

March 2024



WORDS OF GRACE

Monthly Newsletter

Inside the Issue

THIS MONTH'S PASTOR PAGE...

Pastor Brad shares a story from his & Beth's courtship days and a testimony of how FAITH like Abraham came into play in the beginning of their relationship.

THE PATH OF HUMILITY

This month's Women's Reflection is by Beth Rutherford. She looks at the life of Naomi, and how her humility, in the midst of tragedy, changed the trajectory of countless lives.

JUMP INTO A NEW SEASON!

Spring is just around the corner and there are loads of things to get involved with and look forward to! See the latest news and upcoming opportunities on page 3.

MARCH HIGHLIGHTS...

- Mar 2 Family Game Night, 6:30pm
Comedy Night, FDL R-T-L, 7pm at Horace Mann in NFDL
- Mar 3 Worship Service with Communion
FMSC 'Have a Heart' Fundraiser ends...
Help 4 the Homeless Collection ends...
- Mar 4 Elders Meeting, 6:30pm
- Mar 9 "While We're Waiting" Meeting, 1:00pm at parsonage
Youth Bowling Outing, Meet at 2pm
- Mar 12 Deacons Meeting, 6:30pm
- Mar 16 Women's We-Pray Monthly Gathering, 9:00am at Grace
- Mar 21 Missions Team Meeting, 6:30pm
- Mar 21-22 Homeschool Play "It Happened on Route 66" 7pm at Grace
- Mar 24 Palm Sunday (no Youth tonight)
- Mar 29 Good Friday Service with Communion, 6:30pm
- Mar 31 Easter Sunday (no Youth or AWANA)

PLEASE NOTE: WEEKLY STAFF MEETINGS ARE USUALLY MONDAY AFTERNOON AT 1:30PM

"Your story, surrendered into the hands of God, will have purpose beyond the pain to bring about good."

- Lysa TerKeurst



PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray that the Elders will have wisdom as they seek God's face and God's direction for us to join in His mission as the Grace Family, and as they look for God's guidance in shepherding His people.
- Pray for the Deacons to have wisdom as they come alongside hurting people and steward the resources with which we have been blessed.
- Pray for the Ministry Leaders to experience God's presence and power as they lead their ministries.

PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday Mornings

- **8:45am** Corporate Prayer
- **11:00am** Parents Prayer

- **6:30pm** Tuesday Evenings
Corporate Prayer at Grace Church
- **6:00am** Wednesdays
Men's Prayer - Prayer Room
- **8:00am** Thursday Mornings
Men's Coffee Fellowship & Prayer at Grace
- **9:00am** 3rd Saturday of the Month
We-Pray Women's Prayer
Fireside Room

PRAYER & ENCOURAGEMENT CONNECTIONS

- Wednesdays at noon
- Fridays at 7:00am

The easiest way to access these Zoom gatherings is to go to the weekly E-blast (email) from the Church Office. The Zoom links are included every week.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR BRAD



This month, I'd like to share about FAITH IN GOD, using an example from my courtship days with Beth:

In about September of 1993, while we were both at *Christ For the Nations Institute* in Dallas, TX, Beth and I realized that our friendship of the previous three months was developing into a more serious relationship. On one occasion, we went with friends to listen to a South African man speak on the current political and social climate in South Africa. He had shared some very explicit photos and recorded footage of the following event...

St James Church massacre, 25 July 1993, Terrorist operatives attack St. James Church in the Cape Town suburb of Kenilworth, South Africa, during the Sunday evening service. Approximately 1000 congregants were inside the church at the time. Using automatic weapons and two grenades, they killed eleven worshippers and injured 58.

I remember returning home to the campus and sitting outside Beth's apartment in a rather somber mood. (For the record... not a great date night idea!)

Although we had not started to talk about marriage yet, we did realize that neither person was interested in a casual relationship. We needed to deal with the rather ominous question looming over us that night, which demanded an answer, "If we were considering marriage, would Beth be prepared to make the move to live in South Africa, given what she had just seen and heard?"

I am not sure what all was transpiring in Beth's mind at the time, but I knew for myself that I was "stuck between a rock and a hard place." I felt compelled to return to South Africa, where I had committed to take up a teaching position that I fully believed God had called me to in January 1994, (this was 'the rock') or break my commitment to the school, disobey what I believed God was calling me into, and repay the 5-year scholarship granted to me for studying teaching, so that I could make the decision of committing to a serious relationship with me, easier for Beth (the hard place).

This was not an Abraham moment for me. I knew what lay ahead in South Africa, as I was returning to what was somewhat familiar, if not potentially volatile.

However, this was not so for Beth! At first consideration, what would it look like for her to live in this strange land which she'd only seen in pictures, amongst people she did not know, speaking foreign languages, practicing different customs, laughing at different jokes and who generally imagined most Americans to be "LOUD and opinionated!?"?

But now, even if she felt those obstacles were surmountable, "could she even consider a move to a country which at any given moment might erupt in civil war!?" And all for a young man who, at that point in time, she didn't know that well?

The response she gave rings true today for all of us, just as much as it did then on that bench in the late afternoon Dallas sunshine...

Her reply was this: "If we believed that God has called us to pursue this relationship, then there will be no circumstances that stand in our way through which God is not capable of taking care of us." (Hebrews 11:8-16 and Genesis 12:1-9)


FAITH in GOD spoke through her, "We were each to obey God in doing what we knew in our hearts to do. Our faith was not to be circumstantial!"

And, as they say, the rest of the story... is history.

Brad

NEWS & NOTES



 There's still time to participate in The Family Radio's annual "Help for the Homeless" hygiene drive! Please place your donations in the collection box located in the church lobby or make a financial donation at TheFamily.net.

Help for the Homeless
HYGIENE DRIVE

Supplying these items is such a HUGE help to these local organizations! **Most urgently needed items are laundry soap, kitchen size trash bags, shampoo, cleaning supplies, diapers, toilet tissue, and feminine care items.** All of your donations remain here in the Fond du Lac community and will be going to local agencies like ADVOCAP Homeless Program, Beacon House, New Beginnings, Solutions Center & The Salvation Army. **The deadline to return your items is Sunday, March 3rd!** THANK YOU for your generosity in supporting this event.

The FMSC Mobile Pack Event is fast approaching!

If you'd like to "skip the line" and get on the volunteer list for the event it's easy to do so! Sign up at the display in the church lobby *through Sunday, March 3rd*. Spots fill up very quickly once the sign up goes live to the public, so don't wait. If you are looking to donate or reserve your volunteer spot after the sign up goes public visit give.fmsc.org/fdl.

Checks can also be mailed to:
Feed My Starving Children
(ATTN: MobilePack #2404-0325C)
401 93rd Avenue NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55433
Please make checks be payable to:
FMSC, memo line MobilePack #2404-0325C




HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Sunday, March 24th - Palm Sunday
Worship Service at 9:30am

Friday, March 29th - Good Friday Service
with Communion at 6:30pm

Sunday, March 31st - Resurrection Sunday
Worship Service at 9:30am




 **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME**
begins on Sunday, March 10th. Be sure to set your clocks forward and **SPRING AHEAD!!!**

HEADS UP! Due to limited participation, the annual Memorial Day Campout has been cancelled. We have released our reservation, so if you would still to camp out at Green Lake Conference Center, please contact them directly for information: www.glcc.org

SAVE THE DATE! Excitement and adventure await your children this summer at our much anticipated Vacation Bible Camp. This year's theme is titled "The Great Jungle Journey". Vacation Bible Camp (VBC) is for kids 4k thru 5th grade. Be sure to save the dates of July 29–August 2, 2024, on your calendars! Registration for participants will be announced in the next few months. Stay tuned for that.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING? Contact Traci Soeller (soellert@gmail.com) or Jen Koenigs (tuffy2303@yahoo.com) for more info. There are a whole variety of roles. Come use your gifts & talents!



Let's Study Together!

We have lots of great groups gathering here at Grace to study and live life together. We'd love to have you join us!

- Women's Tuesday Bible Study | Tues. Mornings at 9:00am
- Men's Coffee Fellowship & Prayer | Thurs. Mornings at 8:00am
- Inductive Study | Several Thursdays a month, 10:00am-12:00pm
- Men's "No Regrets" Group | Sat. Mornings at 7:30am
- Life Groups | Meetings take place at various times & locations. Contact the Grace Office to learn more!

DO YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEED FOOD ASSISTANCE?

Ruby's Pantry Food Distribution is a great way to stretch your food budget. There is no income requirement! Thursday, March 14th is the next distribution date! This monthly event takes place at Grace Christian Church, corner of 4th St. & Cty K. Doors open at 4:00pm for check in. Distribution begins at 4:30. Pre-registration is available but goes quickly!! \$25 cash donation will supply you with an abundance of groceries. For specific details go to www.gccfdl.org/rubys/

Ruby's PANTRY


Wondering what to do in the case of INCLEMENT WEATHER?

Find out about any church-related cancellations by listening to KFIZ (1450 AM), going to www.kfiz.com or by checking the Grace website www.gracechurchfdl.org or Facebook Page (@GraceChurchFDL)



AWANA SCHEDULE

- Mar. 3 - Help for the Homeless Night (Bring items for the H4H Drive 1pt. per item!)
- Mar. 10 - Backwards Night
- Mar. 17 - Green Night
- Mar. 24 - LOL Night
- Mar. 31 - Resurrection Sunday (NO AWANA)





Monthly Reflection

The Path of Humility

by Beth Rutherford

We live in a culture that values pride over humility. The proud are often perceived as strong and successful while the humble are seen as weak and unsuccessful. However, scripture has something else to say on the matter. James 4:6 tells us that *“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”* Ephesians 4:2 exhorts us to *“Be completely humble and gentle...”* We even see in 2 Chronicles 7:14 that the key to the healing of the land involved humility. We need to recognize the areas in our lives where pride is at work and allow God to empower us to choose the path of humility. Although we often focus on Ruth when we read the book by the same name, let us turn our attention to Naomi, Ruth’s mother-in-law, and see how she walked a path of humility.

The book of Ruth opens with a tragic tale of hardship and loss. Due to a famine, an Israelite named Elimelech took his wife, Naomi, and his two sons out of Judah and into Moab in search of food. We are left to speculate about Elimelech’s decision. From an outside perspective, it does not seem that he was trusting God to provide for his needs. However, we cannot know what we would do in the same situation and so we may need to suspend our judgment of this man’s decision. The scriptures give us no insight into Naomi’s thoughts on her husband’s decision to leave Judah. Perhaps she supported the decision as the thought of having hungry children was too much for her. Or maybe Naomi opposed the idea considering Elimelech’s decision an act of weakness that showed a lack of faith in God. Regardless of the circumstances of the decision, the family ended up leaving their home and living in Moab.

Sometime after fleeing the hardship of Judah for Moab, tragedy struck when Naomi’s husband died.

We are not told how long after their move that this occurred or how old Naomi’s sons were, however, we read that the two sons only marry after Elimelech’s death, leaving us to wonder how old they were when their father passed. Perhaps they were of an age to help provide or perhaps they were not. Either way, Naomi had to deal with the loss of her husband in a foreign land far from the community of family and friends who would have rallied around in support. This fact alone must have made this painful event even harder.

But Naomi’s tragedy was not over. Although she probably experienced joy at the marriages of her two sons, neither of their wives bore children for ten years. This was another tragedy for Naomi – there was no one to continue the family name. This hardship only multiplied when her two sons died. Naomi’s heartbreak must have been unbearable! She was far from home and had lost everything: her home, her husband, her sons, her hope for a lineage. She still had Orpah and Ruth, her son’s wives, but they were Moabites and now widows. Things looked bleak for these three women especially in light of the fact that they lived in a culture where women were completely dependent on men. What was left for Naomi to do but to return to Bethlehem?

Ruth 1:6 says that Naomi *“arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food.”* Naomi’s desire to return to Judah did not look noble – it looked desperate! She needed to eat to survive and with no man to provide for her in Moab, what else was there for her to do?

Sometimes it takes desperation to bring us to a place of humility. Regardless of whether Naomi thought going to Moab was a good decision, she was faced with the reality of how her return would look. Would people think she was a fool to have gone to Moab? Would they taunt her for returning? Maybe these thoughts went through Naomi's head but in the end, it did not matter. She had nowhere else to turn and so she chose the return; she chose the path of humility.

Naomi and Ruth's return proved to be quite the news in Bethlehem. I am certain that after so many years people may have considered Naomi gone forever and yet here she was with her Moabite daughter-in-law. Bethlehem and Moab were about 30 miles apart and it is possible that news of Naomi's losses could have preceded her. Naomi, whose name meant pleasant, was so broken over her loss that she asked to be called Mara which meant bitter. This woman who had lost so much did not try to hide her brokenness. Perhaps she did not voluntarily choose this path of humility, but she did not try to run from it.

The rest of the book of Ruth is a beautiful story of redemption. God blessed Naomi with a faithful daughter-in-law who worked hard and heeded her advice. Ruth's dedication to Naomi has long been hailed as a beautiful example of faithfulness and devotion. Through Naomi's wise counsel Ruth married Boaz and bore a son. The women in Bethlehem proclaimed over Naomi *"Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."* Naomi's path of humility may not have been chosen, but she embraced it and was blessed with the continuation of the family line.

Are you walking a path of humility? You can voluntarily choose to be humble, acknowledging areas of pride, repenting, receiving forgiveness, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide you.

Humility can look like not having to have the last word, expressing gratitude, thinking of others more than you think of yourself, listening more and talking less, asking for help, praying more, etc. We are reminded in James 4:10 to *"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you."* We can follow the example of Naomi and choose the path of humility and see God raise us up too.

You may also find yourself on an unchosen path of humility. Be encouraged by Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 *"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."* God sees your weaknesses and trials differently than you might see them and he wants to use them to show you his power! Let us not despise the path of humility but embrace it knowing that God is faithful to use it in our lives.

Get Involved

We all know that life gets busy and sometimes it's hard to keep track of all the opportunities available to us. That's just one reason why we'd like to encourage you to sign up for our **Grace Women's Ministry email list**. Get the latest info on opportunities to connect with other women, be encouraged by our monthly Reflection, and have it delivered conveniently right to your inbox once or twice a month. What could be better? Scan the QR code to sign up today.



Ladies, consider this your personal invitation to join us for the monthly **We-Pray Women's Prayer Meeting** at Grace. Join with other ladies on the 3rd Saturday of each month, (except Nov & Dec) for a special time of prayer and reflection from 9:00-10:45am (Women needing to slip out a few minutes earlier are free to do so). Open to ladies of all ages! Contact Robin Furhman with questions.



There are many ministries here at Grace that are looking for volunteers. As a body with a variety of talents & gifts we all have different roles to fill in order for the body to function as it should. **Where might God be calling you to plug in and get involved?**

This page holds just a tiny portion of the opportunities that are available to you. Whether it's Kids ministry, Youth group, Life Groups, Women's Ministry, Men's Ministry, the list goes on and on... Don't miss the opportunities before you to serve our Grace Family, and more importantly our Great God!

Our Connections Team is looking for new volunteers!

Have you noticed the bright smiling faces that greet you each week as you walk into the church building? Maybe you've stopped by the Connection Center with a question or two. This helpful group of folks are all part of our Connections Team. This group also includes our Ushers. We would like to get some more folks involved in our "Connections" hospitality ministry. Would you like to help serve the Grace family in this way? Training is available, and typically you only serve one Sunday a month.

Please contact Mick Senn (mmsenn5@gmail.com) or the Grace Office (office@gracechurchfdl.net) for more information!

Do you play a musical instrument?

WE NEED YOU! OUR PRAISE TEAMS ARE LOOKING TO "INCREASE THEIR RANKS" AND ARE LOOKING FOR MUSICIANS. DON'T PLAY AN INSTRUMENT BUT LOVE TO SING? THIS OPEN INVITE INCLUDES YOU TOO. ALL AGES WELCOME! IF USING YOUR TALENTS TO HELP LEAD THE CONGREGATION IN WORSHIP & PRAISE IS SOMETHING THAT INTERESTS YOU,

Contact Pastor Grant to learn more:
baumgart@gracechurchfdl.net



LIGHTS,
CAMERA,
ACTION!



Our Worship Technology team is looking to add more members!

The Tech Team is responsible for running the audio, video, & computer on Sunday mornings during the worship service. Participating in this ministry is a great way to serve the Grace Family "**behind the scenes**". No prior experience required! All necessary training will be provided.

Is God calling you to connect with, lead, or host a **Life Group**?

The purpose of LIFE Groups are to connect a small group of people for the purpose of friendship, fellowship, and following God together. The relationships formed in these groups can provide care and support, as well as opportunities to serve others, deepen our faith, and live out God's calling on our lives.

Contact Pastor Brad (rutherford@gracechurchfdl.net) or one of the Elders for more info!

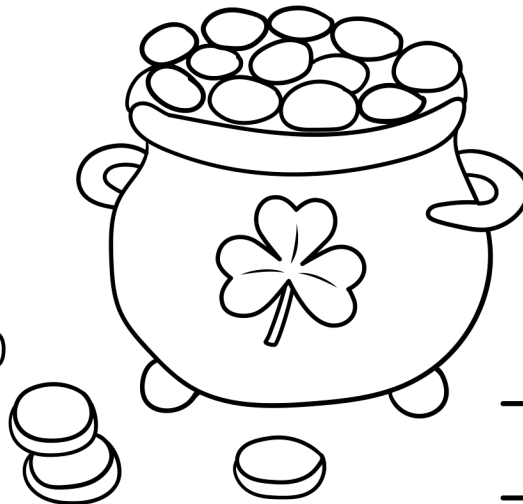
Hey you!

Yes, we're talking to you! Do you enjoy the Coffee Fellowship Time on Sunday mornings after worship? Does serving people or baking tasty treats bring you life? Then the Coffee Fellowship team may be the perfect fit for you! Whether it's setting up and serving, or baking and bringing yummy snacks to share, there's a role for you. We hope to add more people to the monthly/quarterly schedule. If this interests you contact Pastor Grant baumgart@gracechurchfdl.net

JUST FOR FUN

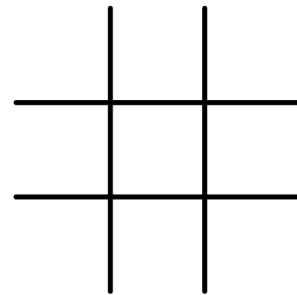
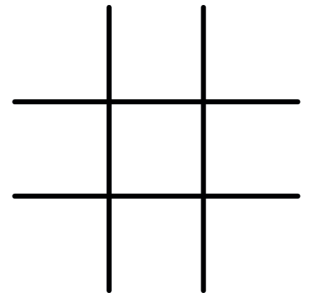
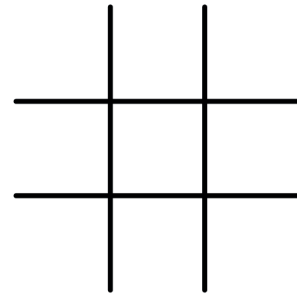


“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”



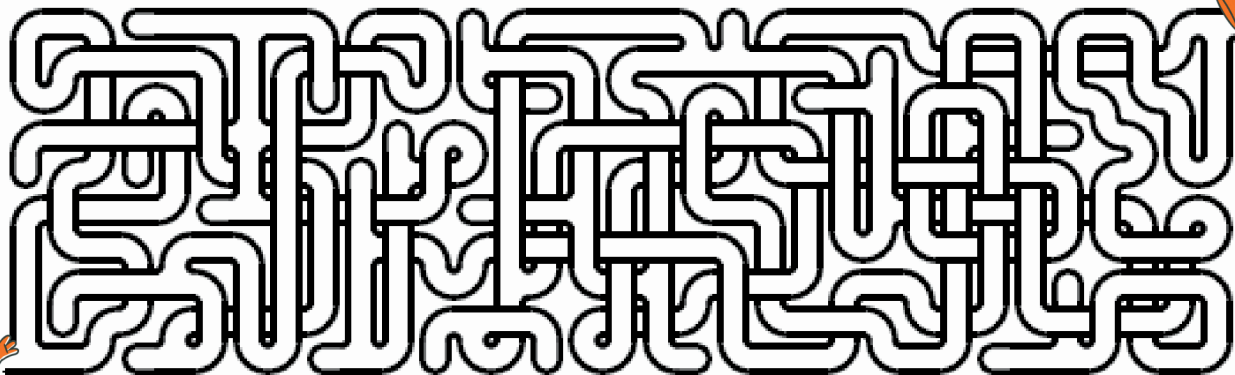
Find a friend and play a few rounds of

**TIC
TAC
TOE**



Matthew 6:19-20

Help the Shamrock catch up to the Hat!





163 18th Street
 Fond du Lac, WI 54935
 office@gracechurchfdl.net
 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

1/7/2024	\$7,291	155
1/14/2024	\$7,692	121
1/21/2024	\$7,245	144
1/28/2024	\$11,911	177

January Weekly Ave: \$8,534.75 149

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

Year to Date Givings \$293,202

Year to Date Expenses \$280,460

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

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please submit information for the
April Words of Grace
 to the church office by March **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