

JULY 2023 • VOLUME 22, NO. 7

## “But Today”

I'm not sure if I'll make it over to see “Rent” at the Woodstock Opera house by the time this newsletter goes out, but I've seen the advertisements, and the words from one of the musical's songs are called back to my mind, “no day but today.” This is it, there's only us, now, here, no day but today.

At the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly in mid-June, the guest speaker, the Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox read one of my favorite passages from Isaiah, the 43<sup>rd</sup> chapter, and focused on the transition words: *but now*. All this has happened, the past has sure been something, *but now*. *But now*, God promises to be with you, to not let you be overwhelmed or consumed, to keep calling you by name for God is *now* doing a new thing, even if you cannot perceive it.

**“*But now* thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”**

-Isaiah 43:1

What is God up to in your life right now? How is God present and active and doing a new thing in our faith community right now? Do you see it, feel it, perceive it.

Over the past couple months, the every-other-Monday food distribution has increased food available—from serving 200 families to serving 225 families, and it still ran out last week. Last month, our congregation walked in the Woodstock Pride Parade, sharing God's grace, because God's grace is for everyone—and people we've never met called out to say thank you for being here ‘Grace Lutheran Church,’ and members we've not seen for a while proclaimed with pride, ‘that's my church!’ This summer, we'll be praying for elementary and middle school students setting out for different weeks away at Bible camps. We've gathered for fellowship at the city band concert, we'll be praying the psalms in the beauty of creation, and in July you're all invited to “Pray and Play” together in this season of renewal.

*But now* God is here, doing a new thing, and God will keep drawing us in to God's welcome embrace and ushering us back out into the world to share the good news of Jesus.

Our speaker at synod assembly spoke of God's acting in the present and invited us to consider our response to God's graciousness, as she called upon the perhaps well-known-to-you poem by Mary Oliver, with the addition of one word: today.

**“Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life [today]?”**

-Mary Oliver's “The Summer Day”

You can't do it all, nor do you need to, but what is it you will do *today* as you live into God's calling for you to love and serve God and neighbor? I pray that you begin each day with a refreshing openness to the newness each day brings, of the sacred and vulnerable limits of life, the profound possibilities of each and every day, and the renewing reminder that no matter what has happened and what is yet to be, God is here and at work *now*. Blessings on today.

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](mailto: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), 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), Tiffany Kurth (niece of Sue & Al

Beckman), Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Donald Miller (brother of Mark Miller), 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), Diane Schulz, Sally Sheahan, 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:** Terry Mikolajczyk (sister of Jim Sheahan), Eduardo Zamora Jr. (nephew of Patty & Mike Kozlow), Hazel Postma

## 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](mailto: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).

## Current Opening

Applications are requested for the following part-time position:

### Director of Worship & Music

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

## Kitchen

Dear Friends, for a whole year (!), we have communicated a note requesting interest and support for Grace's 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?

We've had several people

interested, we've had plenty of people who miss sharing food events, and now we're up to two people who have taken the training. Now it's your turn to step up and join the list so we have a good team of people willing to support the use of the kitchen.

**Tyler Palak**, our new director of youth education, completed the online training (there's also an in-person option held every other month in McHenry), and Tyler will help you sign up or answer any questions.

In addition, Tyler will be facilitating an online training for a couple people at Grace, and you are invited to join on

### Tuesday, July 11, beginning at 9 a.m.

The online training materials last about four hours and then you'll schedule a proctored online exam. Or, you can complete the online training and exam on your own at home, or you can go to an approximate eight-hour, one-day training and test in McHenry on set days.

Grace will cover training and exam expenses. Now is the time to join the team and support the use of Grace's kitchen. Please invite a friend and reach out to Tyler if you'll be attending or have any questions

([tpalak@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:tpalak@gracewoodstock.org)).

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

## Worship this July

"God is a cup of cold water when we thirst,. God offers boundless grace when we fail." We hope to see you soon for worship on Sundays at **9 a.m.** in the sanctuary, via [YouTube livestream](#), or the posted worship videos on our website.

Each Sunday, in addition to staff support for weekly worship, we gather for worship alongside the hospitality, hospitality, generosity, and talents of the following volunteers: 1 or more A/V technicians, 2 greeters, 3 ushers, 1 to 3 acolytes, 1 reader, 1 children's sermon presenter, 2 to 5 communion assistants, an altar guild team, and musicians.

We'd love for you to share your time and gifts in support of our worship life. If you have questions about how you might participate, please ask people listed below or call the office at **815-338-0554** if you'd like assistance in signing up for an opening.

- Could you consider serving as an [Usher](#), [Greeter](#), [Reader](#), or [Communion Assistant](#), once a month or every other month? If you have questions about volunteering as an Usher, Greeter, Reader or Communion Assistant, please contact Fay Wilson at [faymwlsn@yahoo.com](mailto:faymwlsn@yahoo.com);
- Or would you be willing to learn more about joining the A/V team? There are currently three people who facilitate worship being audible in the sanctuary and accessible via livestream. If interested, please contact Bill Nattress at [bill.nattress@gmail.com](mailto:bill.nattress@gmail.com).
- The altar guild teams are expanding and welcoming new volunteers to join the rotation. To learn more, please contact Karen Reinhard at [kereinhard@yahoo.com](mailto:kereinhard@yahoo.com).

If you play an instrument and/or are interested in solo/ensemble opportunities to support worship, please contact Jan Burns at [shelty2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shelty2@sbcglobal.net); our choirs will regather in the fall.

## Church Council Update

Our council has been busy reviewing, updating, and creating policies this spring. Here are some highlights of them.

### GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH "YOUTH SAFETY POLICIES AND GUIDELINES"

This 26-page comprehensive policy has three main objectives: To demonstrate God's love for the youth under our care, to promote the safety and welfare of the youth and volunteers entrusted to us, and to provide a standard of care for all areas of ministry with youth. This reflects Grace's commitment to provide a safe environment for those participating in, receiving, and providing its ministries. Accompanying this will be a grant-provided background screening service. (June 2023 approval)

### GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH "GIFT POLICY"

This 10-page policy governs the acceptance of all gifts to Grace over and above regular giving, offering, or pledges, or specific campaign or initiative contributions. Gifts will be accepted when they support the mission, purpose, and procedures of Grace. Grace has continually been blessed with many gifts. It is the intent of this policy to formalize the receipt of gifts and honor the wishes of the donors. We were very fortunate to have the guidance of Timothy Urness, ELCA Regional Gift Planner, as we created this policy. (April 2023 approval)



### GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH "CLOSING GUIDELINES FOR SEVERE WEATHER OR OTHER REASONS"

This two-page policy formulated a procedure and checklist for notification and staff follow up for the closing of Grace Lutheran Church. Safety and early notification of all drives this policy. We were able to successfully use this policy during our winter ice storm. (March 2023 approval)

### GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH CONSTITUTION UPDATE

Progress has been made in the updating of the language changes required by the amendments to the Model Constitution for Congregations as approved by the 2019 and 2022 ELCA church-wide assemblies. Our last constitution ratification followed the 2016 changes. Our final step needs to be the inclusion of Grace church specific items. Once council and synod approve our final draft, this goes to the congregation in two separate meetings. The document must be approved by a simple majority at congregational meeting. Ratification, without change, requires a two-thirds majority vote at our annual meeting. Please stay tuned as we work toward inclusion of the constitution revision for our Aug. 27 Congregational Meeting.

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**—Our next Congregational Meeting will be Sunday, Aug. 27 at 10:15 a.m. in the sanctuary or via Zoom. More information to follow in our August edition of *Grace for Today*.

# Living Generously

*"You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us."  
2 Corinthians 9:11*

	May 2023				5/31/23 Year-to-date		
Operating	Actual	Budget	Difference		Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$35,326.45	\$33,000.00	\$2,326.45		\$202,492.54	\$182,500.00	\$19,992.54
Expense	\$40,009.74	\$41,167.09	(\$1,157.35)		\$203,230.26	\$210,400.25	(\$7,169.99)
Balance	(\$4,683.29)	(\$8,167.09)	\$3,483.80		(\$737.72)	(27,900.25)	\$27,162.53

Quarterly giving statements will be sent by mail in mid-July (or placed in mail if we do not have your email address). Please contact the church office with any

questions **(815-338-0554)**. Thank you for your financial offerings in support of mission and ministry through Grace Lutheran Church.

## Leadership Nominations

As we look ahead to our Congregational Meeting Aug. 27 (see page 3 for announcement), you are invited to prayerfully consider submitting a nomination form for positions of leadership on Church Council, Endowment Board, and Nominating Committee. Please consider how you might be called to serve in our faith community and return a completed nomination form by July 2 to the church office (printed copies available at the Information Desk or electronically through our Grace Notes weekly email.).

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## God's work. Our hands. ELCA Service Day

Ten years! This year will be the ELCA's (and Grace's) 10th year of this annual day of service. Over these past years of service, it has been a joy to gather as God's people, meet new siblings in Christ, serve locally and for the well-being of global neighbors, and celebrate God's work through our hands.

Save the date: make plans to worship on Sept. 10 at 9 a.m. and participate in either an on-site or off-site service project following



worship. (The Bears don't play the Packers until 3:25 p.m. that day).

Site specifics & sign-up information will be available later through Grace Notes, the bulletin board, and by contacting the church office.

If you have a community partner service project idea, and/or would be willing to serve as a team leader this year, please reach out to **Pastor Amanda**.

## Sewing Circle Spring Update

Thanks and praise to Grace Sewing Circle members for all your hard work, and to the congregation for your continued support of our group. Because of your generosity, Grace Sewing Circle was again able to Share God's Grace through handmade gifts of love, both locally, to 10 nursing homes in the area, and globally through Lutheran World Relief.

In the spring, local nursing homes received 106 lap quilts, 27 crocheted blankets, 114 cell phone bags, 145 walker bags, 80 wheelie bags, 110 poly bags, 45 small pillows, and 35 neck pillows. Lutheran World Relief has received 132 quilts this year to date. As always, this is completed because of the congregation's generous donations of sheets, fabric, batting, thread, yarn, pillow stuffing, and Thrivent Action Team cards. Sewing Circle thanks you. Praise God!

## June's Grace Lutheran Opportunities for Fellowship

Last month, Grace took part in two Woodstock public events. Pictured below, several Grace members and staff picnicked at the Woodstock City Band Season on June 7. Pictured right, many walked the Pridefest Parade on June 11.



## YSJ—High School Youth

**High School Families** Please check your INBOX for YSJ updates via email ... These updates will include event info., sign-up links, and more. Also, follow Grace Lutheran Church on Facebook for announcements and to see what YSJ is up to!

**Wednesday Drop-In Nights** - YSJ meets **EVERY 2 WEEKS** for pizza, 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. Summer drop-in dates: July 12, 26; Aug. 9., & 23.

**SAVE THE DATES!: July 12:** Drop-in will be held at Warp Corps (114 N. Benton St.) on the Square

for a night of learning about mental outreach and a yoga session!

**July 30:** Hands-on outreach experience at Aarrk Garden in Hebron, Ill., from 1 to 4 p.m.

**Aug. 19:** Exciting team building experience! More details to come!

**HIGH SCHOOL and 8th-GRADE STUDENTS** (at the end of the 2022-23 school year). **SAVE THE DATES!!!** The ELCA Youth Gathering will take place in NEW ORLEANS July 15-21, 2024, and we want you to attend this incredible experience!

Contact Kirsten Green at **815-236-6904** or at [stylin1020@gmail.com](mailto:stylin1020@gmail.com), with any questions.

**Your YSJ Co-Leaders are Al Wilson, Gretchen Hutchens, and Kirsten Green.**

## Summer Camp Prayers

Please join in praying for summer camp staff, campers, families, and friends from Grace who are learning and growing in faith this summer! Confirmation students are at [Living Water Ministries Stony Lake Camp](#) (New Era, Mich.) for the last week in June, and then we have seven elementary students from Grace participating in four different weeks of camp at [Lutherdale](#) (Elkhorh, Wis.) and [Lutheran Outdoor Ministries](#) (Oregon, Ill.). Please join in praying for Clementine, Mackenzie, Logan, Teagan, Luca, Zach, Grace, Lilliana, Wilson, Audrey, Addie Jo, Evan, Johanna, Eleasar, Norah, and Sam this summer! You can also follow each of the camps on social media to see updates from their summer ministries

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## Adult Book Club Sunday School

It's not often that a book club can meet the author of the book it's reading. Yet Grace's Adult Book Club Sunday School has. Chris Fabry penned three of the publications discussed over the last year. Currently, the group is reading his debut adult novel, "Dogwood," written 15 years ago.

Goodreads calls "Dogwood" a "mosaic of humanity, God's grace, and the power of love. Solidly literary fiction with deep flawed characters."

The novel is set in the West Virginia town that Fabry grew up, but he used discretion by changing

the town's name to Dogwood.

The club meets at 10:15 a.m. in the Parlor on most Sundays after worship.

Fabry agreed to meet with participants via Zoom in April after finishing "Cloudless Skies." It's special to have a personal connection to the author.

Plan on lively discussions about the books read. Although the club began "Dogwood" at the end of June, it's never too late to join the fun.

**Sally Sheahan** can be contacted at **314-910-0541** for questions.

## Sunday School & Social Opportunities

Mark your calendars as Sunday School hosts a couple of social opportunities this month on Grace's grounds.

First up, a Pray & Play gathering happens Thursday, July 6 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Pizza will be provided, while you bring yourself and your family. The evening will open with a prayer and move on to a night of games.

**Tyler Palak**, director of youth education, will have a few chess games on hand but all are encouraged to bring their fast-paced board games.

Of course, the Gaga Ball Pit and lawn games will be available.

Next up, is the Youth Education Coffee Hour on Sunday, July 30 following the 9 a.m. worship service.

Everyone is welcome to play games, and cook and eat s'mores (outside).

This also will be an excellent opportunity to talk with Tyler about the education programs available to our youth for the upcoming 2023-24 school year!

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## Summer Chimes

Calling all children entering second through eighth grades this fall. We are holding a three-day handchimes "workshop" just for you on July 3, 5, and 6 from 4:45 to 5:30 p.m. No experience is necessary and returning handchimers are welcome! The piece we learned, we will play during the 9 a.m. worship service on Sunday, July 9. Those interested in participating in our workshop should sign up at the Welcome Center. Parents with any questions can contact **Jan Burns**.

## Pinochle Dates

- Wednesday, July 5 & 19 at 1 p.m., Room 101 (enter lower level)
- Tuesday, July 11 at 6:30 p.m., Room 101 (enter lower level)

## Presence Light Sponsors:

### July 2:

To the glory of God.

### July 9:

- In celebration as our daughter Colleen receives her master's degree in environmental science from the university of Copenhagen, given by Janice & Bob Laird.

### July 16:

- To the glory of God

### July 23:

- In honor of our daughters Kim & Tracie's birthdays, given by Ken & Kathy Zank.

### July 30:

- To the glory of God.

## Bulletin Sponsors:

### July 2:

- In honor of our 62<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary, given by Jerry & Mary Johnson.

### July 9:

- In memory of Jim Reinhard, given by Karen Reinhard.

### July 16:

- In honor of Andy's birthday, given by Mary Beth.
- In honor of our daughters Kim & Tracie's birthdays, given by Ken & Kathy Zank.

### July 30:

- In honor of Mark's birthday, given by Beth Miller.
- In honor of Joyce Shook's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, given by her family.

## 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 or 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](http://gracewoodstock.org)**

### **GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL**

#### **Lead Pastor**

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

#### **Administrative Secretary**

Denise Klabunde  
[dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org)

#### **Financial Secretary &**

**Asst. Administrative Secretary**  
Carrie Fiorina  
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#### **Communications Coordinator**

Kari Gippert  
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#### **Director of Youth Education**

Tyler Palak  
[tpalak@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:tpalak@gracewoodstock.org)

#### **Organist & Interim Coordinator of Worship & Music**

Jan Burns

#### **Music Group Directors**

Terry Aavang, Tammy Baier,  
Jon Bergstrom, Carrie Filetti

#### **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