

MARCH 2024 • VOLUME 23, NO. 3

## Lent & Easter

*"In the heart of fear and pain, God plants the seed of our joy."* Throughout this season of Lent, as spring draws near and we draw close to the good news of Jesus' resurrection, we are invited to practice joy even as we name and know grief and sorrow. I hope you will gather in community throughout this season and pray that you will dwell in God's word during Holy Week as we worship and prepare for the glorious joy of Easter.

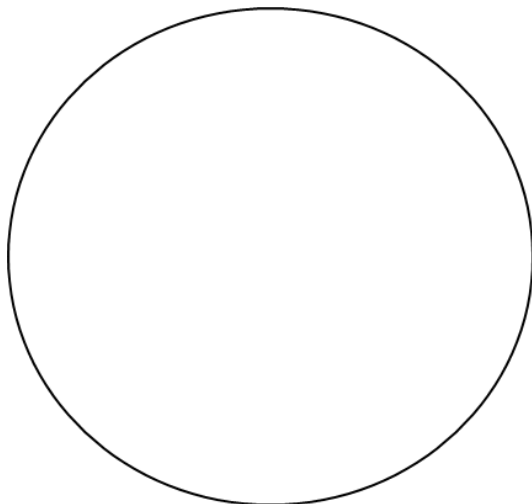
It's not too late to consider one of the daily devotionals (more information at the Information Desk or in weekly *Grace Notes* email). And, in this time of Lenten faith practices, I invite you to carve out time for reflection and discernment through a vocational prayer practice provided below. Blessings on your prayerful reflection and response of faith in action. See you soon.

*Peace,*  
*Pastor Amanda*

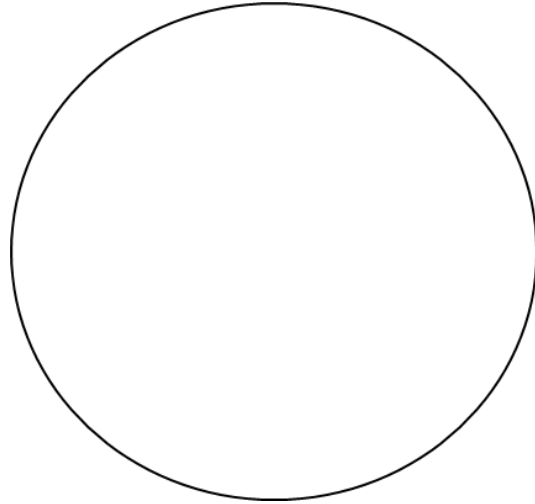
### Vocational Prayer

Can we allow joy to point us toward a clear understanding of our vocation? The word vocation comes from the Latin word *vocare*, to call. At its root, it's a way of talking about what God is calling us to do. Theologian Frederick Buechner describes vocation as "the place where our deep gladness and the world's great hunger meet."<sup>1</sup> Joy and need help us discern where God is calling us.

In the circle below, or on your own, fill it with things that give you joy, represented in words or images: your talents and passions, people you love, hobbies, beloved places, milestones and celebrations.



Now in a second circle below, or on your own, fill it with needs in your church, community, or around the world that are known to you and seem especially pressing.



Where do these two circles connect? Draw lines connecting where things that give you joy connect to a need. Spend time in silent prayer for God to send you a clear sense of vocation, a sense of where your joy and the world's needs meet.

The Seed of Joy: Enduring Joy's vocational prayer. © 2023 Barn Geese Worship. Used by permission.

<sup>1</sup>Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 95.

# 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, 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), David Fish (son of Millie Luallen), Connie Fischer, 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), 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, 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)

**Sorrows:** Al Steinwehe, Barb Gehrke, Zel Edinger, Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), Mark Mindrum

## 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)**.

## Home Communion

If you are unable to gather for worship and would like communion to be brought to you at home, please reach out to the church office. Grace has a team of home communion ministers who visit and bring communion from worship to you.

## Senior Phone Calling

If you are interested in joining the senior calling team or are a senior who would be interested in learning more about this ministry of conversation and prayer, please call the church office.

## Pinochle

Daytime pinochle will be held on the first and third Wednesdays of March (March 6 and 20) at 1 p.m. in Room 101.

Evening pinochle brought in some

new faces in February during the YSJ Shrove Pancake dinner. Join the evening group on the second Tuesday of March, (March 12) at 6:30 p.m. in Room 101. Beginners are welcome!

## Sunday Book Club

The group started a new book on Sunday, Feb. 25 after worship. There is room at the table for newcomers to join the small group in the church Parlor as members read "The Blue Bottle Club" by Penelope Stokes. Read eBooks book description at <https://www.ebooks.com/en-us/book/211019782/the-blue-bottle-club/penelope-j-stokes/>.

The book will be read from a Christian perspective as attendees share their thoughts together. Reach Sally Sheahan at 314-910-0541 with questions.

## 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 April 2024 newsletter is March 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 March



This March, we continue to gather on **Sundays** at **9:00 A.M.** through March 24 when we wave palm branches and shout hosannas on **Palm Passion Sunday**, and then enter into Holy Week.

On **Maundy Thursday**, we remember Jesus' last supper, the night he was betrayed, and consider his new commandment to love one another as Jesus loves. (*Enter the Three Days in worship at noon or 7 p.m.*)

On **Good Friday**, our hearts are broken open as we hear of Jesus' anointing, meal, prayer, betrayal, denial, crucifixion, and burial. We lament and pray as we behold the cross. (*Worship continues at noon & 7 p.m.*)

**Good Friday Prayer Vigil, March 29, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.**, You are invited to participate in this Good Friday Prayer Vigil. Prayer request cards will be available at the Welcome Center. This is available for individual or family prayer time. No sign-up is needed.

On **Easter Sunday**, we rejoice for Jesus Christ is risen today! (*Share the good news, invite family, friends & neighbors to worship on Easter Sunday at 8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m.*)

Please join in community for worship together, or wherever you are via [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website.

**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.

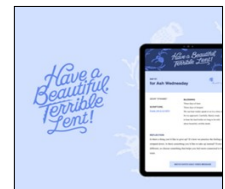
### Lenten Daily & Weekly Devotions



**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 to sign up for daily email prompts at [https://katebowler.com/seasonal\\_devotional/have-a-beautiful-terrible-lent/](https://katebowler.com/seasonal_devotional/have-a-beautiful-terrible-lent/).



**Lent Devotions Conversations**—Together, you are invited to drop in on Sunday mornings for conversation in the parlor at 8:30 a.m. before worship to reflect together on life and this beautiful, terrible Lent.

### Congregational Resourcing Event

The 2024 theme for the Northern Illinois Synod is *Open God's Story*.

You are invited to the Congregational Resourcing Event on March 16, 2024, at Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon, IL

to connect God's work throughout the Bible with God's work in our lives.

For more information, including registration (closes March 2), visit: <https://www.nisynod.org/programs/cre>.

## Easter Flowers Donation

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. Coupons can be picked up at the Welcome Desk.

Anyone donating is welcome to pick up a lily following the 10 a.m. Easter worship on Sunday, Mar. 31. If any are left over, we are going to share them with our homebound members.

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



## Spring Forward

Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, Mar. 10. That means we spring forward an hour.

## CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE: MARCH 2024

*by Council President Mary Noe*

**BUDGET FORUM:** A big thank you to the Grace Church members who attended our 2024 Budget Forum on January 28. Andy Bellavia did an excellent job in his presentation of the summary of our 2023 income and expenses. Then he proceeded to explain the detailed manner in which our Finance Committee determined our 2024 budget.

**ANNUAL MEETING:** With a quorum on Feb. 4 at our annual meeting, we were able to pass very important items. After very intensive work by your church council, we revised our 2018 constitution to meet the required and needed upgrades from the 2019 and 2022 ELCA churchwide assemblies. The changes required two congregational votes. By the approval at our Nov. 12, 2023 and Feb. 4, 2024 meetings, we are now fine until any changes from the 2025 ELCA churchwide assembly may be needed.

We elected our voting members to the June Northern Illinois Synod Assembly. Representing Grace are

*Continued on page 5*

## Sharing God's Grace Through Giving - Endowment Update

Grace Lutheran's endowment committee members guide the 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 \$64,500 to the following entities:

<u>Community</u>	
Credit Counselling Services of Northern IL	\$ 3,500
Family Health Partnership	\$ 5,000
NAMI of McHenry County	\$ 5,000
Veterans Path to Hope	\$ 5,000
Woodstock Food Distribution	<u>\$ 6,000</u>
<b>Community Total</b>	<b>\$24,500</b>
<u>Congregational</u>	
Grace Capital Improvement (Roof)	\$16,000
Grace High School Youth	<u>\$ 8,000</u>
<b>Congregational Total</b>	<b>\$24,000</b>
<u>Global</u>	
Another Child	\$ 3,000
One Collective	\$ 5,000
Lunches for Learning	<u>\$ 6,000</u>
<b>Global Total</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>
<u>Synod</u>	
Living Waters Lutheran Church	<u>\$ 2,000</u>
<b>Synod Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,000</b>

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

The Readle Memorial Scholarship Fund is available to students pursuing a full-time Christian vocation or related areas, including continuing education courses, sabbaticals for further study and other educational purposes.

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 go to education, then scholarships. Scholarship applications for both the Readle and Allen funds are due into the Grace Lutheran Church Office by July 1, 2024. All scholarship applications are reviewed by the Endowment Committee and voted on during the

quarterly meeting in July; payments are made in August.

**ALLEN SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED IN 2023.** The Grace Lutheran Church Endowment Board is proud to have awarded an Allen Scholarship in the amount of \$1,322.79 to Hannah Paulson for 2023.

**READEL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED IN 2023.** The Grace Lutheran Church Endowment Board awarded Readle Scholarship funds in the amount of \$569.70 for Food Safe Manager education trainings for Grace Lutheran Church members in 2023.

## YSJ News

“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.

**Spring Drop-in Dates:** Mar. 6 & 20; April 3, 17; May 1, 15.

**THANK YOU to ALL Grace members** who attended our PANCAKE DINNER fundraiser... it was a huge hit and we can't wait to see you again for **BREAKFAST on APRIL 28** with an expanded menu.

The YOUTH GATHERING “Direct Ask” Fundraiser is underway! We have eight high schoolers to send to New Orleans in July... PLEASE VISIT our YOUTH GATHERING DONATION BOARD in the narthex. TAKE AN ENVELOPE with an 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 the envelope and gift to the church office or in any service offering plate. Youth RSVP's or Questions: contact Kirsten Green at 815-236-6904 or [stylin1020@gmail.com](mailto:stylin1020@gmail.com).

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

## Save the Dates for Sunday School

Many things are happening this spring for Sunday School.

- Our **Easter Egg Hunt** will take place after the 10 a.m. worship on Easter Sunday, **March 31**.
- Speaking of the Easter Egg Hunt, we are **collecting candy** for this fun and engaging children's event. Candy donations are due by **Sunday, March 17**.

Happening In April 2024:

- **First Communion** will be here soon! **Training** will take place **after Sunday School** in the sanctuary on **Sunday, April 7**. **First Communion** will occur during worship service on **Sunday, April 14**. Parents with children who are going to receive First Communion need to **sign up** by Tuesday, April 2.

Currently needing:

- **Confirmation** If you have an interest in sharing a part of your faith journey with the youth of our church and wish to volunteer to teach a lesson for this year's confirmation class, contact Tyler Palak for more information! All curriculum, lesson plans and supplementary material is provided.
- **Camp Scholarship** If you have questions about summer camp, or about the camp scholarship opportunity, please contact Pastor Amanda or Tyler Palak.

## 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.

## Church Council Update *(Continued from page 4)*

Michael Liedtke and Robert Teuber with Matt Meiners as the alternate for the male members. Our female members are Sally Sheahan and Carrie Jarnecke with Mary Noe as the alternate.

Our 2024 budget was approved after another excellent presentation by Andy. We offer Andy a deep appreciation for his time as interim treasurer for the last few months. As noted, we have passed a deficit budget of just under \$21,000.

This is under last year's deficit budget, which we were able to almost completely close the gap by our continued fiscal management of expenses and additional giving.

As your Church Council, we will update you about our 2024 financial status throughout the year. We are so blessed by the sharing of members' time, talents, and tithes.

Our church could not function without the help of our paid and volunteer staff. Please help us close the gap in our deficit by any additional financial help that you can offer throughout 2024.

**COUNCIL NEWS:** We welcome Jane Gerloff as our new treasurer to replace Andy Bellavia starting in February. Although Jane will serve as a non-council member, we do welcome two newly

appointed members to fill our recent council vacancies. Thank you to Robert Teuber and Michelle Anderson for joining our church leadership on council.

Besides council members, many people assisted in the updating of Grace Lutheran's 2018 Congregational Disaster Preparedness Plan which council passed in February. A big thank you to the original committee members: Pastor Amanda, Nancy Kreznor, and Ken Zank for their additional assistance in 2024. Carrie Fiorina, Denise Klabunde, Bill Nattress, and Kevin Kleinjan gave important input, too.

Part of this plan requires us to have planned fire and tornado drills during our church and Sunday School services. We will have these pre-announced and appreciate your cooperation during the drills.

*Peace to you, dear Grace Lutheran Church family, as we move through Lent on the road to Easter! May you continue to feel God's love at Grace Lutheran Church!*



## Presence Light Sponsors:

### March 3:

- To the glory of God

### March 10:

- To the glory of God

### March 17

- To the glory of God

### March 24:

- In memory of Marlene Teuber, given by Bob Teuber

### March 31:

- In memory of my husband, Charles Sinkoske, given by Sharon Sinkoske

## Bulletin Sponsors:

### March 3:

- In honor of our daughter Laura's birthday on March 1, given by Mark & Beth Miller

### March 10:

- To the glory of God

### March 17:

- To the glory of God

### March 24:

- In memory of Marlene Teuber, given by Bob Teuber

### March 28 –31:

- To the glory of God, given by Don & Marylee Steinwehe
- In memory of my husband, Charles Sinkoske, given by Sharon Sinkoske

## 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  
[cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org)

#### **Communications Coordinator**

Kari Gippert  
[kgippert@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:kgippert@gracewoodstock.org)

#### **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, Jon Bergstrom,  
Carrie Filetti, Cindy Meyer

#### **Building Supervisor**

Ken Zank

#### **Custodians**

Chris & Kim Ethridge

#### **Council**

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

#### **Treasurer**

Jane Gerloff