

# RELIGION

## PASTOR’S COLUMN

# God’s amazing grace



JAMES KESSLER  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, LAKE PARK

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now I am found  
Was blind, but now I see.

In John Chapter 1, Verse 16, and from his fullness we have all grace upon grace. So often we hear and say, “By the grace of God I’m here.”

No truer words are spoken. It is by the grace of God, our faith, our trust in him, our willingness to use common sense and believe in him that we are here — wherever the place shall be.

As we read in the Scriptures throughout the Bible, grace is always present, along with faith and believing in God.

We read in the Gospel of Matthew Chapter 14, Verses 28-31,

when Peter called out to Jesus to command him to come, Jesus said, “Come.” The first steps Peter took were good until he took his eyes off Jesus and tried to walk on the water on his own. Then his faith faulted and he began to sink, realizing he was in trouble. Peter called to Jesus like we all do, then we pray to God, expecting a quick fix like Peter did.

By Jesus’ grace and love, he caught Peter, rescuing him as he does for us. As we say, “by the grace of God I’m here,” so true Peter witnessed the grace of God through his son Jesus, being there to show Peter his amazing grace toward man.

Jesus could have said to Peter, “Why should I save you by using God’s grace of love? You let go of your love and belief in my father’s grace and love for you.”

How true it is that we, as humans, forget God’s grace and love. Only do we remember his grace when we are in doubt or trouble.

Why not stay true to God’s grace and love through daily prayer, being thankful whether all is going our way or not? Is it not by the grace of God? Every day we should ask for God’s grace, for a good day — and thank him at the end of each day for being with us and bringing each of us to a place of safety.

Joshua Chapter 1, Verse 9, says, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

God’s amazing love and grace are always with us.

John Chapter 1 Verse 17 — for the law was given through Moses: Grace and truth come through Jesus Christ.

I am writing this on Jan. 1, 2026, by God’s grace, I am here and able to share with you God’s amazing grace he has given me. May we all have a Happy New Year in 2026 filled with God’s grace and love. Amen.

## AREA CHURCH LISTINGS

### ASSEMBLY OF GOD

**Foundation Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Nicholas Hanges, Senior Pastor  
1410 W. 18th St.  
712-262-6292  
foundationspencer.com  
• Sunday School K-12, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday Prayer/Fellowship, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.  
• Kids Church Sunday, 10 a.m.  
• Wednesday All Ages, 6:30 p.m.

### BAPTIST

**Baptist Church, Sioux Rapids**  
Rev. James Marshall  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

### First Baptist Church, Spencer

Rev. Tim Smith  
1200 Grand Ave.  
712-262-1325  
firstbaptistspencer.com  
• Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.  
• Sunday Upward Look — KICD 1240 AM, 10 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Sunday AWANA, 4 p.m.  
• Sunday FBC Youth Group, 6 p.m.

### CALVARY CHAPEL

### New Life Worship Center, Spencer

Rev. Tracy Baugh  
1217 Fourth Ave. W.  
712-262-3125  
• Sunday Bible Church, 10 a.m.  
• Wednesday Prayer, 6:30 p.m.

### CATHOLIC

### St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, Hartley

Rev. Kevin Richter  
260 N. Fourth Ave. W.  
712-928-2626  
• Primghar St. Athony, Sunday, 8 a.m.  
• Hartley St. Joseph, Sunday, 9:30 a.m.

### St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, Milford

Rev. Brian Hughes  
1305 Okoboji Ave.  
712-338-2274

### Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Ruthven

Rev. Paul Kelly  
1801 Rolling St.  
712-852-3187

### Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Spencer

Rev. Kevin Richter  
1111 Fourth Ave. W.  
712-262-3047  
• Saturday Service, 4:30 p.m.  
• Sunday Service, 11 a.m.

Livestreamed at:  
spencersacredheart.com/  
onlinemass

### CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Trinity United Church of Christ, Hartley**  
140 N. Fifth Ave.  
712-728-2889

### CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

### Spencer Family Church, Spencer

Rev. Larry Neiderhiser  
905 Fifth St. SW  
712-262-7298  
spencerfamilychurch.org  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Kid’s Church, 10:30 a.m.  
• Wednesday Life Group, 7 p.m.

### CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

### Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Spencer

1701 W. 11th St.  
712-262-6172  
• Sunday Sacrament Meeting, 10 a.m.  
• Sunday School; Primary and Youth Meetings, 11:10 a.m.  
• Sunday Men’s Priesthood Meeting and Women’s Relief Society, 12:10 p.m.

### CONGREGATIONAL

### Grace Congregational Church, Greenville

Rev. Tonna Parsons  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

### EPISCOPAL

### The Way Station, Spencer

Rev. Beth Preston  
120 W. Fourth St.  
712-580-5463  
revbethpreston@gmail.com  
• Sunday Service, 3 p.m.

### St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Spirit Lake

Rev. Carolyn Tuttle  
23rd and Zenith  
712-336-1117  
• Sunday Mass/  
Eucharist, 10 a.m.

### All Saints Episcopal Church, Storm Lake

Rev. Stacey Gerhart  
121 W. Marina Road  
712-202-6624  
• Sunday Eucharist, 10 a.m.

### EVANGELICAL FREE

### Riverside Evangelical Free Church, Linn Grove

• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.  
• Ignite: 6:30 p.m.  
• Salt Youth: 7:15 p.m.

### CrossWinds Church, Spencer

Campus Rev. Jordan Gowing  
Rev. Dr. Kurt Trucksess  
1900 Grand Ave, Suite A  
712-584-3151  
spencer@crosswinds.tv  
• Sunday Worship, 8:30 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.

### FIRST CHRISTIAN

### First Christian Church, Spencer

(Disciples of Christ)  
Pastor Interim  
915 Fourth Ave. SW  
712-262-2945  
• Sunday Service, 9:30 a.m.  
In-House and Facebook Live  
• Wednesday Kids Sunday School: 4:30 p.m.

### FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

### First Congregational Church, Peterson

712-295-7150  
• Sunday Worship, 8:45 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 10 a.m.

### First Congregational Church, Spencer

Rev. Dr. Shazzy Britz  
DCYM Katie Baltis  
1212 First Ave. W.  
712-262-4392  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Adult Sunday School, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 4 years old to fifth grade, 9:30 a.m.  
• Adult Bible Study Tuesday, 10 a.m., Wednesday 7 p.m.  
• Spencer Congo Youth Wednesday’s, Middle School, 6-7 p.m., High School, 7-8 p.m.  
Livestream on YouTube  
All are welcome

### LUTHERAN

### Hope Lutheran Church, Everly

Rev. Dan Taylor  
206 N. Washington St.  
712-834-2767  
• Sunday Worship 10 a.m.  
• Sunday School and Adult Education, 9 a.m.  
Services livestreamed on YouTube at “Hope Lutheran Church — Everly, IA”

### Lost Island Lutheran Church, Graettinger

Rev. Peter Morlock  
• Sunday Service, 8:45 a.m.  
• Fellowship, 9:45 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 10 a.m.

### St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran, Hartley

Rev. Christopher Nitzel  
60 N. Central Ave.  
712-728-2711  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday School 10 a.m.  
• Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Confirmation, 11 a.m.  
• Choir Practice, 11 a.m.

### Harbor of Joy Lutheran Church, Milford

Rev. Tim Voth  
1204 L Ave.  
712-338-2355  
• Sunday Fellowship, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 8:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

### First Lutheran Church, Milford

1525 Three Cross Road  
Rev. Perry Aalgard, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Brian Jack, Associate Pastor  
712-338-4514  
3cross.org  
• Sunday Worship, 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.  
• Sunday Fellowship, 9:30 a.m.  
• Education/Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

### Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Royal

Rev. Dr. Mark F. Wilms  
207 Church St.  
712-933-2229  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.

### Zion Lutheran Church, Ruthven

Rev. Eric Patten  
• Sunday Service, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.

### First Lutheran Church, Sioux Rapids

Rev. Tonna Parsons  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

### Bethany Lutheran Church-ELCA, Spencer

15 W. 14th St.  
712-262-2327  
bethluthspencer.com  
• Worship, 9 a.m.

### Christ the King Lutheran Church, Spencer

Rev. Michael McGinley  
500 Fourth Ave. SW  
712-262-2244  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.  
• Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.  
• Services on Facebook, 9 a.m.  
Podcast released Sundays

### Faith Lutheran Church, Spencer

Rev. Ben Unseth  
2912 Highway Blvd.  
712-580-4316  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.  
Services are streamed on YouTube  
flcspencer.org

### First English Lutheran Church, Spencer

Rev. Paul Kaldahl  
1311 E. 18th St.  
712-262-5598  
spencer-church.com  
• Divine Worship, also broadcast on 1240 AM

and 102.5 FM, 8 a.m.  
• Fellowship, 9 a.m.  
• Child care in the nursery, 9:15 a.m. to Noon  
• Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.  
• Bible Class, 9:40 a.m.  
• Divine Worship, 10:45 a.m.  
• Communion on first and third Sundays.  
Services & Bible Class  
livestreamed via website

### Riverview Terrace Chapel, Spencer

1501 St. Luke Drive  
712-262-5932  
• Sunday Worship, 10:45 a.m.

### St. Luke Home and Services, Spencer

Rev. Perry DeGroot  
1301 St. Luke Drive  
712-262-5931  
• St. Luke Lutheran Home Worship, 10 a.m.  
• Riverview Terrace Worship, 10:45 a.m.  
  
**Trinity Lutheran Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Renae Behrends  
900 11th Ave. W.  
712-262-1287  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

### NONDENOMINATIONAL

### Faith Community Church, Milford

805 Okoboji Ave.  
Rev. Jennifer Hesebeck  
faithcommunitymilford.com  
fcc@milfordcomm.net  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

### The New Light of the Lakes Friends Church, Okoboji

• Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Service, 10:30 a.m.  
• Group Bible Study, 5 p.m.

### Living Word Outreach Ministries, Spencer

Rev. Barb Dean, Lead Pastor  
Rev. Mark Feauto, Associate Pastor  
905 10th Ave SE  
712-262-9545  
livingwordspencer.org  
• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.  
• Livestream also available on the website, Facebook and YouTube.

### River’s Edge Church, Spencer

Rev. Tim B. Frasher  
Pastor Joseph Leggett  
701 E. 18th St.  
712-580-3013  
• Sunday School, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

### Spirit Life Fellowship, Spirit Lake

Rev. Eric Holdeman  
2504 Enterprise Ave.  
712-336-0114  
• Sunday School, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

### Maple Grove Church of God, Sutherland

Rev. Michael Hyde  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 11 a.m.

### PENTECOSTAL

### Faith Pentecostal Church, Spencer

1700 11th Ave. SW  
712-262-3368  
fpccspencer.com  
Rev. Brad Wallace  
Rev. Dale Hodges  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Wednesday Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.

### REFORMED

### Good News Community Church, Okoboji

Rev. Brandon Morrow  
1010 Julia St.  
712-332-5698  
• Sunday Worship Services, 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.  
• Fellowship. 10:15 a.m.

### Hope Church, Spencer

Pastor James Runcorn  
919 Grand Ave.  
712-262-3016  
• Sunday Worship, 8:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

### SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

### Seventh Day Adventist Church, Spencer

1910 10th Ave. E.  
712-262-5766  
• Saturday Sabbath School, 9:45 a.m.  
• Saturday Worship, 11 a.m.

### UNITED METHODIST

### Calvary United Methodist Church, Arnolds Park

Rev. Chris St. Clair  
209 N. Okoboji Grove Road  
712-332-2447  
• Saturday Worship, 6 p.m.  
• Sunday Lakeshore Worship, 7:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

### Dickens United Methodist Church, Dickens

Rev. Donna Gray  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

### United Methodist Church, Everly

Rev. Michael Eeten  
301 N. Ocheyedan  
712-834-2501  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

### Community United Methodist Church, Gillett Grove

Rev. Donna Gray  
• Sunday Worship, 10:15 a.m.

### United Methodist Church, Hartley

361 Eighth Ave.  
712-928-2649  
• Sunday Church School/Confirmation Classes, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship Service, 10:30 a.m.

### United Methodist Church, Langdon

Rev. Chris St. Clair  
• Sunday in-house and Facebook Live Worship, 11 a.m.

### First United Church, Sioux Rapids

Rev. Dr. Mike Currier  
Rev. Karen Currier  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.  
Church of Christ, Spencer  
Contact Jeff Cookinham  
1304 St. Luke Drive  
712-262-2294  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Bible Study, 11:15 a.m.

### First United Methodist Church, Peterson

Rev. Tyler Thomsen  
103 E. Third St.  
• Sunday Worship, 9:15 a.m.  
• Sunday Fellowship, 10:15 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

### First United Methodist Church, Royal

Rev. John Battern  
408 Church St.  
712-933-2489  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

### United Methodist Church, Ruthven

Rev. Kathy Kluis  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

### First United Church, Sioux Rapids

• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

### Grace United Methodist Church, Spencer

Rev. Michael Slininger  
311 Second Ave. W.  
712-262-5970  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

### Zion United Methodist Church, Spencer

Rev. Michael Eeten  
• Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 10:45 a.m.

### United Methodist Church, Terril

Rev. Terry Luiken  
302 S. State St.  
712-853-6549  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

### Trinity United Methodist Church, Webb

Rev. Kari A. Etherington  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.  
• Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.

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