

MARCH 2023 • VOLUME 22, NO. 3

Return & Renew

At the heart of repentance, apologizing and requesting forgiveness, confessing and receiving forgiveness, is a turning: to change one's mind and a turn of heart, a turning away from sin and evil and wrongdoing, and a turning toward right relationship with God and neighbor, turning toward newness of life.

In this season of Lent, we turn toward God. We summon up courage to be honest, we confess our sinfulness, we

"Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and abounding in steadfast love."

-Gospel Acclamation, ELW p.142

name our need for God, and we return to God's love and forgiveness and calling. Daily dying to sin, and daily rising to newness of life, God calls us to return.

What does that turning from and turning toward look like for you right now? Is there an intentional faith practice that is challenging you or strengthening you for this season? I pray that God's presence at your side is made known to you. I hope your faith

practices are being strengthened by God's word and sacraments. If you are not regularly sharing in worship, invite a friend, come gather around the good news of Jesus among God's faithful people.

In this season of almost spring in the northern hemisphere, we get to see signs of return and renewal all around us. Somehow, from the depths of winter, dreary times, and bitter cold, somehow, there is a refreshing scent, softening ground, and brave green blades rising yet again. We get to witness creation around us returning to newness of life and growth at the same time of our returning and renewal.

"I hear you calling me to return to you with all my heart, O God. Renew in me a right spirit. Turn me toward you through Lenten practices that call me from death to life. In the name of Jesus, Amen."

-Prayer from "Unfinished Vocare Practice" by Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox

Although an ice storm shifted our Ash Wednesday rituals, remember dear beloved of God, that you are dust and to dust you shall return. and the God who breathes life into our being makes beautiful things out of the dust. May God's renewal, of heart, spirit, mind, community, and life be a blessing to you in this season, and always. See you soon.

Peace,
Pastor Amanda

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, Jan Burns, 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, Dorothy Potoczky, 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, Caitlin Wilcox (niece of Anne Johnson)

Joys: *Baptism* of Faith Eliabeth Metze, Robert Charles Metze and Emma Kathrine Krause, *New Members:* Carol Hyde; Melissa & Emma Krause; Johnathan, Ann, Faith, & Robert Metze; Bruce Rosborough; Tanya, Andrew, Kendrick, Norah, & Madeline Thomas

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 (**815-338-0554**).

Spring Forward

Remember to turn your clocks forward one hour on the night of March 11, as we begin Daylight Saving Time on March 12.



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 April 2023 newsletter is **March 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 March

Beginning on **Ash Wednesday, February 22**, we are worshipping together in the season of Lent around our synod's Lent Project themes and the invitation to discover God's call in the not yet. Through worship, reflection, and additional synod offerings, we consider our vocation and what it means to be the body of Christ together.



Please join us in worship this Lent on Sundays **9:00 A.M.** in the sanctuary, via [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website.

As we gather for worship, we need additional volunteers for upcoming services — please consider serving in a new way, sign up for a few upcoming worship services, and support our shared worship life as a faith community.

Sign up through these links, or by calling the church office: [Ushers](#), [Greeters](#), [Reader](#), and [Communion Assistants](#). If you have questions about volunteering as an Usher, Greeter, Reader, or Communion Assistant - please contact Fay Wilson.

Or, to learn more about joining the A/V team, please contact Bill Nattress. To join the altar guild rotation, please contact Karen Reinhard.. Contact Carrie Fiorina to learn more about leading Children's Sermons.

EASTER FLOWERS DONATION

Amount \$ _____

CHOOSE ONE PER COUPON

In Memory Of: _____

In Honor of: _____

To the Glory of God: _____

GIVEN BY: _____

Help provide flowers for our sanctuary on Easter. Give a gift in "honor of someone" or in "memory of a loved one" or "to the glory of God."

Place the above coupon, along with your \$16 in an envelope and mail to the office (1300 Kishwaukee Valley Road, Woodstock, IL 60098), drop it off at the church office or drop it in the offering plate on Sunday.

Please print clearly as you want names to appear in the newsletter. If you do not have enough space, please write on the backside of this coupon.

Anyone donating is welcome to pick up a lily following the 9 a.m. Easter Worship on Sunday, April 9.

THE DEADLINE FOR DONATION FORMS AND MONEY IS MONDAY, MARCH 27.



Sunday Lent Devotions Conversations

Starting on the first Sunday of Lent (Feb. 26) and concluding on Palm Passion Sunday (April 2), you are invited to gather before worship at 8:30 a.m. in the Parlor for conversation and reflection. This drop-in conversation time will follow "Bless the Lent we Actually Have" reflections, and individual daily reading is optional. ([The Lives We Actually Have](#)) by Kate Bowler & Jessica Richie, is now available for purchase at bookstores or online. It

pairs with a free daily guide for Lent that is available by request through the church office. Please email Denise (dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org) to request an electronic or printed copy.

A women's Lent Bible Study meets on Tuesdays, also following "Bless the Lent we Actually Have," See page five to read more about this.

Holy Week & Easter
Grace Lutheran Church
*worship will be livestreamed

Palm Passion Sunday April 2 9:00 a.m.*
Maundy Thursday April 6 Noon & 7:00 p.m.*
Good Friday April 7 Noon & 7:00 p.m.*
Easter Sunday April 9 7:00a.m.* & 9:00 a.m.*

Sharing God's Grace Through Giving Endowment Update

Grace Lutheran's endowment committee members provide guidance in allocation of funds to support social services, mission, and community. Each year the committee reviews several grant requests to support these initiatives. This year, the committee is blessed and honored to approve \$55,500 to the following entities:

Community

Credit Counselling Services of Northern IL	\$ 3,500
Family Health Partnership	\$ 5,000
NAMI of McHenry County	\$ 5,000
Woodstock Food Distribution	\$ 6,000
Community Total	\$19,500

Congregational

Grace Baptismal Faith Formation	\$ 1,000
Grace Confirmation Camp/Program	\$ 5,000
Grace-Pastor Discretionary Fund	\$ 2,000
Congregational Total	\$ 8,000

Global

Bethlehem Lutheran Church	\$ 5,000
One Collective	\$ 5,000
Lunches for Learning	\$ 6,000
Global Total	\$16,000

Synod

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries	\$ 2,000
Wartburg Theological Seminary	\$10,000
Synod Total	\$12,000

GRACE SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS. The Endowment Committee at Grace Lutheran Church is responsible for administering the Readell Memorial Scholarship Fund and Allen Memorial Scholarship Fund. Both of these scholarships are for post high school education.

The Readell Memorial Scholarship Fund is available to students pursuing a full-time Christian vocation or related areas. The Allen Memorial Scholarship is for students attending an accredited Lutheran institution.

These funds are for active members of Grace Lutheran Church who are in good standing. The money awarded each year depends on the amount available. Monies are to be paid directly to the institution and not to the student or parents.

Applications are available through the Church Office or on the Grace website (on the navigation bar at the top of the website go to education, then scholarships). Scholarship applications for both the Readell and Allen funds are due to the Grace Lutheran Church Office by July 1, 2023.

All scholarship applications are reviewed by the Endowment Committee and voted on during the quarterly meeting in July; payments are made in August.

ALLEN SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED IN 2022. The Grace Lutheran Church Endowment Board is proud to have awarded two Allen Scholarships for 2022. Madelyn Rank and Hannah Paulson each received scholarships in the amount of \$1,226.75 from the Allen Scholarship Fund.

Lenten Adult Forum

Please join Deacon Judy Rooney for a Lenten Adult Forum on Sunday, March 19 in the Sanctuary. It will immediately follow the 9 a.m. worship service.

The forum will explore some Spiritual Disciplines meant to deepen our Lenten journey into Holy Week. All are invited!

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Grief Support Group

Deacon Judy Rooney will present a four-week grief support group on Tuesdays, April 11 and 25 and May 9 and 23 at 1 p.m. in the parlor.

Faith-based, the group will offer biblical insights on grief, as well as an education about the many aspects of the grieving process. Time will be given to reflect and share or just to listen.

Those interested in attending, contact the church office at **815-338-0554**, or you can drop in. If this time does not fit into your schedule but you are interested in a grief support group, let the church office know your availability for a possible future group.

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Pinochle

Pinochle continues in March and meets on the first and third Wednesday afternoons. Afternoon dates this month are March 1 and March 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. In March, the evening date is March 15 in Room 102 at 6:30 p.m. Those who participate regularly will help newcomers learn the game. Everyone is welcome to attend. For more details, contact Sally Sheahan at **314-910-0541**.

YSJ—High School Youth “Youth Standing with Jesus”

FUN 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 info and to see what YSJ is up to!

Mobile Food Pantry - High Schoolers needed for this local ministry Can you help distribute food to over 500 community members in need on the first Monday of each month from 3 to 5:30 p.m.? Please help whenever you can! *RSVP's are needed by the Thursday prior to our service date so we know how many volunteers to count on!

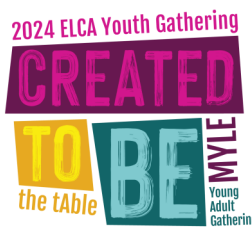
Wednesday Drop-In Nights - This year YSJ will meet EVERY 2 WEEKS for fun connection, meaningful conversation, activities, service planning and more! (No RSVP necessary and you can even bring a friend) **YSJ WELCOMES ALL HIGH SCHOOLERS...this is YOUR SPACE!** Join the fun from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Drop-In Dates: 3/1, 3/15, 4/12, 4/26 and 5/10.

THANK YOU to our “Souper Generous” Grace family and friends for not only helping us meet, but GREATLY EXCEED our \$300 goal. Your donations to the SOUPER BOWL of CARING event raised \$683.53 to help fight hunger!!

HIGH SCHOOL and current 8th GRADE students. SAVE THE DATES!!! The ELCA YOUTH GATHERING is taking place in NEW ORLEANS July 15 to 21, 2024, and we want you to attend this incredible experience!

Contact Kirsten Green at 815-236-6904 or stylin1020@gmail.com. With any RSVP's or questions. Your YSJ Co Leaders are Al Wilson, Gretchen Hutchens, and Kirsten Green



Sunday School News

February was filled with love for one another. We learned what it looks like to love and be loved. Our service project last month was creating 40 fun-filled activity bags for the senior residents at Hearthstone. They were so happy to receive these. This month, Sunday School will meet on March 5 and 19 to learn about Ruth and her loyalty, faith, and work ethic.

First Holy Communion

If your child currently is in first grade or higher and would like to receive their first Holy Communion, please know that from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 15 we have class. Then on Sunday, April 16 they will receive their first communion. Participants (or children's parents) interested in taking part can contact Jamielynn Wedoff, Sunday School Coordinator, at jamielynn@wedoffphotography.com.

Easter Candy

Last year the children of Grace were so loved by the member's with their wonderful donations of festive Easter candy for our annual Easter egg hunt. We once again are asking for donations by Palm Sunday.

Camp Night At Grace

We would love for families with elementary age children to consider summer camp as a part of their faith formation. Sunday school families have received information about financial support for registration fees, and how to learn more about two local ELCA camps, [Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center in Oregon](#), IL, and [Lutherdale](#) in Elkhorn, Wis.

All are welcome to Camp Night at Grace on Wednesday, March 8 from 6:15 to 6:45 p.m. in the sanctuary. Join us as we welcome staff from Lutherdale to Grace for an evening of songs, skits, and camp fun.

If you have questions about summer camp, or about this new camp scholarship opportunity, please contact Pastor Amanda. See you soon!

Women's Lent Bible Study

A women's Bible study just started (Feb. 21) and continues to meet on Tuesdays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Grace until April 11. Please consider joining as you are able! Additional information and sign-up can be found [online](#) or by calling the church office or by asking Pastor Amanda or Mandy Kurka.

Dramatic Readers Needed for Palm Passion Sunday

On Palm Passion Sunday, April 2, the story of the Passion—as detailed in the Gospel of Matthew—will be brought to life during the 9 a.m. worship service. Many people who can be a part of this dramatic reading are needed. This will not

involve a major time commitment as there only will be one rehearsal in March. Participants are required to arrive early on April 2.

Anyone is welcome. Whether playing someone like Pilate or Peter or a Witness or a Priest, a part will

be found. No memorization will be required. If you want to participate, email your name and phone number to Paul Lockwood (apelofaguy@aol.com) by Tuesday, March 7.

Presence Light Sponsors:

March 5:

- In honor of our wedding anniversary on March 9, given by Dallas & Ellen Larson.

March 12:

- In memory of family, given by Diane Schulz.

Bulletin Sponsors:

March 5:

- In honor of our daughter Laura's birthday, on March 1, given by Mark & Beth Miller.
- In memory of Sheri's dad, Stan Russell, & in honor of Shari's mom, Joan Russell, given by the Conover family.
- In loving memory of my mother, Mollie Beardsley, given by Charlotte Beardsley.

March 12:

- To the glory of God, given by Diane Schulz.

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

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Building Supervisor

Ken Zank

Custodians

Chris & Kim Ethridge

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