

FEBRUARY 2023 • VOLUME 22, NO. 2

Actually

“If you look for it, I’ve got a sneaky feeling you’ll find that love actually is all around.” I love these opening lines from the movie “Love Actually.” And lately, I’ve been drawn to that word “actually” as getting at something real or true even if also surprising.

I entered January expecting a typical lull in energy and participation as we usually face a few extremely cold or icy days, but we’ve actually shared a renewed energy and engagement in a couple ministries and in worship participation.

Our congregation will gather for our Annual Meeting this month, where we will review last year’s ministry and finances that included an anticipated deficit budget, we will hear a greeting from our synod’s bishop, hold an election, and consider an operating budget for the year ahead, and I am not sure how many people will actually read and engage in these parts of our life together and future considerations.

There’s a bit of truth telling and honesty when you tell someone how you actually are, instead of a rote reply to a habitual inquiry. There can be countless options and things you may need or hope or want to do in a given day, but there is actually a fixed amount of time available.

I’ve been mulling over that word “actually” lately as I look forward to a new book that will be released mid-February. Author, professor, and theologian Kate Bowler, along with Jessica Richie have prepared a book of 100 blessings for imperfect days, “[The Lives We Actually Have](#),” which you can pre-order now if interested.

Last year during Lent, one of my spiritual practices was to read Bowler’s collection of blessings “Good Enough” with an accompanying daily devotional, and I was so challenged and renewed by the practice.

This Lent, I plan to do the same, read this new book of blessings and engage the daily devotional material. If you are also interested in this practice on your own or if you’re interested in gathering conversation partners along the way, let me know!

I look forward to the upcoming season as a time of intentional spiritual growth as we are invited into the discipline of Lent. I pray that you remember how loved you actually are by God, and I hope to see you soon!

*Peace,
Pastor Amanda*

Lent Devotional Invitations

This Lent, consider how you might incorporate reading scripture and daily prayer into your faith practices. Look for additional opportunities in Grace Notes, including:

- a daily devotion from our synod wide Lent project
- additional information on blessings for “The Lives We Actually Have”
- opportunities to gather for conversation and reflection

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 Readell), Gloria Ogle, Georgia Petersdorf (sister-in-law of Gladys Renner), Pat Peterson, Dorothy Potoczky, Ila Randolph, Barbara Readell, Sheila Readell, 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, Caitlin Wilcox (niece of Anne Johnson)

Sorrow: David Berna (brother of Joyce Shook), Vickie Johnson (mother of Kurt Johnson), Richard Sweeney (life partner of Barb Murray)

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 via email to grace@gracewoodstock.org.

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**).

Find us on Facebook

You are welcome to join Grace Lutheran Church's Facebook group for news and ministry opportunities. You will be directed to the site via this QR code.



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**).

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 **March 2023** newsletter is **February 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 February

Join us for worship on Sundays **9:00 A.M.** in the sanctuary, via [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website. In late February, we move from Transfiguration Sunday on February 19 into the season of Lent. Join us for worship on **Ash Wednesday on February 22** as we gather for worship at noon & 7 p.m. If you would like to pick up a container of ashes to prepare for worship at home, please stop by the church office. Both worship services will be held in the sanctuary, and the 7 p.m. service will be livestreamed on [Grace's YouTube channel](#). **Lent.** This year, throughout the season of Lent, we will share a theme exploring vocation with other congregations of the Northern Illinois Synod. We hope you will be a part of worship, invitations to spiritual practices, daily prayer, and reflection in this important season ahead.



Unfinished: Discovering God's Call in the Not Yet. We can probably all think of a host of experiences from our own lives in which we occupy the space between no longer and not yet. But we are not left alone in this space. God is here – present-tense, each and every day – calling to us, over and over again. This Lent you are invited into the spiritual practice vocare, a practice designed to help you discover and embrace various ways that God calls you in everyday life so that even amid the not yet, you can more intentionally live life on purpose for the common good.

- 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

Mark Your Calendars: NIS CRE Scheduled March 4 at Sauk Valley Community College

The Northern Illinois Synod's Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) will be held on March 4, 2023, at Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon, IL. CRE will feel different this year as we gather for the first time since 2019.



The morning will be intentional conversations around our theme, "Be the Body" while the afternoon will have the opportunity to engage in a variety of workshops.

Look for more information in *Grace Notes* or register at <https://nisynod.org/>.

Church Annual Meeting Set For Feb. 5

We will have our Annual Meeting **Sunday, Feb. 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.

New Members Meet and Greet

We would be grateful for the opportunity to share in conversation with visitors and people interested in becoming new members, and we would like to invite you to a new member orientation on **Sunday, February 12 at 10 a.m.**

We will meet after worship and a few of our church staff and church

council members will be there to share about Grace's mission and ministries, and we welcome any questions you may have about Grace.

If you are able to join us on February 12, please reply to Denise in Grace's office

dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org

or **815-338-0554**) or sign up at the Information Desk.

If you would like to be a member but are unable to join us that day, please let us know and we can send paperwork and find another time to meet with you to share about Grace's ministries and answer any questions.

Amazon Announces Its Smile Program Ends This Month

Grace Lutheran Church thanks those who supported our organization while shopping at Amazon through its AmazonSmile Program.

Since 2017, when we first participated in it, we've raised more than \$1,000 for our organization



What was the AmazonSmile Program? When a person shopped at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donated 0.5% of its eligible purchases to the charitable organization of their choice. The shopping remained authentic to the Amazon website.

Amazon announced to charitable organizations that shoppers have until Feb 20, 2023 to shop at smile.amazon.com. If you shop Amazon before Feb. 20, consider shopping at smile.amazon.com and select *Grace Lutheran Church & preschool of Woodstock, IL* as your charitable organization of choice. *Thank you.*



Kathy Zank ties a quilt during a recent Grace Lutheran Church Sewing Circle meeting.

Sewing Circle Could use a Few Good Women or Men

Sewing Circle meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Men and women are welcome to join the ministry for fellowship and sewing. Even those who cannot sew are welcome as other jobs exist.

Anyone unable to make it to the church during its meetings, can pick up kits to take home.

The ministry welcomes all donations, including yarn, fabric, batting, pillow stuffing,

and Thrivent Action Team cards. Sewing Circle is always looking for new members.

Contact Tammy Hansing at **815-338-5387** with any questions.

Spring Learning Communities Program

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) is offering a free learning community discussing "Martin Luther on the Holy Spirit and the Christian Life."

There are four sessions taking place from Feb 26 through March 22, 2023. Each session will be live on Sunday evenings and repeated the following Wednesday via a facilitated recording.

The course is free but you must pre-register. Course description and registration can be found at <https://lstc.edu/event/learning-communities-individuals/>. Your registration confirmation email will contain the links to the program. Dr. Candace Kohli will facilitate the class. Her bio can be found at <https://lstc.edu/academics/faculty/candace-kohli/>.

Wanna Play Pinochle?

Pinochle continues this month. Grace offers a safe place to have fun and play cards on the first and third Wednesday afternoons of the month. In February, the afternoon dates are Feb. 1 and Feb. 15 at 1 p.m. in Room 102. For those who cannot attend during the day, an evening game is held on the second Tuesday evening of the month. In February, the evening date is Feb. 14 at 6:30 p.m. in room 102. Those who participate regularly will help newcomers learn pinochle! Everyone is welcome to attend. For more details, contact Sally Sheahan at **314-910-0541**.

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 began on Jan. 1. If you are interested in a copy of the book, purchase it in the office or at the Welcome Desk for \$10.

Adult Book Club

The Adult Book Club continues reading "Under a Cloudless Sky" this month. The group meets in the parlor on Sundays after the 9 a.m. worship service. The group will not meet on Sunday, Feb. 5 as that is the date and time of Grace's Annual Meeting.



The Grace 2023 Bulletin & Presence Light sponsor sheets are available in the Welcome Center. We still have some Sundays open. 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 Presence Lights. Thank you for helping Grace fund the weekly Bulletins and Presence Lights.

YSJ—High School Youth “Youth Standing with Jesus”

FUN AND OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY PUTTING YOUR FAITH IN ACTION

High School

Families Please check your INBOX for regular YSJ updates via email. These postings will include event info, sign-up links and more. Follow Grace Lutheran Church on Facebook for information and to learn what YSJ is doing!

Mobile Food Pantry High schoolers needed for this local ministry! Help distribute food to more than 500 community members in need on the first Monday of each month from 3 to 5:30 p.m. PLEASE HELP WHENEVER YOU CAN!

RSVPs are needed by the Thursday prior to our service date,

so we know how many volunteers to count on!

Wednesday Drop in Nights

YSJ meets every two weeks for fun connection, meaningful conversation, activities, service planning, and more! (No RSVP necessary, and you can even bring a friend).

YSJ WELCOMES

ALL HIGH SCHOOLERS ... this is YOUR SPACE! Join the fun from 7:30 to 8:30

p.m. Drop-in dates: Feb 1 and 15, March 1 and 15, April 12 and 26 and May 10.

*****Souper Bowl of Giving! YSJ will collect change or checks (made out to Grace Lutheran) on Sunday, Feb. 12 to help support local hunger ministries after the 9 a.m. service ... LET'S FILL THE SOUP POTS!*****



Commission for A Renewed Lutheran Church



At the 2022 Churchwide Assembly last August, voting members adopted a memorial concerning restructuring the ELCA's governance.

In November 2022, the ELCA Church Council responded to this by authorizing the establishment of a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC). Nominations for the commission are being accepted through **March 9, 2023.**

More information about the commitment and expectation of serving on the CRLC, and instructions regarding the nomination form, can be found at [ELCA.org/CRLC](https://www.elca.org/CRLC).

ELCA Celebrates Black History Month

February is Black History Month. African Descent Ministries of the ELCA celebrates Black History Month with “Talks at the Desk,” a four-part video series that will explore diverse expressions of the church.

A new video will premiere each Wednesday in February. Watch them live on ELCA's Facebook page, or stream them on YouTube on ELCA's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@elca>.



Sunday School News

In January, the children learned about trusting God and his plan for us just as the Israelites did in the Parting of the Red Sea story.

As we move into February, we will learn about First Corinthians and the famous verse of “Love is...” we will meet on the first (Feb. 5) and third Sunday (Feb. 19). Please note on the third Sunday, we create care packages as part of our Service Day!

See you at 10 a.m. on both days!

Presence Light Sponsors:

January 29:

- In honor of Betty Kearns — mother 86th birthday, given by Anne Johnson.

February 5:

- In memory of our mother, Fay Kreznor, given by Bill & Nancy Kreznor.

February 12:

- In memory of Virgil Boal, given by Laura Boal & family.

February 26:

- In honor of our 57th wedding anniversary, given by Ken & Kathy Zank.

Bulletin Sponsors:

February 5:

- In honor of our mother Carole Long's birthday on Feb. 7th, given by the Mark Miller family & Brian Gerloff.
- In memory of Bill Lagerhausen, given by Peggy Lagerhausen.

February 12:

- In memory of Virgil Boal, given by Laura Boal & family.

February 19:

- To the glory of God, given by Joyce Shook.

February 26:

- In honor of our daughter Laura's birthday on March 1st, given by Mark & Beth Miller.
- In honor of our 57th wedding anniversary, given by Ken & Kathy Zank.

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

Lead Pastor

Rev. Amanda Bergstrom
abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org

Administrative Secretary

Denise Klabunde
dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org

Financial Secretary &

**Asst. Administrative Secretary,
Confirmation Coordinator**

Carrie Fiorina
cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org

Communications Coordinator

Kari Gippert
kgippert@gracewoodstock.org

Organist & Interim Coordinator of Worship & Music

Jan Burns

Music Group Directors

Terry Aavang, Tammy Baier,
Jon Bergstrom, Carrie Filetti

Sunday School Coordinator

Jamielynn Wedoff

Building Supervisor

Ken Zank

Custodians

Chris & Kim Ethridge

Officers & Council

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