

April 2024



WORDS OF GRACE

Monthly Newsletter

Inside the Issue

THIS MONTH'S PASTOR PAGE...

Elder Keith Bestul takes up the pen and shares some thoughts about being a church member. He will be our featured writer for the next several months. Thanks Keith!

THE POWER OF WORDS

This month's Women's Reflection is by Beth Rutherford. She shares her experience from the recent Women's Prayer Summit and challenges us to look at our own lives.

THE INVISIBLE PROBLEM

Human trafficking is a huge, sometimes invisible, problem – why should we care? See page 3 for an invitation from the Grace Missions Team to get involved.

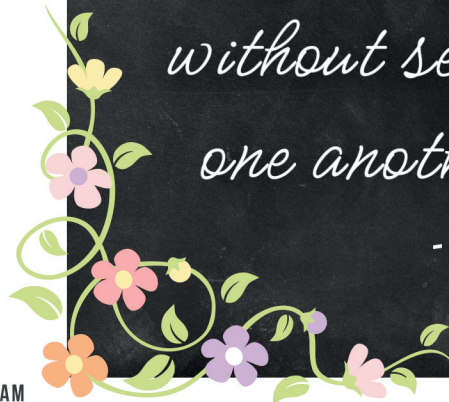
April HIGHLIGHTS...

- Apr 1 **Church Office Opens at 1pm**
Elders Meeting, 6:30pm
- Apr 6 **FMSC Mobile Pack** at the FDL Fairgrounds
Whole Woman Conference at Whispering Springs
"While We're Waiting" Meeting, 1:00pm at parsonage
- Apr 7 **"Connecting with Grace"** Newcomers Gathering, noon
- Apr 9 Deacon's Meeting, 6:30pm
- Apr 14 *Congregational Meeting immediately following the service*
- Apr 15 **EFCA Spring Conference, Church Office Closed**
- Apr 18 Missions Team Meeting, 6:30pm
- Apr 20 Women's "We-Pray" Monthly Gathering, 9:00am at Grace
GMLT Leadership meeting, 11am (lunch included)
Youth "R U Smarter..." Event at Grace, 6-8pm
- Apr 21 VBC Leaders/Teachers meeting, during Coffee Fellowship
Sam Rotman Piano Concert, 3pm at Community Church
- Apr 27 **Spring Potluck**, 5:30pm in Fellowship Hall

PLEASE NOTE: WEEKLY STAFF MEETINGS ARE USUALLY MONDAY MORNINGS AT 9:00AM

"It is impossible to serve God without serving one another."

- Alistair Begg





Just A Thought...

FROM ONE OF OUR ELDERS

I've recently had the privilege to read a book entitled, **"I am a Church Member"** by Thom S Rainier. I've studied this book with the Thursday Morning Men's Group and our Life Group. It has brought some things to light for me about church membership and specifically about my attitude as a member of Grace Evangelical Free Church. I'll be sharing what I've learned over these next six months in the *Words of Grace*, and I hope it will cause you to **think about your own personal church membership**.

This month, we look at the *first attitude*, which we find in Chapter 1, and consider **what church membership means to you**. Now, I've never been a member of a country club, but I have had the privilege to work as a dishwasher and bus boy in one, and I've been invited to play golf with friends at several others. One similarity with all these clubs is that members have certain expectations of the staff of the country club, and are treated accordingly: Doors are held, preferred tables are reserved, towels are handed to you at the swimming pool, etc. I think you get the picture. The members are 'served'.

I've seen this attitude of 'being served' many times in the church... and not just in our church. Do any of these comments ring a bell for you?

- This is my church, so you must play the music the way I want it."
- "Look pastor, you need to know who pays your salary."
- "If you don't do this, I'll withhold my check to the church."
- "I don't pay good money to this church to listen to sermons that long."
- "I don't want my tithes to go to the _____."

Hmmm. Sounds like an attitude of **wanting to be served instead of serving**. Are these attitudes biblical?

Not according to Paul in 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14! If you read these chapters, it looks like Paul thought it was important to **view church as a place to serve others well with fellow Christians**. He compares the church to a body with many parts (Ch. 12). I Cor 12:27-28 says, *"Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping administering and various kinds of tongues."*

He notes love to be a central attitude and action all members should have (Ch. 13). So, the giving of our money (tithing) and not serving the body is not a biblical approach. As believers, we all have been given spiritual gifts. And the Father expects us to share these gifts with His bride! If we're not sharing, we're not using these gifts. Think of the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30). The man who buried what was given him did not fare well.

Finally, we see in I Cor 12:12-26 that Christ's body, the church, has many parts, and each member of the body is an important part. Therefore, in order for a church to function as a whole, **ALL members need to be a functioning part of the body**.

We all have restrictions on our time, talents and treasures. But we need to prayerfully seek whether that restriction is for a selfish or fearful reason? If we all can learn to trust God with what He has given us and learn to serve Him because we love Him, **our church family will be a blessing to each other as well as to the whole Fond du Lac community**.

Blessings in Christ,

Keith

NEWS & NOTES




Spring POTLUCK SATURDAY
April 27, 2024
beginning at 5:30pm

COME CELEBRATE SPRING WITH THE GRACE FAMILY!

ENJOY A DELICIOUS POTLUCK MEAL, FELLOWSHIP & LIVE MUSIC!

Sign up today at the Connection Center.

Deadline to register is Sunday, April 21st




HERE'S WHAT'S UP THIS MONTH

SUNDAY, APRIL 7 - Youth Meeting at Grace | 6:30-8:00pm
SUNDAY, APRIL 14 - Youth Meeting at Grace | 6:30-8:00pm
SATURDAY, APRIL 20 - RU Smarter Than a Teenager?
 Contact Brad for details | 6:00-8:00pm
SUNDAY, APRIL 21 - Youth Meeting at Grace | 6:30-8:00pm
SUNDAY, APRIL 28 - Youth Meeting at Grace | 6:30-8:00pm

IMPORTANT INFO ABOUT THE BUDGET PROCESS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

The Deacons have been hard at work these last months putting together a proposed budget for the coming year. **The budget will be introduced at the upcoming congregational meeting** (see below for details about that) on Sunday, April 14th. There are Q&A sessions set up if you have additional questions about the budget. Those are scheduled for April 21, 28, and May 5 during the Coffee Fellowship time in the Zoom Room. The budget vote will take place on May 12th, immediately following the worship service. Copies of the proposed budget will be available at the meeting on April 14th. **We hope you will make it a priority to be a part of this process!**



Come enjoy an afternoon of music & encouragement featuring pianist, Sam Rotman. Mr. Rotman is an award winning pianist, specializing in the music of Beethoven, who has performed over 3,200 concerts in 61 different countries. He received his Bachelor & Master Degrees from The Juilliard School in New York City. He also has an honorary doctorate from The Master's University. The concert is being held on **Sunday, April 21st from 3:00-4:30pm at Community Church** (N6717 Streblov Dr, Fond du Lac, WI 54937) and is co-sponsored by Grace Evangelical Free Church. There is no cost but a free-will offering will be received. Invite your friends and family to join you and come take part.

JOIN US on Sunday, April 14th for our next CONGREGATIONAL MEETING immediately following the worship service. Come hear about the budget for 2024/25 and updates about life and upcoming opportunities at Grace.

AWANA SCHEDULE

April 7 - Potato Creation Night
 April 14 - Tie Night
 April 21 - Dress Like a Mess Night
 April 28 - Super Hero Sunday



DAMASCUS ROAD PROJECT "EXODUS BAGS"

Human trafficking is a huge, sometimes invisible, problem -

- Why should we care?
- How can we help?

Did you know?...
 I-41 is a major corridor from Chicago to Green Bay and on into Canada - a highway for Human Trafficking - and we are right in the middle of it!
 Traffickers often prey on victims with little or no social safety net, making promises of a better, often glamorous life. They look for victims who are vulnerable, in unstable housing, with previous traumatic experiences or abuse, those who are lonely, living in poverty, are homeless or involved with gangs, sometimes with a history of sexual or substance abuse or addictions.

Here are just a few statistics:

- 50% of Human Trafficking victims are young girls, under the age of 18, often between the ages of 12-14. Women, men, and boys are also trafficked as well.
- 80% of the children are US citizens.
- Human trafficking includes not only sex exploitation, but also forced labor, in other words, modern day slavery.

Thankfully we have a local agency dedicated to fighting the evil of Human Trafficking and sex exploitation. **The Damascus Road Project**, based in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, was founded in 2009, and is committed to bringing awareness through educating, restoring,

and empowering the abused, and advocating for the prevention and elimination of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

Staffed entirely by volunteers, this non-profit organization has over 40 years of experience working with trafficking in WI, Las Vegas and across the US, as well as abroad. Their goals are to **educate** communities and professionals using training opportunities, to **locate** and identify those being victimized, and to **advocate** for victims and offer support, compassion, encouragement, and mentorship as well as connect them with resources and services.

Their EXODUS BAG project is one way to support their clients who are coming out of trafficking. These bags are often the first, and only, things these clients have when starting over. **The Missions team is inviting the Grace Church family to assist victims** by collecting items for these bags, which contain basic daily necessities such as **full-size shampoo and conditioner, body wash, lotion, make-up, etc.** (Hotel or travel-sized products are often triggering for them, reminding them of past exploitation.) **We will be collecting these items through the month of April.** For a complete list, please stop by the Missions Table in the narthex. Here you will find other information on the work of the Damascus Road Project, and Human Trafficking and Sex Exploitation. This is happening right under our noses, and we don't even know it. We encourage you to check out the Damascus Road Project's website (www.damascusroadproject.org) for more ways you can help care the some of the most vulnerable in our society.

If you have any questions about our Exodus Bag project, please contact Mary Tighe (mtighe@gmail.com) or Bonnie Springborn (bonnbomni@charter.net).



Monthly Reflection

A Note About Words

from Beth Rutherford


I was so blessed by the Woman's Prayer Summit this past month. Women gathering for the sole purpose of meeting with God through prayer and worship is powerful. Not only were we encouraged and strengthened in our walk with the Lord, but we were also able to bless those around us through times of prayer for one another.

In one of our sessions a woman shared a word picture of a woman in a white wedding dress. She saw black words, like newsprint, on the dress which represented negative things that people have spoken over us. She then saw white words, representing what God says about us, covering over the negative words making the gown white again. It was a powerful visual representation of the cleansing power of God's Word and how he speaks only that which builds us up and makes us more holy. This reminds me of David's prayer in Psalm 51:7 *"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."*

In a later session I imagined the same idea of negative words spoken to us as stones being thrown at me. I have a choice with what I do with those rocks. Do I take them, catch them, and put them in my pocket and rub them until they are smooth? This would be the idea of holding onto what someone says about you and carrying it around in your pocket, ruminating on the words (like rubbing the stone). Or will I allow the stones to fall out of my hands or even give them to God? Can I let God remove their sting, and remind myself that other's words do not define me? Do I *"destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ"*? We have a choice to receive or reject what others speak over us.

As I sat in prayer during one of our last sessions at the Prayer Summit, I was challenged by the two pictures and felt prompted to write a poem in reflection.

WORDS



Words like stones
Being thrown at me
Accept them, pocket them
Unthinkingly

Staining my gown
Black print on white
Careless words, hurtful words
That cling so tight

The Living Stone knows
The pain I feel
Give *him* my stones
That I may heal

Remove the words
That brought such pain
Speak words of life
And remove the stain

God's Word defines me
Though lies abound
No stone-filled pocket
No stained-white gown

ENJOY SOME **SPRING** THEMED FUN!

Unscramble these
SPRING-themed words!

eitk	----	sbgv	----
ogwr	----	moobl	-----
romw	----	iskhcc	-----
rscop	-----	rarefm	-----
		kajcet	-----

**Why are people tired
in April?**

Because they just finished a March

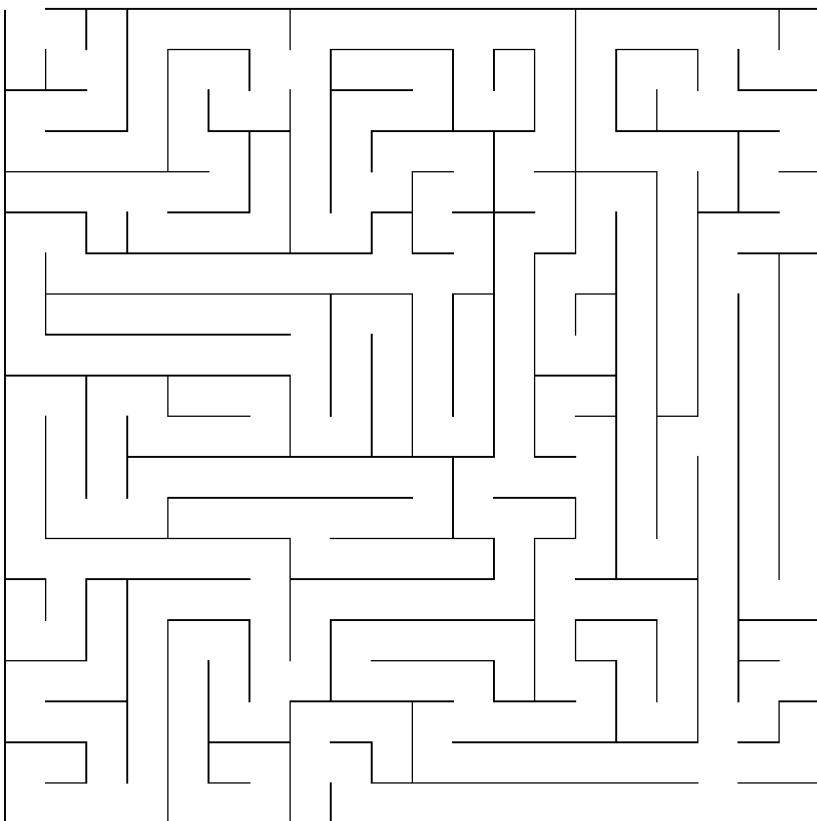
**Why couldn't the
duck work for the
Easter Bunny?**

He kept quacking the eggs.

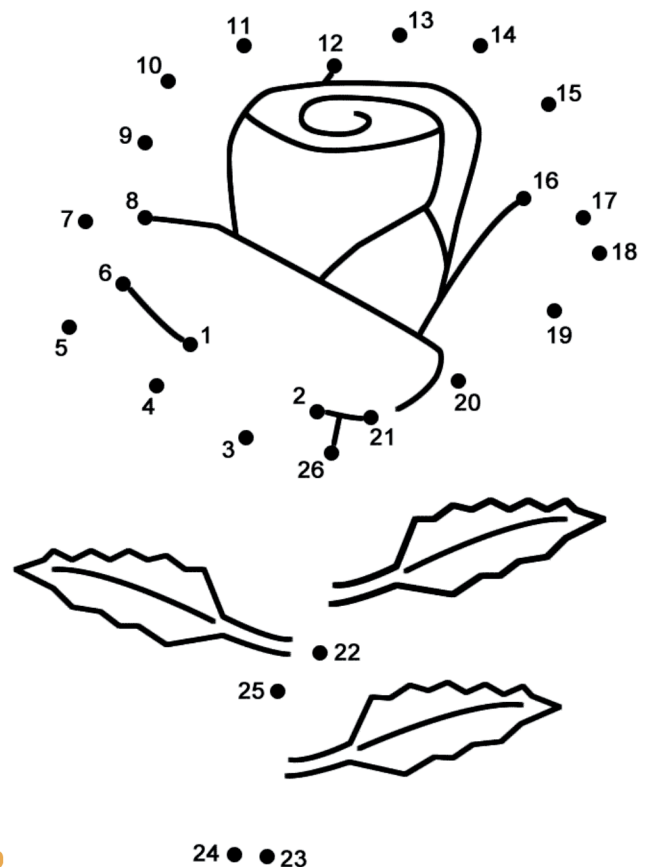
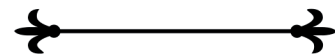
**What's an Easter egg
from outer space
called?**

An egg-stra-terrestrial.

**HELP THE BUMBLEBEE REACH THE FLOWER
BY FINISHING THE MAZE!**



Connect the dots to
complete the flower!



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163 18th Street
 Fond du Lac, WI 54935
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 www.gracechurchfdl.org

CORPORATE PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES:

Sunday mornings at 8:45am
 Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm
 Wednesday AM Men's prayer at 6:00am.
 3rd Saturday of the Month Women's Prayer at 9:00am

*All meet at
 Grace Church
 building*

GRACE CHURCH STAFF

Head Pastor & Chief Shepherd - *Jesus Christ*

Lead Pastor - *Brad Rutherford*

cell: 313-0456 email: rutherford@gracechurchfdl.net

Associate Pastor - *Grant Baumgart*

cell: 948-6373 email: baumgart@gracechurchfdl.net

Administrative Assistant - *Carol Blain*

phone: 922-7211 email: office@gracechurchfdl.net

Communications/Media Coordinator - *Rachel Titel*

email: cmc@gracechurchfdl.net

Custodian - *Jen Koenigs*

phone: 922-7211

Elder on Call: Friday, Saturday & Sunday

(920) 948-9262

Offering & Attendance

2/4/2024	\$5,227	153
2/11/2024	\$6,141	170
2/18/2024	\$7,478	159
2/25/2024	\$14,518	123

February Weekly Ave: \$8,341 151

**Weekly average needed to meet budget
 \$9,083**

Year to Date Givings \$325,201

Year to Date Expenses \$336,801

Y-T-D amounts reflect February month-end totals

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please submit information for the
May Words of Grace
 to the church office by April **15th**.
 You can contact the office at (920) 922-7211 or
 office@gracechurchfdl.net

Office Hours are:
 Monday-Thursday 8:00am-4:30pm
 Friday 8:00am-11:30am