

FEBRUARY 2025

GRACE NOTES

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highlights

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UNION MISSION *IS BACK!*



Consider how to stir one another to love and good works.

Hebrew 10:24-25

PASTOR'S CORNER

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



I learned a long time ago that February is in the middle of winter. In fact, it often has what I personally consider to be the worst of our midwestern weather. I can hold that tension as truth while at the same time sharing with you that I consider February the best month of the year for “Spring Cleaning”. As I long for the warmth and daylight to return to our home I also want to do something that helps me feel like we are getting there. I have found myself setting the thermostat a little higher on a random day off where I can wear a t-shirt and feel like spring. I put all the things of our fall and winter decorations, clean all the surfaces and set up for a minimalistic spring/summer look that we often have in our home.

What I have learned about these practices are a few important lessons that all of us might be able to take into our lives.

Putting everything away reminds me that there is a season for everything. I may not be in the season that I am looking forward to, but I am also no longer in the season that I was. God has given to us all a gift of seasons that help us work, grow, rest, and heal. Not all of us will be in the same season but many of us travel in them as a church together.

Cleaning the surfaces is a practice where I am also completing the work that is needed. Scripture tells us to finish the race that is before us. Many want to talk about that as the entire race of life. But most of us spend our lives running a bunch of little, short runs, instead of running non-stop. Remember that I shared that we have seasons, we can't move all the time. In our personal lives and in the corporate church life, we need to finish the race that is before us. That is why we are finishing the second major project of our 175th Anniversary goal with the acoustic panels for the Gary Ford Family Life Center. We are finishing that season of work. The fruits of that work will be with us for many seasons to come.

Sometimes we need to do something that changes our attitude. When I am feeling low with the grey and cold of winter, I make it feel like summer in our house. I may not be getting my way but I am also able to control my attitude as well as my perspective on how I can manage my world. All of us can use a reminder that though we cannot control the forces around us, we can control how we receive it and what we do with it. If the day was beautiful, I would have gone outside and done anything but the work that is really needed for our family. Though I need a taste of summer, I needed the winter to do the work that I can only do in the winter.

I share all of this with you because you may be in a season that doesn't feel the best. That doesn't mean you cannot do something that helps you grow, you just need to do it in a way that meets your need of the season and re-orientates you to where God is taking you next!

UNITEKIDS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Emmy Thies & Dianna Miller
Co-Directors of Children & Family Ministry



Find the perfect small group for your kids to join and grow in their faith!

3rd through 5th graders are welcome to Bible Buddies on Tuesday nights from 5:30-6:30 or Wed nights from 6:30-7:30

PreK through 2nd graders are invited to join UNITEkids on Wed nights from 5:30-6:30

All 3 groups are currently held at Grace UMC

As always, all kids in K-5th grade are welcome to Children's Church during worship services!

- **Grace UMC Children's Church** during 9 a.m. Sunday worship
- **Pekin First UMC Children's Church** during 5 p.m. Saturday worship and 10 a.m. Sunday worship



Nursery care is available for littles, infant through PreK, at both Pekin First and Grace UMC.

At Pekin First the nursery is open at 5 p.m. Saturday service and for the 10 a.m. Sunday service

At Grace the nursery is open on Sunday from 9 a.m. through 11 a.m. service



Please welcome Dianna Miller,

our new

Co-Director of Children & Family Ministries!!

Dianna Miller has been hired as a co-leader for the Children and Family Ministries. Dianna has jumped right into teaching at Children's Church, Bible Buddies, and UNITEkids. Take a moment to welcome her. She is a wonderful addition to the ministry team!

Here's a bit about Dianna in her own words:

I have been married to my husband Don for 15 years. I have four daughters Kristen, Katrina, Mallory, Maegen, and one son-in-law Gage. We have four cats and two dogs. I have worked with children since the age of 14. I worked as a school bus driver from 2010 to 2018. I worked as a youth director at First Christian Church and volunteered in many roles including Sunday school teaching, children's church, youth groups, and VBS. I currently work part-time at Bremer Jewelry as an assistant bookkeeper. I'm excited to join an amazing team of children & youth directors who share the love and good news of Jesus with the children and community of First UMC and Grace UMC.

If you have questions or needs regarding Children & Family Ministries, please contact Emmy Thies at ethies@pekinfirst.org or ethies@pekingrace.org OR contact Dianna Miller at dmiller@pekinfirst.org or dmiller@pekingrace.org.



UNITE YOUTH MINISTRY

Jill Stoner-Crouch, Brionna Goodin & Megan Rahn
Co-Directors of Youth Ministries



Thank you!!!

Thank you to
Pam, Jeff, Luke, and Booher
*for assisting Brionna and Megan
with the youth at*
WinterXtreme 2025



Thank you Stacey!
for teaching the youth
new art techniques for their
new year journals!!!

UNITEyouth February Dates

Important Dates:

- **2/2** Mission Trip Deposit Due: \$60
- **2/23** Miss Emmy will be visiting UNITEyouth
- **Regular meeting times**
every Sunday in February
 - Junior High 5pm-6:30pm
 - High School 6:30pm-8pm

Mission Trip News 2025

HIGH SCHOOL

Uniteyouth high school parents! We want to hold a parent meeting Sunday 2/2. See details below. Hope to see you all there!

Uniteyouth Parent Meeting Agenda

Who: Incoming Freshman & High School Students

What : Upcoming July Mission Trip

Where: Pekin Grace, Mason Building, 2nd floor.

When: Sunday, 2/2/25 @ 6:30 p.m.

Why: To go over summer Indianapolis Mission Trip, Cost & Itinerary

Agenda: Share Information with parents, our itinerary & expectations.

JUNIOR HIGH

Junior high Uniteyouth parents! We want to hold a parent meeting Sunday 2/2. See details below. Hope to see you all there!

Uniteyouth Parent Meeting Agenda

Who: Jr. High Students

What : Upcoming Mission Trips

Where: Pekin Grace, Mason Building, 2nd floor.

When: Sunday, 2/2/25 @ 6 p.m.

Why: To go over March Chicago Trip, Cost & Itinerary

Agenda: Share Information with parents our itinerary & expectations.



CONFIRMATION

CLASSES

Co-taught by Pastor Sean and
Pastor Eric



**EVERY WEDNESDAY STARTING MARCH 12TH THRU
APRIL 16TH 5PM-6PM**

Pekin First UMC 1315 Court Street
**Any youth who wish to be
confirmed this year are
welcomed.**

UNION MISSION

Church News

The church enjoys reaching out to the community and networking with different organizations. One way we have been able to do this is by letting the Union Mission use the gym at a reduced cost.

If you have ever driven by on a game night you can see that the parking lot is packed and kids are in abundance. We are so fortunate to see the church being a blessing to the community.

For the last two years the Union Mission has also partnered with Grace Church by collecting canned goods for our food pantry and by picking a few angels off the angel tree at Christmas time. They inspire us to find more ways to get involved in the Pekin Community.

Thank you UNION MISSION!



Union Mission organizers: JJ and Jenna Tassert



Book Club

Book Club will meet on Tuesday, February 11 in the library at Pekin Estates at 10 a.m. Members will discuss the book Chasing Lilacs by Carla Stewart. New members are always welcome. Any questions, please contact Sandy Isenburg at 309-241-1411.

Community Rewards: Kroger

Rewards were received from purchases made October 1 through December 31 thirty households earned a \$75.67 a donation through the Community rewards program. Thank you for taking the time to sign up for this program. If you are aware of any other community awards programs, please let the office know so Grace can take advantage of them.

Chili Luncheon

Sunday, February 9

The Grace Softball team will have their annual chili luncheon on Super Bowl Sunday.

Convenient meal options:

Take home meal after 1st service at approximately 10 a.m.

Sit down for a fellowship meal at noon with take-home option available.

Donations only, (No tickets needed)

Money raised will go towards the entrance fee to play. Any extra money will go towards uniforms or equipment.

Church Leadership Board

The new church leadership board are getting acclimated to their positions and responsibilities. They will be attending a retreat on the first of the month where they will be vision casting and preparing for the year ahead.

Devotionals

Grace Church encourages everyone to find a devotional that works for them and get into the word of God. God wants us to actively draw near to him. He uses the Bible and the people around us to shape us to be more like him.

We do have parts of our community that have found different devotional formats that they use for devotionals. These are just a few you can look at. Check these out a maybe you will find one that works for you. Let us know if you find a devotional format that really speaks to you.

Upper Room

At Grace, we offer free the printed Upper Room publication. These are provided to anyone who would like to utilize this study. You may pick up a magazine and take it home for personal study. The Upper Room also has an app that you can find in the app store or you can sign up to have the devotional emailed to your inbox.

YouVersion

This is an app that you can place on your phone. It provides a short daily devotional and scripture reading. There is also an option to set Grace United Methodist Church as your home church and get connected to other members of Grace. Check it out!



First 15

Check out First 15. It provides a week long topic of study, reflection questions to make you dig deeper and a worship song that allows you to spend some time in God's presence. This comes in app form or it can be emailed to your inbox.

Cancellations for weather

Grace United Methodist Church doesn't often cancel Sunday meetings. We like to leave attendance up to your own discretion. In the event that we do cancel church on Sunday, we will send out an email with the information and make a post to social media. This is the same email list used for the weekly email blast. Please let the office know if you would like to be included on this list and make sure your email is still current. Weekly activity/group cancellations will follow the 108 school schedule, including office hours. If school activities or school itself is cancelled, the church activities will not take place.

UMW: Bake Sale

United Methodist Women are having a bake sale on Saturday, February 15 at the evening service and Sunday, February 16 after both morning services. Donations of cakes, pies, candy, and cookies will be greatly appreciated.

Donations of baked goods need to be to the church by 5 p.m. Saturday or 8:30 a.m. Sunday. Donated baked goods should be covered and placed on plates in the amounts of 4, 6 or 12. Please note: If any of your goodies contain nuts, please indicate this on the package. There is no need to put a price on anything as we will have a free will offering.

UMW also will be selling pecan halves and glazed cinnamon pecans. Thank you in advance for your help!

Church Camp Registration

Church camp registration is now open. Brochures are available in the church office or at the Unitekids check in table. To see listings with the full camp descriptions you may go to the following camp websites.

lgc.org/camping
Littlegrassycamp.org
Eastbaycamp.org

UNITEkids Attendance Report

We are experiencing growth at both churches!!

Pekin First Nursery total roster # = **16 children**, 3 adult leaders, 3 youth helpers [average weekly attendance = 6 total/4 children and 2 leaders]

Pekin First Children's Church total roster # = **20 children**, 5 adult leaders, 4 youth helpers [average weekly attendance = 6 total/4 children and 2 leaders]

Pekin First ROC Kids total roster # = **29 children**, 12 adult leaders

Of note, the nursery average weekly attendance increased from 4 total in 2023 to 6 total in 2024

Children's Church average weekly attendance decreased from 7 total in 2023 to 6 total in 2024

Grace Nursery total roster # = **10 children**, 6 adult leaders [average weekly attendance = 5 total/3 children and 2 leaders]

Grace Children's Church total roster # = **22 children**, 6 adult leaders, 3 youth helpers [average weekly attendance = 8 total/6 kids and 2 leaders]

Of note, the nursery average weekly attendance increased from 2 total in 2023 to 5 total in 2024

Children's Church average weekly attendance decreased from 9 total in 2023 to 8 total in 2024

Pekin First plus Grace nurseries increased from average weekly attendance of 6 total in 2023 to 11 total in 2024, almost doubled

UNITEkids/Bible Buddies total roster # = **31 children**, 7 adult leaders, 4 youth helpers [average weekly attendance = 19 total/15 children and 4 leaders]

VBS = **72 children**, 40 adult and youth volunteers

Estimated # unique children served throughout 2024 = 97 children

(number does not include children that only attended our VBS and nothing else)

February Birthdays

Charlie Stroemer	1	Joseph Jacobson	17
Donald Jackson	2	Willie Fahnstrom	20
Lisa Poole	3	Branson Whitman	23
Bill Russell	3	Donna Bignell	24
Joyce Hill	3	Elisabeth Sandoval	24
Judy Dietrich	4		
Jana Swisher	5		
Joy Wojtas	6		
Chris Ward	7		
Emily Weyhrich	7		
Theresa Holly	9		
Nancy Springer	10		
Kristy Whitman	11		
Savannah Butler	13		
Diane Clark	14		
Marcia Gazza	14		
Debra McKinley	17		



Connect!

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

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

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

Prayer Concerns

Ann Vogt

Duane Hill

Jeff Hokey

June Parr

Ken Bradshaw

Kitty Robinson

Mandi S.

Marnie Golden

Pat McMullin

Rich & Harriet Canopy

Sara Golden

Vicki Garman

Willowdean Stone

*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.*

February 1

Leadership Board Onboarding, 9 a.m. -1 p.m.

February 2

UNITEyouth Junior High Parents Meeting, Mason Building, 2nd floor at 6 p.m.

UNITEyouth Senior High Parents (plus incoming Freshman parents) Meeting, Mason Building, 2nd Floor at 6:30 p.m.

February 6

UMW Executive Meeting, Hospitality Area, 1 p.m.

February 8

Grace Drive-Thru Food Pantry, 11 a.m. -noon, Volunteers arrive at 9:30 a.m.

February 9

Super Bowl Sunday: Softball Chili Fundraiser Luncheon.

February 11

Book Club, Pekin Estates, 10 a.m.

Men's Fellowship always meets on Tuesdays, Hospitality Area at 8 a.m.

February 15

Saturday Servants, Hospitality area 9 a.m.
United Women in Faith: Bake Sale 5:30 p.m.

February 16

United Women in Faith: Bake Sale *between the services*

February 17

Office Closed: President's Day

February 18

Grace Notes Articles Due

February 22

Grace Drive-Thru Food Pantry, 11 a.m. -noon, Volunteers arrive at 9:30 a.m.

February 24

Miriam Circle Meeting, Our Inn Place at 12:30 p.m. then to C.B Smith at 1:30 p.m.

February 26

Communion at Pekin Estates, 2 p.m.