

# In the Loop With Pastor Clay

## Faithful Priorities

*Luke 11:11-13 [Jesus said to his disciples,] "Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

In the above Bible passage, Jesus was asking rhetorical questions, that is, questions with an obvious answer. The obvious answer to Jesus' questions should be No, but sometimes I wonder whether there are some people who don't know the obvious answer!

A father was holding his young daughter at a major league baseball game. A fly ball was hit in his direction, and he tried to catch it. OK, in itself, there's nothing wrong with that. But the father was so distracted by trying to catch the baseball, that he dropped his little daughter. I mean he really dropped her. She took a real fall! His wife gave him the stink-eye, his surprised and crying daughter gave him a pop on his hip, and he didn't even get the baseball! I share this story because there are more parents dropping their kids than just this one father. Maybe not literally, but figuratively.

Over the years I've heard some parents say things like, "My parents forced me to go to church and Sunday School when I was young, so I'm not going to force religion on my kids. I'm going to let them choose their own religion, if any, when they're old enough to decide for themselves." To some people, those might sound like wise and sophisticated words, but to me it sounds like parents dropping their kids. Hmm, are parents who say such things being consistent? Do they also say things like, "My parents forced me to go to school, do my homework, take a bath or shower, brush my teeth, go to the doctor, come home before dark, eat the food on my plate before I got dessert, and wear warm clothing when it was cold outside, so I'm not going to make my kids do those things. Rather, I'm going to let my kids choose whether to do those things when they're old enough to decide for themselves." The answer to these rhetorical questions is hopefully No!

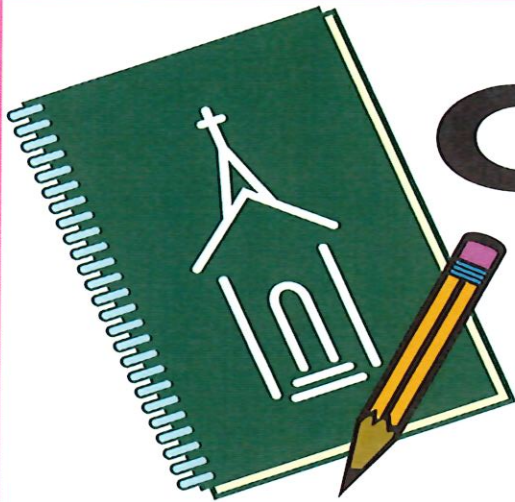
The Lord calls parents (and grandparents!) to show their children the way; to equip their children with what they need to have a better shot at good, meaningful, purposeful, productive, joyful, and passionate lives. A big part of that equipping is a solid, multi-faceted Christian education - not just academics, but also rich experiences. Grace Lutheran Church and our fabulous Christian Education Team offer terrific material and impactful experiences that are faithful to Jesus and the leading of the Holy Spirit as part of the process of equipping youth (and adults) with the tools and resources they/we need to enjoy a better way. As we approach a new academic year beginning in September, consider engaging with the Lord and his holy church through regular church attendance, enrolling your kids in Grace's Sunday School, Confirmation (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders), and Youth Group, and attending opportunities for adults!

Parents can set a faithful example not just by making their kids take a bath, but also by prioritizing the most important education this side of heaven, and by being some of the best witnesses of our loving Savior, Jesus. (The church will show you how!) That's what parents will be; unless, of course, they get distracted and drop the child!

God's blessings for a beautiful and fruitful August!

Pastor Clay

## Church Council 2025



# Council Notes

**\*\*NO COUNCIL MEETING IN JULY\*\***

**\*SEEKING NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS\***

**-CONTACT PASTOR CLAY IF YOU ARE INTERESTED**

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS**

DOUG PINNOW (26)-President	920-896-2718	Dougforth2175@hotmail.com
KATIE WORTHING (26)-Vice President	920-203-5886	worthing@gmail.com
JAMIE JAHNKE- (27)-Secretary	920-392-4650	Skiesareblue44@gmail.com
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SHELLY ZILLS (25)	920-210-7133	Shelleysnacks@yahoo.com
PENNY TEBO (25)	920-872-9900	penny-tebo@charter.net
DAN KELM (25)	920-748-7743	dan@graphicssignandletter.com
MELANIE OPPOR (27)	920-896-3133	jmdopp86@gmail.com



## **Social Concerns Committee**

Many rains and sultry afternoons have been the norm this year. But always there is the evening twilight, the fresher air, and the coolness of the dawn to greet us. After a night of peaceful rest we always find a new morning, a new start, and a gift of a new day that we haven't seen before. Now what are you going to do with it?

With the problems of life and the sorrows of man, we have the reprieve, this pause, this moment every morning where we get a chance to start anew.

You will not find time for everything. If you want time, you must make it. To improve this golden moment and to catch the good that is within our reach, is the great art of life. We have this brief, shining moment. Use it wisely and thank the Lord for it.

The Committee is pleased to announce to everyone, that \$742.00 was raised for the food pantry in the Mid-Summer Canless Food Drive. The check was personally presented to them. The dollar amount collected will permit the purchase of over 3500lbs of food product!!!!

At the Committee's last meeting we held an exploratory conversation of community social concerns outside the realm of just the church community. This included to know and understand what degree homelessness maybe in Ripon; what amount of resources are available to those persons that are vulnerable; what is available to assist students whose families struggle to meet necessary school supplies and clothing needs; for the safety and welling being of persons that maybe involved in an unhealthy domestic arrangement, what advocate resources are available for domestic abuse?

The Committee will further discuss these items at our next meeting.

Until next month, Shalom.



### **THANK YOU!!**

Thank you to everyone who helped in any way to make 2025 VBS True North a success!! As of the publication date of this Grace Notes, we are right in the middle of the experience...so we'll do another wrap up next month. But please know that all your efforts – whether it was serving as a crew leader or planning team member, coming in to help with snacks, bringing food for the family meal, cleaning up after each night – ALL your time and energy is appreciated!!



# *Christian Education - Information and Updates*

## AUGUST 2025

### Christian Education Team Meetings:

**-Sunday, August 10th at 10:15 a.m.** in the Sunday School Office

**JOIN US!!!-ALL ARE WELCOME**

### Events/Activities:

**-July 27th - July 31st VBS**

Register at [riponvbs.org](http://riponvbs.org) or speak to Laurie Parks

**-August 24th**

6:00-8:00 p.m.-**WELCOME BACK BONFIRE**



There are NO Sunday School classes during Summer.

Classes will resume in

September

If anyone is interested in teaching or assisting with Sunday school or is just curious to what it all involves, please contact:



Laurie Parks

Maddy Pinnow

[Laurieparks26@gmail.com](mailto:Laurieparks26@gmail.com) or [madelyn@graceripon.com](mailto:madelyn@graceripon.com)



# WOMEN OF GRACE

**CIRCLES:** Interested in joining others for fellowship and bible study? The Eve circle currently meets on the first Monday of the month at 1pm. The Bethany circle meets the first Monday of the month at 6:30pm in the church lounge to play different games members bring. Bethany circle will meet August 4<sup>th</sup>. Please visit either group during meeting times to find out more.

**\*BETHANY CIRCLE WILL MEET AUGUST 4TH @ 6:30 pm –Join us in the Church Lounge\***

Monies are available to Women of Grace wishing to attend events.

\*Please contact Lisa Beuthin, Peggy Beuthin, or Sheri Bradshaw\*

## **2025 Upcoming Events:**

### **OUTREACH FOR HOPE**

Registration is **NOW OPEN** for our [2025 Ride Run Walk](#) fundraiser!

Join all of your friends the morning of Saturday, September 27 for road and trail bike ride, walking and running routes, followed by a picnic lunch and fellowship. There are four event sites to choose from:

**Grafton Event Site** ([Grace Lutheran Church](#))

**Kenosha Event Site** ([Petrifying Springs Park, site 3](#))

**Milwaukee Event Site** ([Washington Park, site 7](#)) **Waukesha Event Site**

NEW - [Fox River Sanctuary, E.B. Shurts Building](#))

Our theme for this year is "**Hope in Motion!**" Together, we aim to raise \$165K for grants to life-giving ministries serving with low-income communities in the Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA.

Want to participate, volunteer, or join us for fellowship at the picnic after the event? Please register now! [info@outreachforhope.org](mailto:info@outreachforhope.org)

\*\*\*\*Registration for the Biennial Conference is now open! The Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup> event at St. Mark's in Neenah will include breakfast, fellowship, a business meeting, worship service, lunch and featured speaker Jacqueline Bussie, author of "Love Without Limits": Jesus' Radical Vision of Love with No Exceptions.

Register online at [rebrand.ly/biennial2025](https://rebrand.ly/biennial2025)

\*\*\*\*Plan ahead for the 2026 Gathering in Des Moines, Iowa! Event registration is now open. Go to [welcatg.org](https://welcatg.org) for more information.

## 815 Club

Thank you to Max and Terry Saylor for hosting the cookout at their home. It was a beautiful evening and we all had a wonderful time!!

All adult members of Grace are invited to join us for fellowship and fun!! We have set our next outing - please plan to join us!!

We will meet August 21 at 6:00 pm at Vines and Rushes Winery on Cty E.

Dutch treat for pizza, beer, or wine...your choice!!

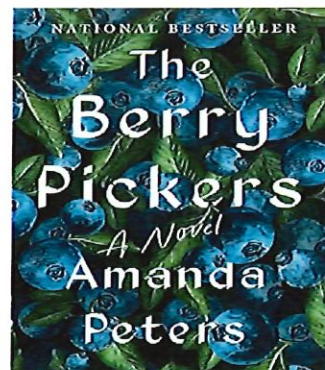
We will be in the Fireside room...*hope to see you all there!!*



## Grace Readers:

JOIN US TUESDAY, AUGUST 26TH  
@ 6:30 PM IN THE CHURCH LOUNGE  
to discuss...

*The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters*







## OLD BAGS FOR GRACE

August 2025

Help us keep plastics out of the waterways and landfills!! We recycle SOFT plastics – and receive benches for our efforts. Bring your SOFT plastics with you on Sunday – or drop them near the box at the Sunday School door.

This is the information and more specific from TREX....so please follow it carefully. **We don't have the manpower to go through every bag and sort for the correct recyclable plastics. We need your assistance!!**

Follow the lists below and be careful about what you bring in.

### YES - DO RECYCLE THESE:

Grocery bags	Pallet Wrap and Stretch Film	Bread Bags
Case Overwrap	Dry cleaning bags	Newspaper Sleeves
Produce Bags	Product Overwrap	Retail Bags
Air Pillows	Bubble Wrap	Electronic Wrap
Ziplock and other food storage		Plastic Shipping Envelopes

If you don't see your item on the list – try this: if the plastic STRETCHES when you pull it, it can be recycled with TREX.

### **NO** - DO **NOT** RECYCLE THESE:

Candy bar wrappers	Chip/Snack bags	Net or Mesh produce bags
Pet Food Bags	PPE: gloves, masks, etc.	Pre-washed salad mix bags
Hot Dog or Meat Wrappers	Pool covers	Vinyl shower curtains
Vinyl tablecloths	Shiny crinkly films like floral wrap	Bedding or linen packaging
Backyard Ice Rinks	Lamination film	Frozen Food Bags

If your plastic tears like paper or is shiny and/or makes a crinkly sound in your hand, it CANNOT be sent to TREX.

We have a wonderful crew of volunteers that help us bag plastic on Sunday mornings...and help us weigh and load for the trip to Oshkosh. We are appreciative of their help...but could always use more folks to assist. If you are interested, please stop and see Sue Mokler at the table on Sunday morning or reach out to Max and Terry Saylor for details.



August 2025

We have set a goal of \$45,000 for sales for the year. Our sales to date are below the average needed to meet that goal. In order to reach \$45,000, we need a monthly average of \$3,750. To date through the end of July, our monthly average is only \$2,705.

Can you help us??

For every gift card sold, a rebate comes back to Grace - those rebates range from 2% to 12% - with some companies offering special rates up to 15%. It's a win-win because you only purchase the cards you will use.

A large number of local business options are available for you to have immediately. Cards are available Sunday mornings and in the office Monday through Thursday. There are also over 700 other retailers who participate in the program..so if you're looking for something special, please ask!! We can order it!!

We have three options for you to designate your preferred ministry of Grace Church. Your rebates will help the Youth Fund, General Operational Fund, or the Improvement Fund.

We are always looking for new participants...and you can order online and have your order delivered to your home...and Grace still gets the rebate....OR you can purchase reloadable cards!!

2025 GOAL	2025 To Date (7/27/2025)
1. Increase sales by 10% in Q3	12%
2. Reduce operational costs by 5%	3%
3. Launch new product line by Q4	Completed
4. Improve customer satisfaction score	85%
5. Expand market reach to new regions	20%

\$45,000	Sales	\$ 18,925	Sales
\$ 1,350	Profit	\$ 618	Profit
\$ 3,750	Monthly Average	\$ 2,705	Currently Monthly Average

**Thank You** to everyone who continues to purchase RaiseRight (formerly SCRIP).

We are asking everyone to **update their registration form** and indicate a preference for donating the rebates. The options are General Operational Fund, Improvement Fund, Youth Fund. Please see the table on Sunday to check your registration and complete a new form.

Remember, the amount and percentage of rebate varies with the card type that is purchased...and there are specials and increased rebates during the year.

For those of you new to the program, RaiseRight provides gift cards from over 700+ retailers around the country. Ask for a complete list of retailers at the table. Please join us for this fundraiser where you only buy what you want and will use!!

**G Dollars for G** Grace 2025

How many G Dollars have you found?? Are you having fun looking for them?

As you know we are collecting **G dollars** in a jar in the narthex. For 2025, the **G dollars** will go toward the new audio and video system which has recently been installed. If you would prefer your G dollar support go to another ministry, submit them in an envelope and write your preference on the envelope.

Congregation members will have the choice of:

putting the **6 Dollars** in the offering plate on Sunday

putting them in the container in the narthex

putting them in an envelope. If members put their name on the donation, it will be recorded for their annual giving

And someone asked me last week if they had some money they wanted to donate and it wasn't G dollars, could they still donate to the Audio Video system... and the answer was "OF COURSE"! Put your donation in one of the envelopes and it will get credited to your giving account and help us reach our goal!!



# VBS Challenge – Kidsave Ukraine

Each year the VBS planning team selects a “Kids Helping Kids” mission. Each day, the children who participate in VBS are asked to bring in donations to support that mission. We try to alternate local missions with wider global missions each year.

The 2025 Mission for VBS is Kidsave Ukraine. We have set a goal for the VBS donations to be \$500. This flyer was circulated to the children and parents in VBS and provided to the five congregations partnering in VBS.

We have also set a challenge to MATCH whatever the VBS donations are. We encourage you to continue to collect your quarters for the tube....but to also make an additional donation during the month of August to help us meet the match from the VBS donations from the kids.



## Ripon Area VBS 2025 “Kids Helping Kids” Mission Project

### The VBS Connection

Lieutenant Colonel Clay Salmela, Wisconsin Army National Guard (Retired), is pastor at Grace Lutheran Church in Ripon. He suggested **Kidsave Ukraine** for this year’s “Kids Helping Kids” campaign. Pastor Clay was deployed to Ukraine for nine months in 2019-2020 as Brigade Chaplain. He and his Chaplain Assistant trained with Ukrainian chaplains (*Fig. 1*), and a Ukrainian woman named Nataliia served as their linguist (*Fig. 2*). Nataliia joined **Kidsave Ukraine** after the war escalated in February, 2022 and is Kidsave’s Head of Subdivision, Ukraine. Pastor Clay keeps in contact with her.

### About the Ministry

**Kidsave** is based in Culver City, CA and operates in the US, Ukraine, Colombia, and Sierra Leone. **Kidsave Ukraine** cares for children who have been separated from their families or are orphans, and they evacuate and rescue children and families from combat zones. **Kidsave Ukraine** also brings aid to front-line cities and towns. **Kidsave Miracles Center** (*Fig. 3*), which opened in the mountains of western Ukraine in summer 2024, is a place for connection, wellbeing, and opportunities for children and youth and the families who want to adopt them. Learn more at [Kidsave.org](https://www.kidsave.org).

### How You Can Help

Because special groups cover Kidsave’s administrative costs, **all of the dollars you donate go directly to programs**. A donation of **\*\$10.00** from each VBS student and volunteer is thoughtfully suggested and will be gratefully accepted at VBS. Our goal is to exceed \$500.00.



*Fig 1: Chaplains and Nataliia. R-Pastor Clay*



*Fig. 2: Nataliia*



*Fig. 3: Kids at Miracles Center*

\*Donating is not a requirement to attend VBS.



Bradley	Gabrielski	08/01
Scarlet	Hernandez	08/01
Brady	Albright	08/02
Linda	Huth	08/02
Melanie	Simpkins	08/02
Judith	Gustafson	08/05
Patti	Albright	08/06
Paul	Trochinski	08/07
Josh	Novitske	08/08
Dan	Amdahl	08/10
Sidney	Hernandez	08/10
Jensine	Salmela	08/11
Max	Saylor	08/11
Alyssa	Bradley	08/12
Eliza	Stephenson	08/13
Josh	Rieder	08/14
Allyn	Gryske	08/15
Douglas	Kelm	08/15
Leland	Cornwell	08/17
Vicky	Stollfuss	08/17
John	Perr	08/18
Jamie	Jahnke	08/19
Pam	Werth	08/19
Lisa	Wiese	08/19
Moniqua	Worthing	08/19
Brad	Larschied	08/20
Joanna	Salmela	08/20
Ryan	Metoxen	08/21
John	Perr	08/21
Jacqueline	Peterson	08/21
Robert	Webster	08/21
Jackson	Gabrielski	08/23
Jeffrey	Hunger	08/23
Andrew	Heatley	08/24
Ardell	Schoephoester	08/25
Karen	Hillier	08/26
Zach	Kelm	08/29
David	Duehring	08/30

8/1/1980	Eidahl, Cindy & Robert
8/5/1995	Wargula, Michael & Gail
08/10/0000	Slate, Mark & Anja
8/10/1974	Kelm, Doug & Kathy
8/14/2004	Trochinski, Paul & Nicole
8/15/1971	Becker, Greg & Barb
8/23/1972	Saylor, Terry & Max
8/25/2018	Christopherson, Sarah & PJ
8/28/1965	Langeberg, Marjorie & Roger
8/30/1975	Krauss, Diane & Norton

### VISIT THE HOMEBOUND...

Maplecrest- Inez Bryden &  
Faye Zacharias

Prairie Place-

Arlene Thiem & LeRoy Holl

Russell Manor-

Jackie Steifner & Jean Zeto

Valley VNA-

Mary Jane Schanke



## **WHO'S DEACON PAM?**

Hello, I am Deacon Pam Werth. I had been a member of Grace Lutheran Church before and returned after serving a church in our synod which ended a little over 10 months ago.

I was a second career seminary student, returning to seminary at age 50. I grew up on a farm outside of Markesan, which we have since sold. Prior to seminary, I worked in the accounting world for private businesses, in the Chicago area. I completed lay school with the Metro Chicago synod, which laid the groundwork for switching careers!

I am a rostered leader in the ELCA for Word and Service ministry, versus Pastor Clay is Word and Sacrament ministry.

After my first year of seminary classes at LSTC (Chicago) I completed a summer residency as a chaplain, (required as part of the curriculum for seminary and unpaid), at NW Community Hospital in Arlington Heights, IL. I completed my yearly internship (part of the curriculum with a monthly stipend of \$200) as a chaplain resident then St. Agnes Hospital in FDL. They offered me a full-time position when my residency was completed, and I was able to finish my final classes for seminary on-line while starting to serve as a staff chaplain.

I started seminary in 2004 and served at St. Agnes Hospital until the summer of 2016.

"Who am I" – members have asked me recently? Serving as a chaplain in a health care facility firmly cemented my initial call to service ministry. Part of our responsibilities as a staff chaplain was being on overnight on-call once a week and every weekend every 5-6 weeks. So, I "lived" at the hospital a times.

When you get paged to "serve" it is usually to the ER and sometimes ICU and then other floors in the hospital. When the page comes across – you respond! You don't stop and think about the patient/patients/family coming. You don't think about their "personal identities" – color, race, ethnic background, religion, sexual identity, life style; all the things that identify us as a person. You are there as a team to serve! Many times as I was running to the ER, I would pray to God for guidance. Over the years of serving as a chaplain, I covered our dialysis facilities, inpatient adult behavior health unit, St. Francis Home – skilled nursing, assisted living and independent living; and hospice. While at St. Francis home I helped plan many funerals for our residents, as they had their funeral at the on-site chapel. I have known Pastor Clay during most of this time.

I struggle with discrimination and when "our neighbors" are treated unfairly. God doesn't ask us to be the judge of others – thank goodness!

Then in the summer of 2016, I talked with the synod, and with the shortage of pastors – word and sacrament, I was able to take a call to serve 2 churches up north in the Antigo Area as their minister in the pastoral role. One church which was located 8 miles from another ELCA church. They were able to sell their church and property to a Mennonite group that had moved into the area and had been renting space from that church. This was stressful but the members of that church have finally admitted it was the right thing to do.

Clergy/rostered leaders are allowed to retire at 60, many don't. But I stayed with the second church until May of 2023, even though I could have retired. I moved back to Markesan as I have a home there, and "retired" for 2 months. A need arose for another church in our synod for a pastoral leader, initially part-time but it became full-time. My service at that church ended last year in September – my decision. So, I am back at Grace Lutheran.

I have recently contacted the synod and have asked to be put on the pulpit supply list. When a pastor needs a Sunday off, you can get called to lead worship in their congregation. Again, not knowing a lot about that specific congregation. You let God guide you. SO, we will see where this journey goes.

## *The wrecking ball swings . . .*



**SHUDDERING UNDER** the impact of a 3,200-pound wrecking ball, a 96-year-old Ripon landmark cracked, buckled and toppled to the ground last week.

An attempt to preserve the steeple of the old Grace Lutheran Church — what had been half of Ripon's claim to a skyline — at first appeared to succeed. After more than 5 hours of labor, the top 60 feet of the spire was gently lowered to the ground.

And then the effort failed: the old steeple was simply too large to move along city streets.

But the old brass bell was spared the tower's collapse. Two men clambered up the fallen brick, attached a cable leading to a hoist, and the bell swung free. It was donated to the present-day Grace Lutheran Church.

Billy Hutton, who had attempted to rescue the steeple, discovered the old church's scripts — the original charter, a list of the founding members — in the tower and turned them over to the Rev. Carl Stubenvoll of Grace Lutheran.

The building hasn't been used as a church since 1961. It was sold to the neighboring First Congregational Church in 1960, and sold again to Ripon College in 1967. It was used as a theater by the college until 1972, and it's been vacant since.

The cleared space where the old church stood will become a private garage and swimming pool.





# August

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
Worship-9 AM 3	Bethany Circle 6:30 PM 4	5	6	7	8	9 Men's Breakfast & Bible Study-7:30 AM Langford's Pub
Worship-9 AM 10	11 Social Concerns Meeting 10 AM Sharing Table 5 PM	12	13	14	15	16
Worship-9 AM 17	18 Church Council 6 PM BLOOD DRIVE 12:30-5:30 PM	19	20	21	22	23 Men's Breakfast & Bible Study-7:30 AM Location-TBT
Worship-9 AM 24	25 Grace Readers 6:30 PM-Church Lounge	26	27	28	29	30
Worship-9 AM 31						



## Grace Lutheran Church

(920) 748-5433

Clay Salmela, Pastor

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**VISIT OUR WEBSITE**  
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