

Grace Notes

February 2024

Praying Through Lent

This year Lent begins on February 14th. That's correct... Ash Wednesday will fall on St. Valentine's Day. This coincidence of the calendar will make for an interesting mashup of celebrating the gift of love on the same day that we acknowledge the brutal reality of the wages of sin — death. My advice is that you come to church on that Wednesday and save your date for Friday.

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Lent is both a penitential season *AND* a season of spiritual growth. This year, as a congregation, we are going to focus on the spiritual growth side of Lent as we lift up and have a special emphasis on prayer. As a congregation we are in the midst of needing to carry out some very significant work and make some very critical decisions that will impact how Grace provides ministry to our community for years into the future. During Lent this year, we will be seeking God's will for calling an Associate Pastor; we will be initiating a Capital Investment Campaign to fund the purchase and development of additional property; and we will start the process of developing a Master Plan. We will do all of this while continuing to provide Christian education and pursuing our mission of making disciples who Worship, Grow, and Engage. And during this season of Lent, each one of us will have experiences or circumstances in our lives that will call for God's strength or His wisdom or His peace to help us in our time of need. That is all to say, **we have plenty about which to pray!**

You will notice our congregation wide emphasis on prayer in three ways:

1. Each week during Lent we will highlight a specific prayer topic or need that we will ask the entire congregation to pray over. This exercise will unite us in prayer, and the collective prayers that we lift will all be heard by our sovereign Lord.
2. Many of our Grow communities (Small Groups and Sunday Morning Communities) will be going through the same Bible Study on prayer (see information on this in the Announcements section of *Grace Notes*). The goal is for this Bible Study to shape the way that we pray together.
3. Our Sermon Series for our Midweek Lenten Services is titled **Powerful Prayers in the Scriptures**. In this series we will take a close look at specific prayers in the Bible, focusing on the context from which they came, the content of the prayer itself, and how those prayers serve as examples to guide us in our prayers.

Join us as we pray together.

In Christ,

Pastor Russ

Midweek Lenten Sermon Series - Powerful Prayers in the Scriptures

- 2/14 – Ash Wednesday: A Prayer of Repentance (Psalm 51)
- 2/21—Jehoshaphat's Prayer: Our Eyes Are On You (2 Chronicles 20:6-12)
- 2/28—The Prayer of the Proud and the Humble (Luke 18:9-14)
- 3/6—A Prayer For Boldness (Acts 4:24-30)
- 3/13—Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom (1 Kings 3:3-10)
- 3/20—The Prayer to End All Prayers (Revelation 22:20)
- 3/28—Maundy Thursday: The High Priestly Prayer (John 17)

WINTER STORM 2024 AT GRACE LUTHERAN



PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

February 2024 Edition

Happy New Year!

Grace Lutheran School jumped back into action following Christmas Break. The second semester started with mid-year MAP testing to check student achievement growth. The month was interrupted with an unexpected week off due to the cold and icy conditions. When we returned, it was National Lutheran Schools Week. Students and staff celebrated with dress-up days – Sports Day, 100's Day, Prom Day, Mismatch Day, and Lumberjack Day. As a special assembly, we welcomed Jennie Williamson to perform for the students and families. We ended the week with the kindergartners singing at the 10:45 AM worship service.

Re-enrollment will open **February 2nd** and Open Enrollment opens **February 15th**. Please encourage anyone you know with school-age children to check out Grace Lutheran School. Interested families can contact the school office to arrange a tour.

Coming Up:

STEAM Night – This event is open to school, church, and community families. Science and engineering activities will be available throughout the school, along with a viewing of the Science Fair projects. STEAM Night will be **Thursday, February 15th** from **6:00 PM– 7:30 PM**.

Trivia Night – **Friday, February 23rd** at **6:30 PM**, the first annual Trivia Night will be held to help Grace's 7th & 8th graders fundraise for their class trip to St. Louis. Gather together a group of friends (High School to adult) and "get your trivia on." Cost is \$8/person with concessions available. See the Announcements section for more information and registration links.

Please continue to keep Grace in your prayers!

God's Blessings,

Delaine Schiestel



CDC HAPPENINGS

February 2024 Edition

We had a wonderful start to the New Year at the CDC! I think that all of our staff would say that relaxing our way into the New Year was such an unexpected blessing! Between weather days, the MLK holiday, and weekends, the CDC staff got 10 straight days at home to rest, relax, reset, and be with their families. I'm not sure that has ever happened or will ever happen again! I have also heard many wonderful stories from the CDC families of their forced time at home to be with one another and connect. We pray that you are having a wonderful start to the year as well! God's timing is always perfect and He knows just what we need!

In January, the CDC also joined the school in celebrating Nation Lutheran Schools Week! Our little ones came dressed up in the theme of the day and were very excited to add to the North Alabama Food Bank donation pile every morning!

Looking Ahead: In February, the CDC will celebrate both Valentine's Day and President's Day. We will also be taking spring pictures and practicing for our Spring Musical that will take place in March!

Please continue to keep the CDC in your prayers as we continue to grow! We have 175 families currently on our waitlist, and we also hired 5 new employees this January! We are excited as we think about plans for a new building and the additional families that we can serve in the near future! Thanks be to God!

Jessica McGuire



GROW - BIBLE STUDY TOPICS

February 2024 Edition



Bible Studies Topics – February 2024

Sunday Morning Children and Youth

- Infant—Pre-K (Church Nursery) – Acts: From Many People to One People
- K—4th (Church Choir Room) – Acts: From Many People to One People
- 5th and 6th Grade (School Library) – Bible Characters: Exodus and Judges
- Confirmation (Room 106) – Word of God
- High School (Youth Room) – Church Relics

Sunday Morning Communities

- Quarter Life Questers (Room 107) - The Chosen
- Figuring It Out (Room 203) – The Chosen
- Balancing Act (School Band Room) – Joel, Amos & Obadiah
- Tug of War (Room 204) – Explaining all the Scary Stuff in Revelation
- Discovering Together (Room 209) – Book of 1 John

Sunday Morning Bible Studies

- A Study of James and Galatians (School Cafeteria)
- Bible for Non-Native English Speakers (Room 113) – Proverbs

Bible Studies During the Week

- Digging Deeper (Wednesday at 6:30 PM in the Assembly Room) – End Times in the Old Testament
- Women’s Bible Study (Monday at 1:00 PM in the Church Library) – Book of Acts
- Women’s Bible Study (Tuesday at 9:30 AM in the Church Library) – Chosen: A Study of Esther
- Men’s Bible Study (2nd Saturday at 7:30 AM in the School Cafeteria) – Guardrails by Andy Stanley
- Ladies of Grace Circles (3rd Tuesday at 9:30 AM in the Church Library and Choir Room) - Topic Varies

See the announcements section for more information on the Prayer Bible Study that many communities will be starting during the Lenten season, on February 18th

OUTREACH CONNECTIONS

February 2024 Edition



LOCAL MISSION ENGAGE CONNECTIONS

Grace Lutheran has developed a relationship with **McDonnell Elementary School** (4010 Binderton Place, Huntsville, AL 35805). We have been advocates for the school and open to responding to needs as they are shared with us. We are still stocking their Little Library with children's books. The library has been moved nearer to the school building as it was knocked down twice recently. **We have a need for children's books, activity books, and basic school supplies.** You can support this project by contributing gently used children's books or providing such items as commercially wrapped individual snacks (examples: Cheez-It crackers, Lance sandwich crackers, Rice Krispy or granola bars). Books and school supplies along with food supplies may be placed in the chest in the church narthex. Thanks for your generous support as you respond in the love of Jesus.



First Stop encounters the homeless where they are, connects them to critical services and support, and empowers them toward independent sustainable living. So far this year, the First Stop team has successfully assisted 53 individuals from homelessness to independent, sustainable living. These are 53 people who are no longer living on the street but are sleeping in the safety and comfort of their own homes.

First Stop relies on volunteer support to provide hot meals twice a day at the temporary facility location – 2820 Governors Drive.

Volunteer Tips for providing meals:

- Meals should serve 80-100 people. Prepare food for 80 people! **3-4 servers** are needed to serve the meal.
- Provide food that is already prepared and only needs to be heated. No cooking, please.
- We serve Breakfast and Lunch, Monday through Friday. Breakfast meals are to delivered to **First Stop** by 7:45 AM and lunch meals by no later than 11:15 AM.
- Breakfast is served from 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM.
- Lunch is served from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM.

For more information, **contact Karen Davidson!**



OUTREACH CONNECTIONS

February 2024 Edition



ACTS Ministry

ACTS (Actively Caring, Tenderly Serving) Ministry has been redefined. We have a new email address which is **ACTS@gracelutheran-hsv.org** that can be used to volunteer to support **ACTS** activities or to request specific help/support. Please respond to let us know how you desire to participate and help this ministry on an occasional basis.

We now have five coordinators in place to support the ACTS Ministry via Grace Lutheran:

- **Pam Lowe** (Hospitality - Meal trains, potlucks, etc.)
- **Mairlyn Johnson** (Cards - Those ill or recovering/birthdays, etc.)
- **Donna Behnken** (Visits/Calls - Friendly calls, friendly visits)
- **Bill Duncan** (Transportation - Pickups and appointments)
- **Rusty Graves** (House/Yard Work - Technology help, lawn, repairs)

If you know of someone who can benefit, or if you have a particular need for yourself, let us know the need by calling the church office. Call and ask for extension **347** to leave your message. If calling after hours, please select option 7 and you can leave a voicemail.

Volunteer Support:

- Sending cards to homebound and those on our care list.
- Checking in by phone with individuals on our care list.
- Visiting those in need, primarily our homebound.
- Providing meals - Case by case, but normally for an illness or coping with a health condition.
- Errand/driving support - Pick up a prescription or groceries, take someone to a medical appointment.
- Helping someone with a technology equipment issue.
- Miscellaneous - Mowing a yard, shrubbery care, cleaning up a kitchen, or whatever a family member might need.

Help Request:

- I would appreciate a friendly visit.
- I have a need for meals.
- I need help with someone to pick up items (i.e. groceries or prescription).
- I need help to get to a medical appointment.
- I need help with upkeep of my lawn/shrubbery.
- I need help with technology use and equipment.
- I need help with a repair in my home (list): _____

It is our intent to share needs as they arise with the ACTS Ministry volunteers. You choose which activity you want to respond to and help!

Please join us in prayer as together we seek to care to serve one another sharing the love of Jesus!

CONNECT CARD – You are encouraged to invite a friend, neighbor, or work colleague to visit our church's website at www.gracelutheran-hsv.org and complete a **CONNECT CARD**. The link is located on the lower part of the homepage. Persons completing the **CONNECT CARD** are added to our MailChimp list and receive the weekly e-mail from Pastor Russ with a link to our livestream worship service.

Serving Persons Via Facebook: Visit the **Grace Lutheran Ministries — Church & School** page on Facebook. Go to the page and “**LIKE**” the page (in the top section at the bottom left side of the cover page — not below the posted comment). Liking the Grace Lutheran page helps us to get information to your Facebook account!

CONNECTION GROUPS

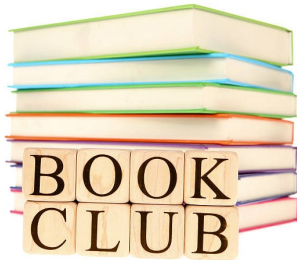
February 2024 Edition

ARE YOU CONNECTED?

Connection Groups (formerly called interest groups) are a means of “building bridges” to connect with others (unchurched or dechurched) in your neighborhood or our community. It’s about building a group around a similar interest (hobby, craft, fun activity, sport, or just about anything else under the sun). The goal is to help connect persons to Christ, the church, and the community. Dream the possibilities and then explore the opportunity to set up a group that meets at least on a bi-weekly basis. Of course, you can choose to take breaks in the schedule as needed for holidays/summer vacation, etc. Grace Lutheran’s vision is to grow in being passionate servants. Organizing or leading a connection group is a means of being a passionate servant. Have you ever thought that you can be instrumental in connecting others around interests as a means of serving God?

Want to start your own group? Contact Kathryn Bradshaw or the church office. Not in a group? We encourage you to join one of our existing groups.

Here is a listing of the current Connection Groups (Continued on next page)



The Christian Book Club meets in the church library at 10:00 AM on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Our next meeting will be **Wednesday, February 14th**, and we will be discussing *The Martyr’s Song (Book 1)* by Ted Dekker. The next reading selection is *West With Giraffes* by Lynda Rutledge. Contact Karen Crout or the Church Office with any questions.

*Can’t come to the Book Club? Books from our reading selections are also available in the church library. When you enter the library, go to the bookcase on the opposite wall (to the left of the window). You will find the books on the bottom two shelves. There is a sign indicating that these are Book Club books. **Feel free to take any of the books!***

The Sew 'n Sews meet on Mondays from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM in the church choir room.

Recent donations included fleece blankets to First Stop and some rag quilts to our CDC. We are currently working on children’s blankets for the Child Advocacy Center. There’s something for everyone to make, no matter your skill level or sewing/craft interest.

Come and join us! Contact Harriett Kicklighter or the church office for more information.



CONNECTION GROUPS (PAGE 2)

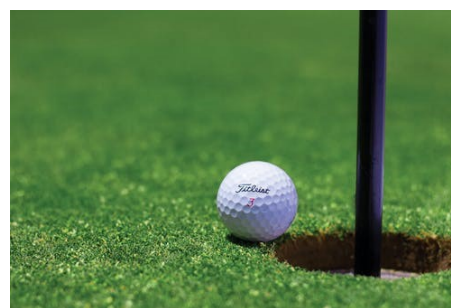
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A Bridge Group meets once a month on the 4th Thursday except in November and December (meeting instead on the 3rd Thursday). This is party bridge – just for fun and friendship. If interested, contact Mary Jane Reumann or the church office for more information.

Friday Afternoon Golf is organized by Dennis Sierk and Phil Nelson. Time and place: The par 3 course at Hampton Cove every Friday afternoon. For more information, contact Dennis or Phil. Please note the following rules:

1. No score keeping.
2. If you don't like your shot, take another one.
3. If you don't like your lie, move it.
4. Refreshments in the clubhouse, afterward.



LADIES OF GRACE CIRCLES (LOG)

Meet monthly for Fellowship & Bible Study,
For more information:

CHARITY - Pam Lowe

FAITH - Betsy Scott

HOPE - Karen Crout

PEACE - Pam Stieglitz

SAINTS ALIVE

February 2024 Edition

Saints Alive is an adult organization within Grace Lutheran Ministries. The group is open to Grace Lutheran members and their friends. The organization hosts two activities each month on the first and third Wednesdays. These activities are designed for fellowship, education, and lunch. Some of the activities involve nearby travel using the church/school bus or by cars. Other activities are held at the church involving speakers on various topics. Descriptions of the activities are placed in the Sunday bulletin, and sign-up sheets are posted in the church narthex. All who have an interest in the various activities are encouraged to join us. Sign-up is needed by the Sunday prior to the activity.



February and March Activities

Saints Alive members will have several activities during the next two months:

On **February 7th** we will be going to see the whooping cranes at Wheeler Wildlife Refuge in Decatur. The cranes are visiting the refuge on their way south for the winter. Following that visit, the group will go to lunch at a restaurant yet to be determined. Sabina Wank is the contact person for this trip.

On **February 21st** we will be going on a tour of **Back Forty Beer Company** on Leeman Ferry Road in Huntsville. This is a new beer company that just opened recently. Lunch will follow at the brewery. Jack Hengel is the contact person for the trip.

On **February 28th** the Saints Alive will host the **Lenten Dinner** in the GLS cafeteria at 5:30 PM preceding the Lenten service in the sanctuary at 6:30 PM. Donna Behnken is the contact person.

On **March 6th** we will have a guest speaker, **Jordan Dressman**, local meteorologist for Fox54 News. He will speak to the group about weather in north Alabama and what we should do to take care of ourselves. Lunch at a local restaurant will follow the presentation. Ann Duncan is the contact person for this event.

Temporarily, **Donna Behnken** and **Jack Hengel** will be the Saints Alive contact people. Contact one or the other if you have any questions or suggestions.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

February 2024 Edition



Isolation, Loneliness, and Solitude

By Merle Trich

Did you feel isolated during the ice storm in January? Maybe loneliness set in. The physical separation from our normal routines and freedoms to move about can be mentally challenging. It's not just a winter storm that can physically isolate us. Many times we isolate ourselves to avoid "hurts" or relationships that are strained. Even those closest to you may disappoint you, and when that happens, you may feel lonely. Grief with the death of a loved one can also invoke loneliness.

Initially I found the confinement to home isolating. However, God speaks in the quiet if we listen. Psalm 46:10 says, *"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."* What initially was frustration with appointments cancelled and confinement to the house was transformed into a time of intentional spiritual solitude and rest. A time to pray and find peace in a time with God through prayer and devotions. Solitude finds us alone, but not lonely, as God is there with us. Jesus often went off alone to rest and spend time with His heavenly Father. Mark 1:35 says *"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed."* Solitude provides perspective and heals.

We also may discover, when facing an overwhelming task or circumstance, that solitude empowers us to surrender, persevere, and find strength we didn't know we had.

Stephen Ministers are available to listen and journey with you through difficult times in life, such as losses through death, illness, aging, or broken relationships. The Stephen Minister will be "present" to reflect and help you connect with God's presence in your life. If you feel such a need, please contact Judy Zecher or Pastor Russ to discuss your desire to be assigned a Stephen Minister, or if you have any questions about Stephen Ministry at Grace.

May God strengthen our Stephen Ministers as they serve members of our congregation and the community.

Praise the Lord for His presence in the solitude!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 2024 Edition



Upcoming Discovering Grace Class

We will be hosting our next Discovering Grace class on **Saturday, February 3rd** (9:00 AM – 12:00 PM) and **Sunday, February 4th** (9:30 AM – 10:30 AM). This class is for those seeking to become members of Grace Lutheran. The class will be held in the Flex Space area in the Family Life Center. Register [here](#), or call the church office if you have any questions.



Christmas Mission Offering Totals

Each year at Grace we choose an international and local mission to support with our Christmas Mission offering. This year we chose to support Child Beyond International as our international mission, and First Stop as our local mission. Our total donations were as follows:

Child Beyond International - \$6,977.00
 First Stop - \$6,497.00

We well exceeded our goal of sponsoring 10 children at the orphanage run by Child Beyond International, and the money donated to First Stop will aid in ministering to the homeless population here in Huntsville. Thank you for your generous support of these organizations!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 2024 Edition



2023 Offering Statements

This week the Business Office sent out 2023 offering statements via **e-mail**. Please be sure to refer to your e-mail to obtain this important tax documentation. If you would prefer to receive your 2023 giving statement in the mail, or if you have any questions regarding your giving statement, please contact the Business Office at 256-881-0552 or at businessoffice@glshsv.org.



GROW Update and New Opportunity

The Crusades

After a short break, The Crusades class will pick up again beginning on **February 11th** in the Cafeteria on Sunday morning at 9:30 PM.

Prayer Bible Study

During the season of Lent, we will be focusing on prayer together as a church body. As a part of that focus, many of our Communities and Bible Studies will be going through the study, *"Prayer: Does it Make Any Difference?"* by Philip Yancey. If you would like to be a part of this study, and are not a part of a group, we would like to get you connected. Contact Jen Roettjer for more information on which Communities and Bible studies would work best for you.

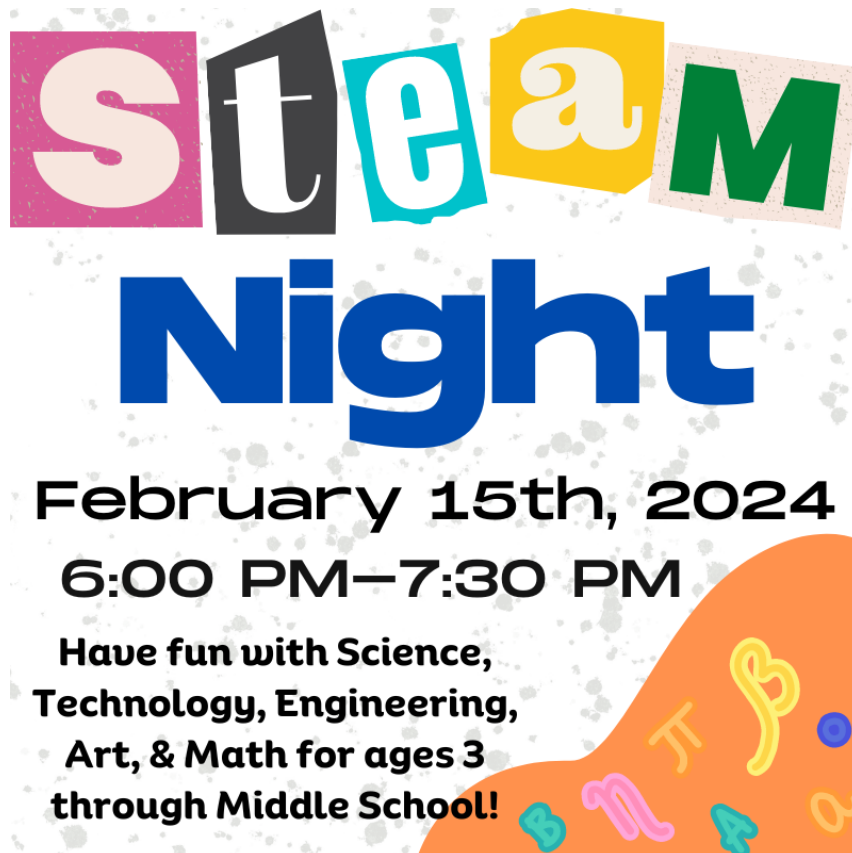
ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 2024 Edition



Lenten Services

The season of Lent begins on **February 14th** with Ash Wednesday. This Lenten season we will be focusing on different prayers throughout scripture. Each Wednesday the service will begin at **6:30 PM**, with a fellowship meal beforehand at **5:30 PM**.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 2024 Edition



Fundraising Trivia Night

This year the GLS 7th and 8th graders will be heading on a class trip to St. Louis. In order to raise money, they will be hosting a **Trivia Night** in the GLC Gym on **Friday, February 23rd at 6:30 PM**. The entry fee is **\$8/person** and you can reserve a team table (up to 8 people), a partial table, or register as an individual and be added to a team. Concessions will be available for purchase. Childcare will also be available for \$5 per child and can be paid at drop-off. Registration for childcare will close on **Tuesday, February 20th**. Sign-up [here](#).

Join us for a fun night of trivia and fellowship! Register [here](#) to reserve your spot!



Upcoming Voters' Assembly Meeting

Join us on **February 18th** around **12:00 PM** following the conclusion of the 10:45 AM worship service as we discuss the interviews of the seminary candidates and vote on the recommendation from the Call Committee regarding the next step forward.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 2024 Edition



Upcoming Blood Drive

Grace Lutheran hosts the LifeSouth Bloodmobile every other month, and often has a great turnout to support the hospitals in our local community. Our first blood drive of the new year will be **Sunday, February 25th**. All donors will receive a \$20 E-Gift Card. Stay tuned for the sign-up link in upcoming bulletins, worship emails, and on the Grace Lutheran website.

Parent Panel

Parenting has many challenges, and those challenges change as our kids continue to grow. In order to help support you in your parenting journey, Grace will be hosting a **Parent Panel** for parents of Junior High kids on **February 27th** at **6:30 PM** in the Assembly room. We will answer the question: What would you like to know about high school before your kids start? We will discuss topics such as social media, extra-curricular activities, driving, and more. Even if you are a year or two away from entering the next stage, our panel of experienced parents and teachers will pass along their observations and advice to help prepare you as your children enter into the next phase of life.

Grace Lutheran Church & School

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Huntsville, AL 35801

Phone: 256-881-0552
Fax: 256-881-0563
E-mail: secretary@gracelutheran-hsv.org

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

Sundays

8:00 AM

Blended Worship

1st & 2nd Sundays of the Month

Traditional Worship

3rd & 4th Sundays of the Month

10:45 AM

Contemporary Worship

Every Sunday

Communion

8:00 AM 1st & 3rd Sunday

10:45 AM 2nd & 4th Sunday

Check Us Out Online!
www.gracelutheran-hsv.org

STAFF & LAY LEADERSHIP

STAFF

Pastor.....Pastor Russ Gipson
Principal Delaine Schiestel
CDC Director..... Jessica McGuire
Director of Christian Education Jen Roettjer
Business Manager..... Laura Muelling
Properties Manager..... Jack Hengel
Event & Facility Coordinator..... Pam Lowe
Office Manager Kristin Haycock
Receptionist.....Laura Ohme

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ChairJim Kirsch
Vice ChairBrian Steeve
Financial/Secretary Nancy Kiser
Member at Large June Kalange
Member at Large Steve Rice
Member at Large Jeff Rullman
Member at Large Jeff Sanders

ELDERS MINISTRY TEAM

Michael Beutel	Jim Hartmann
Mike Banzhoff	Jordan Haycock
Dick Bradshaw	Scott Jagger
Craig Camealy	Kevin Pedersen
Jason Cuny	Dexter McClure
Mike Ellis	Gene Satterfield
Ed Fulda	

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LUTHERAN