations through Kroger Community Rewards. Please link your rewards card to Grace. Our total number of households participating is up to 29. The first quarter, January-March 2024, we earned \$65.55. It's easy and will not affect your personal reward points!

Link your Card to Grace UMC:

Sign in to your digital account.

Search for Grace UMC.

Select the appropriate organization from the list and click "Save".

Pecan Sales

United Women in Faith **still have** pecans for sale. Halves and cinnamon are available.

National Day of Prayer

Take a few minutes to say a prayer on this day, May 2. We are asked to remember to pray for all seven spheres of influence: family, church, education, government, military, business and arts, media, and entertainment.

Photo opportunity for Mother's Day

May 12, Mother's Day-There will be an opportunity to take pictures with Mom, or for Mom. Bring your camera as this will be an unmanned backdrop this time.

Book Club

The book club will meet on Tuesday, May 14 in the library on the first floor of Pekin Estates. We will discuss the book *A Turn in the Road* by Debbie Macomber. If you want more information or have questions, please call Sandy Isenburg at 309-241-1411.

End of Year Celebration

UNITEkids and Bible Buddies- End of Year Celebration May 14 at Blenkiron Park, 6-7 p.m. **EVERYONE IS INVITED!** Bring a picnic side to share and bring your seating, if needed. Sub sandwiches and drinks will be provided.



Shut Doors Firmly

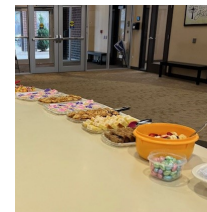
Remember if you are exiting out of the old wooden church doors, these tend to swell in the summer heat. As a result, they may need a little push to shut completely. Please make sure they have closed completely before leaving the vicinity.

Volunteers Needed

Vacation Bible School will be in the evenings July 22-26. Emmy is starting to create the plans for it. If you are interested in getting involved, please talk to the office or Emmy Thies.

Spotlight on Volunteers

Thank you so much to all of our hospitality crews who greet us every Sunday and make us feel welcome! From the wonderful goodies at the coffee bar to the way they serve us communion, open doors, or answer our questions, these people make Grace Church a wonderful, welcoming place on Sunday mornings.



If you are interested in becoming a part of this team, please let the office know. We are currently in need of greeters and another hospitality team for the coffee bar. Also, we are in need of coffee bar subs when our usual people have conflicts and they cannot find anyone to sub for them.

Two members working in tandem seem to work best in the coffee bar area so when things come up, there is always someone there. If interested, please let the office know. This currently would be a commitment for every second Sunday of the month. Receipts may be turned into the office for reimbursement or turned in and added to your giving statement.

Office Closed

The office will be closed on May 27 in remembrance of Memorial Day.

Church News



Hope everyone had a very Happy Easter! Some of our families took advantage of the photo booth . Here are just a few of the great pictures we had on Easter.



NEWS FROM NORTH DISTRICT

*Mike Crawford
North District Superintendent
Serving with you*



Greetings,

We are living in challenging and, to some, anxious times as United Methodists! As General Conference 2020 (in 2024) approaches, I want to thank you for and affirm your vital leadership for the local church. Your ministry is valued.

I recognize that people across the theological spectrum feel pressure, tension, and anticipation. Let me assure you that in this district and in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference we value churches and pastors who have diverse views and perspectives. Our congregations vary widely, and we are blessed to have pastors who can relate nimbly with people whose beliefs range greatly.

I want to be especially sensitive to those congregations, laity, and pastors who may be feeling pensive as we await the start of General Conference. As one who will attend as a reserve clergy delegate, I invite you to join me in prayer for the conference and for the world-wide church of which we are blessed to be a part.

In May, I plan to hold three gatherings around the district to meet with any laypeople and pastors who would like to discuss what happened, what it means as a denomination, and what it means for a local church. During each session, I intend to answer to the best of my ability any questions which are raised. *My intent will be to shed light on the topic as a means of lessening anxiety.*

The following sessions are scheduled:

- **Sunday, May 5, 2:00 pm at Grand Prairie UMC, 12408 W State Rt 17, Bonfield IL 60913**
- **Sunday, May 19, 2:00 pm at Hanna City UMC, 12208 W Farmington Rd, Hanna City IL 61536-9572**
- **Sunday, May 19, 5:00 pm at El Paso UMC, 243 E 2nd St, El Paso IL 61738**

I am blessed to be in ministry with each church in the North District of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference. I appreciate you!

Serving with you,
Mike

Rev. Mike Crawford
North District Superintendent
(309) 688-9027 (Office)

May Birthdays

Lucy Whitman	5	Sam McClain	29
Tommy Dault	6	Willowdean Stone	29
Devin Burks	10	Joe Stoner	29
Gene Wyman	10	Seth Ranney	29
Sharon Lohnes	12		
Jill Garman	13		
Cari Ranney	15		
Patsy Groch	16		
Roy Johnson	17		
Harriet Canopy	19		
Chase Ranney	19		
Michael Ripper	20		
Bill Booher	21		
Jan Darnell	22		
Theresa Snell	22		
Mark Weber	22		
John-David Cohoon	22		
Brandie Stranz	22		
Jim Miller	22		
Kendall Garman	24		
Larry Collier	26		



Connect!

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

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

Office Hours
M-TH 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Closed 12 p.m.-1 p.m.

Prayer Concerns

Carla Terry and Norma Griffin

Jo Trombini

Joyce Hill

June Parr

Terri Luft

Les Seman

*Names are kept on the prayer list for four weeks.
If you would like to be kept on longer, please
call the office, 309-347-7131.*

May 1st-May 3rd

General Conference

May 4

Softball game: Diamond #2 at 9 p.m.

May 10

Church Women United: Friendship Day
at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 10:00 a.m.
Family Game Night, at Pekin First UMC, 6-7:30 p.m.

May 11

Saturday Servants, 9:00 a.m.
Grace Drive-Thru Food Pantry, 11:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

May 12

Mother's Day

May 13

Softball Game: Diamond #2 at 7 p.m.

May 14

Book Club, Pekin Estates, 10:00 a.m.
UNITEkids and Bible Buddies- End of Year Celebration
at Blenkiron Park, 6 p.m. -7 p.m.

May 19

Graduation Sunday at Grace.

May 21

Grace Notes Articles Due

May 20

Softball Game: Diamond #2 at 7 p.m.

May 22

Pekin Estates Communion, Pekin Estates, 2:00 p.m.

May 25

Grace Drive-Thru Food Pantry, 11:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

May 27

Office will be closed in honor of Memorial Day