



Grace Note: Journey to Connection and Joy



Dear Body of Christ in Evanston,

It has been three weeks since we opened an in-person worship with Worship in the Park. Seeing many of you face to face has been healing. Preaching and speaking to the screen was getting old! Christine McGuire and Clark Federer, Co-Chairs of the ReTurn Team, have been a wonderful sounding board, as well as serving to advise and offer clarification as we move towards meeting in the building. Hence, the Church Office has opened with summer hours, and this week we had our first in-person staff meeting!

I do not want to waste a perfectly miserable pandemic, so I am working on changing my stubborn attitude of refusing to ask for help. In her research, Brené Brown reports that many people feel vulnerable when asking for help, because “vulnerability is the core of shame and fear and our struggle for worthiness.” It is no wonder Senior Pastors of large and highly professional congregations like ours are averse to asking for help! No more! I will now begin practicing and modeling vulnerability by asking for help. So here goes!



I need help in getting to know the congregation. Past attempts for Meet-and-Greet-Grace gatherings had not materialized, so pre-pandemic I had mostly met the leadership, committee members, new members and the staff. Now that I am no longer the new kid on the block, I am taking matters into my own hands, bypassing any committee organizing my meeting you and unabashedly and directly asking the congregants themselves to invite me over this summer. Have me in your backyard or den, with or without food. No agenda, just a getting to know you. A good shepherd knows their flock by name! Help me be a good shepherd. And, contrary to most pastors,

Sunday afternoons are great for me! Email me! Grace@faithatfirst.com

Speaking of help, we desperately need help with Worship in the Park on two counts. First, I hope to offer opportunities for personal prayer and anointing either before worship or after worship. If you would be willing and available to pray one-on-one with anyone who needs it, let me know.



Secondly, there is the practical matter of getting equipment from the church to the park. For years we stored the

equipment across the road from the park which made it easy to wheel it to the park, but unfortunately, the B&B across the road has now sold the property and we no longer have access to the garage. If you can provide a truck or van on Sunday mornings at 8:00 a.m. to lug the equipment from the church to the park, please let Colin know. A sign-up is available [here](#).

I am so proud of myself for asking for your help in this Grace Note. It does feel vulnerable when I wonder whether anyone will respond! My longing to be a connected pastor to the congregation gives me hope when Brown writes, “vulnerability is the birthplace of joy, of creativity, of belonging, of love.”

These are the things many of us long for in this new season of being the body of Christ. You are beloved!

Pastor Grace



**First United Methodist
Church**
Evanston, IL

516 Church St. | Evanston, IL 60201
847.864.6181
www.faithatfirst.com

