

SEPTEMBER 2023 • VOLUME 22, NO. 9

On Serving and Advantage

I played tennis in high school and remember well the stress of certain final points in a game: ad-in and ad-out; whether the server or the receiver wins the advantage on the deuce point, and sometimes you would back and forth between the two for a while until one player or team won the game.

When Martin Luther wrote about the freedom of a Christian, he wrote about the ways in which faith produces good works, and of the role of Christian service. Luther writes, "We should be guided in all our works by this one thought alone—that we may serve and benefit others in everything that is done, having nothing else before our eyes except the need and advantage of the neighbor."

**"to serve all people,
following the example
of Jesus"**

**-ELW Holy Baptism &
Affirmation of Baptism**

The goal of Christian service sounds so contrary to our competitive, hierarchical, acquiring, and self-serving ways. What a profound mark of discipleship to set the need and advantage of the neighbor as not only the primary but sole focus. Who then is your neighbor? How are you equipped by God to serve, and called by God to love and serve your neighbor? In what ways can you put someone else's need and advantage before yourself?



September 10 marks ten years of an annual day of service in our denomination, where we too at Grace, continue to set aside a few hours to serve local and global neighbors. Although it is only a few hours of one day in the year, I continue to be amazed at the ways it shapes our community. I see people learn about community partners, and the ministries of the greater church. I admire the commitment to set aside this time in busy schedules to care for other people. And while Luther would call focus to the advantage of the neighbor, I see the mutuality of serving and receiving. We are better together, we are intended to live in community, and we are blessed by extending and receiving Christian care and service.

'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, "' You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

-Matthew 22:36-39

As you settle into changes in school or work or family schedules and find a new rhythm in the fall season ahead: may you consider God's call for you to tend to the common good, to set your focus on the need and advantage of your neighbor, and to be attentive the ways in which others serve you in daily life, too. See you soon, blessings on your lives of faithful service.

*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), Bob & Carolyn Brackett (parents of Kari Gippert), Nancy Brown, Myron Callihan (brother of Susan Payton), Jim Davis, Lori Dechant, Patrice Dunn, Joe Evanoff, Lucille Fergen (mother of Karen Hansen), Connie Fischer, Barbara Gehrke, Robert Giron (brother of Patty Kozlow), Tom Goggin, Becca Guenther (niece of Gretchen & Claude Hutchens), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Jim Haager Sr., 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), Ben Miller (nephew of Jerry & Mary Johnson), 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), Don Rooney, Diane Rouse (cousin of Lisa Washkowiak), Nathan Ruffino, Nicholas Ruffino, Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), 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)

Joy: Baptism of Grace LuAnn Hartwell (daughter of Jennifer & 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 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**).

Kitchen Cleaning

As we move closer to reopening the kitchen, it could still use some tender loving care.

Thank you to BSA Troop 153 for showing up twice last month to clean up parts of the room.

Contact the church office if you are willing to schedule and coordinate a kitchen cleaning day for us to resume kitchen use (if you're in support of Grace utilizing the kitchen, see the story below).

Kitchen

On July 11, Tyler Palak, director of youth education, facilitated an online training session for Grace members to become certified food safe managers.

If you missed his training session but would be interested in becoming a certified food safe manager — because you support the use of Grace's kitchen — you're in luck.

Although Tyler will not be physically by your side to walk you through the process, the materials are available online for you to do on your own in your home, which will be followed by a proctored online exam. OR you can attend an approximate eight-hour, one-day training and test in Crystal Lake on specifically scheduled days.

Grace will cover the training and exam expenses. If you have any questions about how to begin, contact Tyler at tpalak@gracewoodstock.org.

GRACE FOR TODAY—The deadline for the **October 2023** newsletter is **September 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 September

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.

We'd love for you to support weekly worship by volunteering. 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;
- Or would you be willing to learn more about joining the A/V team? There are currently four people who facilitate worship being audible in the sanctuary and accessible via livestream. If interested, please contact Bill Nattress at bill.nattress@gmail.com.
- The altar guild teams are setting up or cleaning up after worship, and there's room for you to join or form a team. To learn more, please contact Karen Reinhard at 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; as they regather this fall.

Learning Communities Through Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago invites you to participate in this fall's online learning community.

FAITH, WORK, AND ECONOMICS

Sundays or Wednesdays, Oct. 8/11 through Oct. 29/Nov. 11

We invite you join us this fall for a remarkable four-part series that explores the topic, "Faith, Work, and Economics." The Rev. Wayne N. Miller will lead this dynamic course for four Sundays, beginning Oct. 8 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. (CST). Or you can join Wednesday's four sessions, beginning Oct. 11 from 7 - 8:30 p.m. (CST).

Register online for free by clicking [here](#) to explore the Biblical and confessional underpinnings of the organic relationship between Faith, Work, and Economics as a lens for understanding ourselves, our world, and the secret of living life well.

Visit [LSTC Learning Communities](#) for more information on future offerings, including "Theological Intersectionality for the 21st Century Church" with Dr. Linda Thomas in January 2024, and "Liturgy and the Natural World" with the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Stewart in April.

Save the Dates!

Animal & Pet Blessing:

Tuesday, Oct. 3 @ 6:15 p.m.

Thanksgiving Eve Eve:

Tuesday*, Nov. 21 @ 7 p.m.

Christmas Eve:

Sunday Dec. 24 @ 4 p.m. &
7:30 p.m.

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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.

ELCA & Climate Care

The ELCA has adopted a social message about climate care entitled "Earth's Climate Crisis." You can access the official message by clicking [here](#).

The ELCA said "A printed one will be available shortly."

Drawing from existing social teaching, social messages provide theological rationale and social analysis to foster discernment and engagement on a

relatively narrow social issue. This project was authorized in light of the grim contemporary situation affecting our global home and the need for fresh action on the part of this church. It draws its framing themes from several social statements, particularly Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice as you can read by clicking [here](#). The social message was called for from



several sources and was adopted by the ELCA Church Council on April 20, 2023. A draft version social message first went through a public feedback process and was edited in light of public comment.

ELCA Service Day ... Sept. 10

A Decade of Service

Have you signed up to serve yet? Sign up online through the link in the weekly *Grace Notes* email or on the bulletin board in the narthex!

This year marks 10 years of this annual day of service across our denomination.

Since 2013, we have gathered for worship, fellowship, and service alongside local and global partners. Thank you for your time and all of the donations for 100 school kits and 50 personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief (LWR).

This year we **worship at 9 a.m.**, take a group picture at **10:10 a.m.**, and set out to serve. We hope to see you Sept. 10.

Here's an overview of service opportunities:

ONSITE:

- **LWR School & Personal Care Kits**—sign up to join the team in Luther Hall (gym) to assemble 100 school and 50 personal care



kits to send out through Lutheran World Relief.

- **Sewing Circle**—join the Sewing Circle in Grace Center (downstairs). No experience necessary, come and help with various steps of quilting (sort squares, design tops, pin together, sew) and pillows (cut, stuff, sew). All ages are welcome.
- **Sunday School**—students and teachers meet in Luther Hall to

assemble birthday bags and a Kindness Project.

WOODSTOCK:

- **Verda Dierzen Early Learning Center**—join a team to paint outdoors: touch up stencils from past years and paint new ones on the sidewalks.
- **Turning Point**—gather to disinfect toys in the playroom and support our county's domestic violence agency.
- **Home of the Sparrow**—Youth Standing with Jesus (YSJ/Grace Lutheran's high school youth group) will be staining decks outdoors and supporting Home of the Sparrow's mission and support for women and children journeying from homelessness to self-sufficiency.
- **TBD**—check sign-up sheets for possible additional sites!

Grace's Continuing Support for Schools in Rural Honduras

For the last 10 years, Grace has worked with the organization "Lunches for Learning," partnering with a school in rural Honduras. Later on, we collaborated with Peace Lutheran Church in Spring Hill, TN to sponsor a second school.

The premise of these partnerships is simple. Nutritious lunches are prepared and given to children at school to incentivize school attendance. These children otherwise would work menial jobs for food or go without and not receive an education. In this way, the cycle of poverty has less chance to continue another generation. Grace supports this program through an annual endowment grant and occasional special actions for infrastructure repairs.

The Honduran School year ends in November. Until the pandemic, members of Grace have traveled to Honduras to visit the schools we partner, along with several others, and attended their graduation ceremonies. After a long hiatus, it is now possible to reconnect with our partner schools in this way.

Andy Bellavia will be going for the fifth time and invites you to join him. The tentative dates of travel are Nov. 15 - 18, 2023. If you are interested or have questions, contact Andy by email at bellavia.a@gmail.com.

"It's a wonderful and moving experience, and I hope you'll consider making the visit with me," Andy said.

Pinochle

Ready for some friendly games of Pinochle this month? Join the group either during the day or at night in Room 101. Haven't played before? That's ok, they teach novices.

Players meet on the first and third Wednesdays of the month and the second Tuesday evening of the month.

In September, play on Wednesday, Sept. 6 and Wednesday, Sept. 20 at 1 p.m. or at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 12. Enter through the lower-level parking lot entrance.

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 YSJ updates via email ... These updates will include event info., sign-up links, and more. 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. Fall drop-in dates: Sept. 6 & 20; Oct. 4 & 18; Nov. 1 & 15.



High Schoolers ... 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! Please contact the church office or

Kirsten Green if your high schooler is interested in going. **Registration for this is due before Sept. 15!**

Call Kirsten Green at **815-236-6904** or email her at stylin1020@gmail.com.

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

Thank you, Al!—Al's tenure as a YSJ leader concluded on Wednesday, Aug. 23. "We are so grateful for his devotion of time and energy to our high school youth ministry," Kirsten said.

Sunday School & Confirmation

Things aren't slowing down this month for Sunday School.

Sunday, Sept. 10 at 9 a.m. our youth are asked to participate in the worship & blessing for Grace's ELCA Service Day.

Following the Service Day group photo scheduled at 10:10 a.m., the children will complete the Sunday School Service project.

That activity involves building birthday bags and writing cards for the Woodstock Food Pantry. In addition, the children will participate in a Kindness Project.



Emma Hinderlider completed a birthday bag last year.

Then on Sunday, Sept. 17, our third-graders will be presented with their Bibles during 9 a.m. worship. At 10 a.m. all grades will focus on reading the Bible for that lesson.

If you have not registered yet for Sunday School, you can do so using the link [here](#)

Our seventh- and eighth-graders began confirmation classes on Aug. 23. Classes will be held from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday nights in Grace Center. Register [here](#) for confirmation if you have not done so already.

Members of the congregation are invited to guest teach a confirmation lesson. Contact Tyler Palak, director of youth education, at tpalak@gracewoodstock.org if you are interested.



Bennett Washkowiak places a can of cake frosting into his birthday bag during the 2022 ELCA service day project that Sunday School completed.

Sunday School Volunteers Needed

Are you looking for a meaningful way to give back to the community? Do you have a passion for working with children? If you answer "yes" to either question, then we have an exciting opportunity for you!

Our Sunday School program currently seeks volunteers to join our team. You'll have the chance to make a real impact on the lives of our young learners, helping them grow in their faith and develop important life skills.

Whether you're a seasoned educator or simply looking for a new way to get involved, we welcome you to join our team. Click [here](#) to fill out a form we need our youth program volunteers to complete or visit Grace's website on the Sunday School page.

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 or go to the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GraceWoodstock>.

Presence Light Sponsors:

Sept. 3:

- In memory of our grandsn, Alex, given by Ken & Kathy Zank.

Sept. 10:

- In honor of our 58th wedding anniversary, given by John & Mary Widmayer.

Sept. 17:

- In celebration of Wilma Malinasky's 85th birthday, given by Janice & Bob Laird.

Sept. 24:

- In honor of our 39th wedding anniversary, given by Karl & Denise Klabunde

Bulletin Sponsors:

Sept. 3:

- In memory of our grandson, Alex, given by Ken & Kathy Zank

Sept. 10:

- In memory of our sisters Kathy & Kelly, given by Bill & Nancy Kreznor.

Sept. 17:

- In memory of my dad, Richard Martin, given by Mary Beth.

Sept. 24:

- To the glory of God, given by Marylee Steinwehe.

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**

GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

Lead Pastor

Rev. Amanda Bergstrom
abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org

Administrative Secretary

Denise Klabunde
dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org

Financial Secretary &

Asst. Administrative Secretary
Carrie Fiorina
cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org

Communications Coordinator

Kari Gippert
kgippert@gracewoodstock.org

Director of Youth Education

Tyler Palak
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, Carrie Jarnecke,
Kevin Kleinjan, Nancy Kreznor,
Amanda Kurka, Paul Lockwood,
Matt Meiners, Mark Miller, Mary Noe,
Bruce Rosborough