



From the Pastor,

I am writing this article while watching the College World Series game and preparing to leave for Confirmation Camp. This may be my last church camp but hopefully not my last College World Series game to watch.

I became interested in the College World Series in 1985. Kathy and I came to interview with Bishop Dennis Anderson in Omaha. The motel we stayed at hosted at least one team playing in the series. My interest in the series, Nebraska, and the Nebraska Synod started that June and has continued since.

When asked why we came to Nebraska, I always blame the Holy Spirit. Of course, when things go well in my ministry, I always thank God the Holy Spirit for my ministry in rural Nebraska. I have enjoyed raising family in Wilber. There I even served a middle size church. A middle size church is defined as worshipping 101-300 people on a Sunday. First Evangelical Lutheran Church at one point worshipped 101-103 average for a couple of years.

I am thankful to end my full-time ministry in Cook and Burr. Thank you for working with me to live out our faith in God.

Pastor Jim

Church Seasons: We are currently in the green season of Time after Pentecost. The text calls us to live out our lives as children of God and avoid following the crowds not following Jesus and the Good News for us.

Church Festivals— July 3 Thomas, Apostle
 July 22 Mary Magdalene, Apostle
 July 25 James (son of Zebedee), Apostle
 July 29 Mary, Martha and Lazarus of Bethany
U.S. Holiday—July 4 Independence Day

PASTOR'S RETIREMENT DINNER

Hope will host Pastor's retirement dinner on Sunday July 12th. The Worship service will be at 10:00 AM at Hope with potluck dinner to follow. The meat will be provided by Hope. Grace members are requested to bring a covered dish.



Carol Joy Holling Camp, Conference & Retreat Center Quilt Auction

Saturday, July 25, 2026

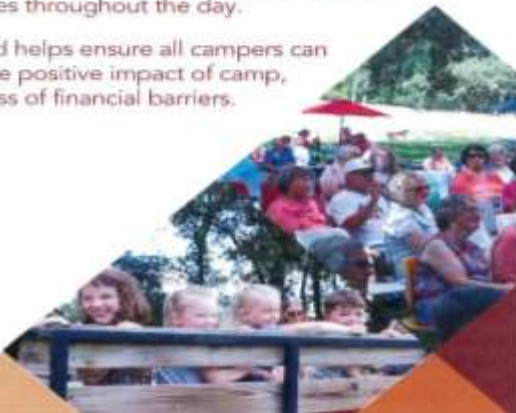
Join us for one of our most beloved traditions
the 38th annual Quilt Auction!

Enjoy a day at Carol Joy Holling Camp, connecting with the camp community and our 2026 Summer Ministry team. There will be hundreds of beautiful quilts, a delicious lunch, and activities for all ages throughout the day.

Every dollar raised helps ensure all campers can experience the positive impact of camp, regardless of financial barriers.



Scan the QR Code to
view the schedule and
preview quilts.



Vacation Bible School 2026

Hosted by Grace Lutheran, St. Paul's UCC Osage and Hope Lutheran
All kids pre-K through 6th grade are welcome!

Minimum age of 3 and must be fully potty-trained.

Where: St. Paul's UCC Osage, 3288 R Road, Cook, NE

When: July 13-17

5:30-7:45 each evening

Supper provided during VBS

VBS Kids will perform songs at the Cook Community
Church Service on July 19th!

RSVP: Please RSVP by June 28th to ensure we have the necessary
T-shirts, food and craft supplies. There is NO COST to attend!

Use the QR code to go directly to registration link or go directly to the
following registration link (Google

Form): <https://forms.gle/T7itFZYGTGVqsuVE9>



COOK COMMUNITY WORSHIP

Worship in the Park on July 19, at 9:00 a.m. sponsored by Grace Lutheran Church, Hope Lutheran Church and St. Paul UCC, Osage.

VBS Students will sing during the worship.

COOK RESCUE BREAKFAST

PANCAKES, EGGS, SAUSAGE, BISCUITS W/SAUSAGE GRAVY, COFFEE,
MILK, ORANGE JUICE

COOK FIREHALL

SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2026

8 A.M. TO 11 A.M.

FREE WILL DONATION

CELEBRATING **48 YEARS**
OF SERVICE TO THE COOK COMMUNITY

Even though the Grace Lutheran Church women are not sponsoring the traditional food stand at the Cook Days this year, all are invited to donate pies for the Food Stand and/or pies and baked goods for the Museum bake sale.

School Kit items for Lutheran World Relief are being collected. We have 100 backpacks made & ready to fill. The items needed are:

70 sheet spiral notebooks (4 each school kit)
Rulers (12" with centimeter ruler on one side)
Boxes of 16 or 24 crayons
Unsharpened #2 Pencils.

School Sales will be happening soon! Donations are welcome to help purchase the items and Thrivent Action team funds will help fill these back packs.

July Birthdays

4th – Linda Daniels
7th - Laura Finke
8th – Lori Brinkman
10th – Judy Brinkman
11th – Samantha Effken
12th – Taylor Bailey
14th – Kathy Carman
16th – Joe Brinkman
Sara Kuhl
Arlene Panko
18th – Michelle Dutcher
Mike Weber
19th – Jason Dorn
21st – Shaun Thompson
23rd - Russ Dietz
26th – Sarah Purcell
27th – Chris Thompson
29th – Daniel Moles
Ellen Mannschreck
30th – Ayden Smith
Jane Keigher

JULY ANNIVERSARIES

7/1—Robin & Andrea Eggleston
7/6—Mike & Kathy Carman
7/9—Alex & Holly Kuhl
7/11—Kirk & Brenda Ullrich
7/13—Nick & Lisa Weber
7/24— Louis & Grace Bentzinger
7/31—Tom & Lori Brinkman

On June 14th both St. Matts Church and the United Methodist Church of Johnson voted yes to become a shared ministry. Amy Woods of the Nebraska Synod will be meeting soon with Pastor Kate Woolf and the church councils of Faith, Grace, and Hope to walk us through how to become a 3-Point Ministry. As things progress, we will keep you informed.

VACATION

Pastor & Kathy will be on vacation July 20—31. Pastor Kate Woolf will be available in case of emergencies. Her cell phone # is 316-371-0803.

Worship on July 26th will be a Joint Worship at Hope at 10:00 a.m. PMA Fred Bredehoeft will lead worship. There will not be worship @ Grace.

July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 
5 Worship w/Communion - 8:30 am	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Joint Worship @ Hope - 10:00 am Pastor's Retirement Dinner/Potluck to follow Osage Ice Cream Social—5-7	13 Grace & Hope Bible Studay @ Grace 2:00 pm	14 Church Council 7:00 pm	15	16	17	18
19 Cook Community Worship in the Park - 9:00 am	20	21 Piecemakers Blanket Making - All Day	22	23	24	25
Pastor Helgren's last sermon is at the Cook Days Community Service. He will be on vacation following this service and his last day as GLC & Hope pastor is formally July 31 st .						
26 Joint Worship @ Hope Service led by Fred Bredenhoeft, PMA - 10:00 am	27	28	29	30	31	

VISITATIONS – With Pastor Jim’s retirement fast approaching members were invited to participate in two visitation training sessions. These visits would include members homebound, members in care facilities, and visits requested by members. The committee will begin their service of visitations in August. Members home bound and in care facilities can expect a visit once a month and communion will be included.

Pastor Kate Woolf (316-371-0803) of Faith Lutheran has agreed to do hospital visits upon the personal request of our members. When Pastor Kate receives a request from a Grace member, we will need to provide mileage and an agreed upon compensation until we become a 3-Point Ministry.

You are free to call the following visitation members to request a visit beginning August 1st ,

Judy Brinkman – 402-239-8029,
Cheryl Grundman – 402-873-2468,
Diane Wilken – 402-297-3863, and
Jody Wellensiek – 402-335-7121.

NEBRASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2026

More than 500 participants gathered as church together around the theme, “Broken Open,” trusting that brokenness is not the end, but the beginning of grace. We prayed, sang, learned, and discerned together, and the Spirit was clearly at work in, around, and through this assembly.

Together we:

- Entered into rich worship, led by Bishop Scott Johnson and Presiding ELCA Bishop Yehiel Curry, who reminded us that God meets us precisely where life feels most fragile and is already making all things new.
- We were led in powerful, imaginative music by Paul Vasile, whose leadership helped our shared song become a place of hospitality, honesty, and joy.
- Participated in pre-assembly workshops and learning opportunities that deepened our understanding of ministry in this time and place.
- Attended business sessions where 429 voting members discerned how God is calling the Nebraska Synod to live out our shared mission in the years ahead.
- In all of this, we experienced what it means to be “Broken Open” together, as our scars became sacred and our vulnerabilities became sources of strength, mended by God’s grace and sent out for the sake of the world.

We give thanks for all that God has done in and through this assembly.

Cheryl Grundman & Diane Wilken, voting member attendees

GRACE & HOPE LUTHERAN WORKING TOGETHER GUIDELINES

- I. Services: Beginning August 2026
 - A. Joint services alternating churches every other Sunday
 - 1. *Unless a change in schedule is necessary*
 - B. Worship time: 9:30 am every Sunday
 - C. Hosting Church is to supply reader(s) for lessons & Psalms
 - D. Children's Sermon
 - 1. Grace: To be determined
 - 2. Hope: Pastor Jim will do a children's sermon at Hope when he preaches; other Sundays to be determined
 - E. Communion
 - 1. Each church will have communion once a month, at their church, when Pastor Jim *leads the service*
 - F. Mission Festival
 - 1. Hosted by Hope
 - a) Service lead by Nick Weber
 - b) Sermon by guest speaker
 - G. Thanksgiving Service
 - 1. At Osage this year 2026
 - a) Paster Ken West leads service
 - H. Christmas Eve Service
 - 1. Each church will have a Christmas Eve service at their church lead by Pastor Jim
 - a) Hope at 5:00 pm
 - b) Grace at 7:00 pm
 - I. Service Costs
 - 1. Split cost 50/50 between Hope and Grace
 - a) Pulpit Supply: \$250 for one service + mileage, \$75 for each additional service
 - b) PMA: \$250 for one service + mileage
 - c) Lay Service Leaders: \$200 per service + mileage
 - (1) Erin Ebeler
 - (2) Nick Weber
 - II. Sunday School — **ON HOLD** until Grace talks with Bret & Melissa Wellensiek and Hope talks with Nancy Gorking and Vanessa Sell.
 - A. Each church has their own Sunday School, sets time & beginning date
- OR-
- B. Joint Sunday School between the two churches at the host church
 - 1. Start Date
 - 2. Time
 - 3. Teachers
 - 4. Materials
- III. Children's Christmas Program — **ON HOLD**
 - A. Each church has their own Children's Christmas program
- OR-

- B. Joint Children's Christmas program
 - 1. Director(s)
 - 2. Practices
 - 3. Date for Program
- IV. PMA Program
 - A. Funding
 - 1. Grace will help fund Erin Ebeler & Nick Weber
- V. Visitations
 - A. Each church is responsible for doing their own visitation.
- VI. Confirmation: Fall 2026
 - A. Grace: on July agenda @ Grace
 - B. Hope: No students for 2026/2027
- VII. Weddings & Funerals
 - A. Each church handles their own
 - 1. Who to officiates?
 - a) Family will choose
 - b) Pastor Helgren has agreed to be available
- VIII. Parsonage
 - A. Grace will cover costs
- IX. Guidelines are to be reevaluated every two months

August & September Calendar

(subject to change)

GRACE & HOPE LUTHERAN CALENDAR:

SUNDAY:	SERVICE LOCATION:	SERVICE TIME:	SERVICE LEADER:	
August 2026				
August 2	Hope	9:30 AM	Nick Weber	
August 9	Grace	9:30 AM	Erin Ebeler	
August 16	Hope	9:30 AM	Pastor Jim	Communion
August 23	Grace	9:30 AM	Pastor Jim	Communion
August 30	Hope	9:30 AM	Erin Ebeler	
September 2026				
September 6	Grace	9:30 AM	Nick Weber	
September 13	Hope	9:30 AM	Pastor Jim	Communion
September 20	Grace	9:30 AM	Pastor Jim	Communion
September 27	Hope	9:30 AM	Erin Ebeler	

Grace Lutheran Church Council

June 9, 2026

The regular meeting of the Grace Lutheran Church Council was called to order by President Cheryl Grundman at 7:01 pm – Members present: Cheryl Grundman, Ryan Panko, Sarah Purcell, Lisa Weber, Diane Wilken (Church Treasurer), and Owen Weber (Luther League). Mike Carman (excused). Pastor Helgren led with an opening prayer.

Minutes of the May 2026 meeting were reviewed. Sarah Purcell motioned to accept and Ryan Panko second. Minutes approved.

The Treasurer's report was reviewed. Ryan Panko motioned to accept the treasurer's report. Owen Weber second, motion carried.

Correspondence:

A thank you card was received from Owen Weber in appreciation for the wonderful senior breakfast and beautiful quilt.

Pastor's report:

May visits reported on shut-ins, hospitalized.

A Baptism for Asher David Moses was held on Saturday, May 16.

Pastor attended a meeting for VBS on May 20.

Pastor held a graveside funeral for Anita Hervy Lowe on May 23.

Pastor attended Synod Assembly May 29-31.

Pastor will be at confirmation camp June 21-26. Sheridan Thompson and Charlotte Wellensiek will attend this year.

Burr Days Community worship will be on June 28 at 10:00.

Property - (Mike and Ryan co-chairs)

An update on the waterline was given. The recent rainy weather has delayed other projects that were scheduled ahead of our project. We do not have a start date yet.

The picture to go in the southwest stairwell of the church still needs to be placed. There was a discussion on the best way to hang the picture in that location.

Ryan Panko repaired the humidifiers in the kitchen and stage area in the church basement.

An update was given on the neon cross. More bids for update/repair are needed.

Worship, Evangelism & Fellowship - (Sarah Chair) –none

Parish Ed & Young People – (all co-chairs) -

VBS will be July 13-17 at St Paul's Osage.

Options for Confirmation classes were again discussed. No decisions were made.

Stewardship & Memorial – (Lisa Chair) none

Old Business:

Pastor's Retirement Dinner is still set for July 12 at 10:00 am at Hope. Potluck will be served.

Members of Grace are requested to bring a covered dish.

Service in the Cook Village Park will be July 19th at 9:00 am.

Service will be led by Fred Bredenhoeft, PMA, on July 26 at 10:00am at Hope.

Compensation for lay leaders was discussed.

Sarah Purcell motioned to pay Nick Weber and Erin Ebeler \$200, plus mileage when they serve as the lay leader of a worship service, with the cost being split 50-50 between Grace and Hope.

Ryan Panko second, motion carried.

New Business

Guidelines for Grace and Hope worship services and schedules for services were discussed.

A worship service schedule for August and September were discussed. A 9:30 am worship time was set. This schedule was set on June 9, for the August and September worships. It was noted that changes may occur even after a schedule is released, and the council would appreciate patience and understanding as we work through this process. Another important note is that the council plans to review the arrangements every few months and make adjustments as needed as we work to find a best fit.

Thank you

Thank you to Dean Wellensiek, and Nick and Lisa Weber for the songfest on May 31.

Thank you to Carl and Sarah Purcell for keeping the sign in the park up to date.

Thank you to Diane Wilken for spraying for weeds.

Thank you to both Mike Carman and Gene Ekhoft for cutting the grass at the parsonage.

We appreciate everyone who makes Grace the wonderful church that it is!

Next meeting – July 14, 2026, at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 after the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Weber





Grace Lutheran
Church

306 N. First St.
P.O. Box 96
Cook, NE 68329



Church Office: 402-864-4201
Pastor Jim Helgren: 402-864-2113
Church Email: grace68329@gmail.com