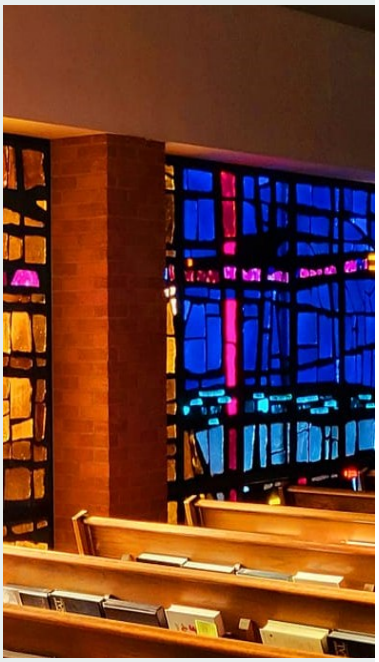
Grace United Methodist Church Newsletter

September 2026



MISSION STATEMENT

Everyone is invited to know and feel God's love, experience spiritual growth, encounter forgiveness, receive respect and gain hope.

Grace Kidz 2.0 Is Coming!

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." — **Mark 10:14**

We are excited to introduce Grace Kidz 2.0, a new FREE afterschool ministry for children in grades K–5, beginning Wednesday, October 7!

Each Wednesday from 3:45–5:30 p.m., children from our community will come to Grace for snacks, games, crafts, activities, fellowship and opportunities to experience God's love in a safe and welcoming environment. At 5:30 p.m., families will be invited to join us for a free meal before heading home.

The school district will provide transportation to the Clay County Administration Building, where Grace volunteers will meet the children and safely escort them to the church.

We Need YOU!

Grace Kidz 2.0 will take the hands and hearts of our congregation to make it happen! Volunteers are needed to meet and escort children from the bus stop, prepare and serve snacks and meals, help with games and crafts, assist with activities, and simply spend time welcoming and encouraging our kids.

You don't have to be a teacher or have any special talents. If you can offer a smile, a helping hand and a caring heart, there is a place for you in Grace Kidz 2.0!

(Continued on page 5)

Inside this issue

Cover Story 1
Pastor's Message 2-3
Wed Nights at Grace 3
Mission Projects..... 4
Children's Ministry..... 5
UWFaith 6
UMM..... 6
CAT Survey Results.... 7
Small Groups..... 8-9
In The News..... 10
Joys &Concerns..... 11-12
Calendar 13
Calendar 14

To contact Pastor Michael

Email:

ThePastor @spencergumc.com

Call:

712-262-5970

Pastor Michael's BLOG:

The Bare Church

THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR MICHAEL

We are moving into the month of September, which means fair season. I am blessed to once again be invited to help with the Clay County Fair on different days in different capacities. Many of our members at Grace help to make the Clay County Fair the amazing experience it is. Everyone who helps make the Clay County Fair happen comes sharing their different gifts and graces. It takes all kinds of work, personalities, and abilities to make something like the fair happen.

The Church is no different. At Grace we have a care team that stays connected to those who are ill, homebound, or temporarily displaced. We have talented folks who share their musical gifts. We have people seeking to make children and young families welcome and cared for as they participate. We have folks who care for the transfer of communication. We have members who give their time to committee work to help make it all happen. There is so much that happens at Grace with or without me as Pastor to minister to our members and the community.

A lot goes into the fair. But the fair is ten days. And while there are some individuals that are navigating and coordinating fair activities all year, most who help contribute much less time to making the Clay County Fair happen. At Grace we want to be the Church year-round, every year, until there is no strength left in our body. That is the body of Christ.

This past month of August and this month of September is dedicated to discerning how each of us is being called to serve Grace in new and different ways.

"*He said to them, "The harvest is bigger than you can imagine, but there are few workers. Therefore, plead with the Lord of the harvest to send out workers for his harvest."* -**Luke 10:2**

We invite you to pray about ways you can serve Grace. If you are in a season where physicality prevents you from serving in different capacities, I invite you to do as Jesus asked, pray for workers. Pray for God's calling to be upon the heart of talented individuals, and the invitation to be present, that they step into a joyful work of service.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Our goal is to grow our family through the love of God, by the example of Christ, in the power of the Spirit. May God encourage our hearts, enlighten our minds, and enliven our feet to go and serve.

Charge Conference – October 4

Join us for our annual Charge Conference on Sunday, October 4. . Charge Conference is an important time in the life of our church as we celebrate the ministry of Grace United Methodist Church, conduct required church business, and look ahead to the coming year. Your presence matters! Come be informed, hear what's ahead, and join us as we prayerfully look toward the future of our church. We hope you'll be there!

Wednesday Nights at Grace

Grace Kidz | 3:45–5:30 PM
Games, crafts, learning, and lots of fun! We're creating a safe, welcoming space for kids to grow and experience God's love. **Volunteers are needed** to help, laugh, and be present with our kids.

Wednesday Night Meal | 5:30–6:00 PM
Come enjoy a delicious meal, share fellowship, and make new connections in our community. **Gather around the table, meet new friends, and share God's love.**

Grace University | 6:00–6:30 PM
A new, interactive weekday worship experience with **Pastor Michael**. Think **Bill Nye meets church**—a short, engaging time of lessons, songs, questions, and discovering faith together.

MISSION PROJECTS

We are collecting:

- Boxed macaroni and cheese
- Canned green beans
- Canned fruit
- 10-pack boxes of fruit snacks

JumpStart

We are back to our regular schedule for JumpStart, providing food for a monthly meal for all Head Start families. There are 120 families this year!

We are collecting:

- Boxed macaroni and cheese
- Canned green beans
- Canned fruit
- 10-pack boxes of fruit snacks

Please have your donated items to the church by September 15. Bags will be packed on Wednesday, September 16, after Coffee @ Grace.

September Home Delivered Meals

Grace is blessed with the opportunity to provide homebound people in our own community with hot meals. September is our next opportunity to deliver meals to our neighbors. It is about more than a hot meal. The clients enjoy seeing a friendly face and chatting for a few minutes. Our assigned days are Thur. and Fri, and the route usually takes an hour to complete.

"Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land." – **Deuteronomy 15:11**

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

For more information and registration:

https://www.spencergumc.com/children-youth-and-families.php

(Continued from page 1)

This is more than an afterschool program. It is an opportunity for our congregation to build relationships with children and families in our community and show them through our words and actions that they are loved, valued and welcome at Grace.

Together, we can live out our mission of "Nurturing God's Grace in the Children of Our Community."

Please prayerfully consider how you can be part of Grace Kidz 2.0. Together, we can make Wednesday afternoons a time of fun, friendship, faith and God's amazing grace!

UNITED WOMEN OF FAITH

WELCOMING USE OF YOUR GUMC LIBRARY

United Women in Faith have added 16 new adult books to our library from their 2026 reading list which cover the five categories of education in mission: leadership development, nurturing for community, social action, and spiritual growth.

There are memoirs of an Auschwitz survivor in The Happiest Man on Earth, a black physician dealing with racism in the health care system in Legacy; and an immigrant daughter's story in Heart of Fire. Highway of Tears is a true story around the pursuit of justice for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times is the latest book by Jane Goodall and Douglas Adams. For those who enjoy historical novels, we have The Women by Kristin Hannah set during the Vietnam War and The Personal Librarian by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray that explores the life of a black American employee of J. P. Morgan who was forced to pass as white. We have also added two books by Diana Butler Bass: Freeing Jesus and the meditations of A Beautiful Year.

Six new books for children (recommended from the 2026 UWFaith reading list) have been recently donated and are on the shelves in the children's section. Any of these books can be checked out at any time by anyone. Here is your chance to enjoy some great, award-winning fiction, expand your education, or inspire spiritual growth. Keep reading!

https://uwfaith.org/

UNITED METHODIST MEN

United Methodist Men Will Be Back After the Fair!

The **United Methodist Men** will begin programming for the year on **Saturday, October 10, at 8:30 AM**.

Join us for **breakfast and a program**! Everyone is welcome to attend—it's **not just for men anymore!**

Come enjoy good food, fellowship, and a great program. We hope to see you there!

First, I want to thank the 56 persons who took the time to participate in the CAT (Congregation Assessment Tool) survey. This is a good cross-section, making it a great tool to determine where Grace is currently and the direction we want to go.

Ryan Christenson presented the findings to the Church Council at our May meeting. His Big Picture take-away was that Spencer Grace is in a much better place than when we last completed the CAT survey in 2020. Ryan encouraged us to celebrate that our church is not where anyone expected us to be at this point considering all the challenges we've faced - so that is definitely a reason to celebrate. He did suggest that now is the time to clarify our values and mission on how to be church in our current culture and even outside of our local community. We are in a position to DREAM BIG!!

The survey showed that one of the top priorities that has remained the same since 2020 is the goal to "make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church." This was the #1 or #2 priority among all age groups but not so much for infrequent attendees. Another goal that ranked high was to "develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church". This was especially high for those who attend frequently and are 35 and older but not so important for those under 35. There were also pretty high marks for "expanding outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society" for most categories. The last priority I want to mention is "work to renew and revitalize the community around the church by building coalitions with partners." This ranked third for those under age 35 and first for infrequent attendees.

We should see this as a significant priority as these young people and families are the ones we say we want to attract. The survey also showed that being a part of our community gives us meaning and being involved in social justice issues was a high priority across all groups.

So the challenge is, what do we do with this information? What needs are being met in our community and what needs are not? Can we increase options of hands-on service activities, not just in our building but outside in the community, for people to connect and have good experiences together? We need to continue to add small group participation to develop close, healthy relationships and become disciple makers. (I just read that we need to be less "churchy" and more fully practical - getting the job of love done better!)

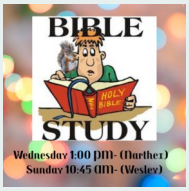
What is our next big new goal that everyone can get behind? Taking all suggestions.

Remember, we are challenged to **DREAM BIG!!**

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

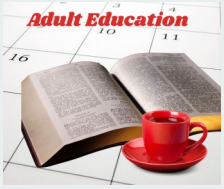
In the Methodist tradition .disciples grow best in the context of Christian community. An essential part of becoming deeply committed Christians is our connection with others in small groups, and that is true now more than ever. Small groups allow us to find encouragement, prayer, learning and life together. Therefore, we emphasize that persons be committed to a small group.

Small groups can meet anytime and anywhere! Every small group is encouraged to focus on growing in God's Word through regular use and study of the Bible, practicing prayer together and for one another, and making an impact both in the lives of group members and in the community and world beyond. If you would like to start a new group or have an idea for a new small group, please contact Pastor Michael..



Men's Bible Studty

Wednesdays at 1:00–2:00 PM
Narthex



Adult Education

Sundays at 10:45 AM
Wesley Room

Our Adult Education group gathers each Sunday morning following worship. Together we take time to revisit the scripture passages and sermon from the service, sharing insights, questions, and personal reflections. This welcoming discussion group offers a chance to grow in faith, deepen understanding, and build meaningful connections with others in our church family.

Coffee @ Grace

1st & 3rd Wednesdays | 9:30–11:00 AM
Fellowship Hall

Come enjoy good coffee, delicious food, and warm fellowship! It's a great place to catch up with old friends—or make new ones.

Everyone is welcome—we'd love to see you there!

Move, Stretch, and Breathe at GUMC!

Grace United Methodist Church invites you to enjoy our growing lineup of fitness and wellness classes—perfect for reducing stress, improving flexibility, and supporting overall well being.

Instructor-led Chair Yoga: A gentle, beginner-friendly class focused on stretching, strengthening, and relaxation—all from a chair. Tuesdays & Thursdays • 12:00–12:30 PM (Wesley Room).

Cost: $5 per session. Sign up at www.SpencerGUMC.com or contact the church office. Questions? Email mandikingyoga@gmail.com or call/text (712) 260-3314

Video-Led Fitness Classes (Wesley Room) Mondays & Wednesdays:

9:30–10:00 AM – Essentrics

10:00–10:30 AM – Chair Yoga

Essentrics uses slow, controlled movements to build strength, flexibility, and balance. Chair Yoga offers gentle, accessible stretching for all fitness levels.

Come as you are, bring a friend, and take time to care for your body and spirit—wellness is for everyone at GUMC!

Saturday Prayer Group

Come as you are—everyone is welcome!

Join us for a time of **prayer, reflection, and fellowship** as we gather together in God's presence.

You don't need to be comfortable praying out loud—**silent prayer is always welcome.** There's no pressure and no perfect way to participate.

We meet every other Saturday at 2:00 PM
Grace United Methodist Chapel

Next Meeting: Saturday, September 5

John Cotton Visits Every Town in Iowa

Long-time Spencer businessman **John Cotton** recently completed an impressive journey: visiting every city in Iowa. His final stop was Bloomfield, marking the completion of a project that took him to communities across the state.

Along the way, Cotton kept a journal of his experiences and reflections. He observed that many Iowa communities have faced challenges, including the loss of schools and local businesses, while towns with strong leadership continue to maintain a high quality of life.

Cotton's journey gave him an opportunity to experience the unique character of Iowa's communities firsthand. He hopes that his journal entries may someday become a book, allowing others to share in the stories and lessons

Hear more about John's travels at Coffee at Grace on Wednesday, September 2, at 9:30 a.m.

Officer Nick Ensley!

The Waterloo Police Department welcomed its newest officer, **Nick Ensley**, during a swearing-in ceremony on August 11, 2026. Assistant Chief Aaron McClelland and Waterloo Mayor Dave Boesen officiated, while Abby,Ensley's wife ,proudly pinned on his badge.

A Spencer, Iowa, native, Officer Ensley studied Police Science at Hawkeye Community College and serves with the Iowa Army National Guard, including a previous deployment to the Middle East.

Officer Ensley will complete initial training in Waterloo before attending the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) for certification. Following ILEA, he will return to Waterloo for Field Training before beginning solo patrol.

Congratulations Officer Ensley!

JOYS & CONCERNS

In Memoriam

We mourn the passing of Sue Burdick, who passed away Friday, August 5. Sue was a longtime member of Grace United Methodist Church, and her gentle presence will be deeply missed.

https://www.warnerfuneralhome.com/obituaries/susan-burdick

Prayer Requests

Please keep these members of our congregation in your prayers this week as they face health challenges:

June Miller
John Young
Joyce Trojahn

May God surround them with His loving presence, giving them courage for each day, strength for the journey, comfort in difficult moments, and peace in the midst of uncertainty.

We also pray for their families and caregivers, asking God to give them strength, patience, hope, and the assurance that they are not alone.

May all who are facing illness feel the love and support of their Grace church family and know that they are being held close in prayer.

Congratulations, Nick & Abigail Ensley!

Congratulations to **Nick and Abigail Ensley**, who were married on **July 25th**! May God bless their marriage with love, joy, and a future filled with hope.

"Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." **— Mark 10:9**

JOYS & CONCERNS

Benefit for Heather Watson

Please join us in supporting **Heather Watson** as she continues her recovery following surgery for uterine and ovarian cancer. A benefit will be held **Sunday, September 27**, at Grace United Methodist Church. Enjoy a **free-will taco-in-a-bag meal from 1–3 p.m.**, followed by a **chance auction from 1–4 p.m.**, with the drawing at **4:30 p.m.** Proceeds will help with medical expenses and other bills.

If you are unable to attend but would like to donate, please contact Tanya at **712-299-4843**. Direct donations may also be sent via Venmo to **@oxygen-247**.

Baby & Housewares Shower

Join us **Sunday, October 4**, after worship in the Narthex for a baby and housewares shower honoring Alexa and Brett Triggs. The celebration is being hosted by Jane Ingledue, Sandy Heerdt, and Linda Wittstruck. Everyone is welcome to join in celebrating the growing Triggs family! More details will be shared as the date approaches.

Baptism of Maeley Faith Triggs

On August 16, we celebrated the baptism of Maeley Faith Triggs, daughter of Alexa and Brett Triggs and little sister to Kinsley. We pray that God will bless Maeley with a lifetime filled with faith, love, joy.

Happy 1st Birthday, Lyza Mae!

Lyza Mae will turn 1 on September 8th! Riley Herman invites family and friends to join in celebrating her birthday on **Sunday, September 6th, from 1:00–3:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall**.

Sunday Worship

9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary)
10:45 AM Fellowship (Narthex)
10:45 AM Adult Education (Wesley)

Committee Meetings

Children's & Youth Ministry	Sept 8	Oct 11	6:30 PM	Wesley
Church Council	Sept 28	Oct 26	6:30 PM	Fireside
Finance (Quarterly)	No mtg	Oct 26	5:30 PM	Wesley
Grace Cares	Sept 23		3:30 PM	
Missions	Sept 7	Oct 5	3:30 PM	Library
SPRC	Sept 7	Oct 5	6:00 PM	
Trustees	Sept 14	Oct 12	6:30 PM	Library
Worship	Sept 5	Oct 3	10:00 AM	Library

Monthly/Weekly Scheduled Events

Essentrics Class	Monday Wednesday		9:30AM	Wesley
Chair Yoga	Monday Wednesday		10:00AM	Wesley
Coffee @ Grace	Sept 2 & 16	Oct 7 & 21	9:30AM	Narthex
Yoga with Mandi	Tuesday/Thursday		12:00-12:30 PM	
Grace Band Practice	Thursdays		3:00 PM	Sanctuary
Loom Work Session	Wednesday		2:00-4:00 PM	Fellowship Hall
Men's Bible Study	Wednesday		1:00 PM	Narthex
Esther Circle	Sept. 26	No mtg	10:00 AM	
Ruth Circle	Sept 24	Oct 15	1:30 PM	
UMM	No mtg	Oct 10	8:00 AM	BenTena Room
UWFaith	No mtg	Oct 1		
Weighted Works with Love	Sept 22	Oct 27	9:00 AM	Fellowship Hall
Adult Study Group	Sunday		10:45 AM	Wesley
Package Jump Start Bags	Sept 16	Oct 21	10:30 AM	

Special Events

Christian Women Speak—GUMC Guest	Sept 6	7:50 AM	KICD 1240 AM
Clay County Fair	Sept 12-20		
Heather Watson Benefit	Sept 27	1:00-4:00PM	Fellowship Hall
Grace Kidz Carnival	Sept 30	5:00-7:00PM	

The complete calendar may be accessed here.

CHAIR PERSON OF MINISTRY BOARDS:

Church Council: Ben Pullen
Co-Lay Leaders: Sandy Heerdt, Ben Pullen
Lay Member to Ann. Conference: Jenn Ingledue, Bri Pullen
Treasurer:
SPRC: Ric Guerrero
Trustee: Gary Small
Finance: Paul Kassel
Missions: Brownie Small
Memorial: Judi Calhoon
Grace Cares: Cyndi O'Hara
Worship: Linda O'Clair
Children's & Youth Ministry: Lisa Elliott
UWF: Cyndi O'Hara and Pastor Shurmaine McAlpine
UMM: Bill Elliott
Youth Rep:
Church Council Secretary: Joan Waller
Finance Secretary: Sandy Thomas
Director of Communications: Alison Herman

GRACE
United Methodist Church

JOIN US FOR...
Inperson/Live Stream Worship
Sundays @ 9:30 AM- Sanctuary

CONTACT US
Grace United Methodist Church
311 2nd Ave W
Spencer, IA 51301
Phone: 712-262-5970
office@spencergumc.com

OFFICE HOURS
Monday - Thursday
9:00 AM - 3:30 PM
Friday - Sunday
Closed