

APRIL 2024 • VOLUME 23, NO. 4



Beloved of God,

We are Easter people. In Lent and in Easter, in confessing and proclaiming, in deep valleys of sorrow and mountain top experiences of transformation, in still quiet moments to catch our breath and hurried frantic days dashing to the next event on the calendar, in all things we are Easter people.

For we belong to Christ in whom we have been baptized. We belong to God who claims us and redeems us, who loves us so much that Jesus lived, died on a cross, and rose from the grave for you, for me, for all.

Throughout the past couple of months we gathered around the covenant promises of God and Jesus' persistent, irrational joy, as we cling to the hope of God planting the seed of our joy in this resurrection promise: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

As I have felt deeply the sadness of grief and the weariness of the world, I have wrestled with this invitation to joy. And, I have seen goodness and wonder in people's honest sharing, generous serving, compassionate connecting—reflections of the ways Jesus calls us to live.

As your experiences of joy ebb and flow, resists that which separates us from God, holds on to hope, and is embodied in Christ—I wish you Easter joy in the good news of Jesus that endures through all times and all things. I wish you the joy that just like the peace of Christ, surpasses all human understanding.

For God remains by your side, and whether we can figure it out yet or not, Jesus is ever at work in the world and our lives, stirring up newness of life. I pray that this spring and Easter season is a time of renewal for you. May you live with the joyful assurance that Christ is risen, and may your words and actions proclaim this joyful promise with all.

*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, 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), 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, Jenny Perrone (friend of Cindy Walters), Georgia Petersdorf (sister-in-law of Gladys Renner), Lydell Peterson, 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)

**Sorrow:** Robert Johnson, Joyce Shook

## 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**).

## Pinochle

Daytime pinochle will be held on the first and third Wednesdays of April (**April 3 and 17**) at **1 p.m. in Room 101**.

Evening pinochle will meet on the second Tuesday of April (**April 9**) at **6:30 p.m. in Room 101**. Beginners are welcome!

## 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.

## 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.

**SUNDAY BOOK CLUB**— The group will not meet on Easter Sunday. Gatherings will resume each Sunday this month. They currently are reading “The Blue Bottle Club” by Penelope Stokes. Anyone is welcome to participate.

**GRACE FOR TODAY**—The deadline for the **May 2024** newsletter is **April 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 April

*Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!* Come sing and rejoice in the good news of Jesus' resurrection. We hope you will share in worship this Easter season.

In April we give thanks for the gift of baptism, rejoice in welcoming people to Jesus' table as people celebrate their first communion, and we hear how we belong to Christ in the abiding and shepherding love of Jesus.

Thanks be to God for the gift of worshipping in community. See you soon, at Grace or wherever you are to worship via [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website. Happy Easter!

**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 the worship audibility in the sanctuary and accessibility via livestream. If interested in joining this A/V team rotation, please contact Bill Nattress.
- 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.
- 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.

## Reminder of Holy Week Events



When this April newsletter publishes, Holy Week will be underway. This is a reminder of Grace's worship schedule.

## A Scam Or Not A Scam, That's the Question

Please remember to be aware of spoofed emails or texts that appear to come from Pastor Amanda Bergstrom. Neither Pastor Amanda nor any other church office staff member will ever ask for gift cards or request a favor in an urgent manner. How can you determine if the email or text is a scam or not?



- ◆ **Check the sender's domain** (the part after "@" in the address). If it is a public domain (e.g. Gmail or Yahoo) or it's misspelled, that is a red flag. All of Grace Lutheran's email addresses end in [gracewoodstock.org](#). Also, check the name before the "@" sign. Pastor Amanda never has [pastoramanda](#) or [pastor amanda](#) in her email address before the "@" sign.
- ◆ **Is the message poorly written?** If the grammar and spelling are not good, then it might be a scam.
- ◆ **Does the email or text create a sense of urgency?** If so, beware. If you're made to feel an immediate need to respond, then more than likely it's a scam.

If you're still not sure, do not click on anything and don't reply. Please call Grace's office at 815-338-0554 to confirm the email came from Grace Lutheran.

**CONSTANT CONTACT**— In addition to this monthly newsletter, we often do have other news to share via email through an email program called Constant Contact and hope to connect with you in this way. Weekly on Thursdays, we send "Grace Notes" to inform you of that weekend's worship service and the week's events. If you've not been receiving "Grace Notes," please call the church office or email Denise ([dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org)) to add your email address(es) to Grace's email list. On a monthly basis, Sunday School and confirmation also sends its news through the Constant Contact program. The subject lines are Sunday School and confirmation, respectively. The name these emails are sent from are Grace.



“So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.”  
Romans 12:5

|                | February 2024 |             |               | 2/29/24 Year-to-date |              |               |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Operating      | Actual        | Budget      | Difference    | Actual               | Budget       | Difference    |
| <b>Income</b>  | \$32,066.50   | \$46,426.43 | (\$14,359.93) | \$69,490.12          | \$83,875.12  | (\$14,385.00) |
| <b>Expense</b> | \$45,689.15   | \$41,709.21 | \$3,979.94    | \$86,903.36          | \$85,204.55  | \$1,698.81    |
| <b>Balance</b> | (\$13,622.65) | \$4,717.22  | (\$18,339.87) | (\$17,413.24)        | (\$1,329.43) | (\$16,083.81) |

Quarterly giving statements will be sent by mail this year in mid-April (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.

### 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.

### 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 began Jan. 1, 2024. Copies are available for purchase at the Welcome Desk for \$10.

### Spring Grounds Cleanup

It's time to roll up our sleeves and breathe new life into our beloved community spaces. Our spring grounds cleanup will be Saturday, April 20 from 8 a.m. - noon. The rain date is set for May 4. See you there!

### Appreciate, Protect Our Planet: Attend NIS, LOMC's Earth Day Earth Church

Northern Illinois Synod and Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center team up to celebrate Earth Day Earth Church on Saturday, April 20 from noon - 3 p.m.

This special event will be held at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center in Oregon, Ill. Bishop Stacie Fidler will be the guest leader that day.

The schedule includes



lunch, Earth Church Celebration, Forest Meditation, a Prayer

Labyrinth, and Hiking.

Cost is \$7 per person. To attend, registration is required. Visit <https://lutheran-outdoor-ministries-center.square.site/product/earth-day-earth-church/68> to register.

For more information about the day visit <https://lomc.org/earth-day-earth-church/>.

### LSTC Learning Communities: Liturgy, The Natural World

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago will offer a four-part Learning Communities series led by the Rev. Dr. Benjamin M. Stewart. This series aims to reimagine our communal liturgies and daily rituals in the context of our ecological responsibilities. Register at <https://lstc.edu/registration/learning-communities-liturgy-and-the-natural-world/>.

#### Session Schedule:

- Session 1 : *Trees Clap their Hands, Stars Sing for Joy-*

Sunday, Apr. 7 or Wednesday, Apr. 10;

- Session 2: *Each Day is a Gift-* Sunday, Apr. 14 or Wednesday, Apr. 17;
- Session 3: *A Sacramental World-* Sunday, Apr. 21 or Wednesday, Apr. 24;
- Session 4: *Earth to Earth-* Sunday, Apr. 28 or Wednesday, May 1

## 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:** Apr. 3, 17 & May 1, 15.

**YSJ PANCAKE BREAKFAST**- see all the details below.

**Youth Gathering 'Direct Ask' Fundraiser** - It's 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 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](mailto:stylin1020@gmail.com).

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

## Save the Dates for Sunday School

Parents/grandparents/guardians mark your calendars:

- Anyone wanting to participate in First Communion needs to sign up by Tuesday, April 2. **First Communion 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**. Contact Director of Youth Education, Tyler Palak, to register.
- Sunday School meets this month on **April 7** for a lesson and on **April 21** for a service project. We hope to see you there!



Kids in Pre-K through sixth grade can celebrate God's creation by attending Grace Lutheran's Vacation Bible School, ReNew.

VBS will take place June 25 - 27 from 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Watch for registration soon!

Our 2024 VBS will empower children to grow in faith, have fun, and change the world.

### . . .Speaking of VBS

Any adult interested in learning more about our VBS program this year and creating a wonderful experience for the children by volunteering, is asked to attend a VBS planning meeting on Wednesday, April 3 from 5 p.m. - 6 p.m. in Grace Center.

Contact Tyler Palak with any questions.



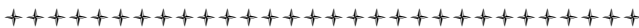
## YSJ Pancake Breakfast Returns

Attention Grace family and Friends! Join YSJ for a Pancake Breakfast after worship on Sunday, April 28 from 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

They'll have an expanded menu from Shrove Tuesday's Pancake Dinner. Options will include pancakes with toppings, egg, cheese and hashbrown casserole (gluten free), sausage, juice and coffee.

Tickets are \$10 each or \$40 maximum per family. Tickets can be purchased after services on

April 7, 14, and 21 or at the door. Funds brought in from this event will go toward the Youth Gathering.



## Summer Camp Scholarship

With the arrival of spring, we anxiously await 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://lomc.org/>) in Oregon, Ill and Lutherdale (<https://www.lutherdale.org/>) in Elkhorn, Wis. If you have questions about summer camp, or about this camp scholarship opportunity, please contact Pastor Amanda or Tyler Palak.

## Presence Light Sponsors:

April 7:

- To the glory of God

April 14:

- To the glory of God

April 21

- In honor of our grandson, Jakob;s birthday, given by Ken & Kathy Zank

April 28:

- To the glory of God

## Bulletin Sponsors:

April 7:

- In honor of Jerry's 87th birthday, given by Mary Johnson.

April 14:

- In memory of Mary's parents, Arnold & Linda Holman, and her brother, John Holman, given by Jerry & Mary Johnson

April 21

- In honor of our grandson, Jakob;s birthday, given by Ken & Kathy Zank

April 28:

- In honor of Zach's birthday, given by Andy & MB

## 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, Matt Meiners,  
Mark Miller, Mary Noe,  
Robert Teuber

#### Treasurer

Jane Gerloff