

First Grace Notes



Join us for any of our Lenten meals & services!

We are so blessed! We will again be sharing meals and fellowship before our Wednesday night Lenten Services! Join us! Meals will be served at 5:30 PM with service beginning at 6:15 PM. Our meals this year will be served by the Youth going on our summer mission trip.

Thank you for the spiritual and financial support you so willingly share with our Youth!

March 4 - 5:30 meal - Sloppy Joes, Chips, Fruit Tray, Dessert
6:15 service in Grace Hall

March 11- 5:30 meal - Baked Potato Bar, Veggie Tray, Dessert
6:15 service in Grace Hall

March 18- 5:30 meal - Spaghetti, French Bread, Green Beans, Dessert
6:15 service in Grace Hall

March 25- 5:30 meal - Pulled Pork, Hot Dogs, Green Beans, Dessert
6:30 service in Grace Hall

April 2 - Maundy Thursday, no meal
6:15 PM in the sanctuary

April 4 - Good Friday service at 6:15 PM in the sanctuary

April 6- Easter Service - 10:30 AM

****NEEDED****If you would be willing to read for the Maundy Thursday or Good Friday service(s), please let Carrie Barker know. Thanks!

This month let's meet all of our call committee:

Donna Bruesewitz; chair; Julie Anhorn, Maddie Bruesewitz, Nancy Danzow, Jeff Huftalin, Brodie Mitchell, Tracy Ruehlow, and Nicole Wigern.

Over the past year, this committee finalized the congregational profile with the completion of the video that was submitted to the NALC. In the upcoming months, time will be spent prepping questions for when we have the opportunity to interview pastoral candidates. If you haven't yet, watched the video about First Grace, you can find it on YouTube as First Grace Lutheran Church Intro Video.

The Call Committee is considered an Advisory Committee that is created by the Church Council. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, the duties of the Call Committee shall be as follow

- Contact the NALC Bishop's Office and/or Regional Dean for assistance with the call process.
- Prayerfully study and review the congregation's mission and pastoral needs.
- Gather descriptive information about the congregation to be in compiling and completing the Congregational Profile Report.
- Receive recommendations from the NALC Bishop or Regional Dean for study.
- Interview pastoral candidate(s).
- Recommend a candidate to the congregation at a Special Meeting called for that purpose.

Continue praying that God will send us a Shepard to guide us.

JOEL 2:12-13 "EVEN NOW," DECLARES THE LORD, "RETURN TO ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH FASTING AND WEeping AND MOURNING." REND YOUR HEART AND NOT YOUR GARMENTS. RETURN TO THE LORD YOUR GOD, FOR HE IS GRACIOUS AND COMPASSIONATE, SLOW TO ANGER AND ABOUNDING IN LOVE, AND HE RELENTS FROM SENDING CALAMITY



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

March 15-
Community Choir at
First Grace

March 23-
5:30 PM Church
Council Meeting

10 AM Bible Study
on Wednesdays in
First Grace Hall

March 29 -
Food Bank
Sunday

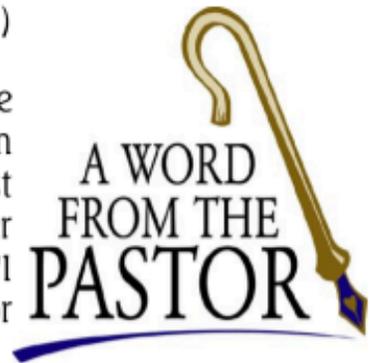


**Please see calendar on the last page for more events or scan this QR code for the calendar.

Ways to stay connected with FGLC:
*website: firstgracelutheran.com
Youtube: First Grace Lutheran Church - Osage
*Instagram: @fglc2024
Facebook: First Grace Lutheran Church

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1)

Thus begins one of the most beloved chapters of the Bible, the 23rd Psalm. I have used it countless times in hospital rooms and care centers, and have leaned upon it just as often in my personal devotions. But I have begun to wonder about this first verse, in particular. It makes quite a claim, "I shall not want." And I can't help but wonder if it's true for myself. It all comes down to that word "want."



Having been a father for 30-plus years now, I have had a lot of practice at explaining to my children the difference between our "needs" and our "wants". "I need a new phone." No, the phone you already have works fine." "I need some pop to drink." "Actually, I'm sure that water will suffice." And how often we have heard or said, "I'm starving," or the famous line "There's nothing to eat," while the speaker is gazing into a full pantry or refrigerator.

But, as you may have already noted, the Psalmist did not say, "I shall not need." He said simply "I shall not want." Now 'want' is an entirely different thing altogether than need. When I am honest about my life situation, I seem to 'want' a great deal of the time. I want more time or more money or more energy or more sleep or more happiness or more success or more freedom or more, well, you get the idea. And I don't think I'm alone in this 'wanting' quite a lot. Most of us 'want', if not the same things, at least some things. So what are we to make of this truth about ourselves in light of the Psalm's words, "I shall not want."

It is tempting to dismiss the apparent incongruence of the Christian's life of faith in which we "shall not want" with our actual life of "want" by saying that the Psalmist isn't talking about the little 'wants' that seem part of our daily existence. But that may be a bit of a cop-out. Could it be, instead, that whenever we 'want' something, no matter how small or too small a degree it may be, we are displaying a lack of faith in God? Consider what Paul says in **Colossians 3:5**, "Put to death whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry)." What is greed, after all, but to want more than what you have? And Paul says that greed (wanting) is idolatry. And idolatry means to seek after other gods. Or to use Martin Luther's explanation to the 1st Commandment (You shall have no other gods), "We should fear, love, and trust God above all things." We also read from Paul in **Philippians 4:11-12**, "I have learned, in whatever situation I am in, to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need."

So, to pull all these pieces together, to 'want' is to show a lack of trust in God. Whereas to fully trust in God would actually be to 'want' for nothing, to be content with what God has provided you. So, the Psalm begs the question for each of us: "Is the Lord actually my shepherd, or not?"



Monthly Matters~First Grace Youth~

Building Our Faith.....

Our kids took an exciting journey through parts of the Old Testament and we discovered how God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things!

First, we met **young David**, the shepherd boy no one expected — except God! Samuel anointed him king, teaching us that God looks at the heart, not appearances.

Next, we climbed **Mount Carmel** with **Elijah**, who trusted God completely. When God answered with fire, the children learned that real faith means believing even when others don't.

Then came the blazing story of **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** in the fiery furnace. They bravely stood for what was right, reminding us we can follow God even when it's hard.

Finally, we helped **Nehemiah** rebuild **Jerusalem's wall**! The kids worked together just like the people did, learning that God gives us responsibility and strength to finish the work He gives us.

Through election, faith, resistance, and responsibility, our students discovered that God calls, helps, and stands with His people in every situation, always.....and that includes them!

Thank you to everyone that makes each and every Sunday morning the success that they are! Whether it's cooking breakfast, supporting us in prayer, teaching or bringing your children, we are all part of bringing the most important thing to them, God's Word!

Kids—if you haven't yet had the chance to join us for Sunday School, please do!

There is so much fun and learning going on! We'd love to see you!



Our 5th Grade First Communion Class will be beginning Sunday, March 1st. This class is open to all kids 5th grade (and up as needed) for instruction on First Communion. Classes will be Sunday mornings during the Sunday School hour. Fifth grade students and parents will receive an informational letter soon. If you have a son or daughter who is not in 5th grade but older, who has not had their First Communion and you would like them to receive instruction- please contact Julie.

Mark your calendars

with these exciting Dates!

*First Communion Sunday-Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026

*Confirmation Sunday-April 19, 2026

*High School Youth Mission Trip-May 30-June 7, 2026

*Bible Camp-July 6-8, 2026 (Registration begins April 1st!)

*Vacation Bible School-Monday, August 3-Thursday, August 6, 2026

All of our fabulous activities are that way because the dedicated volunteers make them that way! Please prayerfully consider donating time with us this summer to make all of this work! Information on each will be out soon!





It's a TEAM effort! Our 2026 Mission Trip is officially in the works! We currently have 15 registered to go! But there is always room for YOU! If you are interested in our trip, please touch base with Julie.

We are planning various fundraisers to help us help the people of this area of Texas. We also have a fund jar in the Narthex for anyone wanting to make donations.

Save your change for us :) Donate when you can :) Send a little each week :) Help us be the hands and feet of our Jesus!

Updates- Church Council Meeting 2/23/2026

Discipleship: The Discipleship committee has decided to give the Youth \$1,000 to be used as needed for Bible Camp and they will also provided Bible Camp t-shirts this year. They are also looking into new blinds for Grace Hall to replace the curtains. The property committee will hang them once they arrive.

Faith Formation: The Faith Formation committee continue to finalize Lenten services and the shut-in process. They are working on hosting an event called "Graced Tables." They also encourage each committee to begin their meetings with a prayer.

Property: The Property committee reported that the boiler was inspected and heat tape was put in the gutters. They were also able to obtain risers for youth programs.

Resource: The Resource committee renewed a CD and are working on insurance quotes.

Children & Youth Education: The Education committee reported Sunday School is going well. First Communion classes for 5th graders start in March. The youth going on the Mission Trip will be planning and serving the Lenten meals. Dates for Bible Camp and Bible School are set.

Other Updates: Donna Bruesewitz presented a request for a new camera and controller for the sound booth. Hakon is looking into a new copier that will collate and staple, so we will be able to print our own bulletins. Carrie Barker will create a new member information booklet. The council decided to trial having fellowship before worship and still continue the current fellowship after worship.

COMING IN MARCH!!

The First Grace online apparel store will be open March 8th and run through March 22. Orders will be able to be picked up at the church on April 1st. Look for an email or on social media for the link to order. Also the next 2 Sundays, we will have helpers in Grace Hall to help you place your order, if needed.



OSAGE COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE

MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026
1:00 pm - 6:00 pm

First Grace Lutheran Church - Grace Hall | 726 State St. | Osage

WALK INS WELCOME call: 800.287.4903
Web: lifeservebloodcenter.org
Text: LIFESERVE to 515.815.7242



Thank you for hosting a recent blood drive!
Feel free to share these results.

Celebrations from Osage Community Blood Drive
February 18, 2026

- 45 Registered Donors
- 1 First Time Donors
- 38 Eligible Donors
- 44 Units Collected
- Up to 122 lives saved or sustained!

Milestone Donors

- 1 Gallon - Ann Powers and Susanne Guy
- 4 Gallons - Jan Adams
- 8 Gallons - Timothy News
- 9 Gallons - Debra Popp
- 16 Gallons - Eric Julien



Are you shut-in this winter due to cold weather or illness? We would love to visit you or someone you know... we can drop off bulletins or provide communion. Please let us know if you would like a Pastor visit or someone from the Faith Formations committee to visit you. You may reach Carrie Barker at 641-832-9082 or let any council member know.

Come join in the addition of a Pre-fellowship time!
When: before worship during the Sunday School hour starting March 8th!
Where: Grace Hall
Who: Anyone!



****Treat providers DO NOT need to provide for this fellowship time. Treats will still be used for fellowship AFTER worship.**

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

As of February 26, 2026, we have raised \$118,548.25 towards our goal of \$450,000.

The Cross at First Grace Lutheran Church, Osage, Iowa

By Kathleen Stauffer

Our journey to establish a mission plant church has not always been easy. We needed a place to worship, we needed a pastor, we needed a name; basically, we needed almost everything—including a cross. What we did have was a growing congregation who were eager to hear the Christ-centered Word of God in a traditionally grounded church that was also mission driven and congregationally focused.

The cross in the Christian church is a central reminder of hope, new beginnings, strength during difficult times, healing, faith, and especially a reminder of the death and resurrection of Jesus, Our Savior, who died for our sins so that we might have eternal life with him. We began our worship services at The Cedar Valley Seminary on 7th Street in Osage, Iowa, without a cross. However, there was an expressed need in March of 2024 for a cross at our Easter service. Worship would be held at the Watts Theater on Main Street—a place that would accommodate a larger group of worshippers.

Two of the women of our congregation approached their husbands with a question: Can you make a cross for our Easter service? Tedd and Jeff, who had known each other since childhood years, met in one of their woodshops, and started brainstorming. The woodpile in the workshop might have something that would make a simple cross for the Easter service. A long piece of Burr Oak caught their attention. It had been collecting dust with other timber in a sizeable wood pile. The two men pulled the heavy, rough piece from the lumber odds-and-ends with thoughts of “The Old Rugged Cross.” The upper left corner was splintered, but its character jumped out at them.

Tedd thought of the farm sale years ago where he vaguely remembers buying a wooden bench. A pile of discarded wood had been thrown in with his purchase. He recalled taking special note of this six inch by eight foot Burr Oak log. Known to be strong under compression and resistant to rot and decay, Burr Oak was useful for a wide variety of things from fence posts to floors to furniture. And, at that time, he considered the possibility of a fireplace mantle. This one length of Burr Oak, however, was destined to become more than a forgotten discarded piece of lumber or a fireplace mantle.

An air compressor was used to blow off the dust and dirt. Steel brushes were carefully used to clean it more thoroughly. A light sanding would protect anyone from slivers while handling it. The last step was to cut off about one-third of its length to use as the horizontal piece. The two pieces were notched together to make a cross. Although only a two-hour project, as each step was completed, the two men began to feel a respect for this cross that worshippers would focus on Easter Morning. Thinking it would be a “one and done” chore, as they were working with their hands, they were hoping for more.

Its first home may have been a nearby grove or forest area where it provided shade and shelter to squirrels and birds with its wide-spreading branches and leaves. Or, it may have existed on a far-away hill, alone, for many to see, if one had taken the time to notice. With its strong, resistant hardness, perhaps it became a part of a farm building for machinery or farm animals at one time. For some reason, it ended up at a farm sale in a pile of unwanted pieces and in due course made an appearance as a cross at the Watts Theater on Main Street in Osage, Iowa. A circle of barbed wire was shaped around it to

remind worshippers of the crown of thorns. Surrounded by palms and spotlighted, it had an impact all its own that Sunday morning, March 31, 2024, when some 300 worshippers sang “Christ the Lord is Risen Today.”

Following Easter, the cross was returned to the workshop, both men hoping this wasn’t the last time they would see it at a service. First Grace Lutheran was meeting at the Cedar Valley Seminary at the time and it was not used there. However, the church was soon in need of additional space and more permanent accommodations and moved to a rental property, what used to be the Osage Senior Citizens Center, May, 2024. Many hands and much refurbishing changed a somewhat empty building into a warm and friendly environment for worship. The first service was May 1, 2024. We soon learned to think of it as our home. It is an interesting note that the Senior Citizens Center in Osage used to be a livery stable in the 1800s and provided horse boarding. Although the cross barely fit through its doors, the congregation thought it to be right at home in its new place.

In July, 2024, the cross was once again moved from its home and secured to a trailer. Surrounded by a few children and adults, it participated in the 4th of July parade. On this warm and sunny day, the crown of thorns was absent. In its place was a fishing net holding fish--of course! “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” Matthew 4:19

A little over a year later, First Grace Lutheran moved a few blocks down the street into what used to be the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church. On July 13, 2025, we gathered for our first service in our new home. Many hours had been spent cleaning, painting, and moving items to prepare the Sunday school rooms, Sanctuary, and Grace Hall. The cross was moved in the midst of all the busyness to the front and center of the Sanctuary. When parishioners arrived Sunday morning, they were humbled and touched when they first saw the cross in its new environment. Something that took a couple of hours of time to construct in a woodshop, the old rugged cross now had a more permanent home.

Although crosses are made of a variety of materials from glass, to woven rushes, to fiberglass; this simple, rustic, wooden cross was a perfect fit for First Grace. The cross is there as we celebrate the various church seasons, as we worship weekly, as we clean and care for what we have. It stands above the chatter of children. It hears our praises and our prayers as we listen to the pastor share God’s Word. We celebrate, we give the peace, we repent, and we are forgiven. A cross that cost nothing to represent a cross that cost everything.



Helpers in March

READERS:

March 1- Julie Anhorn
March 8- Carrie Barker
March 15- Donna Bruesewitz
March 22- Harv Demuth
March 29- Amber Hanson



COMMUNION ASSISTANTS:

March 1- Jan Witt & Lori Valsek
March 15- Mike & Tracy Ruehlow

USHERS:

March 1- Matt Bartz & Jesse Mehmen
March 8- TA Kleckner & Mike Ruehlow
March 15- Steve Anhorn & Philip Young
March 22- Mark Wagner & Alec Walls
March 29- Jonathon Rogers & Bill Spitz

TREATS:

March 1- Darcy Betts
March 8- Theresa Berg & Joan Kirk
March 15- Carrie Barker
March 22- Donna Bruesewitz
March 29- Sheila Olsen

CAN ORGANIZERS:

March 1- Mehmen
March 8- Spitz
March 15- Balsley
March 22- Demuth
March 29- Huftalin

GREETERS:

March 1- Kathy Stauffer
March 8- Paul & Nancy Danzow
March 15- Bev Schuler
March 22- Jake & Theresa Schafer
March 29- Hakkon & Ashley Rosendahl

CAN HAULERS:

March 1- Mehmen
March 8- Spitz
March 15- Evenson
March 22- Williamson
March 29- Huftalin

Weekly Attendance:

February 1- 99
February 8-102
February 15 -134
February 18- 82
February 22 - 97
February 25- 51

Giving for January 2026

Regular Offering: \$10,242.00
Fundraising: \$9,930.00
Can money: \$1,182.60

Donations/Memorials:

*Memorials given in memory of Kathleen Drew
*Memorials given in memory of Janele Valasek
*Mission donation of \$500 from Norway Lutheran, Saint Olaf, IA

MARCH



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
9:30 AM 1 Sunday School 9:30 AM 5 th grade First Communion Class 10:30 AM Worship with Communion & Children's Choir	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 9:30 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM 5 th grade First Communion Class 10:30 AM Worship	9	10	11 *10 AM Bible Study *5:30 PM Lenten meal *6:15 Lenten Service	12	13	14 Pastor's day off
15 9:30 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM 5 th grade First Communion Class 10:30 AM Worship with Communion **Community Choir at First Grace	16 Community Blood Drive at FGLC 1:00 PM-6:00PM	17	18 *10 AM Bible Study *5:30 PM Lenten meal *6:15 Lenten service	19	20	21 Pastor's day off
22 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship	23 *5:30 PM Council Meeting	24	25 *10 AM Bible Study *5:30 PM Lenten meal *6:15 Lenten Service	26	27	28 Pastor's day off
27 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship FOOD BANK Sunday	27	27	27 *10 AM Bible Study *5:30 PM Lenten meal *6:15 Lenten Service			Pastor's day off