



OUR JOURNEY

A newsletter for members & friends of
Saving Grace Lutheran Church

A message from Pastor David Irgens

- ¹*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.*
- ³*Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever;*
- ⁴*to him who alone does great wonders,
for his steadfast love endures forever;*
- ⁵*to him who by understanding made the heavens,
for his steadfast love endures forever;*
- ⁶*to him who spread out the earth above the waters,
for his steadfast love endures forever;*
- ²³*It is he who remembered us in our low estate,
for his steadfast love endures forever;*
- ²⁴*and rescued us from our foes,
for his steadfast love endures forever;*
- ²⁵*he who gives food to all flesh,
for his steadfast love endures forever.*
- ²⁶*Give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his steadfast love endures forever.*

Psalms 136:1, 3-6, 23-26

What, it's Summer?! No one told me. Then I found out that summer begins on June 21 which is the longest day of the year and every day after that starts getting shorter. It's not fair, it just began! Summer will continue through September 22 astronomically. It may seem short, but take time and enjoy your Summer. *Tempus fugit*: Time flies. It escapes, it's irretrievable. We sometimes forget that we are to give thanks to God for all that we have been given.

When Jesus came into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey, the sign of the conquering King of Israel, the crowds shouted, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "**Teacher, order your disciples to stop.**" **Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out"** (Luke 19:38-40).

King David Julian of Norwich said, "**The greatest honor that you can give to Almighty God, greater than all your penances and sacrifices and mortifications, is to live joyfully because of the knowledge of His love.**" We may never know the little things we...

JULY & AUGUST 2026

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WORSHIP WITH US

Saturday

Traditional 5:00 PM

Sunday

Traditional 8:30 AM

Contemporary 10:30 AM

OFFICE HOURS

Mon. – Thur. 9am – 4pm

(715) 514 – 3552

www.saving-gracechurch.com

3735 Jeffers Rd, Eau Claire, WI 54703

Submissions to the SEPTEMBER

Our Journey newsletter due:

MONDAY, AUGUST 17th

NEWS & EVENTS

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JULY 13 - 17, 2026

9:00 AM - Noon



SCAN HERE



Registration is open online or fill out a form in the Narthex!

Join us again for VBS this summer!

Contact Cheryl Eberhardt, Education Director,
with any questions:

savinggraceeducation@gmail.com

ADULT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Interested in helping out with VBS? We need adult volunteers for set-up/clean-up, working stations, etc. Fill out a form online or contact Cheryl Eberhardt.

SCAN HERE



New Members Classes

Sunday, July 19 & Sunday, July 26

9:30 AM

Monday, July 27

6:00 PM

Interested in church membership?

Come to one of our New Members Classes to learn how you can grow your relationship with our community. Contact either pastor with any questions.

...do for others that change their lives. As disciples of Jesus, children of God, every day we are learning to listen and respond to the Holy Spirit. It's rarely an audible voice. The Holy Spirit often moves us by gently prompting us. It's a feeling that leaves us uneasy, until we follow through what should be done. It may seem out of place, but God's plan often doesn't make sense until after we've fulfilled what we are called to do. **We respond to the God of all that exists with joy and thanksgiving because "His steadfast love endures forever!"** (Psalm 136:26). That refrain is written in every verse of Psalm 136, it is written 26 times because it's a fundamental characteristic of who God is. In all of life God watches over us and provides for us, "surely we ought to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him" (Luther's Small Catechism). Surely, we ought to give Him praise and thanks every day!

L'Arche is an international federation of communities where people with intellectual disabilities live and work together. It was founded in France in 1964 and has over 150 communities worldwide. One beautiful summer day the community took a group of children with Down Syndrome to the beach. Everyone was happy and they were playing in the ocean and drawing pictures in the sand on the beach. One of the helpers said to one of the children, "Draw me a big picture of a house." The child drew a big picture of a house. She said to another child, "Draw me a picture of a horse," and the child drew a great picture of a horse in the sand. Finally, she said to a third child, "Draw me a picture of joy." The child looked up at her, then looked all the way down the end of the beach, then looked back at her, then looked all the way down the other end of the beach, then looked back up at her and said, "There's not enough room for joy!"

Sometimes we don't see God's plan, but we're a part of it. This summer you'll have the opportunity to do all the things you wanted to do during the winter, but couldn't. Remember all that the Lord has given you, and take time to give Him thanks for all He has done.

The Lord bless you with eyes to see all He has done for you.

*In Jesus Christ our Lord,
Pastor David Irgens*

A message from Pastor Dan Doran

Some of you have heard of Stephen Ministries. It's a ministry organization that provides training and resources to churches so that their members can care for one another and their surrounding communities. It was started by a pastor fresh out of seminary who quickly realized that the needs of his congregation went beyond what he was able to accomplish on his own. He started a class that would train and equip his own congregation to help meet the needs of their church. Here's how Dr. Kenneth C. Haugk remembers it,

"I trained nine lay caregivers in that first class, all with very different backgrounds. A secretary. A teacher. An insurance agent. A businesswoman. A student. An executive. A homemaker. A beautician. A retiree. I was immediately impressed by the dedication all nine of them put into their training, as well as their enthusiasm for the opportunity to be involved in hands-on ministry. After I assigned each of them to a care receiver, I was even more impressed by the care they provided—and their joy as they saw Christ working through them to bring hope and healing to another person."

Two of these first caregivers recognized just how valuable the teaching and training was and they encouraged Kenneth and his wife to figure out a way to offer it to other congregations. In 1975, Stephen Ministries was founded. Ephesians 4:12-13 has remained the heartbeat of their mission, "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ."

Some of you might recognize the Stephen Ministries name from the mailers we send out to those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. We've heard from our congregation that these short booklets on grief have come at a perfect time to provide comfort and insight into their own grieving experiences. In Book 1: A Time to Grieve, we read of a man who went grocery shopping, filled his cart full, left the store, and drove home only to discover that he left the entire cart of groceries in the parking lot! In the fog of his grief, he had forgotten to pack the groceries into his vehicle. We need time to grieve...

LECTIONARY SCHEDULE

for the months of July & August 2026

Sunday, July 5 – Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Zechariah 9:9-12

Romans 7:15-25a

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Sunday, July 12 – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 55:10-13

Romans 8:1-11

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Sunday, July 19 – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 44:6-8

Romans 8:12-25

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Sunday, July 26 – Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

1 Kings 3:5-12

Romans 8:26-39

Matthew 13:31-22, 44-52

Sunday, August 2 – Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 55:1-5

Romans 9:1-5

Matthew 14:13-21

Sunday, Aug. 9 – Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

1 Kings 19:9-18

Romans 10:5-15

Matthew 14:22-33

Sunday, Aug. 16 – Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

Matthew 15:[10-20] 21-28

Sun. Aug. 23 – Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 51:1-6

Romans 12:1-8

Matthew 16:13-20

Sun. Aug 30 – Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 15:51-21

Romans 12:9-21

Matthew 16:21-28

Interested in reading the Word at the Sunday 8:30

AM traditional worship service?

Contact Ellis Stewart to sign up!

ellis.stewart@charter.net

...and we need to be patient with ourselves in the process. In Book 2: Experiencing Grief, we read about practical suggestions for celebrating holidays after losing a loved one. The holidays prove to be one of the most difficult times of the year. But, focusing on one year at a time, adapting family traditions where necessary, and finding ways to honor your loved ones who are so deeply missed by the whole family are all helpful ways to process our grief.

I'm sharing all this with you because I'm excited to let you know that we are offering a Stephen Ministry Class this summer! Melissa Kuziej-Winder will be leading a class on "Distinctively Christian Caring" based on the book Christian Caregiving: A Way of Life. The class is open to everyone. It will meet for four sessions on Wednesdays at 5:00 pm starting on July 8th. This class will be valuable for anyone in our congregation. You might be caring for a spouse or a parent in a long-term care situation. You might be wrestling with the challenges of parenting your children. You might know someone in a financial bind. Caring for one another is a life-long, multifaceted, and rewarding endeavor. We all have something to learn, and this class will help us sharpen our skills and provide us with new resources to care for one another.

Every blessing in the Lord,
Pastor Dan

DISTINCTIVELY CHRISTIAN CARING CLASS



WEDNESDAY JULY 8, 15, 22, 29
5:00 PM
LED BY MELISSA KUZIEJ-WINDER

"What makes Christian caregiving distinctive? How does my faith make a difference in my caring and relating?"

Focusing on the essentials of using Christian faith in caring for hurting people and learning practical ways to live out the reality that we are the caregiver, and God is the Curegiver.

Four-part series focusing on the book,
Christian Caregiving: A Way of Life
by Rev. Dr. Kenneth Haugk, who is the founder and executive director of Stephen Ministries.

FELLOWSHIP

Sundays @ 9:30 AM

Thank you to the Discipleship Committee for leading fellowship in July and the Board of Worship & Music for leading fellowship in August!

Sign-up to lead fellowship and/or bring snacks at the refreshment table in the Fellowship Hall.

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Saving Grace Choir – July/August Schedule

No rehearsals or performances in July.

Rehearsal on Thursday, August 6, 6:30-7:30pm.

Performing on Sunday, August 9, at the 8:30am traditional service.

See the bulletin board in the Narthex or in the Music Room for the choir schedule!

Interested in sharing your gifts?

Contact Katherine Altreuter, Music Director, for more information about the choir, Special Music, the contemporary band, or helping out in the Audio/Visual Booth.

sglcmusic@gmail.com

A message from Katherine Altreuter, **Office Administrator & Music Director**

¹*Praise the LORD!*

Praise God in his sanctuary;

praise him in his mighty firmament!

²*Praise him for his mighty deeds;*

praise him according to his surpassing greatness!

³*Praise him with trumpet sound;*

praise him with lute and harp!

⁴*Praise him with tambourine and dance;*

praise him with strings and pipe!

⁵*Praise him with clanging cymbals;*

praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

⁶*Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!*

Praise the LORD!

Psalms 150

I know summer is truly here when I look at the calendar and see all the awesome opportunities for music and worship. People are excited to get out in the nice weather, sing and dance, and immerse...

5 June 2026

...themselves in music everywhere they go. In our area, there is music in some park around town on almost every week night. There are restaurants that feature bands on their patios, open mics, and pop-up jams. We are so blessed with such a musical community that unfortunately, we can't go see and hear everyone!

This summer, I have lots of gigs coming up where I get to make music with not just other great musicians, but people I call my closest of friends. Sometimes I'm playing fiddle in a bluegrass band, sometimes I'm playing bass and singing with my rock band. I'm also helping lead the "Sing and Play" portion of Vacation Bible School this July, where the children get to learn songs and dances all about praising our Heavenly Father. One of the songs, "Stand in Awe," includes a refrain that says, "*I stand in awe of your wonders | All the things that You've made | To the ends of the earth | Your glory is displayed.*" What a wonderful opportunity we have as staff in ministry to get to share the glory of God with the young disciples here at Saving Grace.

Music is such an important part of worship. It's also incredibly rehabilitating, as music therapy studies have shown over the last few decades. When I visit my grandmother in her nursing facility with my violin, I see dementia patients light up for the first time when they hear the music I'm playing, songs they recognize and used to sing. From the kindergarteners at VBS to the elderly in hospice, music brings everyone closer to God in healing and restorative ways.

If you haven't registered your child or grandchild for VBS yet, please do! We have so many games, songs, dances, crafts, and other activities planned to share the glory of the Father and what He has done. If you're "too old" for VBS, don't forget we have a bluegrass band for the contemporary service on Sunday, July 26th. I hope to see you there in worship!

Blessings,
Katherine Altreuter

**bluegrass
gospel**

sunday, july 26

10:30 AM

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Bazaar/Craft Ladies

First & Third Mondays of July & August
@ 1:00-3:30pm

Discipleship

Monday, July 6 @ 3:30pm
Monday, August 3 @ 3:30pm

Mission Outreach

No meeting in July
Monday, August 3 @ 5:00pm

Church Management

Monday, July 13 @ 4:30pm
Monday, August 10 @ 4:30pm

Education

Sunday, July 12 @ 10:30am
Sunday, August 9 @ 10:30am

Worship & Music

Thursday, July 9 @ 5:30pm
Thursday, August 13 @ 5:30pm

Council

Tuesday, July 28 @ 6:00pm
Tuesday, August 25 @ 6:00pm

LCMC PHOTO CONTEST

"The LCMC Photo Contest offers churches an opportunity to share inspiring images and stories that celebrate faith, ministry, service, and the life of the local church."

Have you taken a picture of worship, fellowship, service projects, or inspiring moments of faith here at Saving Grace? LCMC wants to see and share "how God's work is being unleashed in [our] congregation and throughout [our] community!"

Enter the contest by submitting photos at the link (scan QR code) below or email office@saving-gracechurch.com to assist you with filling out the form.



lcmc.net/blog/unleash-your-creativity---enter-our-2026-photo-contest/a1145

MISSION OUTREACH

In June, monthly gifts went to Starfish Kids, Ephrem, Binder Family, Feed My People, American Bible Society (in honor of USA 250th anniversary semi-quincentennial of Independence), Haven House, Chippewa Valley Free Clinic, The Eau Claire Family who lost their home to a fire on May 25th, and Eau Claire County Human Services.

We chose to support the Eau Claire County Department of Human Services annual picnic. Our gift will be part of the fundraising this year, to be raffled to celebrate and engage clients and their families.

Look for future information on Eau Freedom Fun Run & Fest (*Wednesday, July 15, 2026*) and Hike for the Homeless (*Tuesday, August 18, 2026*).

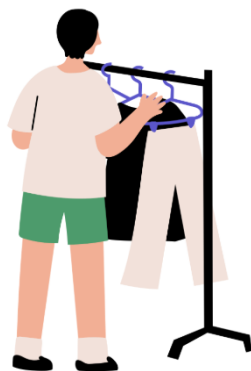
We would like to invite you to our Mission Outreach table in the Narthex. We have newsletters, volunteer information, and notes from groups and organizations Saving Grace supports. We are always open to ideas and suggestions (use the Lockbox) for missions from our Congregation.

Mission Outreach next meeting will be on Monday, August 3, 2026 at 5:00. *We will not be meeting in July.*

fall treasure sale

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

9am – 2pm



Our **Fall Treasure Sale** will be on Saturday, August 8th from 9am – 2pm. We will start taking donations Monday, August 3rd. Contact Chuck Hill with any questions: (715) 529-5794

LEFSE! LEFSE! LEFSE!

We start making lefse for the Fall Bazaar on Tuesday, July 14th from 8am to noon. Check the church calendar either in the office or on our website for the rest of the dates.

Rooted in Faith: A Century of Vacation Bible School by Nikki Jackson

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 19:14 (ESV)

Today, Vacation Bible School is a familiar summer tradition in many Eau Claire-area churches, but its roots reach back more than a century. While Lutheran congregations often relied on parish schools, catechism classes, and confirmation instruction to teach the faith, other Protestant churches pioneered organized summer Bible programs for children.

One of the earliest local examples appeared in 1918 when First Presbyterian Church announced an “Open Vacation Bible School” for children ages four to fifteen. The ten-day program met each weekday morning and included Bible stories, memory work, church history, missions, hymns, prayers, catechism, and even lessons in patriotism. An enrollment fee of 25 cents was charged to cover material expenses. With structured classes, recess periods, and age-based instruction, it reflected a growing national movement to provide religious education during the summer months when public schools were closed.

A review of local newspaper archives suggests that Lutheran congregations throughout the Chippewa Valley began adding—or at least advertising to the broader community—Vacation Bible Schools by the 1930s. Looking at our congregation’s roots, First Lutheran was holding Vacation Bible School by at least 1932. In 1939, Grace Lutheran conducted classes on the first floor of what would later be known as Randall School, renting the space for the cost of the janitor’s services during that week.

By the mid-twentieth century, Vacation Bible School has become a staple of summer church life, evolving from its early classroom-style format into the week long programs of Bible lessons, music, crafts, and fellowship that many families remember today.

In more recent years, SGLC has continued that tradition while adapting to the changing needs of children and families. One memorable example came in 2019, when Vacation Bible School kicked off

7 June 2026

with a congregation-wide pool party at Fairfax Pool! Organizers have also incorporated special programs such as the 2023 one-day preschool VBS, *Pets Unleashed*, with the tagline, "Where Jesus Cares 'Fur' You."

Even during that challenging time of the pandemic, God's Word continued to be shared as SGLC organizers provided a VBS-at-Home program. For four days children gathered online through Zoom each day for two hours for Bible learning, music, and fellowship. The methods may have changed that year, but the mission remained the same!

More than a century after one of Eau Claire's earliest recorded Vacation Bible Schools, children are still being brought to Jesus. This year, SGLC's "Rainforest Falls" VBS will be held July 13-17 from 9:00 a.m. to noon, "inviting children on an adventure to discover what it means to be rooted in a relationship with God. Children will explore five foundational truths about God while growing deeper in faith and learning to trust Him in every season of life."

Please consider signing up your children, volunteering if you are able, and praying for Cheryl, our volunteers, and the children as they share another wonderful week of growing in faith and experiencing God's love.

MEMORIAL & HONORARY GIFTS

In memory of my parents, Bev & Don Erickson
to General Operating Fund
given by Don Erickson

In memory of John Naser
to Debt Reduction
given by Brenda Marlow, Kris Squier, Renae Hestekin,
Marcella Jordan
to TV Ministry (sponsored the June 21st broadcast)
given by Pat Naser and family

In memory of Jane Brown
to Debt Reduction
given by Stan & Jean Brettingen, Jean Parkhurst
to Music
given by Cynthia Cramer, Cindy Joy Fischer, Darleen
Bauer, Barb Mathson, George & Sandy Nelson

starting June 21...

OUR NURSERY IS OPEN!

**REGISTER
ONLINE:**



**During the 8:30am
traditional worship service!**

**Contact Cheryl Eberhardt,
Education Director, for more
information:**
savinggraceeducation@gmail.com



**American
Red Cross**

Blood Drive

**A thank you goes out to all who donated (or
attempted to donate) blood at the June 6th
American Red Cross Blood Drive!**

8 of the 19 donors were non-members;
3 Power Red donations were collected, for a total
of **22 units collected.**

Next American Red Cross Blood Drive:

Monday, November 16, 2026

If you donate prior to Sept. 21, you will be eligible to
donate blood on Nov. 16. **Mark your calendars!**

COMMUNITY NOTES

Death Notices

Jerome S. Ausman passed May 26, 2026. Pastor David Irgens presided over the funeral on June 17th at Smith Funeral Chapel.

Brandon Richard Stephan passed June 1, 2026. Pastor David Irgens presided over the funeral on June 10th at Smith Funeral Chapel.

Jane Elizabeth Brown passed June 7, 2026. Pastor David Irgens presided over the funeral on June 18th at Saving Grace Lutheran Church.

Altar Flowers in June

June 6-7: given by Vicky Hagel in memory of husband, Phil; given by Nancy Balash in honor of Kevin Balash's birthday (6/5/58)

June 13-14: given by Kevin Balash in honor of Nancy Balash's birthday (6/12/58)

June 27-28: given by Tom & Berta Kuehn in memory of Tom's father, Milton; given by Pete & Renae Hestekin in honor of their 37th wedding anniversary (July 1); given by Dean & Sandy Kallenbach in honor of their 45th wedding anniversary and Sandy's birthday (both June 28)



Saving Grace Lutheran Church

3735 Jeffers Rd.

Eau Claire, WI 54703

715-514-3552

saving-gracechurch.com

Office Hours: Mon. – Thur. 9AM – 4PM

MISSION STATEMENT

*Established in the Holy Scriptures, our mission is to
make Jesus Christ known to all as the One True
Savior, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

STAFF

Pastor David Irgens, Senior Pastor

ibn1irgs@yahoo.com

Pastor Dan Doran, Associate Pastor

pastordansglc@gmail.com

Katherine Altreuter, Office Administrator & Music
Director

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Cheryl Eberhardt, Education Director

savinggraceeducation@gmail.com

CHURCH COUNCIL

Michelle Otto President

Patty Dundas Vice President

Pam Bee Treasurer

Barb Clark Secretary

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Patrick Bartholomew, Brian Hagen, Dean

Kallenbach, Melissa Kuziej Winder, Chuck Olson,

Carol Pickhardt, Mary Schneider

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Bev Nelson Bazaar/Women's Group

Duane Erickson Church Management

Jean Brettingen Discipleship

Renae Hestekin Education

Chet Berkey Men of Saving Grace

Kay Granger Mission Outreach

Kevin Otto Personnel

Chuck Hill Visual Ministry

Kathy Berkey Worship & Music