



September 15, 2017

Greetings friends,

Mark and I are taking off later this week for a quick trip to Niceville, Florida to pick up my sister, Kelly. (Living up on the western end of the panhandle, they were thankfully spared any of the catastrophic damage of Irma. It is just time for her to come home for a few months.) As we are making our plans and beginning to gather things to be packed for both of us and, of course, Miss Trixie, I can't help but think of the Texas and Florida folks who also packed in these last few weeks. Where my toughest decision is whether or not I want to take a bathing suit, they had to rush around and figure out how to protect precious family memorabilia, what to do with their beloved pets and safely pack identification materials and essentials. They had to secure their homes as best they could, not knowing if anything would be there when they returned. Mark and I will notify the post office, ask a friend to water our outdoor areas and drop a key off at my other sister's, but that is pretty much it. We're pretty confident things will be much the same as we left them when we return.

It is sobering. We know no one is promised tomorrow and life can change in a finger snap, but most of us live with a fair certainty that all will be well when we wake up in the morning. When that "certainty" is ripped away, that is when we figure out that life isn't concerned about "fair" and when it comes to the fury of nature, we are pretty powerless. That is where the kindness and generosity of strangers as well as family and friends play life-changing roles. That is where we get a true estimate of our own fortitude and grit. And that is when Faith and Hope in the Almighty step in to carry us forward.

A friend pointed out Luke 21:25-28 to me last weekend. This passage describes the Coming of Jesus.

There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

None of us knows where we are in God's timeline for the Second Coming of Jesus. With the recent eclipse, these terrible storms, and the pervasive unrest around the world, it sure does seem to be aligning with this scriptural passage. We could be rapidly approaching the end of days...or not. There have been eclipses, droughts, fire, famine and terrible storms juxtaposed many times since Jesus ascended into Heaven. There has been horrible unrest throughout the world since the moment Adam and Eve left the Garden, we know that. But, we really don't know if recent events are the Biblical described signs.

Here's my takeaway: Regardless of signs, *Be prepared in your spiritual life because truly nothing of this world will matter in the End Times.* Examine your relationship with Jesus. Have you asked Him into your life and placed your trust in Him? Have you repented and asked Him for forgiveness for your sins and do you strive to be like Him in what you do and say and in how you treat others? Are you ready to lean on him and trust that all will be well in His timing? *Today, tomorrow, next week or a hundred years from now, your relationship with Jesus is paramount.* Everything else is just "stuff" and of little consequence in God's eternal plan.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES ARE DUE ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH, PLEASE! ☺

This week at Grace –Pastor Fred’s message this week is inspired by Romans 14:1-12. The SPRC is celebrating church staff this week and our Chancel Choir returns! Terry Gustason is our liturgist this week with Erma Schaeffer, Valerie, Camille & Eli Hubert serving as greeters and Bill & Susan Mardock and Adam & Owen Hubert acting as ushers. As always, worship begins at 9:15. We invite you to join us!

What if you could help change the world? Here is a wonderful opportunity!



Meals from the Heartland is coming up again on September 30th in Story City. Sponsored by the Roland-Story Ministerial Association, this is the 3rd year for the event. This year, they hope to *Pack the Truck* with **60,000** meals and hope to raise **\$20,000** (just 20 cents per meal) to fund it. Please consider donating and/or signing up to help package meals on:

Saturday, September 30, 2017
Story City Recreation Center (812 Elm Ave.)

You can sign up online at:

www.tinyurl.com/2017SCHungerFight



FINANCIAL REPORT – June 30, 2017

At the end of the second quarter of 2017, Grace’s **General Endowment Fund** had a balance of \$43,393, with a year-to-date income of \$196.00. The **Hendrickson Fund (undesigned)** had grown to \$12,557, earning \$56.62 through June. The **Beckman Fund (Camping)** had a balance of \$3,827, with a year-to-date income of \$17.25. The **Frandsen Fund (Youth)** had grown to \$12,808, earning \$57.75 through June. The **Elevator Fund**, instituted in February 2014, had a balance at the end of June of \$9,709, with a year-to-date income of \$43.83.

Overall, Grace’s Endowment Funds have earned \$371.45 so far in 2017, growing to **\$82,294** from an initial principal investment of \$72,385. Grace’s funds are conservatively allocated with 52% invested in **Equity Funds** – which have grown 19.59% over the last twelve months – and 48% in **Fixed Income Bond Funds** – which have grown 2.07% over the last twelve months.

The **average annual net returns** for the funds invested in by Grace (and managed by the Iowa United Methodist Foundation), as of June 30, 2017 follow:

	1 year	3 years	5 years
Equity Fund	8.10%	3.99%	11.34%
Bond Fund	3.00%	1.72%	2.20%

Grace’s Endowment Committee encourages you to consider the various ways your giving can help to **Endow Grace**, preserving the future of our Church.

Please contact the church office at 515-733-4712 or office@grace-umc.com or visit our website at <http://www.grace-umc.com/endowgrace.aspx> .

As you pray this week, please remember these friends and hold each up in special prayer: Sharene Lykins; Ron & Darlys Orth; Julie Jacobson; Sharon Matson; Denny Michel; Parker Witthuhn; Sawyer Miller; Helen Gates; Norman Patti; Claudia Pauk; Marjorie Gookin; Pam Hillis; Leota Berg; Vivian Whitmore; Jeanne Hohneke; Ray Hults; George Sellers; Lois Johnson; Al Rau; Jordan Gertsen; Cooper Leeman; Taylor family in Africa mission

Cards for Julie - We have a basket set out in the narthex to receive special gifts for our friend, Julie who is battling a very pervasive cancer and could use some help. Gas cards, restaurant cards, retail cards, checks or cash, we hope you'll give generously in her time of special need.

Parker Witthuhn is making progress with his healing – here is his address if you'd like to remember him with a card or note: **Parker Witthuhn; 603 W. 26th Street; Kearney, NE 68845**

News You Can Use

Sunday, September 17

- 9:15 AM Worship
- 10:15 AM Coffee Fellowship
- 10:30 AM Sunday school and Confirmation

Wednesday, September 20

- 6:30 PM Leadership Dev't
- 7:00 PM Chancel Choir
- 8:00 PM Bell Choir

Sunday, September 24

- 9:15 AM Worship
- 10:15 AM Brunch (Thanksgiving Ingathering focus)
- 10:30 AM Sunday school and Confirmation

Faithfully,
Cathy



The Story Theater will present the faith-based film All Saints, starring John Corbett, this weekend, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, September 15, 16, 17. It's rated PG and show times will be each evening at 7 p.m. with special matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 4:30 p.m.

