



Weekly Devotional Materials
Faith. Justice. Hope.



Opening the Doors to our Hearts

Love Opens Doors is a giving initiative that encourages and equips the people of Grace to wisely and generously pledge their financial commitments for 2021. This is an incredible opportunity for all of us to step out in faith, love bravely, and commit to God's mission through Grace for the year ahead. Because we can't gather as we have in the past, we're making a big deal about this year's annual giving initiative, and we invite your full participation.

In this packet, you will find materials that will help you to prayerfully discern how God is calling you to participate in "Love Opens Doors". We encourage you to engage with these materials each week, via one of the following opportunities:

- Neighborhood Church group
- Zoom Study with your Pastors on Wednesdays at 12:00 - 12:30 pm CT
 - October 14, 21 & 28th
 - Grace Zoom: *Phone: 312-626-6799 (ID# 4164783219) or Video (password: grace)*
- Together with your family or on your own in quiet devotion.

Our prayer is that this season in the life of Grace will be more than just a giving initiative, but a time for each of us to deepen our faith and expand our vision for how our God of Love, Opens Doors to the future.

We miss being connected with you in person, and we long for the day when we can open the doors of our church building once again. We know that God is opening doors through you in your home and in our community, and we value your gifts!

We invite you to take some time to pray over these questions weekly and email us your thoughts at: [**loveopensdoors@graceofav.org**](mailto:loveopensdoors@graceofav.org)

We promise to read all of your responses and provide them to our pastors and church leaders for consideration and guidance. Thank you for taking some time so that we can be better connected with one another.



Week 1

Love Opens Doors to Faith

This week's message is "Love opens doors to faith." In this new season of ministry, we must equip our congregation to practice our faith wherever we are. We desire to coordinate care ministries in new ways, support Children, Youth, and Family Ministries as we pass our faith on to the next generation, and creatively maintain ministry excellence as we learn to be the church in our current reality. Calling a full-time associate pastor to Grace will help us open doors to faith. Let's ask God to deepen our faith in these challenging times.

Prayer of the week:

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the connection you have established with everyone who reads this message. Bless their lives, help them find a new normal during this pandemic with whatever challenges they are facing or losses they have experienced. Bring us together to heal us where we are broken. Deepen our faith, give us hope, and bring justice to this hurting world. As we work together to fulfill your calling and purpose for our lives, help us see how we can each make a difference through the doors we step through into your world. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

Scripture:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

*Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love,
for I have put my trust in you.*

*Show me the way I should go,
for to you I entrust my life.*

Psalm 143:8

Reflection & Response:

What are your prayers for how Grace can deepen our faith as a congregation, and trust in God to shape the ways we share our faith in these challenging times?

What has Grace done well, and how can we share our faith in more places and with more people in ways that are impactful to our community and beyond?

What do I sense that God is calling me to personally do to help "open doors to faith" through Grace?

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Week 2

Love Opens Doors to Justice

This week's message is "Love Opens Doors to Justice". Right now, we need to focus only on the things we can't not do. We have already started to engage in the work of racial justice, a natural next step for a congregation that knows how to love bravely. We know the community needs other things from us, too. In 2021, we'd like to hire a community organizer to help us to listen in the community and help people take action on the things they care about. Can we increase our ability to live out the Spirit's call to love and justice? What if Grace becomes the go-to place in Apple Valley for people to engage in anti-racism work?

Prayer of the week:

Dear Lord,

Please open our eyes and hearts to recognize wherever we see injustice, particularly from a perspective of those who are experiencing it. Give us the courage to act with compassion and love toward those being oppressed. Give us voice to speak out against injustice in bold and loving ways; and give us the perseverance and strength to begin to change the causes of injustice. Bring your church together so we can be of one mind and spirit to help us focus on how to begin to do this work in our own community first. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

Scripture:

Luke 10:25-37, The parable of the Good Samaritan

*Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love,
for I have put my trust in you.*

*Show me the way I should go,
for to you I entrust my life.*

Psalm 143:8

Reflection & Response:

What are your prayers for Grace's emerging efforts to bring justice to our community?

Can you identify specific injustices in our community that you feel called to address because of your faith in Jesus Christ?

How can I share my leadership, time, talents and resources to help our congregation be more effective at bringing about changes that eliminate the causes of injustice, particularly right here in our own community?

We invite you to take some time to pray over these questions weekly and email us your thoughts at: loveopensdoors@graceofav.org





Week 3

Love Opens Doors to Hope

This week's message is "Love Opens Doors to Hope" Our building serves as a place of hope every day, especially in the midst of this pandemic. As we generously respond to crises and support people experiencing homelessness, we are using our building in new and essential ways right now. Our congregation isn't gathering for worship in the building, but our space is being used for God's purposes. Hope is found in community, and we want our physical spaces to help people connect in relationships with God and each other. Let's fully fund the operation of our building for 2021.

Prayer of the week:

Dear Lord,

This world has been turned upside down and destroyed our confidence in the systems and methods we have designed to get along in this world. Too often we put our trust in these systems rather than in you.

But you have turned the world upside down through Jesus, showing us to fully depend on your love. The pandemic has destroyed our sense of security in our health. The economic systems that we thought were stable and could be trusted are a roller coaster ride of uncertainty. Racial injustice and a lack of respect for each other is deepening in so many places, destroying our sense of community and good will toward one another. Bring us together through your church to use our buildings and the doors of our homes as your temples to invite our neighbors to again seek you with our hearts, minds and souls and restore our focus to you. Keep these temples open and ready to do your will in new and necessary ways. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Scripture:

John 2:1-11

*Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love,
for I have put my trust in you.*

*Show me the way I should go,
for to you I entrust my life.*

Psalm 143:8

Reflection & Response:

What might your prayers be for how we can reach out more effectively to others in need through the use of our spaces and many doors?

How is Grace's physical building already serving God's mission of hope? Where have you seen examples of how our physical spaces (church and homes) are already serving others since the pandemic?

How can I share my resources to help our church be more generous in how we are able to meet the needs and bring hope to those who are suffering?

We invite you to take some time to pray over these questions weekly and email us your thoughts at: loveopensdoors@graceofav.org





Week 4

Love Opens Doors to Faith, Justice & Hope

Over the last three weeks we have already begun opening doors. We have renewed confidence in the future God is at work creating among us. We know that your prayerful engagement over these weeks has been faithful and intentional and we are thankful for you. We know that thousands of lives will be blessed through this vision God is creating for Grace.

Prayer of the week:

Gracious God,

We are grateful for every good gift that comes from you. We know that Faith, Justice and Love are only possible in this world because you show us the way through Jesus Christ. Open our hearts this week as we discern how we can be at work opening doors through our gifts to your church. We trust you, God, and we are ready to take a leap of faith.

Amen.

Scripture:

*Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love,
for I have put my trust in you.*

*Show me the way I should go,
for to you I entrust my life.*

Psalm 143:8

Reflection & Response:

As we approach the time for submitting our pledge cards in the week ahead, how is God calling us to make sacrifices to ensure God's work through Grace will flourish in 2021?

When our sense of security feels threatened, we often react by being more conservative with our resources. What are your fears that make you worry about being more generous in 2021?

How have you found ways to put your trust in God to take care of your needs?

How does your trust in God set you free to be generous with your resources?

What is your deepest prayer of how God will use Grace Lutheran Church to open doors to faith, justice and hope?

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