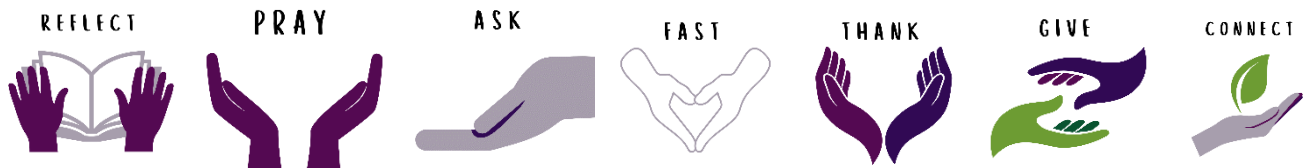


FEBRUARY 2024 • VOLUME 23, NO. 2



We have made it through a two-snowstorm week and the bitter cold temperatures that followed. The sun shines brightly, reflecting off the abundance of snow; and as I give thanks for the beauty and pray for safety and shelter in this time—I'm not sure about you, but I am ready for spring.

From the Old English *lencten* and Middle English *lente* springtime; Lent leads us to spring in the Northern Hemisphere. As we gather on Valentine's Day this year for Ash Wednesday, remembering how loved we are by God, that we are dust and to dust we shall return, we enter into the church season of Lent as we draw near to Holy Week and then Easter Sunday.

This Lent, as the days lengthen, we will consider different ways to practice joy. Even in somber reflection, in repentance and forgiveness, in sorrow and in the heart of fear and pain—God plants the seed of our joy. You are in my prayers, blessings on this season before us, and I hope to see you soon.

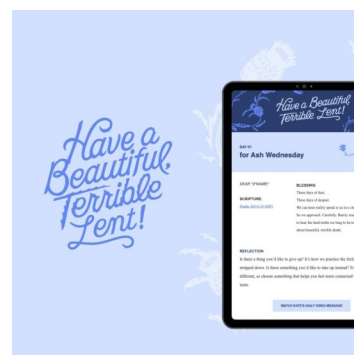
Peace,
Pastor Amanda

Daily Lenten Devotionals

Here are two options for daily devotional practice during the season of Lent. I hope you will consider one or both as a part of your Lenten discipline.



Tending Joy is a daily devotional booklet that is structured by the regular practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to explore a different texture and color of joy each week. You are invited to read scripture, pray, reflect, and consider occasional journal prompts. Printed copies will be available at the Information Desk and electronic copies available by weekly *Grace Notes* email.



Have a Beautiful Terrible Lent is a daily email devotional prompt by Kate Bowler, (with an optional, accompanying new book you can purchase). You are invited into courage and hope for when times are tough, in the season of preparing for Easter. Visit her website at <https://katebowler.com/seasonal-devotional/have-a-beautiful-terrible-lent/>, to sign up for daily email prompts.

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, the Rev. Michael Burk, 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: Phyllis Aavang, Bob Beardsley (brother of Charlotte Beardsley), Charlie Bell (friend of Jamielynn Wedoff), Betty Boehmke, Nancy Brown, Myron Callihan (brother of Susan Payton), Barb Carmichael, 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), Liz Henniges, 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), Fred Learman, Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Tom Meyer, Ben Miller (nephew of Jerry & Mary Johnson), 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), 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: Dwight Jensen, Pat Botts (sister of Barb Hathcock)

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)**.

Pinochle

Daytime pinochle is held on the first and third Wednesdays of February (Feb. 7 and Feb. 21) at 1 p.m. in Room 101. Enter through the lower level parking lot. Contact Sally Sheahan at 314-910-0541 with any questions.

2024 'Bread for the Day' Devotional

"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 Jan. 1, 2024. If you are interested in having a copy, the devotional books are available for purchase at the Welcome Desk for \$10.

Bulletin & Presence Light Sponsors

The Grace 2024 Bulletin & Presence Light sponsor sheets are available in the white binder at the Welcome Center. 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 Light. Thank you for helping Grace fund the weekly bulletins and presence lights.

Current Job Opening

Applications are requested for the following part-time job:

• 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.

GRACE FOR TODAY—The deadline for the **March 2024** 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** at **9:00 a.m.** in the sanctuary, or worship wherever you are via [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website.

Come, enter the season of Lent as remember that we are dust and to dust we shall return, in worship on **Ash Wednesday, February 14** 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. **The 7 P.M. service will be livestreamed.*

The season of Lent continues through Holy Week (also D200's spring break this year). As you are invited into the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament, we hope you will share in this time and season together in worship and prayer.

<u>Ash</u> <u>Wednesday</u> February 14 noon & 7:00 p.m.*	<u>Palm Passion</u> <u>Sunday</u> March 24 9:00 a.m.*	<u>Maundy</u> <u>Thursday</u> March 28 noon & 7:00 p.m.*	<u>Good</u> <u>Friday</u> March 29 noon & 7:00 p.m.*	<u>Easter</u> <u>Sunday</u> March 31 8:00 a.m.* & 10:00 a.m.*
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Thank you to all who volunteer their time in support of weekly worship. If you have questions or would like to learn more, please reach out to people listed below, or call the office if you'd like assistance in signing up for an opening.

- If you have questions about volunteering as an [Usher](#), [Greeter](#), [Reader](#), or [Communion Assistant](#), - please contact Fay Wilson.
- There are currently four people who facilitate worship being audible in the sanctuary and accessible via livestream. If interested in joining this A/V team rotation, please contact Bill Nattress.
- The altar guild teams are setting up before or cleaning up after worship, and there's room for you to join or form a team. To learn more, please contact Karen Reinhard.
- Please contact Jan Burns if you are interested in learning more about a choir, band, or opportunity to share your gifts with a vocal or musical instrument solo/ensemble.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING



We will hold our annual congregational meeting on **Sunday, February 4, 2024, at 10:15 a.m.** in the church sanctuary. Please plan to attend this year's annual meeting where we will vote on the 2024 budget, give final approval to our revised church constitution, and elect voting members to the June 2024 Northern Illinois Synod assembly. This meeting will be held in person or Zoom with a quorum of 50 voting members needed.

Congregational Resourcing Event

The 2024 theme for the Northern Illinois Synod is *Open God's Story*. You are invited to the Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) on March 16, 2024, at Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon, Illinois to connect God's work throughout the Bible with God's work in our lives. This CRE day will be time to gather together to share ideas and inspiration for all the ways we are opening God's story together in our congregations and in our communities. For more information on guest speaker, workshops, and registration (closes March 2), click or visit: <https://www.nisynod.org/programs/cre>.

Have You Met Our Newest Members?

Several recently joined Grace Lutheran Church in December 2023. We welcomed on Dec. 17, **Kristin Baldwin**, **Sandy Olson**, the **Schaaf family**, and **Dave**

and Lisa Smith. If you get the chance, please introduce yourself to our newest members!



Pictured left to right:
Kristin Baldwin, **Teagan Jones**, and **Dave Baldwin**.

KRISTIN BALDWIN

Kristin currently lives in Woodstock with her daughter, Teagan Jones, and husband Dave. Teagan is a freshman at Woodstock High School and has participated in Grace's youth programs. Currently, she is a member of Youth Standing with Jesus (YSJ). Kristin works at Verda Dierzen Early Learning Center. While Teagan was born in Woodstock, Kristin lived in Michigan and Indiana before moving to Illinois. Kristin attended a Lutheran School from second to fifth grades. As a family, they enjoy swimming, listening to music, attending the Farmers Market on the Square and binge-watching their favorite shows.

SANDY OLSON

Sandy lives with her husband in Huntley. She enjoys walking their dog, Sadie. Sandy also likes reading, plants, & being a member of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra.

JEREMY, HEIDI, GRACE & CELESTE SCHAAF

Living in Woodstock, the Schaafs love to travel and decorate their house for all holidays. The four love movie nights, cooking and walking together.

LISA & DAVE SMITH

Lisa & Dave attend Grace nearly every week via our livestream. They live in Woodstock.



Sandy Olson



Jeremy and Heidi Schaaf
and their daughters,
Grace and Celeste.



Lisa & Dave Smith

Adult Book Club

The Adult Book Club will not meet on Feb. 4, 2024. Instead, members are encouraged to attend the all-church congregation meeting after church that morning. The group will finish discussing the last chapters of "The Chosen" on Sunday, Feb. 11 and hold a brunch. A new book will be chosen at that time. More information will be shared as it becomes available, through the weekly Grace emails (*Grace Notes*). Come join us! Contact Sally Sheahan or Paul Lockwood for more information.

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 coupon below, along with your \$16.00 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 it to appear.

Anyone donating is welcome to pick up a lily following the 10 a.m. Easter worship on Sunday. If any are left over, we are going to share them with our homebound members.

DEADLINE FOR DONATION FORMS & MONEY: March 22, 2024.

YSJ News for All

"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.

Wednesday Drop-In Nights YSJ meets **EVERY 2 WEEKS** for refreshments, 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 - 8:30 p.m. **Winter Drop-in Dates:** Feb. 7 & 21.

Youth Gathering 'Direct Ask' Fundraiser - It's underway! We have nine high schoolers to send to New Orleans in July... PLEASE VISIT our YOUTH GATHERING DONATION BOARD in the narthex. TAKE AN ENVELOPE with a designated amount of your choice and GIVE a GIFT of a life-changing experience to our youth as they GROW in their FAITH JOURNEY together! Any amount gets us one mile closer... THANK YOU! Please return your envelope and gift to the church office or offering plate during any service.

Youth RSVP's or Questions: contact Kirsten Green at 815-236-6904 or stylin1020@gmail.com.

Your YSJ Co-Leaders are Gretchen Hutchens, Kirsten Green and Tyler Palak.



Last month YSJ held a New Year celebration. This month, they will hold a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner for all church members. Pictured (*front row, left to right:*) YSJ co-leader Tyler Palak, YSJ co-leader Gretchen Hutchens, and Owen Fiorina. Pictured (*middle row, left to right:*) Dakota Hendrickson and YSJ co-leader Kirsten Green. Pictured (*back row, left to right:*) Mackenzie Green, Teagan Jones, and Amelia Shaffer. (*Not pictured: Maren Filetti, Sean Fiorina, and Ellery Shutt*).

Mark Your Calendars:

YSJ holds YOUTH GATHERING FUNDRAISER SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE DINNER

TUESDAY, FEB. 13. YSJ will serve pancakes from 5:30 - 7 p.m. (*High School youth, please arrive at 4:45 p.m. to set up and begin mixing batter!*)

For Grace members: presale tickets will be sold for \$8 each or a \$32 family maximum, before and after church Feb. 4. Please join YSJ for a delicious & fun evening while helping our youth travel to New Orleans this summer!

Summer Camp Scholarship

During these snowy and cold winter days, we look forward to summer and to blessing elementary students before a week of summer camp! 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 (<https://omc.org/>) in Oregon, IL and Lutherdale (<https://www.lutherdale.org/>) in Elkhorn, WI. If you have questions about summer camp, or about this camp scholarship opportunity, please contact Pastor Amanda or Tyler Palak.

Vacation Bible School Meeting This Month

While Sunday School meets this month on the fourth and the 18th, Tyler Palak will host a meeting on Sunday, Feb. 25 at 10 a.m. to gauge volunteer assistance for Vacation Bible School. Anyone interested in participating with VBS is asked to attend this meeting to discuss potential dates, curriculum, and other suggestions for this summer.

Meyer Named New Children's Choirs Director

We are pleased to announce that Cindy Meyer has joined Grace's staff as director of Cherubs and Joyful Messengers in 2024. We give thanks and look forward to continuing opportunities for children's choirs in the new year ahead.

Presence Light Sponsors:

Feb.4:

- In memory of Russ Freeman, my husband; given by Donna Freeman.

Feb.11:

- In memory of Fay Kreznor; given by Bill & Nancy Kreznor.

Feb. 25:

- In honor of our 58th wedding anniversary; given by Ken & Kathy Zank.

Bulletin Sponsors:

Feb.4:

- In memory of Russ Freeman, my husband; given by Donna Freeman.

Feb. 25:

- In honor of our 58th 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 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,
Jon Bergstrom, Carrie Filetti,
Cindy Meyer

Building Supervisor

Ken Zank

Custodians

Chris & Kim Ethridge

Officers & Council

Diana Frisbie, Carrie Jarnecke,
Kevin Kleinjan, Nancy Kreznor,
Amanda Kurka, Matt Meiners,
Mark Miller, Mary Noe, Robert Teuber