

JANUARY 2023 ▪ VOLUME 22, NO. 1

Happy New Year, Grace Lutheran Church!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year! Here we are, on the cusp of a new year filled with possibility. I pray that your Christmas celebrations have been filled with wonder and joy, trusting in the promise and hope of Jesus' birth. I pray that the new year ahead is filled with the life and grace of God's love for you in Christ.

I hope you'll set aside some time in these late December and early January days to look back at the past year. Recall some of your greatest surprises, moments, events, your disappointments, sorrows, and struggles, and hold them all before God.

I hope you'll set aside a few more moments to look ahead to the new year before us. What are you looking forward to? What are your hopes and dreams for the new year ahead, what are your worries and concerns? Hold those before God in prayer too.

In this time of year, I am thinking of a couple of my favorite phrases and quotes. One is from a prayer written by Ted Loder, "I tremble on the edge of a maybe." And another from Frederick Buechner, "Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid."

We feel well the uncertainty and unpredictability of life. The past few years have continued to take a heavy toll. Who knows what the new year may hold. And, what steadfast love we carry with us into a new time, a new season, a new year. Emmanuel, God with us, promises to be with you through it all.

I pray that God's presence holds you steady in all the 'maybes' and possibilities. I hope you'll hear that ever-repeated call throughout scripture to not be afraid. For God is with you and God loves you. God is always creating and stirring up newness of life, even if we cannot perceive it.

Whether or not you share in the practice of new year's resolutions, I invite you to name a faithful intention for the year. Perhaps you'll begin intent on seeing God in your neighbor or most difficult acquaintance. Perhaps you'll name an intention of dwelling in the word, opening up the book of faith, and reading scripture. Perhaps you'll set an intention to commit to serving others and working for justice and peace.

We may not know what the new year holds, but we know how to live as God calls us. May the abiding love of God in Christ compel you to love as Jesus loves, and may you summon up the courage to dare to live faithfully and boldly in this beautiful world that God has created.

Peace,
Pastor Amanda

Blessing for the New Year

O God, you have been our help in ages past, our hope for years to come. As we welcome this new year, bless us with peace. Fill our days with the light of Christ and lead us on the path of life until we see you in our heavenly home. You live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

Prayers

Please lift up these petitions in your prayers—To become a praying member of the Friends in Prayer, please submit name and e-mail address to dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org.

World: Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, churchwide staff & their families, Bishop Stacie Fidler, synod staff & their families, those serving in military conflicts, Arusha Town Lutheran Parish in Tanzania (our companion parish)

Woodstock: Pastor Amanda Bergstrom & her family; Grace Staff; Grace Council

Health Concerns: Charlie Bell (friend of Jamielynn Wedoff), Mary Sue Boerner (friend of Paul Lockwood & Diane Baker-Lockwood), Nancy Brown, Myron Callihan (brother of Susan Payton), Jim Davis, Lori Dechant, Patrice Dunn, Joe Evanoff, Lucille Fergen (mother of Karen Hansen), Barbara Gehrke, Robert Giron (brother of Patty Kozlow), Tom Goggin, Becca Guenther (niece of Gretchen & Claude Hutchens), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Leonard Haulotte (brother of Laura Boal), Gloria Holy, Denise Hoover, Nicholas Karasch (nephew of Jamielynn Wedoff), Steve Kosmen

(loved one of the Koehn family), Judie Kunzie, Tiffany Kurth (niece of Sue & Al Beckman), Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Kem Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Linda Nogan (sister of Sheila Readel), Gloria Ogle, Georgia Petersdorf (sister-in-law of Gladys Renner), Pat Peterson, Ila Randolph, Barbara Readel, Sheila Readel, Jayne Reicher (great niece of Barb & Wayne Japp), Herb & Bev Renner (brother- & sister-in-law of Ken & Gladys Renner), Nick Resek (son of Tammy Resek-Goggin), Jessie & Sue Robertson (friends of Ron, Mary & Kimberly Koehn), Diane Rouse (cousin of Lisa Washkowiak), Nathan Ruffino, Nicholas Ruffino, Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), Nathaniel Shipp (family friend of Brian Meyers), Hollis Shutt, Ann Sinnett (friend of Shirley Berna), Kathy Stone, Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahon), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Bev Visconti, Addie Jo Wedoff, Nick Wedoff

Sorrows: John Kunzie

Joys: Birth of Grayson John and Kinsley Jean to Andy and Kelsy Buhrow and the birth of Grace LuAnn to Jennifer and David Hartwell.

Prayer Requests

If you wish to add a prayer request for the newsletter, please call the church office at: **815-338-0554**.

Your prayer concern will run for one month and may be renewed. Submissions to the *Friends in Prayer* email may be submitted by telephone to the church office or by email to grace@gracewoodstock.org.

Kitchen

Do you enjoy cooking and hosting meals? Are you already or would you be willing to become a Certified Food Safe Manager and support the use of Grace's kitchen? If so, please call the church office (**815-338-0554**).

Due to confidentiality laws, hospitals no longer notify churches or pastors when a member is hospitalized. If you or a member of your family have a medical procedure planned or is admitted to the hospital, please call the church office (**815-338-0554**).

Mitten Tree

Thanks for your donations! Our Grace Mitten Tree had another successful year thanks to your generosity!

Winter gear, socks, and underwear were collected and given to Verda Dierzen Early Learning Center, Family Health Partnership Clinic, the Woodstock Library and McHenry County PADS!

-Adeline Arana

Current Openings

Job descriptions have been posted and applications are requested for the following part-time positions:

1. **Director of Youth Education;** and
2. **Director of Worship & Music**

We invite you to encourage interested candidates to submit a cover letter and resume; job descriptions are posted on the front page of the website until positions are filled.



GRACE FOR TODAY—The deadline for the **February 2023** newsletter is **January 15**. Please send articles to Kari Gippert at kgippert@gracewoodstock.org, or the church office. Questions: Call the office at **815-338-0554**.

Worship this January

Happy New Year! Join us for worship on Sundays **9:00 A.M.** in the sanctuary, via [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website.

On Sunday, January 1 we give thanks to God and pray for the new year ahead. This January, we'll dwell in the good news of Jesus' birth, observe Baptism of our Lord Sunday, and hear how Jesus' ministry continues to be revealed.

Thank you, worship team volunteers! We look forward to seeing you soon & welcome your continuing support for worshipping as a gathered community. **Please sign up to serve** as [Ushers](#), [Greeters](#), [Reader](#), and [Communion Assistants](#), and see additional opportunities to volunteer below:

- If you are interested in learning to be a camera, sound, & livestream technician, please contact Bill Nattress bill.nattress@gmail.com
- If you would like to join the altar guild rotation, please contact Karen Reinhard, kereinhard@yahoo.com
- If you are interested in joining the rotation for Children's Sermons, please contact Carrie Fiorina, cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org
- If you have questions about volunteering as a Reader, Greeter, Usher, or Communion Assistant - please contact Fay Wilson faymwlsn@yahoo.com

Council Invitation For January and February 2023 Events

Dear Members of Grace Lutheran Church,

Greetings to you as we share in the blessings we have as the family of God at Grace Lutheran Church. Please join us as we review our 2023 budget and have our congregational meeting. We thank you for your participation in the life of Grace Lutheran Church through your commitments of time, presence, volunteering, and giving.

GIVING INTENTIONS

As we make plans for the future and mission of Grace in 2023, your "estimates of giving" are an important reflection of your giving intentions for the year ahead and allow us to more accurately prepare our 2023 budget. Thank you for your generosity in giving and faithfulness in serving God and our neighbor. If you still need to communicate your intentions, please drop off or mail your card to the church.

BUDGET REVIEW

We are planning our budget review on **Sunday, January 29 at 10:15 a.m.** in Luther Hall or via Zoom. This is an opportunity to review our planned budget and ask any questions in preparation for our annual meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING

We will have our annual meeting on **Sunday, February 5 at 10:15 a.m.** in the church sanctuary. Please plan to attend this year's annual meeting where we will vote on the 2023 budget. This meeting will be held in person or Zoom with a quorum needed.

Blessings to you as we share in the life and ministry of Grace Lutheran Church.

Grace Lutheran Church Council-

Pastor Amanda Bergstrom, Diana Frisbie, Lisa Gerloff-Banker, Carrie Jarnecke, Kevin Kleinjan, Mike Liedtke, Paul Lockwood, Matt Meiners, Mark Miller, Mary Noe, Robert Teuber

People In Need Forum

The public is invited to learn about the abundance of resources and support for themselves and for others at the annual People in Need Forum each January at MCC.

This year's event will be held

Saturday, **Jan, 28, 2023**. Exhibitors showcase important community resources available to help those in need and present workshops to address topics such as immigration, senior issues, caregiver resources,

LGBTQ, substance abuse and addictions, and homelessness.

The event is free and open to the public. Visit the website at <https://www.mchenry.edu/pin/>.

Sewing Circle 2022 Recap Plus Thank You To Circle Members, Congregation

By Tammy Hansing

Thank you to Sewing Circle members for all your hard work, and thank you to the congregation for sharing your gifts of sheets, fabric, pillow stuffing, batting, yarn, thread and Thrivent Action Team cards. Because of your generosity, Grace Sewing Circle helped many people this year, both locally (10 area nursing homes) and globally through Lutheran World Relief.

Last year we distributed in March and in November. Our local year-end stats for distributed items: 231 lap quilts, 53 crocheted blankets, 75 small pillows, 44 neck

pillows, 248 walker bags, 193 wheelie bags, 75 cell phone bags, and 262 poly bags. Lutheran World Relief received 233 quilts from the group. Praise God!

This group continues to meet on the first and third Tuesdays of the month from 8:30 a.m. to noon and new members always are welcome. Come check it out! There are projects for sewers and non-sewers alike. In addition, some kits can be completed in the comfort of your own home and at your leisure. Any questions, please contact Tammy Hansing at (815) 338-5387 or Faith Watkins at (815) 451-2592 or the church office at 815-338-0554.

Marge Birk Tree Dedication



On Nov. 1, 2022, the sewing circle held a dedication of the Marge Birk tree planted by the lower entrance to Grace. Pictured, left to right, are Sally Sheahan, Nancy Berkholtz, Kathy Zank, Nan Behrns, Meg Hagen, Karen Hansen, Tammy Hansing, Penny Slavin, Karen Klabunde, Carrie Fiorina, and Denise Klabunde.

‘Under a Cloudless Sky’ Book Review Continues this month

In January, Adult Sunday School Book Club will continue with the book, "Under a Cloudless Sky," by Chris Fabry. We have covered chapters 1 through 13 and Howard Hoyt will lead discussion on Jan. 8 for chapters 14 and 15. It can be hard to read an exciting book bit by bit each week, but the class discussions are worth it! Come join us to be part of a great small group here at Grace. Contact Sally Sheahan by text or phone call at 314-910-0541.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – Interfaith Prayer Breakfast

Save the Date!: Monday, January 16, 2023, Breakfast at 7:30 a.m.; Program from 8 to 9 a.m.

Location: Holiday Inn, 800 S. Illinois Rte. 31, Crystal Lake, IL 60014

Beyond the Lunch Counter: Health, Wealth & Equity Through an MLK Lens

Keynote Speaker: Venoncia M. Bate-Ambrus, Ph.D., Executive Director, Healthcare Foundation of Northern Lake County

Join FaithBridge for a provocative discussion exploring the relationship between health, wealth, and social justice, guided by the seminal teachings of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. We will examine the role of historic, systemic and institutional racism and their impact on the social determinants of health.

Tickets (\$25 adults; \$15 youth) can be purchased at www.FaithBridgeinterfaith.org.

Let's Play Pinochle!

Happy New Year from the Grace Church Pinochle committee! In 2022, we had 153 attendees combined between the afternoon and evening. We added evening pinochle in September. This month, we will continue to offer a safe place to have fun and play cards on the first and third Wednesdays (Jan. 4 and Jan. 18 at 1 p.m. in room 102) and the second Tuesday evening (Jan. 10 at 6:30 p.m. room 102). We will help newcomers learn pinochle! For more details, contact Sally Sheahan at 314-910-0541,

McHenry County Faith Leaders Food Collaborative Food Distribution Help Hundreds

Thank you to all Grace parishioners who helped distribute food in 2022.

The McHenry County Faith Leaders Food Collaborative distribute food on alternate Mondays for a mobile food distribution for people in need.

From 4 to 5:30 p.m. the event is held in the South St. parking lot behind St. Ann's (the lot can be found across from Woodstock High School via the South Street entrance.)

"Grace continues to supply at least half of all volunteers," said Mike Phillips, lead program organizer and Grace parishioner. "Whether a regular or periodic helper, having so

many willing hands truly does make this happen."

We continually feed 170+ families twice a month.

The Door Dash option helped reach more people along with using more social media and word of mouth to advertise.

Those who want to volunteer, in the coming months, please contact Mike via email at redbarn123@comcast.net on the Thursday prior to the distribution date. Volunteers need to arrive at 3:30 pm.

Confirmed dates in 2023 are Jan. 9 and 23; Feb. 6 and 20; March 6 and 20; April 10 and 24; May 8 and 22; and June 5 and 19.

CFS Sharing Thank You

Each year I so appreciate the generosity of our congregation in support of our Christmas Family sharing ministry. With so many thanks to you, we were able to provide significant donations to Turning Point, Family Health Partnership Clinic, and ELCA Good Gifts! Thank you!

-Mary Beth

Epiphany

The day of Epiphany is January 6, and you are invited to stop by the narthex in early January to pick up a star word, a word to pray and reflect on in the year ahead. You also are welcome to pick up a piece of chalk and prayer sheet for a blessing of the home.

Sunday School

This month looks different for Sunday School. We only will meet on January 15. There is no Sunday School on January 1.

Sledding

Winter is here and we pray for safe travels in this time. Last year, Sunday school families enjoyed a few days of sledding at Grace and look forward to inviting everyone to join the fun this year. Keep an eye out for a sledding invite when it snows!

Bread for the Day 2023

Bread for the Day is a daily-use devotional resource with a brief scripture reading, a prayer, and a hymn for each day of 2023. The devotions begin Jan. 1, 2023. If you are interested in a copy of the book, purchase it in the office or at the Welcome Desk for \$10.



The 80 and over recognition service took place on Nov. 1, 2022. Thank you to those who attended. Front row: pictured left to right, Ed Lehman, Gloria Holy June Pienischke, Joe Pienischke, Marlene Botts, Donna Freeman, Judie Kunzie, Ken Bergum, Borghild Stenoiien, and Sally Sheahan. Back row: pictured left to right: Deacon Judy Rooney, Tammy Hansing, Jim Haager, Chris Schildt, Judi Koeller, Judy Reilly, Judi Mason, Denise Hoover, Janice Burns and Pastor Amanda Bergstrom.

Bulletin & Presence Light Sponsors

The Grace 2023 Bulletin & Presence Light sponsor sheets are available in the Welcome Center. A month prior to your sponsorship, a form will be sent to you requesting information plus a \$20 donation for the Bulletins or a \$10 donation for the . Thank you for helping Grace fund the weekly Bulletins and Presence Lights.

Presence Light Sponsors:

January 1:

- To the glory of God, given by Bev Unglaube.

January 8:

- In memory of my father, Russ Freeman, on his birthday, given by Denise Klabunde.

January 15:

January 22:

- To the glory of God, given by Doug and Mary Noe.

Bulletin Sponsors:

January 1:

- In honor of Abigail's 27th birthday on January 6th, given by Bill and Nancy Kreznor.

January 8:

- In memory of my husband, Russ Freeman, given by Donna Freeman.

January 15:

- In memory of my husband Bob, given by Joyce Shook.

January 22:

- To the glory of God, given by Doug and Mary Noe.

eGiving Options

In addition to weekly offering envelopes, Grace provides electronic giving options. Please give in the way that is most convenient for you and let us know if you have any questions.

Give Online at our website via our QR code



Give by Text by texting **877-698-3604**

Enter the 10-digit number (877-698-3604) and the amount you wish to donate, then press send, and follow the prompts to complete your donation.

Give through Vanco Mobile App by downloading the app

- Go to the App Store or Google Play and search “**Vanco Mobile**” to quickly find and download the app for free.
- Search “**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church**” to select Grace in Woodstock, IL, then select Give to select an amount, General Operating Fund, and frequency, and the app will prompt you through completing your donation.

Give through automatic withdrawal program. To participate, please complete an enrollment form and return to the church office to schedule pre-authorized electronic funds transfer (EFT) from your bank account. You can change, stop, or temporarily hold your giving by contacting Grace's church office four business days in advance of a scheduled contribution.

*Please contact the church office (815-338-0554)
if you have any questions.*

**Visit the Grace website for the most up-to-date information for all
that is happening at Grace! gracewoodstock.org**

GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

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Jon Bergstrom, Carrie Filetti

Sunday School Coordinator

Jamielynn Wedoff

Building Supervisor

Ken Zank

Custodians

Chris & Kim Ethridge

Officers & Council

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Carrie Jarnecke, Kevin Kleinjan,
Mike Liedtke, Paul Lockwood,
Matt Meiners, Mark Miller, Mary Noe,
Robert Teuber