



From the Pastor,

September has flown by! It's hard to believe that I have been serving alongside you all for almost a month already! I have had the opportunity to meet and talk with some of you and am learning the various programs and ministries that you and Hope have. It's an exciting – and sometimes a bit overwhelming – time of learning and exploring. I've enjoyed hearing some hopes that you have for the future, and ideas for ways that things might be different going forward. As well as learning how things have been done in the past. Starting into this three-way ministry partnership at the same time that there is a new pastor may feel like a lot of change. There is certainly a learning curve for all of us! But I have heard a lot of hope and enthusiasm about possibilities for the future.

Dr. Brené Brown, a professor of sociology who has written several books on leadership, community, and how to live as people together, uses this adage often: "Clear is kind and unclear is unkind." She's referring to the importance of communication – and clear communication – for working, serving, and living together as people. The more clearly we communicate, the more informed and on-the-same-page everyone is. As we try to bring three congregations together into a new partnership, to learn one another, and to discern how God is calling us, communication will be important. We will try to make changes and decisions as clear and transparent as possible.

I would love to hear your thoughts and ideas, and welcome your feedback about the ministry we are doing together. In this process of figuring things out and getting to know one another, there will invariably be some bumps and questions along the way. So, please let me know if you have questions or concerns at any point. Asking or telling me directly helps me to be able to answer the question or address the concern better than if the feedback comes through others. It creates the possibility for conversation and clarification, which increases the chances that a satisfactory answer or resolution can be found. (I promise, I'm not scary.)

If you need to get ahold of me, my cell phone will be the best way to do that, either by calling or texting. If you call and I don't answer, please leave a message. Occasionally calls don't come through if I'm driving, but the voicemail will show up even if the call doesn't. Texts almost always come through. If you would like to meet with me or to have me visit, please let me know and we'll find a time.

In the coming weeks and months, I hope to meet as many of you as possible and to get to know you a bit. I will do my best to learn names as quickly as possible, but it may take me a little while. The picture wall in the basement helps though!

Just as I'm still learning names, I'm also still learning who might need visits, why, and when. So, if you feel that I might have missed you, please let me know. Similarly, if something happens, like an accident, illness, someone going into the hospital, etc., please let me know. Even if you think everyone already knows, it is helpful for me to get the information as directly as possible. Relying on the grapevine will not always get me information in a timely manner and I want to make sure I'm able to be there, if you would like me to be.

Speaking of getting to know people, here's a bit of an introduction to me.

I grew up in Wichita, KS with my mom, dad, and younger sister. My dad, now retired, worked as an engineer at Boeing for many years. My mom, trained as a librarian, and worked in a variety of settings including the children's room of a public library, the specialized library at a botanical garden, and before her retirement, as part of an Arts-in-schools program with storytelling and puppetry. My sister has a photography business and works as a nuclear engineer. She lives in Scotland with her English husband and their almost 1.5 year old daughter, Avi.

I attended UNL for my undergraduate degree and majored in Computer Science, though my business minor has gotten more use since I started ministry. Between undergrad and seminary, I spent a year in the Lutheran Volunteer Corps serving two churches in Baltimore city. Following that I began seminary at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, IA. During seminary I served my internship year in Green Bay, WI. (No, I'm not a Packers fan, but, yes, I did visit the stadium.) After my final year in seminary, I was an exchange student at a seminary in Neuendettelsau, Germany for a year. As a result, I do speak German, although I am a bit out of practice now. If you also do, I'm happy to practice.

My German skills did get some use in my first call. The first congregation that I served was Friedens Lutheran Church in Lincoln, NE. This congregation still holds a German language Christmas service during Advent! Friedens discerned during my time there that they needed to have a parttime instead of fulltime pastor. So, during the last year and a half of my time there, I served part time in the congregation and part time as a chaplain in an independent/assisted living and memory care senior living community. I came to this area almost 7 years ago as a transitional pastor (interim) for Faith and Christ Delaware.

I'm a vegetarian. I enjoy spending time outside (ideally when it's less than 85 degrees), swimming, yoga, reading, listening to music, penguins, and learning new things. I like teaching, and helping people learn about and explore their faith, so if you have questions, let's talk about it!

I am glad to be here with you and look forward to our ministry together!

Pastor Kate

Grace
Lutheran
Mission
Statement

By Grace you have been
saved!

"We have decided to
follow Jesus and there's
no turning back!"

Congratulations
yeah
WEDDINGS

Here's to
love that lasts,
joy that grows,
and adventures
you'll cherish
forever.

Lori Panko and
Tommy Dieckgrafe
on their marriage on
September 5th.

Erin Ebeler and
Scott Herman
were married here at Grace
Lutheran on September 12.

October Birthdays

4th Erin Ebeler
7th Kirk Ullrich
Brylee Cropp
9th Michael Melson
10th Travis Dorn
James Helgren
12th Kali Drake
15th Grace Bentzinger
18th Kandi Bilslend
19th Maggie Finke
20th Kali Effken McGinnis
25th Shawn Grundman
26th Tucker Thomas
28th Andrea Eggleston
Penny Weber
Megan Wirth
31st Eleta Eisenhauer

October Anniversaries

10th - Jim & Kathy Helgren
10th - Chris & Dawn Thompson
19th - Mike & Penny Weber
19th - Makayla & Grant Shippert
22nd - Brian & Tonia Mannschreck
23rd - Lindsay & Grant Badertscher
28th - Arlin & Judy Brinkman

Mission Festival

Mission Festival is October 25th with Joint Worship at 10:00 a.m. at Grace Lutheran Church. We are pleased to have McKenna Olson from The Lutheran Center (Campus Ministry) in Lincoln as our guest speaker.

A potluck will follow with the main dish being pulled pork sandwiches provided by Grace.



Trunk or Treat Cook Main Street

Saturday, October 31, 2026 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

You are invited to come and join us

DOWNTOWN ON MAIN STREET for “Trunk or Treat”.

Decorated vehicles are to park on the South Side of the Street from Damme Appliance to the Post Office.

Treats, hot dogs, chips, and bottled water will be served in Front of the Firehall.

Bring your treats and your trunk and remember to decorate . . . the kiddies love it!!

Come and join the fun for a “**howling**” good time.

October 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 9:15 am Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship Service led by Erin Ebeler SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING FOLLOWING WORSHIP	5	6	7 Confirmation 6:00 pm	8	9	10 ELCW Autumn Renewal St. Paul's, Grand Island
11 9:15 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Pastor Kate	12	13	14 Kids for Christ 4:00 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm	15	16	17
18 9:15 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship w/Communion Pastor Kate	19	20 Piecemakers Blanket Making All Day Church Council 7:00 pm	21 Grace & Hope Bible Study @ Grace 2:00 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm	22 Tower Echoes Deadline	23	24
25 9:15 am Sunday School 10:00 am - MISSION FESTIVAL Joint Worship followed by Potluck	26	27	28 Kids for Christ 4:00 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm	29	30	31 TRUNK OR TREAT Cook Main Street 5-6:30 PM

*Please join us for
fellowship in the basement
following worship ☺*



SPECIAL MEETING OCTOBER 4TH FOLLOWING WORSHIP –

Agenda items;

#1 Amend 2026 budget to include Pastor Kate's salary and benefits Sept 01, 2026, through Dec 31, 2026.

#2 – Parsonage, discussion on where we go from here.

Options include sale of the property, or improvements, upgrades, and rent. If the vote is to retain the property, we will need a committee of 3 to 5 individuals. The committee responsibilities will include the following: Note – more responsibilities may be necessary to be added later.

1. Mow the lawn weekly
2. Trim or remove 3 trees on the property
3. Remove snow from sidewalks before the start of the JCC school day
4. Contact the NE Synod for protocol on renting
5. File necessary IRS paperwork
6. Council approval of renters
7. Improvements and upgrades – acquire contractors and bids, all expenses \$1.00 to \$1,000.00 must be approved by council before proceeding. All expenses greater than \$1,000.00 must be approved at a special meeting and voted on by the congregation.
8. FUNDRAISING

There is a display of parsonage pictures in the church basement on the ping pong table.

If you were unable to attend the open house of the parsonage on Sept 20th you may contact Cheryl Grundman, 402-873-2468, for a tour.

GRACE WORSHIP SCHEDULE

October 4	10:00 AM	Erin Ebeler
October 11	10:00 AM	Pastor Kate
October 18	10:00 AM	Pastor Kate - Holy Communion
October 25	10:00 AM	Mission Festival – Hope & Grace
November 1	10:00 AM	Nick/Erin
November 8	10:00 AM	Pastor Kate
November 15	10:00 AM	Pastor Kate - Holy Communion
November 22	10:00 AM	Nick/Erin
November 25	7:00 PM	Thanksgiving Eve Service @ Osage
November 29	10:00 AM	3 Point Joint Service @ Hope Lutheran
December 6	10:00 AM	Nick/Erin
December 13	10:00 AM	Pastor Kate
December 20	8:00 AM	Pastor Kate - Holy Communion
December 24	6:00 PM	Pastor Kate - CHRISTMAS EVE -Holy Communion
December 27	10:00 AM	Nick/Erin

On Sundays when services are not held here, please feel free to join us at one of our partner congregations

<u>DATE</u>	<u>8:00 AM Service</u>	<u>10:00 AM Service</u>
October 4	Faith	Hope
November 1	Faith	Hope
November 22	Faith	Hope
November 26	8:30 AM Thanksgiving Service @ Talmage Community Building	
December 6	Faith	Hope
CHRISTMAS EVE	4:00 PM Hope	8:00 PM Faith
December 27	Faith	Hope

Grace Lutheran Church Council

September 15, 2026

The regular meeting of the Grace Lutheran Church Council was called to order by President Cheryl Grundman at 7:04 pm – Members present Cheryl Grundman, Ryan Panko, Mike Carman, Lisa Weber, Diane Wilken (Church Treasurer). Sarah Purcell- excused.

Pastor Kate led with an opening prayer.

Minutes of the August 2026 meeting were reviewed. Mike Carman motioned to accept and Ryan Panko second. Minutes approved.

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

Mike Carman motioned to increase the budget \$9,883.48. Ryan Panko second, motion carried. This increase accounts for Pastor Kate's salary and benefits for September - December 2026. It was noted that the congregation will be asked to vote to approve this at the congregational meeting on Sunday, October 4 after worship.

Ryan Panko motioned to use memorial funds to pay \$165 to Stoller Electric for the additional electrical upgrades needed for the cross. Mike Carman, second, motion carried.

Ryan Panko motioned to use memorial funds to pay \$1381 to Doeden AV Services for the church's half of the AV upgrades. Mike Carman, second, motion carried. It was noted Erin Ebeler generously contributed the other half of the cost for the AV upgrades.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor Kate reported on visits in September

Confirmation will start on September 16. Confirmation will now include grades 6, 7 and 8 for both fall and spring semesters. Previously only 8th graders attended the spring semester. Pastor Kate also noted that the curriculum will now include a more comprehensive study of the Bible.

Correspondence: none

Property - (Mike and Ryan co-chairs) - New fans were installed in the church basement. The PA system has been upgraded. It was noted that the thermostat at the rear of the church may not be working correctly. It will be watched to see if repairs are necessary. It was also noted that Grace Lutheran Church is the designated emergency site for both Johnson County Central Public School-Cook site, and Golden Acres.

Worship, Evangelism & Fellowship - (Sarah Chair) –The Syracuse and Nemaha Valley Observer papers were updated with Pastor Kate Woolf's name, along with the new worship and Sunday School times. It was noted that the Nemaha Valley Observer incorrectly listed the pastor's name. This was brought to the paper's attention for correction. Adkin Signs from Nebraska City created new signs to be used in the church yard throughout the year. The purpose of the signs is to help inform members of changes in service or event times. Pastor Kate met with the musicians from the three churches and hymns were selected for several months. The basement bulletin board of our church family photos continues to be updated.

Parish Ed & Young People – (all co-chairs) - Confirmation will begin September 16. Sunday School will begin September 20.

Stewardship & Memorial – (Lisa Chair) Memorial monies were used to purchase new fans for the church basement, additional electrical upgrades needed for the new cross, and a portion of the new AV system. Thank you to all the families that have generously given memorial monies to support our church,

Old Business:

The joint service on September 13th was well attended. The council received many positive comments from members of all three churches. 98 people attended service, and more than 80 people dined at the Potluck.

New Business

The open house for the parsonage will take place on September 20 after worship. A picture display of problem areas/concerns will be available for viewing in the church basement. It was noted that anyone needing a different time to view the parsonage should contact Cheryl. At the special meeting concerning the parsonage following worship on October 4, the congregation will also be asked to vote to approve the increase in budget for Pastor Kate's salary and benefits for September - December 2026.

Mission Festival will take place on October 25 at 10:00 at Grace, with a potluck to follow. Grace will provide the shredded pork. Members are asked to bring covered dishes. Help serving and cleaning up is always appreciated!

It was noted that it would be nice for confirmation students to take on some of the duties that were previously done by Luther League. This includes help with Mission Festival, Cream Chicken Dinner, Annual Meeting meal, any additional potlucks, and Lenten refreshments.

Thank you

Thank you to Brian Mannschreck for weed control.

Thank you to Gene Ekhoﬀ for thermostat work for the past two funerals.

Thank you to Dave Smith for the excellent lawn care and help with the cross.

Thank you to the Cropp, Wellensiek and Weber families for kitchen duty during the joint potluck.

Thank you to Gene and Diane Ekhoﬀ for church duty.

Thank you to Jody Bruns for church duty.

Thank you to Ryan Panko for installing fans in the church basement.

Thank you to Joyce Roesener for fellowship drinks.

Thank you to Jane Antholz for a great job keeping up Facebook posts for the churches.

Thank you to Kathy Helgren for the wonderful job cleaning the parsonage.

Next meeting – October 20th, 2026, at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 after the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Weber





Grace Lutheran Church

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