



VOICE OF GRACE

Vol. 56 September 2025

In God's Time

It was a long process, and we were methodical in our steps: Prayer; forming of committee; review of synodical directives; self-study of the congregation; prayer; job description; profile of desired traits and gifts; submission of names matching profile; District President's evaluation and addition of names; prayer; review of pastors' personal data; selection of candidates for virtual interviews; conducting of interviews; dwindling of list to none; questions of altering criteria; considering alternatives or starting over; more prayer; determination to stick with process and previous profile; reception of new list; revision of approaching candidates for virtual interviews; narrowing of candidates to invite for on-site visit; prayer; face-to-face committee and group interviews: recommendation of candidate to BOD and congregation; prayer; unanimous election by Voters' Assembly; prayer; issue of Divine Call; receiving of Call by candidate; deliberation; prayer; acceptance of Call. It took 56 weeks - twice as long as we thought it would take even though we were prepared. But, it was all done in God's time.

Last summer, we began praying, *"God, You already know to whom You will be leading us in this process. Help us learn what You desire us to learn in going through the steps*

of this process; and, as You work through us, lead us to Your man. Amen."

At that time, Pastor Steve Braun, happily serving the Lord as pastor of Risen Christ Lutheran Church and Preschool in Fairport, NY, had no idea that Grace Lutheran Church and School in Winter Haven, FL, even existed, much less was praying that God would lead them to him – and neither did the people of Grace know Pastor Braun existed.

Pastor Braun was not seeking a new Call from God and most likely would have closed the door last summer had we contacted him, especially for the role of Associate Pastor. But soon after, God began kindling a desire in his heart to possibly partner with another pastor and join a team in a new setting for congregational and school ministry. But God still wanted him to continue serving His people of Risen Christ. The time was not right. Pastor Braun did receive inquiries and even Calls from other congregations to serve as their pastor, and they began to stir on his heart. But he needed to be where he was. It was not God's Call. Then came our first contact to him, the first week of June, 2025, saying we

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believed he was a good match for our congregation. He let us check him out, and he checked us out. Both of us could sense God's hand at work. Pastor Braun's visit with us, the last week of June, 2025, was a wonderful and informative visit with God's Spirit clearly evident. We completed our process and determined to issue a Call, firmly convinced that Pastor Steve Braun was the man God had in mind for us all along. Upon receiving the Call and through his own prayerful deliberation, Pastor Braun came to the same conclusion – it is God's will for him, at this time, to serve the people and community of Grace Lutheran Church and School in Winter Haven, FL. It was all in God's time.

This would not have happened last summer, last November, or even last winter. But it did happen this summer. Why? Because it *was* God's time.

This entire progression is another reminder to me to follow a good and deliberate process, do the hard work the Lord wants us to do, and then leave the timing and the results of that work up to God.

God has provided! Now let's get to work! We have much ministry to do and many souls to reach – and a great God who has our back!



Pastor Charles Reich

Prayer Vigil Church Ministries

Sept. 16, 5:30 PM

Join us on Sept. 16 at 5:30 as we pray over all of our church ministry spaces! In place of the usual prayer service, we will meet in the sanctuary at 5:30 before dispersing to various rooms and offices to pray over them for all who enter them.

Please keep all staff, boards, and volunteers in your prayers as we begin this new season at Grace!



Heavenly Father, guide our church in your ways. Send your Spirit to us that everything we do and say would glorify you and further your Kingdom. Use us as your hands and feet to reach out to those you have put around us so that more people will come to a saving faith in you. Amen

Voice of Grace is
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**SCHOOL
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Come, join the celebration!

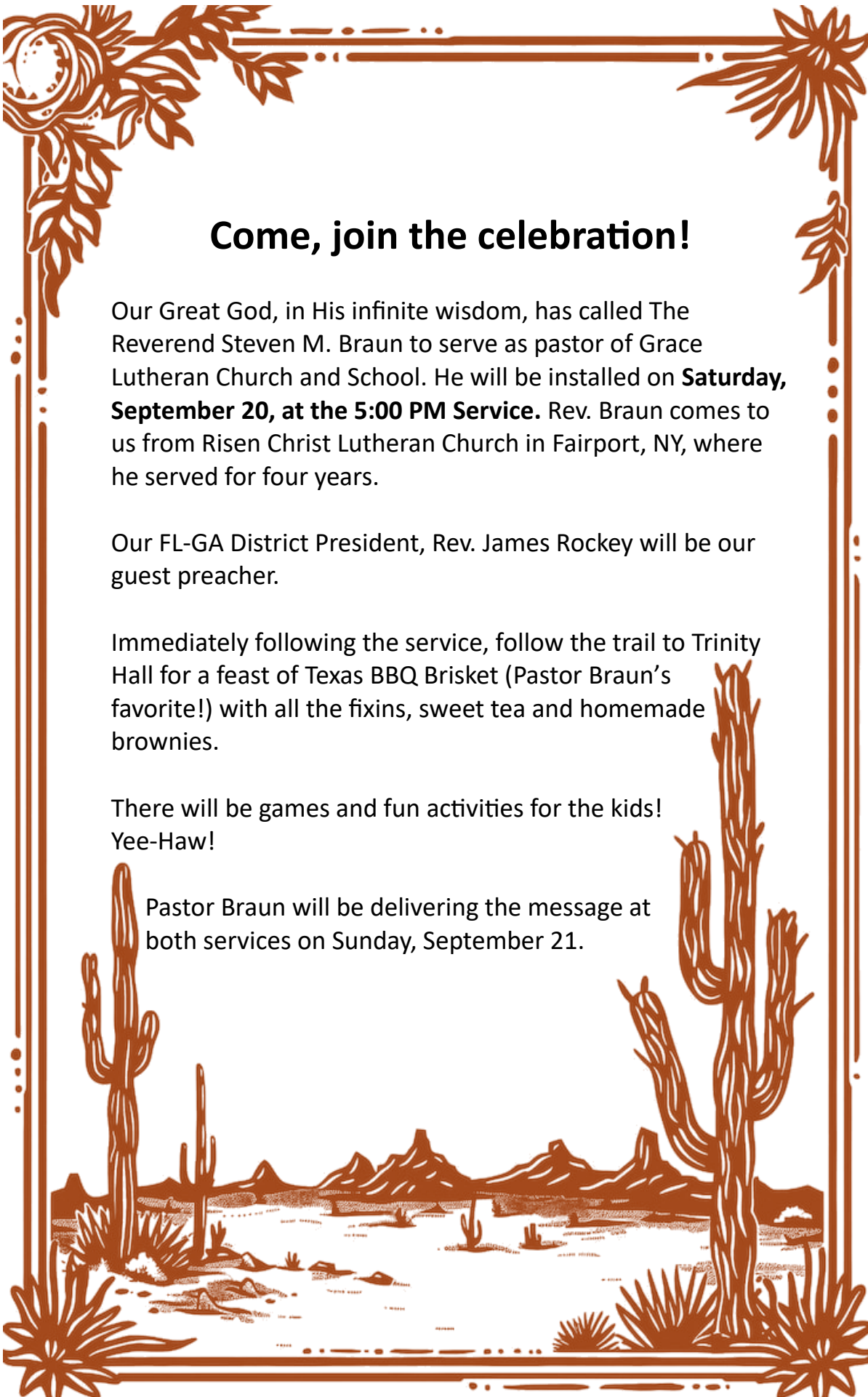
Our Great God, in His infinite wisdom, has called The Reverend Steven M. Braun to serve as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church and School. He will be installed on **Saturday, September 20, at the 5:00 PM Service.** Rev. Braun comes to us from Risen Christ Lutheran Church in Fairport, NY, where he served for four years.

Our FL-GA District President, Rev. James Rockey will be our guest preacher.

Immediately following the service, follow the trail to Trinity Hall for a feast of Texas BBQ Brisket (Pastor Braun's favorite!) with all the fixins, sweet tea and homemade brownies.

There will be games and fun activities for the kids! Yee-Haw!

Pastor Braun will be delivering the message at both services on Sunday, September 21.



New Sunday Morning Bible Studies

TrinityHall Bible Class

UNFORGIVABLE?

A Study on Forgiveness

Forgiveness is our Business!

Starting September 7, join us in Trinity Hall at 9:45 as Vicar Stephen leads a six week Bible Study series on forgiveness! Vicar will use Scripture to tackle tough questions on the subject, including "What if They Don't Repent?" This is one series you won't want to miss!



Luther Room Small Group

DANIEL

**Beginning September 21
Led by Dr. Cliff Threlkeld**

The Book of Daniel shows the triumph of God-given faith even in the most difficult of circumstances. Saved from a fiery furnace and delivered from a den of lions, the saints in Daniel clung to our saving and delivering God. God's mighty works recorded in Daniel caused lofty rulers to recognize He is the Most High God, whose power is supreme and whose kingdom lasts forever.

Upcoming Discover Grace Classes

Wednesdays in September

If you are interested in membership at Grace Lutheran Church, or if you would like to know more about Lutheran theology, please join us for a series of classes on Wednesday evenings: **September 3, September 10, September 17, and September 24 from 6:30 PM – 8 PM.** It is a great time to learn and grow with other people who also have questions. A simple meal will be provided each week. For more information, to sign up, or to arrange child care, please contact Michelle Reddick at the church 863.293.8447, or at mreddick@glwh.org.

Grace Bytes is Back!!

Resuming in September

If you are interested in learning about the Bible and Lutheran theology, please join us for Grace Bytes on the second Tuesday of each month starting in the sanctuary for a short time of prayer at 5:30 PM. We will then go to the Mary-Martha room for pizza, learning, and discussion led by Pastor Reich. Bring a friend, your questions, and join us!

September's Topic: **What's Up with Jesus Descending to Hell?**

If you have any questions, please call the church office and speak to Michelle at 863.293.8447, or email mreddick@glwh.org. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Tuesday Prayer Service Schedule

We are making some changes to our Tuesday Evening Prayer Service. Each week will focus on something different.

1st Tuesday - A Service of Healing with Holy Communion (*special prayers for all surgeries and medical procedures that month*)

2nd Tuesday - A brief Prayer Service, praying for all names on our printed prayer list, followed by *Grace Bytes*. (*Resuming in September. See above for more info on Grace Bytes.*)

3rd Tuesday - General Prayer Service with Holy Communion

4th Tuesday - Service of Relationship Healing with Holy Communion (*special prayers for healing in family and social relationships*)



MUSIC NOTES

LSB 792 New Songs of Celebration Render

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 New songs of celebration render
To Him who has great wonders done;
Love sits enthroned in ageless splendor;
Come and adore the mighty One.
He has made known His great salvation
Which all His friends with joy confess.
He has revealed to ev'ry nation
His everlasting righteousness.</p> <p>2 Joyfully, heartily resounding,
Let ev'ry instrument and voice
Peal out the praise of grace abounding,
Calling the whole world to rejoice.</p> | <p>Trumpets and organs, set in motion
Such sounds as make the heavens ring;
All things that live in earth and ocean,
Make music for your mighty King.</p> <p>3 Rivers and seas and torrents roaring,
Honor the Lord with wild acclaim;
Mountains and stones, look up adoring,
And find a voice to praise His name.
Righteous, commanding, ever glorious,
Praises be His that never cease:
Just is our God, whose truth victorious
Establishes the world in peace.</p> |
|---|---|

Text: Erik Routley, 1917–82
Text: © 1974 Hope Publishing Co. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110000942

This hymn is a paraphrase of Psalm 98. This becomes clear when looking at stanza 2: Let ev'ry instrument and voice ... make a joyful noise to the Lord. Trumpets and organs ... make a joyful noise before the King! Rivers, seas, torrents, mountains, stones ... praise His name! This text was written by Erik Routley, who chose to write just a paraphrase of the psalm rather than include references from the New Testament. Routley based his text on a version of this psalm in French, got it included in a hymnal, and now the text appears in many hymnals.

The tune used with this text is a tune that was written for the Genevan Psalter (the book of Psalms translated from Latin to French for use in the Church following John Calvin's reforming of French-speaking countries). Historians believe that Louis Bourgeois wrote this tune around 1551, which is about the same time that he wrote the tune for "Comfort, Comfort Ye My People" (LSB 347). Even though the tune might not be familiar for you, it is by no means a "new tune."

Sing to the Lord a new song...Make a joyful noise to the Lord!

Thomas Schulteis
Dir. of Worship Arts (Organist)



Grace Lutheran Church **Sunshine Club News**



September 4 11:30 AM Meet at Olive Garden on Cypress Gardens Road for great conversation and delicious dining. Plan to bring a friend. Everyone is on their own for lunch. See you there!



October is Pastor Appreciation Month...Join us in Trinity Hall on Thursday, Oct. 2 for a time to celebrate Pastors Reich and Braun and Vicar Moore. We'll gather from 11-11:30 for fellowship, followed by devotions, announcements and lunch. A Mexican taco bar and dessert will be provided by the club. Cards and notes are always a lovely way to say thank you. A thank offering basket will be passed to cover luncheon costs.

One of the most active groups in our church community, Sunshine club focuses on individuals and couples, providing social interaction, support and spiritual growth. Join us the first Thursday of the month for food and fellowship. Everyone is welcome.



ADULT GAME DAY

TRINITY HALL 1-3 PM

**JOIN US ON THE 4TH THURSDAY OF THE MONTH FOR
GAMES, FELLOWSHIP, FUN & SNACKS**





DONATE BLOOD

Donors Receive



- PLUS -



- PLUS -



ID REQUIRED



Appointments are encouraged, please visit
oneblood.org/donate-now and use sponsor
code **74078**



Grace Lutheran Church
Sunday, September 7
8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

All donors will receive*:

- **\$20 eGift Card**
- **OneBlood T-shirt**
- **Wellness Checkup**

including blood pressure,
pulse, temperature, iron
count, and cholesterol
screening.

Fact: Only 3% of those who are eligible actually donate blood.



Women's MINISTRY

After a short summer break from our regular meetings and activities, we are eagerly looking forward to getting into full swing again beginning with a Circle Meeting on **September 11**. Our meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month, usually in the Mary-Martha Room. All ladies of Grace are encouraged to join us for a time of Bible study, wonderful discussion, and fellowship. This is a great way to meet ladies of our congregation, make new friendships, and participate in a variety of fundraising activities whose proceeds support a variety of missions.

At our last board meeting in June (before our summer break), plans were made for upcoming activities and opportunities to serve which allow us to continue supporting our mission projects. We are looking forward to these activities and truly enjoy our time working together in His service. Once again, **come join us on September 11**.

Another opportunity for service and fellowship at Grace is our quilting group that meets every Thursday morning. Many different tasks need doing and sewing skills are not a must. Please consider visiting the group to see for yourself as to what is involved.

Please always check the weekly Blue Pages and monthly VOG for all our Women's Ministry activities and the various ways we all can do our part in accomplishing our Lord's work.

Treasurer's Report for the Twelve Months Ending July 31, 2025

	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance
<u>Church</u>				
Income	\$ 83,427.99	\$ 83,427.99	\$ 124,716.66	\$ (41,288.67)
Expenses	\$ 104,907.73	\$ 104,907.73	\$ 122,842.82	\$ (17,935.09)
Total Church	\$ (21,479.74)	\$ (21,479.74)	\$ 1,873.84	\$ (23,353.58)

<u>School</u>				
Income	\$ 136,036.67	\$ 136,036.67	\$ 10,466.67	\$ 125,570.00
Expenses	\$ 478,715.66	\$ 478,715.66	\$ 407,955.09	\$ 70,760.57
Net	\$ (342,678.99)	\$ (342,678.99)	\$ (397,488.42)	\$ 54,809.43
Designated (In/Out Accounts)	\$ 1,102.77	\$ 1,102.77		
Total School	\$ (343,781.76)	\$ (343,781.76)		

<u>Investment Assets</u>	
Church Endowment Fund	\$ 955,964.98
School Endowment Fund	\$ 703,597.88
Bernthal Endowment Scholarship Fund	\$ 147,565.78
All Other Scholarships/Investments	\$ 23,764.39



Parish Statistics

Deaths

Elizabeth "Beth" Beasley
7/29/25

Janet Olson
8/5/25

Frema Stanley
8/9/25



Any of you go camping lately? How about during the summer months? What items did you bring with you? If I were going to go, I would make sure I would have a shovel, a cooking pot, sleeping bag, a tent, as well as many other items. Your list may be different than mine, but one item that I feel we all would bring along would be a flashlight.

Why would a flashlight be important to have on a camping trip? What would camping be like if I didn't have a light? If you were the only family on a campground with a working flashlight, what would happen?

Jesus is the light of the world. He came to save us from our sins. He came to show us how much the Father loves us. He came to show us how to love each other.

Before Jesus came and died and rose again, the world was dark with sin. If we didn't know Jesus and His love for us, we would be stumbling in the dark.

Jesus is the light that shows us the way to heaven. The Wise Men traveled a long way to find Jesus. Other people in our world want to hear about Jesus and feel His light too.

We can try to do things without Jesus, but we would not be successful. Just like camping in the dark would be dangerous, we would be lost without Jesus. Because Jesus shows us the way, we can be lights shining for people around us. We want other people to see the light of Jesus.

We want others to know what He did for us. As we are back into the routine of the school year, our students are excited to share the message of Christ with others. May this time of the year be good for you and your family and also provide you with the opportunity to give thanks by **making a joyful noise** to God for all that He has and continues to do.



SCHOOL CALENDAR

September

- 1: Labor Day
- No School/No Lion's Den
- 3: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 4:00PM
- 5: Midterm of 1st Quarter
- 8 - 12: MAP Testing (Grades K - 3)
- 10: Spirit Night at Beef O'Brady's (Winter Haven Location) 5:00 - 9:00PM
- Middle School Youth Group 6:30 - 8:00PM
- 12: First Day of Food Drive (Supporting The Mission)
- 15 - 19: MAP Testing (Grades 4 - 8)
- 17: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 4:00PM
- P.A.C.E. Coffee Talk 8:15 - 9:00AM
- 19: Early Release Day
- Cain's Snowballs Spirit Day
- Last Day of Food Drive (Supporting The Mission)
- 22: Grades K - 5 N.U.T. Day
- 24: Middle School Youth Group 6:30 - 8:00PM
- 24 - 26: No School FL/GA Educator's Conference (Lion's Den Open)
- 30: \$2 Grade K - 5 N.U.T. Day
- Donuts with Dad 7:30 - 8:15AM (Hosted by P.A.C.E.)

October

- 1: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 4:00PM
- 6: Middle School Poinsettia Sales Begin
- 8: Spirit Day/Night Panda Express (Winter Haven Location)
- Middle School Youth Group 6:30 - 8:00PM
- 9: Fall Picture Retakes
- 10: End of 1st Quarter
- 11: JV CFLAA Soccer and Volleyball Tournament (St. Paul, Lakeland)
- 13: Beginning of 2nd Quarter
- 15: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 4:00PM
- P.A.C.E. Coffee Talk 8:15 - 8:00AM
- 16: \$2 Grade K - 5 N.U.T. Day
- 17: Last Day for Poinsettia Sales
- Fall Carnival 3:00 - 6:30PM
- 18: FLAA State Varsity Volleyball Tournament (St. Luke's, Oviedo)
- 22: Middle School Youth Group 6:30 - 8:00PM
- 23: Early Release
- Cain's Snowballs Spirit Day
- 24: No School (Lion's Den Open for Grades K-5 Only)
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 25: FLAA State Varsity Boys Soccer Tournament (Trinity, Delray)
- 29: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 4:00PM
- Middle School Youth Group 6:30 - 8:00PM
- 31: Grades K - 5 N.U.T. Day

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF GLS: The mission of Grace Lutheran School is to provide its students and their families with a strong spiritual and academic foundation so that they know and understand God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ and are also able to live lives appropriate to their positions in their families, churches, community, and country.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 	2 7:30 AM Staff Devos 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 12 PM God's Guys 5:30 PM Prayer Service of Healing 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	3 1 PM WM Board Mtg. 6:30 PM Discover Grace 6:30 PM HS Youth 6:30 PM YA Bible Study	4 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 11:30 AM Sunshine Club (Meet at Olive Garden) 6 PM AHG & TL 6 PM Trinity Bells 7:15 PM Grace Chorale	5 10 AM Bible Study - MM	6 5 PM Worship Svc
7 BLOOD MOBILE 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Confirmation 10:45 AM Worship	8 7:30 AM Staff Devos 9 AM Circuit Pastors Meeting 7 PM Elder Meeting	9 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Grace Bytes 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	10 7:30 AM Staff Devos 6:30 PM Discover Grace 6:30 PM MS Youth 6:30 PM MS Parent Bible Study	11 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 1 PM Martha Circle 6 PM Trinity Bells 7:15 PM Grace Chorale	12 10 AM Bible Study - MM	13 5 PM Worship Svc
14 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Confirmation 10:45 AM Worship 12 PM Families in the Park	15 7:30 AM Staff Devos 6 PM School Board	16 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 12 PM God's Guys 5:30 PM Church Campus Prayer Vigil 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	17 8:15 AM PACE Coffee Talk - Trinity Hall 6 PM Stephen Ministry 6:30 PM Discover Grace 6:30 PM HS Youth 6:30 PM YA Bible Study	18 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 1 PM Adult Game Day 6 PM AHG & TL 6 PM Trinity Bells 7:15 PM Grace Chorale	19 10 AM Bible Study - MM	20 10 AM AHG Servant Event Day-Wesche Hall 5 PM Installation of Rev. Steven Braun w/reception dinner following in Trinity Hall
21 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Confirmation 10:45 AM Worship	22 7:30 AM Staff Devos 5:30 Business Mgmt. 6:30 BOD Meeting	23 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc - Relationship Healing 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	24 6:30 PM Discover Grace 6:30 PM MS Youth 6:30 PM MS Parent Bible Study	25 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 6 PM Trinity Bells 7:15 PM Grace Chorale	26 10 AM Bible Study - MM	27 5 PM Worship Svc
28 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Confirmation 10:45 AM Worship	29 7:30 AM Staff Devos	30 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal				



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