

J U N E 2 0 1 5

# Arbor Covenant Newsletter

Madison WI



## Grace Defies – Pastor Peter

*“All the natural movements of the soul are controlled by laws analogous to those of physical gravity. Grace is the only exception.” - Simone Weil*

It's hard to translate the concept of grace. Not because it's hard to define; we have words that can express it. Not because we don't have good stories that illustrate it; we have beautiful ones. But because it is so seldom experienced.

The concept itself is contrary to most of our expectations and our sense of fairness. Twentieth century French theologian and philosopher, Simone Weil muses that it defies gravity. She insists that it (metaphorically) breaks the laws of thermodynamics. It goes against our tendencies and our desires that are usually predicated on market forces and on rewards and punishment. These tendencies inform us that achievement is the pathway to value and esteem, and that mistakes are the highway to shame and guilt. These desires convince us that pain felt is pain that must be inflicted (somewhere on someone or something).

Grace is different. With grace we don't get what we deserve. With grace we don't go about our days trying to prove or sell ourselves. With grace we don't carry the burden of our grudges or burn from the searing heat of other people's resentment. Instead, with grace, we recognize all people's worth; our own, our neighbors, even our would-be enemies. With grace we offer to each other our best intentions, our hopes, our patience, and our acceptance.

Grace is an alternate way of life. It defies natural law. It defies the prevailing priorities of our economic system. It defies shame and regret and all the agendas we feel so desperate about proving. In the kingdom of God these things just don't apply. In the Kingdom of God gravity gives way to love.

### Save the Dates!

#### Children's Sunday

June 7

The children will Participate in the service, plant in the garden and enjoy a cookout

#### Confirmation Sunday

June 14

Sam Kessenich will be confirmed.

#### Denominational Meeting

June 25-26- 27

Pastor Peter will represent us in Kansas City

## A word from Sam's teacher – Pastor Peter Morris

Spending Sunday mornings with Sam these last couple of years has been a privilege and blessing. He'd drink hot chocolate and wear flipflops and inordinate amount of the time. I'd drink coffee and wear my tie loosely. We'd talk about how our weeks went, the Bible, and the implications of faith. It was a blessing. I'm grateful for his kindness and really amazed at how well-rounded he is with interests spanning all sorts of subjects and activities. Sam's a really great young man!



Sam is proud to be a member of the third generation of the Levin family to attend Arbor and the second generation to be confirmed in this church. Here he is at his cousin Michelle's wedding in 2013. He's the one in the purple shirt in the front row surrounded by his mom and dad, Marijo and Dan Kessenich and his brother Randy – along with many members of the Levin family who attended the wedding.

## Confirmation

**Congratulations to Sam Kessenich who has completed his two-year program of study with Pastor Peter and will be confirmed on Sunday June 14.**

Sam Kessenich will be confirmed at Arbor Covenant Church on June 14. We will have cake and coffee following the service.

He is also graduating the 8<sup>th</sup> grade from Core Knowledge Charter /Badger Ridge Middle School, in Verona on June 9.

Some things you may not know about him:

- 1) He's a Minnesota Vikings Fan (we think he's really a Packer fan)
- 2) He plays piano but also plays viola
- 3) He competed in the State Solo & Ensemble and received a 1!
- 4) His favorite foods are pizza & Oscar Meyer hot dogs
- 5) He is his Mom's tech support with ALL electronics
- 6) He secretly loves his brotherJ
- 7) He loves to take things apart to see how they work, especially electronics
- 8) He has a bin in his room full of electronic parts, he doesn't always put things back together.

He has had two great years with Pastor Peter, learning the Bible and talking sports!!!!

*Submitted by Marijo Kessenich*



## Graduations

**Congratulations to all of these graduates and their families!**



### Seaira Goettler

Seaira graduated from North Park University in May with a major in theater. Seaira is the daughter of Carin and Bill Goettler.



### Tiffany Goettler

Tiffany Goettler graduated from University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in May with a major in psychology/social work. Tiffany is the daughter of Carin and Bill Goettler.



### Emma Lundeen

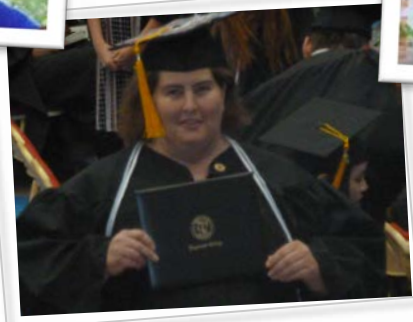
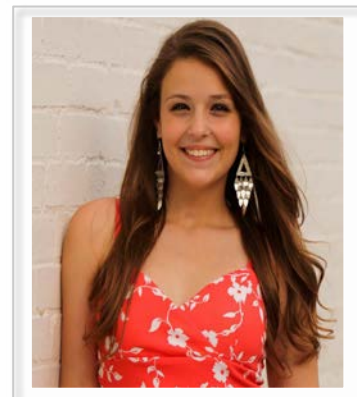
Emma graduated from North Park University in May. She is granddaughter of Lowell and Trudy Nordling. Emma's major was sports management and she will now continue on for her MBA.

### Ryne Pagel

Ryne Pagel graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in May. His major was conservation.

Ryne is the son of the late Pam (Levin) Matthews. Ryne is also the nephew of Deb Levin, Sue Pecotte, and Marijo Kessenich.





## More Graduations!!

### Jacob Meyer

Jacob Meyer received a PhD in Kinesiology, Exercise Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in May. Jacob is the son of Dan and Debby Meyer and will be doing a post-doc at University Hospital.

### Emma Keillor Hutchins

Emma graduated from the University of Wisconsin – LaCrosse in May. She majored in psychology. Emma is the daughter of Doug and Sheri Keillor and the granddaughter of Ann-Britt Keillor

### Carin Goettler

Carin Goettler has received a Masters Degree in Art Therapy from Edgewood College

### Hope Collins

Hope will graduate in June from Middleton High School and plans to attend Winona State College in the fall. Hope is the granddaughter of Tom and Lynda Collins.



## Introducing Winnie

Have you met Winnie – the newest member of Pastor Peter and Tamsin’s family? She is a Wheaten Terrier who is about 3 months old. She even made a special appearance at church recently when they were unable to leave her at home. Winnie was on her best behavior – most of us didn’t even know she was sleeping quietly in Pastor Peter’s office during the service.

## New Beginnings

Ian will begin kindergarten this fall  
Jackson will begin kindergarten this fall  
Reese will begin kindergarten this fall.



## Finishing Grades

Kayla is finishing first grade  
Reba is finishing second grade.  
Aubrey is finishing second grade  
Jordan is finishing third grade

## New Starts this Fall

Lea will be in Day Care this fall  
JD will begin first grade this fall  
Josiah will begin first grade this fall.  
Sedona will begin first grade this fall.



## Summer Plans

Aubrey and Jordan will spend the summer in Georgia with their father.  
Reba will be going to Covenant Harbor Bible Camp in July!!  
Reese and Samantha will be moving to Fort Collins CO with their parents Anika and Ryan Simmons. We will miss you!!

## Children's Church and Other Summer Activities

While school will be out shortly for the summer, **Children's Church** will not be going on vacation. There is a full summer of Sunday morning lessons, laughs, prayers, and play. We'll start the summer off with a **Children's Day** Program on June 7 (note that's a week ahead of the regular Children's Day). The Children will have some things to share during the morning worship service, and will then go running to the garden to hear what God has said in the Bible about gardens. Children will then plant their garden with tomato plants, green beans, squash, etc. That will be followed by a cookout.

Our core of teachers expanded this past year with Lissa Turner joining Fabio Mora, Holly McCoy, Ruth Hallblade, and myself. With this talented group of teachers we are able to cover all Sundays, and any one of us does not have to miss the regular worship service that often.



Besides our regular Children's Church activities, look for an announcement about traveling to Covenant Harbor on a Sunday in early to mid July to worship under the tent. A picnic and beach activities follow. Later in July (tentatively July 27 to 31), Joyce Boggess is working with our neighboring Covenant Church Fountain of Life on a joint **VBS (Vacation Bible School)**. We'll provide more information in the near future.

**At a recent meeting of the teachers, we remarked on the spiritual development that we are witnessing in the children.**

As we look forward on this journey with the youngest members of our church community, we'd like to ask all of you to help us grow this ministry by inviting families with young children to join us. We'd also like to remind all of our nursery volunteers to be sure to use our downstairs nursery area for children under 3 so we always have two adults present in our Children's Church classroom.

*Submitted by Mark Hanson*

## The Church's Posture Towards LGBTQ Friends & Neighbors: Some Resources and a Tentative Plan

First, I want to thank everyone for their input to help shape our congregation's discussion about our posture towards LGBTQ friends and neighbors. The leadership team has been working to shape a comprehensive conversation that accounts for your concerns and aspirations while presenting an even-handed, measured report of the prevailing considerations that are making this topic so essential, and in many circumstances, so contentious.

We've identified a few key components for this conversation. Central will be faithful to scripture as the living, authoritative word of God, written within its own contextual circumstances but with truth for all people in all places. Also important will be our stories and the stories of others as they relate to personal experience and encounters with the LGBTQ community. We'll also spend time considering congregational and denominational policy and how those offer structure and guidance for how we live out our faith as a community. Furthermore we'll carve out time for people to share their hopes, fears, and frustrations along with other concerns that we find need to be articulated.

Each of the components will be addressed in a variety of contexts: large group, small group, one on one discussion over cups of coffee, etc. These gatherings will be scheduled and publicized in the coming weeks and months. Expect more information soon.

In the meantime, I want to provide a list of books that I've read over the last 6 months or so that you may be interested in checking out. Please note that this list is not exhaustive, undoubtedly it will grow. In fact, if you have suggestions for other books or resources that we should engage, please let me know. For now, if you want copies of any of the following, please let me know and I'll make sure you get them.

### **David Gushee, *Changing Our Mind*. David Crumm Media, LLC: 2014**

A book from a preeminent Evangelical ethicist and theologian that in its early chapters makes a strong case for the necessity of faith communities having conversations regarding their position on LGBTQ neighbors. It goes on to present analysis of crucial scripture passages and a thoughtful accounting for what's at stake for LGBTQ Christians and congregations, both affirming and non-affirming.

### **Wesley Hill, *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality*. Zondervan. 2010**

A book that is written from within the ECC's current policy. In it, Hill tells the story of coming to terms with his homosexuality and his choice to remain single and celibate. It's a moving memoir that highlights the importance of integrity, vulnerability, and community as congregations address questions concerning LGBTQ brothers and sisters.

### **Justin Lee, *Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gay-vs-Christians Debate*. Jericho Books 2012**

It tells the story of Lee's theologically conservative upbringing and the difficulties he encountered as he struggled with his gay orientation. In an even-handed manner he urges the church to be welcoming of Gay Christians, recognizing that in some contexts and for some people celibacy and singleness will be a necessary part of this welcome while in other contexts faithful, covenanted same-sex relationships will be celebrated.

### **Ken Wilson, *A Letter to My Congregation*. David Crumm Media, LLC: 2014**

Written from the perspective of an evangelical pastor who serves a community where unanimity on LGBTQ questions proves allusive, Wilson attempts to offer a "third way" that seeks welcome, hospitality, and unity despite disagreement.

### **Matthew Vines, *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships*. Convergent Books. 2014**

A relatively thorough discussion of the relevant scripture passages from both the Old and New Testaments and an examination of Christian tradition and history as it applies to LGBTQ questions. The book also includes elements of Vines' personal story, ultimately arguing the case that there is ample room in Christianity to affirm and celebrate faithful, covenanted same-sex relationships.

*Submitted by Pastor Peter Morris*

## **A Stay at Home Mission Trip**

*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.  
Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers  
into His harvest fields. Matthew 9:37-38*

### **Being Missional**

*At its most basic, being missional means that the Church does not exist for itself but for the good of the world. Our role is to live out the Good News of the Gospel. To work to bring God's Kingdom more fully to this world. We go outside the walls of the church to embody the presence of Christ in our world. (Ken Callahan wrote in his book **Effective Church Leadership** 199)*

## **A Stay At Home Summer Mission Trip – What is it?**

Did you ever want to participate in a summer mission trip-but did not have the time away from work or school, or it was just too expensive? Well here is an opportunity for you to participate in mission work. This **Stay At Home Mission Trip** was developed as a unique opportunity for those with limited time or resources to participate.

“A Stay At Home Mission Trip” can be as exciting and as meaningful and rewarding as a ministry that takes place abroad or in another state. Most “Stay At Home Mission Trips” are designed around your time, your finances, and your interest.

### **Who can participate?**

Whatever your age, interest or skills, we have a place for you. We invite all who want to show God's love and spread the Good News.

**The Stay At Home Mission Trip** is inviting you to join for a quality, organized, and life-changing rewarding, cross-cultural mission experience that may be as near as our own neighborhood

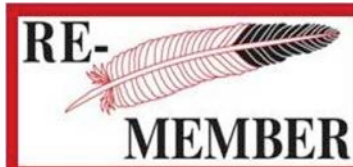
This year the children will be the primary focus of our **Stay At Home Mission Trip**. Many of these little ones may be living in homes (or homeless) riddled with drugs, alcohol and crime, being raised by a single mother who is overwhelmed with problems of her own. What future can they expect unless we all show them God's love?

Our Stay At Home Mission Trip is something really cool this hot summer! Join us as Arbor Covenant in conjunction with Fountain of Life Covenant Church will be hosting a 5 day Neighborhood Vacation Bible School, Neighborhood Festival and **School Supplies Pantry** (*The School Supplies Pantry will be open to all VBS participants*)

Summer internships are available for students. (high school juniors and up). We need your youth and vitality – bring your music, songs, drama, and fun ideas.

More information will be available in the next few weeks, *Submitted by Jan Gietzel*





## Working with the Oglala Lakota People on the Pine Ridge Reservation, SD

One of the most rewarding experiences one can have is to participate in a mission trip. There is something about the experiences, the relationships that develop, the opportunity to serve, grow and learn that is unique to these types of experiences.

Thus, at least eight adult missionaries will be traveling to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation for the second time on August 8-14, 2015 and will spend 7 days installing bunk beds, building outhouses, skirting trailer /steps/decks. The weeklong trip is divided between service and cultural immersion and building relationships with the Oglala Lakota people. Cultural immersion activities are scheduled in afternoons and evenings, including guest speakers, Lakota crafts, tours, museums, and social gatherings with Lakota friends.

**Mission Trip Date:** Saturday, August 8 – 14, 2015

**Location:** Pine Ridge Reservation Pine Ridge, SD

**Trip Costs:** ..... \$500.00

All food, housing and transportation costs are included.

You are invited to join the Trip to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota **.As of now we have room for only two more volunteers – we will need to know as soon as possible if you plan to participate.**

**For information about volunteering:** contact the volunteer trip coordinators.

Joyce Boggess 608-219-3673 or Peter Morris 608-338-2268 at Arbor Covenant Church

**Please pray for the group!**

### There's plenty of work to be done on the Pine Ridge Reservation!

- The Pine Ridge Reservation is home to approximately 40,000 people, 35% of which are under the age of 18.
- 80% unemployment and rates go higher in the winter when travel is difficult or impossible
- Average family income is just \$2,600 - \$3,700 per year - 97% live below the Federal Poverty Levels. There is only one grocery store and no banks on the reservation.
- High rates of alcoholism - alcoholism affects 8 out of 10 families on the Reservation - high rate of diabetes, heart disease and cancer.
- Highest infant mortality rate in the US at 300% higher than the US national average - Teenage suicide rate is 150% higher than the national average. Life expectancy for men is 48 years. Life expectancy for women is 52.
- It is reported that at least 60% of the homes on the Pine Ridge Reservation are infested with Black Mold. This infestation causes an often-fatal condition with infants, children, elderly, those with damaged immune systems, and those with lung and pulmonary conditions at the highest risk. Exposure to this mold can cause hemorrhaging of the lungs and brain as well as cancer.
- School drop-out rate is over 70%.
- There is an estimated average of 17 people living in each family home (a home which may only have two to three rooms). Some larger homes, built for 6 to 8 people, have up to 30 people living in them. Over 33% of the Reservation homes lack basic water and sewage systems as well as electricity.
- Many residents must carry (often contaminated) water from the local rivers daily for their personal needs. Some Reservation families are forced to sleep on dirt floors. Many Reservation homes lack adequate insulation. Even more homes lack central heating. Periodically, Reservation residents are found dead from hypothermia.

**With our help we can improve the lives of the Oglala Lakota people living on Pine Ridge Reservation**

*Submitted by Jan Gietzel and Joyce Boggess*

# Birthdays

June 2	Gloria Stehley
June 8	Sue Springman
June 12	Dick Lindgren
June 15	Amanda Pecotte
June 25	Chuck Gietzel



# Anniversaries

June 11	Duane and Harriet Anderson
June 17	Mark and Janis Hanson
June 25	Kevin and Susan Corrado

The Good Neighbors Personal Essentials Pantry item of the month for June is toilet paper. Thank you for your donations – please leave in box in narthex.

	Host	Nursery	Children's Church	Lay Reader	Projector
<b>June 7</b>	Susan/Charlie	Debby M	Holly + Mark	Ruth	Chuck
<b>June 14</b>	Kessenich	Hannah	Lissa	Mike J	Michelle
<b>June 21</b>	Deb L/Michelle	Deb McGill	Ruth	Susan	Susan
<b>June 28</b>	Joyce/Mike	Michelle	Fabio	Jan G	Debby
<b>July 5</b>	Susan/Charlie	Ulrika	Mark	Michelle	Mark

# June Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
10:25 Gathering 10:30Worship COMMUNNION DEACON FUND					10:00am- 1:00 pm. Personal Essentials Pantry	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
10:25 Gathering 10:30Worship CHILDREN'S SUNDAY Congregational Mtg. following service				6:30 p.m. Leadership Team	10:00am- 1:00 pm. Personal Essentials Pantry	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
10:25 Gathering 10:30Worship CONFIRMATION				10:30 Community Meals at Luke House 5:30-7:30 pm. Personal Essentials Pantry	10:00am- 1:00 pm. Personal Essentials Pantry	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
10:25 Gathering 10:30Worship					4:30-7:30 am Homeless Shelter @ Grace Episcopal** 10:00am- 1:00 pm. Personal Essentials Pantry	
28	29	30	1	2	Denomination Meeting-Kansas City	
10:25 Gathering 1:30Worship					3	4
5					** Shelter volunteers Mark Hanson and Doug Keillor	
10:25 Gathering 10:30Worship Communion Deacon Fund						