

JANUARY 2022 • VOLUME 21, NO. 1

**Leave what's heavy behind. Loving God, lead us into this new year...**

Moved to tears while doing yoga at home—that was me a few months ago, when all of the sudden the words to a song playing in the background of a yoga video interrupted my practice. “Leave what’s heavy behind” were words in the refrain. And then these other words of the song spoke to me too: “If you’re feeling lost and lonely go and figure out why” and “don’t we all just want to be together” and “are you tired, are you weary of the hidden hate you’ve been holding?” ... *leave what’s heavy behind.*

I had not heard of the group Birdtalker before, but I invite you to listen to this song of theirs, “[Heavy](#)”. For after naming grief and loneliness and sadness, there’s this: “the only way to lose that fearful feeling- replace it with love that’s healing.”

And isn’t that our calling as people of faith? Love is what Jesus was born for, redeeming and healing love is the promise of the newborn king that carries us through this Christmas season and will lead us into a new year. The love of God in Christ forgives us our sin and unites us into one body. The love of God turns swords into ploughshares, casts out fear, and turns the world around. The love of God in Christ ventures into the most unlikely and desolate spaces and times with a promise of abundant, newness of life in Christ.

The call to love is clear, dear church. As individuals and as a community of faith, we are called to love God and neighbor. Let’s figure this out together. Let’s leave what’s heavy behind, for we can only carry so much at one time. Let us entrust our worries and cares, sorrows and joys to God, so that we can embrace and embody the healing love of Jesus.

Please join in faithful prayer and participation as we enter into the new year ahead. Let us pray for God to lead us and guide us. Let’s participate in worshipping God, and serving, caring, and loving one another and the world around us. *Loving God, lead us into this new year.*



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year, Grace Lutheran Church. May God continue to accompany you through endings and beginnings, and bless you with joy, peace, and grace.

Peace,  
*Pastor Amanda*

**BREAD FOR THE DAY 2022**—Bread for the day is a daily-use devotional resource filled with rich treasures, such as a brief scripture reading, a prayer and hymn for each day and more. The devotions begin January 1, 2022. If you are interested in having a copy of the devotional book, there are a few left for purchase in the office or welcome desk for \$10.00.

**BULLETIN & PRESENCE LIGHT SPONSORS** — 2022 Bulletin & Presence Light sponsor sheets are available in the white binder at the Welcome Center. A month prior to your sponsoring, a form will be sent to you requesting information and a donation of \$20 for the Bulletins & \$10 for the Presence Light. Thank you for helping us fund the weekly bulletins and presence lights.

**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](mailto:dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org).

**World:** Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, churchwide staff & their families, Bishop Jeff Clements, 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:** Erik Asher (son of Stephane Fylpaa-Asher), Robyn Bates (friend of Denise Klabunde), 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, Stephane Fylpaa-Asher, Robert Giron (brother of Patty Kozlow), Stuart Given, Tom Goggin, Hal Goodman (friend of Bob & Janice Laird), Becca Guenther (niece of Gretchen & Claude Hutchens), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Leonard Haulotte (brother of Laura Boal), Denise Hoover, Anne Johnson, Nicholas Karasch (nephew of Jamielynn Wedoff), Steve Kosmen (loved one of the Koehn family), Anna Larsen (sister of Al Henniges), Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Kem Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Linda Nogan (sister of Sheila Readel), Gloria Ogle, Alan Page (friend of Joe Evanoff), Linda Page (friend of Joe Evanoff), Georgia Petersdorf (sister-in-law of Gladys Renner), Pat Peterson, 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), Deacon Judy Rooney, Diane Rouse (cousin of Lisa Washkowiak), Nathan Ruffino, Nicholas Ruffino, Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), John Rust (Aavang family friend), Colton Sciluffo (infant son of a friend of Joy Oberman), Nathaniel Shipp (family friend of Brian Meyers), Ann Sinnett (friend of Shirley Berna), Kathy Stone, Dave Sundby (brother-in-law of Deborah Evanoff), Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahon), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Marilyn Vanskike (friend of Cathy Meyer), Bev Visconti, Addie Jo Wedoff, Nick Wedoff, George Werres (brother-in-law of Don & Judy Rooney), Esther Wienke, Ruth Zirves

**Sorrows:** Dee Bohn, Marge Birk

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 week and may be renewed. Submissions to the *Friends in Prayer* e-mail and phone teams may also be submitted by telephone to the church office or by e-mail to [Gracewoodstock.org](mailto: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.

**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**—The deadline for the February newsletter is **January 15th**. Please send articles to Lauren Kleinjan at [lkleinjan@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:lkleinjan@gracewoodstock.org), or the church office. Questions: Call the office at 815-338-0554.

## COUNCIL INVITATIONS FOR JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2022

Dear Grace Lutheran Church,

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh.

Thank you for joining in prayer as we discern how God is calling us forward in mission and ministry. We hope you will make time to share in conversation and reflection at one of the upcoming conversation gatherings below. In addition, please save the dates for our upcoming Budget Review and Annual Meeting. Thank you for participating in the life of our faith community through your commitments of time, presence, volunteering, and giving.

**Mission & Ministry Conversation Gatherings.** You are invited to attend one of the following meetings to share in conversation with one another as we reflect on ministry and listen for how the Spirit is leading us to adapt and change as we discern future mission priorities.

Tuesday, January 25, 1-2 P.M. (Luther Hall)  
Tuesday, January 25, 7-8 P.M. (Luther Hall)  
Sunday, January 30, 10:15-11:15 A.M. (Luther Hall)  
Thursday, February 10, 7-8 P.M. (Zoom)

**Giving Intentions.** As we look to our future and our mission, your estimates of giving are an important reflection of your giving intentions for the year ahead and allow us to more accurately prepare our 2022 budget. Thank you for your generosity in giving and faithfulness in serving God and neighbor. If you have yet to communicate your intentions to give in 2022, please drop off or mail your card to Grace Lutheran Church in the next couple of weeks (or call to receive another card if needed). We look forward to preparing a faithful budget and discerning our plans for ministry in the year ahead.

**Budget Review.** Please join us on Sunday, January 30 at 11:30 A.M. in Luther Hall/via Zoom to review and ask questions about the upcoming budget in preparation for the Annual Meeting.

**Annual Meeting.** There will be a congregational meeting on Sunday, February 6 at 10:15 A.M. Please plan to attend this year's annual meeting where we will vote on a budget for 2022. This year's Annual Meeting will be held in hybrid format. If you are unable to attend in person, you may attend via Zoom (meeting link below, or by phone).

Blessings on the new year ahead, thank you for sharing in the life and ministry of Grace Lutheran Church.

*Lisa Banker, Andy Bellavia, Pr. Amanda Bergstrom, Diana Frisbie, Gayle Hoch, Kevin Kleinjan, Mike Liedtke, Paul Lockwood, Matt Meiners, Mary Noe, Robert Teuber* -Grace Lutheran Church Council

*"I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For surely I know the plans I have for you, says God, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." + Jeremiah 29:10-11*

**THANK YOU!** - 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 & McHenry County PADS!

**CHRISTMAS FAMILY SHARING**—So many thanks for your continued generous support of our Christmas Family Sharing ministry!



**GRACE PRESCHOOL UPDATES**—December had been a month plentiful with love, laughter, and the Christmas spirit. The first day of December, the preschool hosted a fundraiser at Chipotle in Woodstock. On December 8th, the children enjoyed our annual Polar Express field trip. The parents and children met at the train station and had the opportunity to meet Santa! Once we boarded the train, we sat down and received a special bell from Santa Claus. The train conductors came and punched the children's first initial into their polar express train ticket. On our way back to Woodstock we sang Christmas carols and the children enjoyed the company of Santa. After, we went to the Woodstock Library for story time, songs, a craft, and snack. On Saturday, January 22nd, we will be at the Woodstock Public Library for their annual Preschool Fair. Come on out and visit us at the fair from 10am–1pm. We will also have a preschool open house for prospective families/ returning families to come tour the school.

We are always registering and enrolling! If you have a child, grandchild, or friend who has children that do not quite make the cutoff for kindergarten; look no further! We are registering and enrolling all year long! If you would like more information or an application, stop by the Church office for a packet with all of our information. If you would like a preschool tour, please call the Preschool Director, Casey Dezwijger, at 815-338-0554 to set up a time. We hope you had a Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the new year! Happy 2022 from Grace Lutheran Preschool!

**SUNDAY SCHOOL—STEWARDS OF GOD**—Wow! Just Wow! Watching the children of Grace growing in their understanding and applying what it means to be a steward of God has been contagious. Sunday school has applied their stewardship to Grace and the Woodstock community by creating birthday celebration packages, volunteering during a church service and grocery shopping of our Blessings Box. Every time the children are eager to participate and it has brought tremendous joy to all who are involved.

In January we will be meeting on the 9th and 23rd to learn about being stewards of God for ourselves. January 9th will be a traditional Sunday School lesson and the 23rd we will meet in the gym (wear comfy clothes) to learn about mindfulness, breathing techniques, and stretching. All things that will help keep our body healthy to continue to be light and spread the teaching of Jesus. If you have any questions, please contact Jamielynn at [jamielynn@wedoffphotography.com](mailto:jamielynn@wedoffphotography.com)



**YSJ "YOUTH STANDING WITH JESUS!"** - High School Youth Program

**YSJ - "Youth Standing with Jesus!"** High School Youth meet for Wednesday night drop-ins from 7:30-8:30pm. Join us January 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th for conversation and connection, fun activities, and planning ways to serve as God's Hands at Grace and in our community.

**High Schoolers have begun helping at the mobile food pantry in Woodstock** and will continue to serve at this important ministry on the first Monday of each month from 3-5:30pm, or whenever students can arrive after school. Please contact Kirsten Green with any questions or to let us know you are coming! [stylin1020@gmail.com](mailto:stylin1020@gmail.com)

**Grace Congregation is invited!** - Our Youth Room has a fresh look for our Confirmation students and YSJ... be sure to check it out after church on January 16th at our open house!



## WORSHIP THIS JANUARY



This month we continue in worship with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas on January 2, as we begin a new calendar year centered in the faith practice of worshipping God. We continue through January with Baptism of Our Lord and the following Sundays after Epiphany. We look forward to sharing in worship with you: on **Sundays at 9 A.M.** in the sanctuary, via [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website.

This year, you are invited to an **Epiphany worship service** on **Thursday, January 6 at 7 P.M.** in the sanctuary. We hope you will set aside time for prayer and worship this Epiphany.

In addition to worship, there will be an Epiphany Home Blessing (& chalk) and star words available for pick up in the narthex. The home blessing is a brief prayer service you are welcome to use at your home. The stars contain a word for you to pray and reflect on for the year ahead. May Christ bless each person and home in this new year!

**SENIOR PINOCHLE CLUB: DATE CHANGE**—We have decided to change when we meet! We will now meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of each month in room 102 from 1:00 – 4:00. Masks are required. Join us for some friendly games of pinochle on January 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. For more information, please call Shirley Busse 815-338-9063.

**SUNDAY BOOK CLUB**—We are reading the book “Gentle and Lowly” The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers” by Dane Ortlund. New members are always welcome; just stop in the Parlor after services or call Shirley Busse at 815-338-9063 for the link to join in via zoom.

**CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCING EVENT**—The Northern Illinois Synod’s annual Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) will be held on Saturday, **March 12, 2022**, via Zoom from 8:30 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. Save the date and look for more information and registration at <https://nisynod.org/programs/cre> to participate in this synod-wide gathering for worship and a variety of ministry resources and workshops.

**PEOPLE IN NEED**—Each year there is a gathering of community leaders and resources at the People in Need Forum held at MCC. This year’s event will be held on Saturday, **January 29, 2022**, from 8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. 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. More information is available at <https://www.mchenry.edu/pin/>, and pre-registration is encouraged.

**GRACE VOLUNTEERS & MOBILE FOOD TRUCK DISTRIBUTION**—Thank you, Grace Lutheran Church, for being a part of the McHenry County Faith Leaders Food Collaborative! Through this shared ministry and volunteer commitment, a mobile food truck has been at St. Anne’s Episcopal Church in Woodstock every other Monday since last January. [Click here](#) to read about this ministry, as covered by Religion News Service. In the article you’ll hear from Grace’s volunteer coordinator for this ministry, and you’ll see Grace members in the photo. Please contact Mike Phillips at (815)355-7513 or [redbarn123@comcast.net](mailto:redbarn123@comcast.net) if you would like to volunteer or learn more. The next opportunity to receive food and/or volunteer for distribution will be January 10 & 24 and then continues in February every 1st and 3rd Monday of the month.

**eGIVING OPTIONS-** In addition to weekly offering envelopes, Grace has additional electronic giving options available. 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: [gracewoodstock.org](http://gracewoodstock.org)

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

- Enter the 10-digit number (877-698-3604) and the amount you wish 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 4 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](http://gracewoodstock.org)**

#### **GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL**

##### **Lead Pastor**

Rev. Amanda Bergstrom  
[abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org)

##### **Administrative Secretary**

Denise Klabunde  
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##### **Office Assistant/Bookkeeper/ Confirmation Coordinator**

Carrie Fiorina  
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##### **Director of Senior Ministries**

Shirley Busse

##### **Director of Communications**

Lauren Kleinjan  
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##### **Parish Musicians**

Terry Aavang, Jan Burns, Dale Carlson,  
Tammy Baier, Carrie Filetti

##### **Director of Preschool Ministry**

Casey Dezwijger  
[cdezwiiger@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:cdezwiiger@gracewoodstock.org)

##### **Sunday School Coordinator**

Jamielynn Wedoff

##### **Building Supervisor**

Ken Zank

##### **Custodians**

Chris & Kim Ethridge

##### **Officers & Council**

Andy Bellavia, Lisa Gerloff-Banker,  
Diana Frisbie, Gayle Hoch, Kevin Kleinjan,  
Paul Lockwood, Mike Liedtke, Matt Meiners,  
Mary Noe, Robert Teuber  
[council@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:council@gracewoodstock.org)