

# Grace E Free Congregational Meeting

January 25, 2026

**Opening/Prayer:** After Dave Brummitt made sure we had a quorum Pastor Matt opened the meeting in prayer at 12:03pm.

**Approve Minutes of October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Meeting:** Jason Flenker moved to approve; Chris Schilb seconded. All were in favor.

## Reports:

**Senior Pastor:** Pastor Matt has three things that have been on his heart:

- His heart's desire is for all to join Grace Communities. Pastor Matt shared that he is persuaded that God is working greatly through our Grace Communities.
  - We get fed through our communities
  - We find needed encouragement to live on mission together
- Pastor Matt is very excited for our Men's Ministry – a Men's Bible Study will begin in February (most likely on Wednesday evenings).
- Pastor Matt would like to bring Bilori & Gabby Paul to work alongside him as they too want to enter into ministry (to people groups without the written bible in their language).
  - Going forward, Paul has an open invitation to the elder meetings to get a better understanding of godly leadership.
  - Paul will be a non-voting member at these elder meetings.

**Youth Pastor:** Markus talked about goals for the youth in 2026.

We have both gained and lost leadership; we have faithful leaders and small group conversations are thriving. Those leaders who are faithful each week are Jason & Tina Ferrell, Jessy Ketchum and Sarah Carter. Others (like Marisa Kuhl) have been willing to step up when needed. Markus expressed heartfelt thanks for all those willing to invest in our youth. We also pick up kids for youth group. (Dave Brummitt reminded us that there is reimbursement available for travel expense.)

We have moved to a new curriculum – finding a good bible-teaching curriculum has been a hard search; but worth the effort as it has been a blessing for both students and leaders (especially in Markus' absence – the curriculum is helpful to whoever teaches that week).

We did not have a retreat in 2025 – this is a goal for 2026. We have an “equip lab” event planned for March 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> (Friday 5-8pm./Saturday 9am.-3pm.) Nate Steinholtz will be leading the equip lab and youth from other churches are invited.

This year has been a year of growth with some growing pains – pray for our leadership as they are often stretched and need prayers for endurance.

Markus would like to minister in a special way to our High School students – to create a space for them to be in the Word – this has been difficult as we have only 3-4 in this age group. This continues to be Markus’ heart’s desire.

Markus asked for specific prayers for:

- Endurance for our leaders
- A space for High Schoolers to grow and learn
- Our equip lab in March

If anyone would like to become involved with the youth ministry here at Grace; please contact Markus by text/e-mail or in person – more leaders are always needed and welcome.

**Worship Pastor:** Cameren shared that 2025 has been an exciting year – his first full year serving at Grace.

Cameren is always looking for healthy rhythms in the worship service – the rhythms include gospel assurance, a call to worship, one new song per month.

IT Issues:

- We now have a new camera with one additional camera still to be purchased in order to upgrade our I.T. capabilities (especially for our on-line services). Cameren continues to troubleshoot our lights and cameras.
- We now have video in our welcome center – we will be getting audio there also. (We have plans for video/audio in the nursery & other places of need.)

Cameren has enjoyed working both with Jason Flenker (Men’s Ministry) and Todd Woods (Welcome Team). He is so thankful for these men and their faithfulness.

The new kid check-in procedures are up and running – this is an important move in keeping our kids safe while under our watch.

Cameren has finally finished updating our Website – please check out our new and updated Website if you haven't already!

The “sing” conference was a huge blessing – Sharon Hakanson suggested all members of the worship team attend the next one.

Cameren is looking forward with joy and excitement to 2026.

**Elders:** Denny Martin shared that the elder report is self-explanatory – Todd Woods is the newest member to join the Elder Board. The Elder Board now consists of Pastor Matt Vogel, John Graves and Todd Woods (with both Denny Martin and Wayne Allen stepping down after years of faithful service).

Denny assured the grace family that choosing an elder is a lengthy and time-consuming process that the elders **do not** take lightly.

Now that we have held our grace communities during the ACE hour for a while we need to re-evaluate. One concern is that those serving in Sunday School/Nursery are unable to participate in the community time – Pastor Matt assured our church family that this is a known problem and continues to be a matter of prayer.

Pastor Matt took a moment to express thanks to both Denny Martin and Wayne Allen for their many many years of faithful service to our Church Family – this was heartily endorsed by the congregation.

**Missions:** Nate Adams referred to the missions report with these added thoughts:

- We got to celebrate Wayne and Jeanine Allen in 2025.
- We brought the Wests on as ministry partners (serving in Jordan).
- We just received approval to bring the Aubreys on as ministry partners! (They help translate the bible from the original Hebrew to the heart language of people groups without the written bible.) The work that the Aubreys do is remotely – splitting their time between the QC area and Michigan.

Because we have a surplus of funds we are using it to bring the Aubreys on as ministry partners and also to give a one-time bonus and a cost-of-living increase to our existing ministry partners. This year (2026) looks like a good balance and Nate closed by thanking all those who are faithful with their faith promise.

**Deacons:** Dave Brummitt passed the baton to his deacon team after thanking all those who are faithful in serving:

- Thank you to our Pastoral Staff
- Thank you to our Welcome Team
- Thank you to Scott Preston and our Security Team.
- Thank you to Chris Schilb, Rocky Crow and Sara Graves for their faithfulness in 2025 with all of our projects and remodeling. (Sara is in need of others to help on the design/decorating team – another opportunity to serve!)
- Thank you to all who serve in Awana, children’s church, Sunday school, youth group, coffee & fellowship, those who move chairs/walls. Heartfelt thanks to EVERYONE who helps in any way to contribute to our Grace Family.
- Apologies to anyone Dave may have omitted from the list – thank you too!!

**Deacon of Body Life:** Jason Flenker thanked Nanelle Lane for her faithful service with both Divorce Care and GriefShare. She has done Divorce Care for many years and Nanelle would like to step down and train another as facilitator to join Penny Soucie. Divorce Care is a needed program as we are the only local known church to offer this. We had 5 participants this Fall with 2 already signed up for Spring.

Thanks to Sharon Hakanson for leading the Women’s Ministries.

Men’s Ministry – A Bible Study is starting SOON (in February). Next Sunday specific dates and times will be announced. Randy Vogel will teach – Godly Masculinity. The Men’s Ministry team consists of Cameren Martinez, Jason Flenker and the newly added Randy Vogel and Chuck McCoy. We are planning at least 4 events for 2026 starting off with a Men’s Breakfast on Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Deacon of Building Services:** Kirk Hakanson shared that many of the building upgrades are obvious:

- New windows
- Parking lot repair/maintenance
- New/Remodeled bathrooms
- Fencing (in front of our outdoor shed)

Other repairs don’t show:

- Water main repair
- Roof repair

Kirk shared that at some point in the future we will need to remove all of our Callery Pear trees (we have many on our property) as they have been defined by the State of Iowa as “invasive” trees and are prohibited. At the point of removal we will need “grace sweat equity” to help with this project.

If you see any repair/maintenance need in our facility or grounds please let Kirk know so that he can take care of it. Kirk is the contact person for all maintenance.

**Deacon of Children’s Education:** Joe Urmy shared 4 things:

- AWANA – going strong (we are halfway through the year); many kids have aged out and we currently have 45 students and 18 leaders.
- Inside-Out Kidz is going well with 70 students.
- Camp – we already have 6 signed up (last year 8 kids attended camp). This year is the first year we are opening up our scholarship opportunity to kids that are not part of the Grace family.
- C.A.P. – We have 78 trained ministry workers and are fully compliant with the requirements set by our insurance carrier with regard to child safety.

**Deacon of Sunday Ministries:** Todd Woods shared that this year has been a year of much change:

- The Welcome Team is up and running.
- The new kid check-in is also up and running.
- Communion – we continue to seek out best practices; Todd is encouraged that we are back to “pre-covid” passing of the elements.
- Nursery – we are hoping for a fully-staffed nursery going forward.

Todd expressed thanks to all those serving – everyone has been flexible and has “rolled with the punches” through all of the changes. Thank you for your service. (Todd will be doing “double-duty” as both a deacon and elder at the present time – hopefully this will not be too long.)

**Deacon of Administration:** Charles Smith started with thankfulness as he has seen God’s continued faithful provision with both people needs and financial needs.

Just a few things to point out in addition to the budget:

- As our offering has exceeded our expenses, Charles has placed \$34,000 back into our Capital Carryover account.

- Much money was taken from our Capital Carryover account for needed and legitimate repairs and upgrades in 2025.
- CDs – we have earned almost \$6,000 in interest from our CDs in 2025.

Charles closed his portion with thanks to Melanie Garrett, Jeanine Allen, Deb Anderson and Liz Erdmann for all of their help with the office/finances. He also expressed thanks to Pastor Matt and Dave Brummitt for their wisdom and guidance.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

A slide show for the congregation showing the “history” of our gym/sanctuary layout:

- In 2021 we moved to the gym for services.
- In 2022 a “What If” team was established to look into what to do if we grow. Several ideas were determined.
- In 2023 a “Next Steps” team was established to look at narrowing the recommendations, and determine approximate costs for each. An additional idea was to build a “bump-out” across the front of the gym and build a stage.

Pastor Matt expressed the desire for the bump-out in order to increase evangelism opportunities with open gym nights, outreach nights, etc. This was moved up.

Dave mentioned that the deacons have been praying about the timing of this for a year, and asked the congregation to pray also at the last two meetings.

- Is it time to go forward with the bump-out?
- Should we fund raise or borrow? If we borrow, what %?

The cost of the bump-out was quoted at \$550,000 in 2023. This included \$145,000 required to hook up to city sewer and add a sprinkler system to the gym building. Both are required if we build. 2026 costs are projected to increase to \$650,000. We have \$142,000 available at this time.

A short questionnaire was distributed to the congregation with almost half (23) of those present wanting to go forward, almost half (23) wanting to spend more time in prayer and 3 members of the congregation opposed to moving forward with the bump-out at this time. With regard to financing 16 members want to raise all funds prior to expansion, 5 want most funds raised and 2 want to borrow all needed funds (many who filled out the questionnaire did not opt for any financial option).

Andrea Volk asked, “Is any kitchen expansion included in the bump-out plans?” (no) Rob Kuhl asked, “How long will the project take?” and “Where will we meet in the interim?” (We don’t have a time-frame yet/we can probably put plastic sheeting over the area of ongoing construction with minimal interruption of services) Tom Nock asked, “Do we gain more storage in addition to more seating?” (yes) Cameren Martinez asked, “Does the EFCA have low or no-interest loans available for such projects?” (no?) Scott Preston suggested a longer construction loan to be paid off as the work is completed. (We did the crosswalk with a 3-5 year construction loan.)

**Election of Deacons, Secretary & Approval of Elder:** Ballots were passed to the members for the following people:

- Deacon of Administration – Charles Smith
- Deacon of Body Life – Jason Flenker
- Deacon of Children’s Education – Joe Urmy
- Deacon of Sunday Ministries – no candidate at this time
- Corporate Secretary – Sarah Carter
- Approval of Elder – Todd Woods

All were approved by member vote.

**Security Team Update:** Scott Preston enlisted Hank Jacobsen (a retired Davenport Police Officer) to make a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vulnerability assessment and based his grant requests on this assessment. He submitted a NSGP (Non-profit Security Grant Program) request in 2025 for \$150,000. which included:

- Video Surveillance System
- Physical Access Control
- Personnel Identification
- Alarm System / Sensors
- Exterior and Parking Lot Lighting (Stage 1)
- Interior Design Signage

Although we have not received approval yet, Scott submitted another NSGP request for 2026 for \$200,000. which included:

- Exterior and Parking Lot Lighting (Stage 2)
- Ballistic Glass (3 Main Entrances, 1W, 2W, 3W)
- AED and Medical Kit (Crosswalk, Depot)
- Exterior Signage
- Fencing

- Bollards and Barriers
- Emergency Standby Generator
- Safety & Security Training
- Computer Backup
- Walkie-Talkies (Business Class, Private Channel)
- PushPulse Devices

Scott is hopeful these grant requests will be approved; the shut-down has caused delay and when working with any government agency (FEMA) delay is a given. Nate Adams asked, “What ongoing expenses will we incur if these grants are approved?” Scott assured Nate that ongoing expenses will be minimal. Dave Brummitt asked, “How do we now stack up with other churches and how will we stack up security-wise if these measures are implemented?” Scott said that if these grants are approved and these security measures implemented we will be “way ahead of the game” when compared to most churches. Coram Deo (a newer building with an extensive security system) is the gold-standard in the QC area and with the upgrades we would be at their level of security and far exceed most churches.

Chris Schilb made a motion to adjourn and Todd Woods closed the meeting in prayer at 1:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Carter