

RALLY/AUTUMN 2026

ISSUE 2603

#GRACENOTES

GRACENOTES

A SEASONAL PUBLICATION OF

Grace Lutheran Church

Palo Alto, California



A BODY THAT LIVES!



*What is this place where we are meeting?
Only a house, the earth its floor.
Walls and a roof sheltering people,
windows for light, an open door.
**Yet it becomes a body that lives when we are gathered here,
and know our God is near.***

What Is This Place - ELW 524 - Huub Oosterhuis, David Smith

We are celebrating our 75th Anniversary as a congregation on Sunday, September 27 with a single service at 10am (Sunday School/Forum at 9am)! As I write this we are pivoting from Summer to Fall, basking in the glow of a successful Grace Goes to Mt Cross weekend while finalizing plans for Rally Day and our 75th Anniversary the last weekend in September. In the midst of that, the last pieces of tile are going into the chancel space completing our generational update of the sanctuary even as we begin a process of calibrating the new acoustics and completely new audio system.



There is a lot happening, but profoundly our mission and purpose is unchanged over the last 75 years let alone the last 500 or even 2000. We gather together in a house, the earth its floor.

And in that gathering, we become a body that lives, knowing our God is near. We gather to worship, to become one body in community together, to deepen our faith, and to share Christ's mission to the poor and marginalized in our community and world. As I like to say, it is in the doing of all the things that all of things get done.

Our newly polished floor in the sanctuary beautifully captures the history of our congregation and all those who came before with it's polish and character. I would encourage you to join those forebears and lean in this Fall. Lean into community, to worship, to faith, to mission. Get involved and get to know people. Revisit your calendar and recalibrate it enriching your faith life. I look forward to seeing you soon, and living this life together in community with you.

Peace,

Pr Matt ❖

Cover photo: Grace Goes to Mt. Cross 2026!
See the expanded photo spread on pages 12-13...

Fall Sundays at Grace

a place to belong at every age



Every Sunday:
8:30 & 10:45 am
Worship

Beginning Sunday, September 13:
9:45 am
Sunday School
all ages, infants to adults

September 13 ONLY:
11:45 am
BBQ Lunch and Bounce Slide



Grace Lutheran Church
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA | GRACEPA.ORG

All are welcome!

GRACE HISTORICAL VIDEO ARCHIVES

We have about **5,500 video recordings** stretching from the mid 1980s to this week. The early records are far from complete but as time went by more were preserved. If you would like a copy of a service or an event, please ask. Also, if you have any tapes from events at Grace, please let me know. You may be able to fill in some of the gaps.

Andrew Mellows



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NEXT ISSUE:

Advent/Christmas 2026

PUBLICATION DEADLINE:

November 12, 2026
(end of day)



- 4:30** **Confirmation** (online)
- 6:00 - 6:30** **Children's Choir (Grades 1-8)**
- 6:00 - 7:00** **Life Together Dinner!**
Bring yourself for **\$12.50** (children 12 and under are free) or your **whole family for not more than \$30...** truly the best and most delicious deal in town!
- 7:00 - 8:00** **Children's Fun**
Confirmation (in-person)
High School Youth Group
Adult Chat with Pastor Matt
- 7:00 - 8:30** **Adult Choir**

NEW DINNERS! 6-7PM IN BROWN HALL

We are VERY excited about Wednesday Life Together programming this Fall. There are several new components to the program and even our dinners this Fall will be at a new level! Gama Santacruz, our cook the Fall, used to work at Grace as our janitor before going to culinary school and beginning a career as chef. We are THRILLED that he will be pulling together our meals and we look forward to advertising menus in the near future. These dinners are fantastic stand alone option for you, but also bridge our other programming opportunities on Wednesday evenings. Dinners will cost \$12.50/person or \$30/family. You have to eat dinner . . . you may as well have a great one with your Grace community, and friends are always welcome!

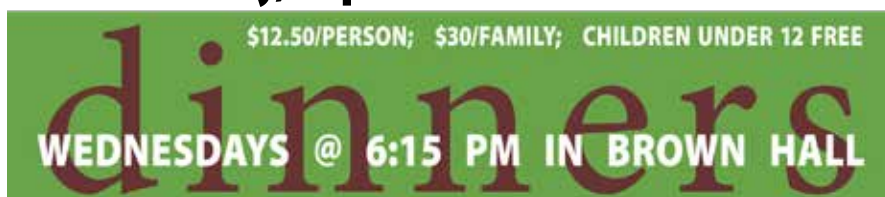


NEW ADULT CONVERSATION 7-8PM IN GRACE COMMONS*

Pr Matt will be leading a series of discussion which will take place in Grace Commons. *Our former preschool room is taking on a new name and purpose for this coming programming year which will be a comfortable space for adults to be in conversation about important faith and modern life topics. While many of these topics will be of particular interest for parents, they will be broad enough for anyone to participate and enjoy. Keep your eyes open for more details. See you there! ❖



BEGINNING Wednesday, September 16!





75th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, September 26 | 5-7:00pm | Courtyard

+ Use QR code to RSVP: =====>>>



75 YEARS of GRACE Rooted and Rising

75TH ANNIVERSARY! | SAT SEPT 26 & SUN SEPT 27

Grace Lutheran Church was founded in the Fall of 1951, with Pastor Harold Brown assigned to develop the new ministry for the American Lutheran Church (ALC), a predecessor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Grace was founded in the wake of World War II as were many other congregations in California in the thick of waves of people relocating from the upper midwest where the Lutheran tradition is strongest in the United States. Mt Cross Lutheran Camp was founded five years prior, and California Lutheran University and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary were all started in the same era. The essentials for a thriving Lutheran ecosystem. We have much to celebrate and are blessed to be in a position to continue to make plans for the future with hope and faith in the Holy Spirit's continued passion for this community and our mission now and in years to come.

We want to invite you to participate in two events for this celebration. They should be great!

- **Saturday, September 26 from 5-7pm** we are having a catered courtyard celebration! Please RSVP using the QR code here, or using the link on our Connect page on our website. There is no cost thanks to generous sponsors, but we would like a head count. Elementary and younger children will have their own opportunity for pizza and activities during that time.
- **Sunday, September 27 at 10am** we will have a single Anniversary Worship Celebration with Pastor Susan Kintner (Grace Associate Pastor July, 1980 - June, 1986) preaching with Sunday School and Forum prior at 9am. We would love to have you bring some finger foods to share to make for an embellished Coffee Hour. ❖



75th Anniversary Worship

Sunday, September 27 | 10:00am | The Rev. Susan Kintner, Preaching

9:00 am Sunday School/Adult Forum | 11:00 am Potluck Coffee Hour

AN EPIC SUMMER

The Rev. Friederike Wekel,
Associate Pastor

Friederike Wekel



Thanks to your generosity, I was able to take a 3-months Sabbatical—and I have to tell you: It was a wonderful time. First of all, it gave me the opportunity to travel. And thanks to Tilman, even for 18 days on my own. Secondly, (and though I love my profession dearly) it was nice to only need to focus on one thing, and that was myself and my family.

Right after my wonderful farewell service on Sunday, May 17, (Thank you for all the cards and wishes! Emily and Mariel collected them with photos into a wonderful album and I just cherish that dearly! It makes me cry every time I look through it!), I flew to Frankfurt on Monday, May 18, where I met my best friend from college, Torben, and spent a day together discovering Frankfurt and catching up.

On Wednesday, May 20, I set out in my rental car to Switzerland, where I had several stations: 1. St. Gallen with its famous 17th library. However, what fascinated me even more than the library itself, was the early history of St. Gallen, particularly the story of Saint Wiborada. Wiborada is the first woman in the history of the church that became a saint, who has long been forgotten and whose story is now revived. Wiborada lived as an anchorite (walled into a cell at the church St. Magnus) for 10 years. In 925, she predicted the Hungarian invasion, all towns and abbey people could save themselves, and also the treasured manuscripts of the library were brought to security. Only Wiborada refused to leave her cell and got killed by the Hungarians on May 1, 926. However, her vision ensured that up to this day, the library of St. Gallen has one of the most important collections of medieval manuscripts in the world, with codices from the Carolingian and Ottonian period (780-1024 CE).

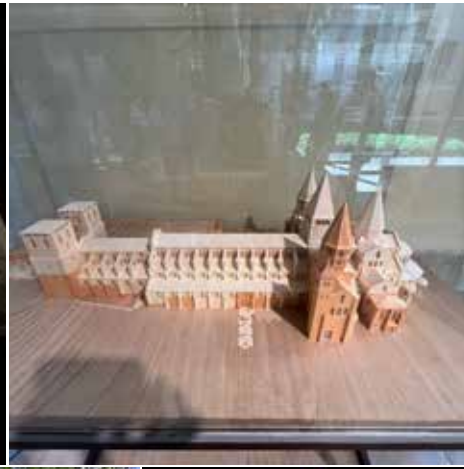
Ok, that was a very deep dive... After that I spent two days, visiting Lausanne and Geneva, both cities with a strong reformation history. In Geneva, I met with staff from the Lutheran World Federation at their office.

On Saturday, May 23, I left for France—drove through the beautiful country side of the Jura, always still with the Alps in the background. It was wonderful to be able to follow my own whims and stop here or there. I arrived in Cluny, a small town close to Taizé, in the afternoon. In Cluny, there

used to be an influential Benedictine Abbey with a basilica that was the biggest of its time until St. Peter in Rome was build. Destroyed through and after Reformation and French Revolution, I was only able to walk the ruins and see the museum. But oh my God, just gauging by the ruins that basilica must have been magnificent!

On May 24, Pentecost Sunday, I started my week in the Community of Taizé, which is only 15mins from Cluny. The days were structured by worship three times a day (before breakfast and lunch, and after dinner), with a bible study in the morning, led by Frère Pedro, and a discussion group in the afternoon. Having been twice to Taizé as a teenager, I learned that it is a little different to come as an adult - but nonetheless a really good and intense time of prayer, discussion, connection, and self-reflection. Through my English-speaking discussion group I met another associate pastor from Charleston (on the first week of her sabbatical—we became good friends), a pastor from Melbourne, Australia, a peace worker from Northern Ireland, a doctor from London, a retiree from Belgium, a CPA from the Netherlands, an Italian Social Worker living in Germany, and a religion teacher from Germany (with a heavy Irish accent as she had studied in Dublin). We were a fascinating mix of people, languages/accents, and backgrounds and had many deep discussion about biblical topics and what they mean for our lives.

The week in Taizé flew by, and I left for Dijon to meet up with Torben, my best friend from college. Together we drove through the Eastern part of France for the next three days. We saw the city of Dijon, the origin of the river Seine (in some remote forest with an archeological digging site next to it, because they found an ancient temple complex there), the village and church where Joan of Arc was born and grew up, the city of Nancy (I was not too impressed), the battlegrounds of Verdun (we only lasted half a day: the history and horror of WWI is still very much visible), and finally the city of Metz (which is beautiful and has a stunning cathedral with stained glass windows by Marc Chagall). We then returned to Frankfurt in Germany, where I picked up my family from the airport on the next day. [cont. page 10]



From here on, family vacation started. We had several stations planned, starting with visiting Tilman's dad near Darmstadt, driving further down south to Bavaria where we visited a family friend and her family and also toured Neuschwanstein Castle (this castle and the scenery is too beautiful to be real!). From there we left for South Tyrol, which is a German-Italian speaking part of Italy. To get there we took the scenic route through the Alps which was stunningly beautiful. We stayed in Merano (or Meran, as the German speaking population says), which is city that lies on the southern side of the Alps, surrounded by in a stunning panorama by roughly 10,000 feet mountains, in the midst of apple orchards. To complete the romantic picture: Our Air B'n'B were a couple of rooms in a castle dating back to the 11/12th century. We also went to the South Tyrol Museum of Archeology in Bolzano, where we finally visited Ötzi, the Iceman, a 5000 year old glacier mummy, that had been a topic of many a conversation in my family.

Our way up to Berlin took us two days along the eastern side of Germany. From here on it was more summer vacation as usual (still good though!), seeing our Berlin friends and family, and then driving up north to see my family in Northern Germany. The only difference is that we left Henriette with a friend near Lübeck (where we lived before we came here), and drove on to Frankfurt. So we had come full circle!

We flew back to California for two weeks, only to leave again for two weeks in Boca Raton, Florida, where my older sister and her family with Henriette joined us after a week. We explored some local flora and fauna (and some fauna explored us ;)), spent a lot of time in the water, drove down to Key West, over to the gulf coast, visited the Everglades (\$100 more expensive for non-US residents, as we learned) and just had a really good time. After a week, all of us flew to California, and we spent two more weeks together with day trips to Carmel, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge, the Exploratorium in SF, Yosemite, beach days, and board games, ice cream tacos, a karaoke night and a lot of good conversation. When they left on August 7, we only had a couple of days to get our heads on straight and start back into school mode...

Thank you so much! It really was an epic summer that I enjoyed immensely. And I did my job: I slept a lot, read three books (not related to anything about theology!), and relaxed. THANK YOU for making that possible!

Pr. Friederike ❖

YOU are invited!

Join in the fun!

Friday, October 30, 2026

6:00 - 8:00 pm

- **Sign up to decorate a trunk and pass out candy as kids go "trunk or treating"**
- **Bring your family and friends!**
- **Haunted house, guessing jars, food and fun!**



Check out the updated 2026/27 Program Guide included with this newsletter to block off all of the important dates for this program year

CONFIRMATION AT GRACE: BUILDING FAITH AND BUILDING COMMUNITY

Faith is a lifelong journey. It changes as we grow, ask questions, have new experiences, and face challenges.

The middle school years are an important time for that journey. Young people are beginning to ask bigger questions about themselves, the world, and what they believe. Our Confirmation program gives them a place to explore those questions together.

At Grace, we have a three-year program for tweens & teens in grades 6–8. We talk about the Christian faith and our Lutheran tradition, but Confirmation is about more than exploring facts. Our secret goal is that young people build relationships, become part of the church community, and discover what faith can mean in their everyday lives. (Oh, no, now we gave the secret away! Ooops.)

Community matters, because nobody figures out life or faith on their own.

Middle schoolers are dealing with school, friendships, social pressures, technology, family life, and many changes in themselves. Confirmation gives them a regular place where they can talk, ask questions, disagree, laugh, and simply be themselves—without the pressure to perform or compete.

Confirmation is not about “right” answers. Questions and doubts are welcome.

Over the three years, confirmands also get to know adults and other young people in the congregation. They worship, serve, go on retreats, and spend time together. Our hope is that Grace becomes a place where they know people, where people know them, and where they feel that they belong.

Confirmation Classes meet every Wednesday. Families can choose between two options:

- **4:30–5:30 PM – Zoom**
- **7:00–8:00 PM – In person**

Classes are interactive. We talk about the Bible, the Lutheran and other Christian traditions, faith, ethics, and questions that come up in a middle schoolers’ life. There will be discussion, activities, creativity, games, and sometimes a little bit of chaos. That’s part of it.

Our Confirmation program also includes:

- **Mentor Program & Sunday School** – Students meet monthly with an adult mentor during Sunday School in the Emmaus Room, beginning in October. This gives each confirmand another trusted adult in the congregation who gets to know them over time.
- **Acolyting** – Confirmands participate in worship by serving as acolytes. Training begins shortly after Rally Day.
- **Worship Notes** – Students use worship notes to help them focus, ask questions, and reflect on what they experience in worship.
- **Retreats & Off-Site Activities** – Retreats, camps, and other activities give us time to have fun together and build relationships outside the classroom.

When are we getting started?

- **Parent Info Meeting:** Sunday, September 13 at 9:45am in the Emmaus Room.
- **First Confirmation Class:** Wednesday, September 16, on Zoom (4:30-5:30) and in the Fireside Room (7-8pm)

If your child is entering 6th, 7th, or 8th grade, we would love to have them join us.

If you have questions about Confirmation or would like to learn more, please contact Pastor Friederike at pastorf@gracepa.org.

I look forward to another year of learning, questioning, laughing, and growing together. ❖



WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Women's Night Out

Every first Thursday of the month from 7:00–9:00 PM, the women of Grace get together. What do we do? Where do we meet? What's the plan? Well... that depends.



Women's Night is intentionally flexible. We might meet at church, at someone's home, at a restaurant, or somewhere completely different. We might have a conversation, do something creative, eat, drink, learn something, play something, or just enjoy being together.

And you can be in charge! If you would like to host a Women's Night, let me know. You pick the where, the how, and the what. It does not need to be elaborate, deeply meaningful, or perfectly organized. Sometimes the best evenings are the ones with the least complicated plans.

And as for conversation: honestly, nothing is off topic in this group. Faith, family, work, politics, relationships, ridiculous stories, serious questions, things we probably shouldn't repeat elsewhere... it all has a place. That openness is something I am really proud of.

So come as you are. Bring your opinions, your questions, your stories, and your sense of humor.

First Thursday of every month | 7:00–9:00 PM

Want to host one? Let me know! ❖

FALL WOMEN'S RETREAT: FOCUS

What does it take to focus or stay focused? Is focusing a spiritual practice? Are there biblical texts that discuss this topic—that somehow seems



to be a very modern problem? And speaking of modern problem: What are things that distract us most in our everyday life? And then: What happens when we focus?

I am looking forward to discussing all these things with you at our annual Fall Women's Retreat on Saturday, October 17, at Grace Lutheran Church.

We will start at 10am and wrap up around 4pm. Please sign up via the Grace Connect page.

All people identifying as women are welcome.

I am looking forward to focusing with you on this topic!

Pr Friederike ❖



Ask...Explore...Connect Volunteer Engagement Fair

September 13
after each service

Looking to **connect** with others and be engaged in a meaningful way? Our **Volunteer Engagement Fair** is the perfect opportunity to find out ways to be more active in your church community!

Explore a variety of volunteer roles that cater to your interests and skills after each worship service on Rally Day, September 13. Whether you're passionate about community outreach, youth programs, or

event planning, want to join the choir or learn to play handbells, there's a place for you to shine. Your involvement helps build a stronger, more connected community. Join us, and let's work together to make a meaningful impact and foster lasting relationships.

For more details, contact Pr Friederike (pastorf@gracepa.org). **We can't wait to see how we can grow together!** ❖

SERVICE FOR SURVIVING FAMILIES

Have you experienced the loss of a child—during pregnancy, infancy, childhood, or even in adulthood? Are you a sibling mourning the loss of a brother or sister, or a grandparent carrying the grief of losing a grandchild?

The death of a child leaves deep and lasting scars. Grief becomes a lifelong companion—sometimes you carry it, and other times it carries you. Even after many years, the loss remains part of your story. You are not alone. You are part of a community of surviving families.

On All Saints' Sunday, November 1, at Grace, we hold a special evening service of remembrance for surviving families. Together, we will make space for grief, memory, love, and hope. The service will begin at 7:00 PM and will last approximately 30 minutes.

If you have any questions, please reach out to pastorf@gracepa.org. ❖



CONNECTIONS CAFÉ

Light refreshments (cookies, snacks, coffee, tea) & conversation



2 pm in the Emmaus Room | **SECOND** and **FOURTH** Thursdays

The programming year is starting and we are kicking off another year of our twice monthly programming and meeting for our senior members at Grace with interesting topics! After Pr Friederike's sabbatical report in late August, we will beat the heat on Thursday, **September 10** with an ice cream social in the Emmaus Room.

On **September 24**, Pr Matt will talk with us about the history of Grace, getting us all warmed up for the 75th anniversary weekend on September 26/27.

On **October 8**, our director of children, youth, and young adult ministry, Emily, will talk to us about volunteer opportunities for senior citizens.

October 22 and **November 12** deal with the topic of funeral and death from two perspectives: On October 22, Tim will join us for a meeting on memorial services and funeral planning. On November 12, Pr Friederike will lead a session on the question of: What happens to my body?

Our second meeting in November would fall on Thanksgiving Day and therefore will not take place.

We will round the year out with Christmas Caroling with Tim on **December 10**—an old, cherished tradition! ❖

REFORMATION FEST

Wear red and celebrate with us the 509th anniversary of nailing it - meaning theses to a church door in Wittenberg. As Lutherans, we like a good BBQ, so there will be all kinds of food, including sauerkraut and some other German specialties for Reformation Sunday, October 27. Join us at noon in the courtyard and sing together "A mighty fortress is our God!" ❖



**SUNDAY,
OCTOBER 27
12:00 NOON**
**DEET
"BEER" & BRATS
GAMES & FUN**

**BRING YOUR FAVORITE SALAD
OR SIDEDISH TO SHARE**

REFORMATIONFEST





WORSHIP & SONG



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Getz".

Tim Getz,
Director of Music

“The average worshiper is, at best, a reluctant singer. Any worshiper who is willing to join in the song is more likely to do so if that person feels supported by the swell of voices and instruments. Similarly, a majority of worshipers will either sing quietly or not at all if they can hear only themselves.” This is a quote from Bob Batastini, a now-retired prominent musician in the Roman Catholic Church, but what he says has been exactly my experience for many years. Grace’s green carpet, just removed in the past few weeks, swallowed our collective sound and dampened participation in worship. I often talk about my years of experience, playing the organ from upstairs in our carpeted sanctuary, when I really couldn’t be sure anyone was singing at all! And I noticed first-hand on several occasions when I had an opportunity to join the congregation, that even with others sitting nearby, I felt like I was singing alone.

Here’s another quote from Walter Holtkamp, one of the great organ builders of the 20th century: “The importance of the full participation of the congregation in singing must always be encouraged, for in a large portion of each service, the people in the pews, untrained and insecure, are the musicians of the church.” Holtkamp goes on to talk about the fact that a concert hall would never have a carpeted stage. Musicians on a carpeted stage would not be able to hear themselves, would not be able to hear other musicians, and would not be heard well by the audience. In worship, all of us are the musicians.

Finally he says, “For the person in the pew, the floor is the primary sound reflecting surface in close proximity. A hard floor pops your sound right back to you. A soft, carpeted floor absorbs your sound and the sound of those around you.”

As I write this article, we’ve now been worshiping in our newly-uncarpeted sanctuary for two Sundays. From my perspective, the change in sound has been nothing short of miraculous. Just a little bit of reverberation has encouraged and strengthened congregational singing; even the spoken responses feel heartier. I get the sense of a community uniting into worship with one heart and one voice, rather than a random collection of people doing their individual best. Already, I’ve found that I can lead more gently from the keyboard, even stop playing altogether, and the singing will continue robustly. I said to Pastor Matt this afternoon: “The congregation has found the voice they had all along.” This is just what I’d wished for, and I hope you’re feeling energized by this change as well!

Of course, just as our voices are amplified, other ambient noise will also increase. I suspect we’ll quickly get used to most of it. On our first week without the carpet, I chuckled to myself as I heard shoes squeaking while people walked forward for communion. Today, our second week without carpet, to be absolutely honest I didn’t even notice. The fan of our ventilation system may sound loud as we get into the months when the heat is turned

Evening Prayer in the style of Taizé

Second Sunday of each month

at 7:00 pm



on. We might adapt to that sound quickly as well, or we may find ourselves with an idea for something to address in a future capital campaign! In general, when you hear extra noise, remember and rejoice: we are a community of living, breathing, human beings, come to worship together, not alone. Sometimes humans make noise.

Clarity of speech is something that can suffer just a little bit in a resonant acoustic. To be heard clearly, our readers and other worship leaders (even pastors!) may have to pay a bit more attention to speaking slowly, with clear consonant sounds, and avoiding the easy habit of clipping short words and dropping off at the ends of sentences. To that end, I'd like to encourage all of our readers to attend one of two workshops I'll be leading in September:

- **Thursday, September 9**
from 7:00-8:30 pm or
- **Saturday, September 19**
from 10:00-11:30 am.

At each of these workshops, we'll spend a little time discussing common pitfalls and helpful tips for good public speaking, and then do some actual practice in the sanctuary with a chance to receive helpful and friendly feedback from other participants. It'll be fun, and the whole congregation will benefit. Whether you're already on our reader list or would like to get involved with this ministry for the first time, you are most welcome! Please speak to me if neither of these times works for you and we may schedule additional workshops this fall.

As always, I look forward to worshipping with you and singing with you next Sunday! ❖

HEARING AIDS

We have exciting news! Over recent years we have sought to add accessibility to our Sunday morning worship experience for those with hearing assist devices. On the last Sunday in August our T-coil/Hearing Loop system received a major update and the reviews were ecstatically positive! Night and day from the previous Sunday. We are VERY excited about that!



In addition to our T-coil/Hearing Loop progress we are exploring the possibility of adding (NOT replacing!) soon a much more recent technology called Auracast. Both the T-coil/Hearing Loop and Auracast systems are features you should be seeking in your next hearing aid purchase or to research if your device already has these capacities. Also, we are seeing a number of accessories for phones and otherwise that might bridge the Auracast technology to the T-coil/Hearing Loop capacity your hearing Aid may already have, and even headsets for those without hearing aids entirely. Auracast is also a technology that would potentially allow us to offer support in other locations as well, e.g. classrooms, Brown Hall, etc. To be clear, these additions would be in addition to the existing T-coil/Hearing Loop.

Ongoing feedback is helpful, and the more specific the better (e.g. last Sunday I had a hard time hearing the sermon, but the lectors were very clear). We had a great forum on Sunday, August 30 that helped productively illuminate these issues in a way that will allow everyone to fully participate in our congregational life. We expect more forums to come on this topic and if you have any questions on this subject, Andrew Mellows is a great resource, as is Gretchen Rauch in our office as she is a longtime user of these features.

Learn more at: www.bluetooth.com/auracast/ ❖



Choir
Wednesdays 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Bells
Thursdays 5:00 – 6:00 pm

Interested?
Contact
Tim@gracepa.org

HAPPY FALL!

Emily

Emily King-Nobles,
Director of Children, Youth & Young Adult Ministry



Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

While the leaves might not be changing colors just yet, Fall is definitely upon us! There is lots to look forward to at Grace this coming season as we continue building community and growing in faith together.

As we say goodbye to summer, I am thankful for all the memories that were made. Our kids spent a week in the Santa Cruz Mountains at Mt. Cross Camp, learning what it looks like to “wear love.” Our young adults continued meeting throughout the summer, strengthening friendships and trying new activities around the Bay Area. Our high schoolers spent a week in Southern California at the Western States Youth Gathering, meeting other ELCA youth and participating in service projects.

The Youth Gathering this summer focused on Romans 12:2: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Throughout sessions on relationships, mental health, identity, and more, the students dove deeper into what it looks like to be transformed by Christ rather than conformed by the world.

As Fall approaches, it can be easy to fall back into a routine of busyness. Or perhaps the busy routines followed you throughout the summer. My hope for all of us is that we continue to find ways to let our minds and routines be transformed by the Word of God.

This might look like slowing down, at least one day a week. It might mean taking a phone detox and not immediately responding to every notification. It could be going on a hike that gets you out into nature, saying no to an extracurricular activity and making time for family meals, or prioritizing serving others and learning about justice issues in the world outside of our own everyday worries.

It is ok to slow down.

May we find routines this fall that aren’t written by the world, but are shaped by the call God has placed on our lives through Jesus Christ. There are several opportunities listed below to dive deeper into faith at Grace and continue building community.

I want to especially highlight a change coming this Fall:

Our **Wednesday evening Life Together** programming is expanding. There are now programs offered for every age and we hope you will make Wednesdays at Grace with your church family a part of your weekly routine. One exciting component is that our children’s choir is back! Children’s choir will meet with Tim and I from 6-6:30pm to learn about music and prepare songs to sing occasionally in worship. We are also adding an adult fellowship time from 7-8pm and a children’s program from 7-8pm. Here is what Wednesdays will look like:

- **6:00-6:30pm: Children’s Choir**
- **6:00-7:00pm: Dinner, cooked by our culinary trained chef and long-time friend of the church, Gama Santacruz**
- **7:00-8:00pm: Children’s group time, Middle School Confirmation, High School Youth Group, Adult Fellowship (with Pastor Matt)**
- **7:00-8:30pm: Adult Choir Practice**

Here are some additional dates to save. (next page)
Please reach out with any questions about any of these ministries or programs. I am always open to coffee and meals to hear your ideas as we continue growing our programs.

Blessings,
Emily ❖

FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

Children, Youth, & Family

- **September 13:** Rally Day, Bounce house & BBQ
Celebrate the start of our official programming year with a BBQ and Bounce house obstacle course after the 10:45am worship service!
- **September 16:** Life Together Dinner and Programs begins
Refer to Schedule above
- **October 30, 6-8pm:** Trunk or Treat
Come decorate a trunk and pass out candy as kids go "trunk or treating". There will also be a haunted house, guessing jars and food!
- **November 6-8:** Elementary & middle school retreat at Mt Cross, led by the Sierra Pacific Youth Committee
A weekend of fun in the Santa Cruz Mountains! Open to all 3rd-8th graders.
- **November 29, 11am:** AdventFestival
Stay after our single 10am service for activities, crafts and Lefse! Single 10am services will continue throughout advent.

Youth

- **October 10, 9am-12:30pm:** Second Harvest Volunteering at St Athanasius Church, ages 12+
We are partnering with Second Harvest Food Bank to distribute food to local families. This is a great opportunity for community service hours and to learn about Second Harvest's mission.
- **June 27-July 2:** ELCA National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis!
The most epic week of Summer 2027! For all 9-12th graders AND young adults. Stay tuned — registration information coming soon.

Young Adults

- **September 17, 7-9pm:** Dinner & Games at Emily's condo ❖



Photos (clockwise from top left):
Our Grace kids at a week of Mt. Cross camp; Western States Youth Gathering (WSYG) Fun; WSYG Fun; Young Adult Bowling; Young Adult Canoeing; Adding senior handprints to the youth room wall; WSYG Fun



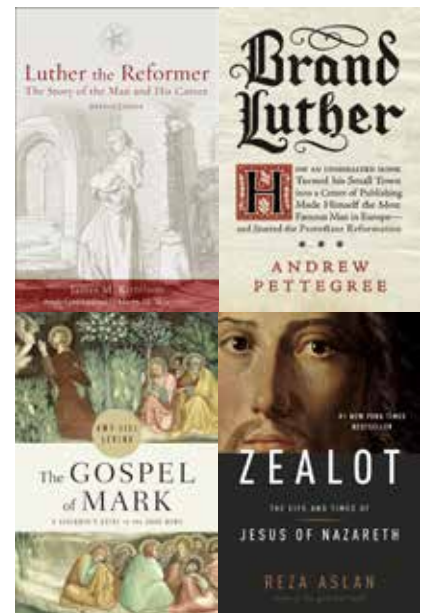
500 Years of Reformation Era Artist's The Four Apostles, 1526

SUNDAY FORUMS

Every Sunday during the Fall we will have time from 9:45am - 10:30am in the Chapel between services to engage in learning and faith development for adults. We like to say that, at Grace . . . Worship is [also] for kids, and that Sunday School is [also] for adults! On Rally Day Sunday our focus will be an overview of the Fall topics and a review of the books that will augment and inform those sessions. The goal for this Fall is to have Forums that are accessible for anyone to simply walk into and engage, but that there would be deeper reading and reflection that can happen along the way to enhance your experience!

Our Fall Themes:

- **The Protestant Reformation - 500 Years and Thriving** - we will have several sessions that focus on the rolling 500th anniversary of the key events of the Reformation and connect them to today's life. We will also take some time to look at innovative technology and communication that was key to the Reformation's success. *Additional Reading:*
 - *Luther the Reformer* - James Kittleson & Hans Wiersma, 2016
 - *Brand Luther* - Andrew Pettigree, 2015
- **The Gospel of Mark** - we will spend a few weeks this Fall focussing on getting to know the Gospel of Mark a bit better. Mark is the primary Gospel of Lectionary Year B which will begin on the First Sunday of Advent, so these weeks will deepen your experience of preaching in worship. These Forums will also give you a feel for the earliest days of the Christian community in a pluralistic society as Mark is the oldest of the four Gospels. *Additional Reading:*
 - *Gospel of Mark* - Amy-Jill Levine, 2023
 - *Zealot* - Reza Aslan, 2013
- **Pastor Friederike's Sabbatical Review!**
- **Other Topics** ❖





2025 Grace Men's Retreat at Mt. Cross

MEN'S MINISTRY

We are starting the Fall with a lot of momentum still from our record Spring Men's Retreat! There are three legs to the Men's Ministry stool and you should definitely participate. Being in community is important and community happens best . . . when YOU are in it! I look forward to seeing you at these events:

- Weekly Coffee/Breakfast Tuesdays @ 7am at Palo Alto Cafe on Middlefield in MidTown.
- Seasonal Dinners - next one is **Sunday, October 11 from 5-7pm at Pr Matt's** . . . you should come!
- Annual Retreat at Mt Cross the last weekend of April (April 23-25, 2027). This is a great time of fellowship, service, and intentional community. Make sure this is on your calendar now!

Peace,

Pr Matt ❖



Tuesdays | 7:00 am | Palo Alto Café

Men's Breakfast

LANDSCAPING 2026

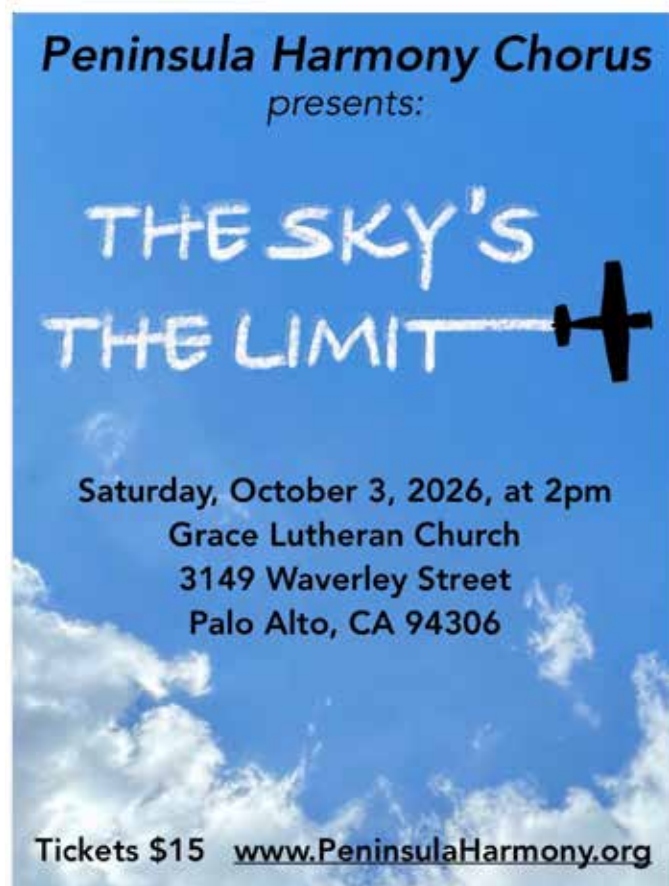
A special thanks goes to Doug Hohbach and his crew for getting our plans to the city for review in mid- August! That's the big news! We are finally in process with the city and expect things to really start to pick up speed in the next 6-8 weeks as we get our approvals and the city's requirements and finalize contractors and their bids. As we are closing in on breaking ground for this project, you might double check where you are with your Capital Campaign pledge. We are getting to the point of using it! Yay!



MISSED THE ANNUAL MEETING?

You can check out the annual report on the Grace Connect page of our website...

gracepa.org/graceconnect



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

October 4, 2026 | 10:45 am | Outdoor Worship

Bring your well-restrained pet to this annual outdoor worship service in the courtyard for a blessing.



BEER AND HYMNS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9 AT 5:30 PM | EMMAUS



Grace Lutheran Church Identity Statement:

“Grace Lutheran Church is called to be an inviting and diverse Christian community, embracing our Lutheran tradition in ways that are faithful and innovative, that makes disciples through worship, education, and service to all creation.”

On many occasions our Lutheran tradition lead via innovation and collaboration. Grace’s potential affiliation with “Silicon Valley Allied for the Common Good (SVACG)” may become a viable means to extend our service to all creation, at least parts of creation here in Silicon Valley where there is significant wealth inequality.

Look for an upcoming Adult Forum with SVACG’s lead organizer Liz Hall. Liz will provide an overview of our Industrial Area Foundation organizing principles and detail our up coming Public Action on Tuesday, November 22 6:30 TO 8:00 PM at the Santa Clara Convention Center.

For our Public Action we are organizing 400 to 500 people from our 21 member institutions to meet with elected leaders of Santa Clara County with a special emphasis on a Healthcare Safety Net as Federal funding cuts will be affecting healthcare throughout our county.

I hope members of Grace will attend this Public Action to see what the collaboration of 21 institutions representing nearly 30,000 people can accomplish for the common good.

To learn more, please reach out before or after worship, or call me.

John Sullivan

Tel. +1 650-704-9658 ❖



Canned Food & Diaper Drive

Supporting Families in Need
through Ecumenical Hunger Program
with non-perishable foods and supplies



drop-off in the narthex anytime you are on campus
#GraceSocialMinistry-in-Action

GRACE OUTDOORS

- **Stanford Dish Hike**
Sept. 19, 9:30 am

Don't miss this easy/moderate Grace Outdoors fall season favorite as we hike up to the iconic Palo Alto landmark on a 3.7 mile paved loop trail. Afterwards, we'll visit another iconic Peninsula destination for lunch: the Dutch Goose.

We will meet at the Main Gate at Stanford Ave. & Junipero Serra Blvd; overflow parking is available at the office buildings on Page Mill just north of the intersection with Junipero Serra. It's a great day to bike or carpool if you'd like to avoid the parking rush!



- **Pulgas Ridge Hike**
Saturday, Oct. 24, 3:00pm

Join us for a gorgeous afternoon overlook of the San Francisco Bay at Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve, with an option for a more accessible hike.

Option A: We'll climb (1,010 total ft. elevation, 5.5 mi) through the oak forest until we reach the sweeping views of the Bay and surrounding area on top of the ridge. There is a decent incline, but this hike is appropriate for reasonably fit adults and kids. And dogs are welcome! Part of the route is through an off-leash area. We'll hike 5.5 miles.

Option B: We'll cut out some of the switchbacks and elevation gain of the longer trail by staying on the lovely Dusky-Footed Woodrat and Cordilleras trails (3.8 mi, 679').

Park in the Pulgas Ridge Parking Lot. Those who wish to join us afterwards can head over to **Blue Oak Brewing Company** in San Carlos.



- **Russian Ridge Preserve Hike**
Saturday, Nov 21, 9am

Our longer hike option (6 mi, ~1,100 ft. elevation) will combine several trails at the beautiful Russian Ridge Preserve. Look for wildlife such as wild turkeys, vultures, hawks, coyotes, foxes, and deer.

Our more accessible path will take the beautiful Ancient Oaks trail out to the Ridge Trail for a gentler climb and a total hike length between 3.5-4mi.

Both options begin and end at the **Mindego Parking Area on Alpine Road.** We'll grab a bite afterwards at **Alice's Restaurant** in Woodside! ❖





Grace Lutheran Church

3149 Waverley Street Palo Alto, CA 94306 650.494.1212 gracepa.org



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Sunday Worship

In-Person (Sanctuary) 8:30 a.m.

In-Person (Sanctuary) 10:45 a.m.

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Broadcast on Cable 75

Sundays 11 a.m. | 8:30 p.m.

Mondays 12:30 p.m.

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**Livestreamed on the Grace YouTube
channel. Links at gracepa.org**