

JULY 2025 • VOLUME 24, NO. 7



At confirmation camp in June, one of the evenings included an all-camp Christ Hike. Campers gathered around as they followed camp staff around the beautiful valley and campgrounds to hear and see the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

In the beginning, the narrator began, and then, a voice is crying out in the wilderness. Placing a finger into a bucket of water, making the sign of the cross, we remembered our baptism. Counselors canoed across the lake, and then they were called to follow, to fish for people. Loaves and fishes were multiplied and distributed, a camp canoe rocked side to side as they called out for Jesus to wake up and calm the storm.

And then students wondered why Peter denied Jesus, and watched Judas betray him with a kiss. The crowd mentality took hold as not only the camp staff playing their parts shouted out, but some of the campers joined the cries to crucify him as we hiked up a hill, while others protested.

And the line that caught me most in this telling, was the women who were left alone as Jesus was arrested, who discerned what they would do in this most uncertain and fearful, terrifying time. As they discussed and decided, one said this: "we cannot save or fix, but we will witness, he will not be alone." And so they went, amid the violent cries for crucifixion, against the will of leaders afraid of Jesus' power, they went as followers and friends, though they could not save or fix, they would witness and keep company.

We know how the story ends and continues. Jesus saves. Jesus was indeed crucified up on that cross, buried, and then rose again. Startling and surprising his friends and disciples, Jesus shows up again and sends them forth to share the news with others.

Where in your life can you decide to keep showing up? Even if you cannot save or fix someone or something on your own, where can you give witness, and accompany? I think of the countercultural voices who give witness to an inclusive way of living and loving. I think of a friend or family member, who cannot change a medical diagnosis, but sits by someone's side to witness and accompany through a health journey, so you are not alone. I think of the people who stick around to document unjust actions and proceedings and give witness to injustice and shine a light on a need to change.

Jesus says, "you are witnesses of these things," as he blesses and sends them forth to live, serve, and tell the story. May you consider all that God has done and find ways to share that goodness with others. May you find courage, as those who have gone before us, to witness what is happening, stay faithful, keep company, and tell the story of Jesus' redeeming love for you and for all.

*Peace,
Pastor Amanda*

Prayers

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.

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: Phyllis Aavang, Wayne Aavang (son of Joy Aavang and brother of Barb Aavang), Charlotte Beardsely, Charlie Bell (friend of Jamielynn Wedoff), Butch Borchardt (friend of Barb Aavang), Elaine Burcham, Barb Carmichael, Jim Davis, Patrice Dunn, Patricia Erickson (friend of Carrie & Kevin Jarnecke), Marshall and Paige (Behrens) Fink (great granddaughter of Joy Aavang and great niece of Barb Aavang), 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, Wayne Japp, Anne Johnson, Nicholas Karasch (nephew of Jamielynn Wedoff), Tiffany Kurth (niece of Sue & Al Beckman), Beverly Limbaugh (friend of Carrie & Kevin Jarnecke), Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Ben Miller (nephew of Mary Johnson), Natalie Miller (sister to Mary Johnson), Kem Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Jenny Perrone (friend of Cindy Walters), Joe Pienschke, Dorothy Potoczky, Kim Qualls (friend of Kari Gippert), Ila Randolph, 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), Diane Rouse (cousin of Lisa Washkowiak), Orest Rychtytzkyj, Ryan Rychtytzkyj, Nathaniel Shipp (family friend of Brian Meyers), Ann Sinnett (friend of Shirley Berna), Kathy Stone, Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahon), Janice Techmer (cousin of Mike Phillips), Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Marilyn Vanskike, Mary Widmayer, Caitlin Wilcox (niece of Anne Johnson)

Sorrow: Peggie Klabunde (mother of Eric Klabunde, Karl Klabunde and Linda Kuziel), the Rev. Arthur Bergren (former pastor of Grace)

Joy: Baptism of Liliana Kay Baartz (daughter of Justin & Melissa Baartz)

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**).

Current Job Opening

Applications are requested for the following part-time job:

- **Director of Youth Education**
- **Director of Worship & Music**

These job descriptions are posted on Grace's website at <https://www.gracewoodstock.us/current-openings/>.

Pinochle

Pinochle will be held on the first and third Wednesdays of July (July 2 and 16) at 1 p.m. in Room 101.

Sunday Book Club

Sunday Book Club will meet each Sunday this month in the parlor, discussing, "The Hiding Place," by Corrie ten Boom. See the book summary in "Grace Notes." Contact Paul Lockwood or Sally Sheahan.

Sewing Circle

Grace Sewing Circle continues to meet the first and third Tuesdays (July 1 and 15) from 8:30 a.m.-noon in Grace Center. Contact Tammy Hansing with questions.

GRACE FOR TODAY—The deadline for the **August 2025** newsletter is **July 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 July

Gather together, invite a friend, dwell in God's word and receive Jesus' forgiveness and gift of Holy Communion. See you this summer for worship together on Sundays at 9:00 a.m., 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 by 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.
- As youth and adult vocal choirs & handbell choirs conclude rehearsals and worship participation this month, please reach out to Jan Burns for instrumentalist, soloist, contemporary band or small group music opportunities this summer.

Let's Go for a Ride ...

Have you ever wished you could go for a bike ride around scenic Emricson Park?

Join us. Thanks to Cycling Without Age - McHenry County, we're offering free "trishaw" rides on July 27 (rain date Aug 3) right after church on the 2 mile loop around the park. The trishaw can accommodate 2 riders at a time, piloted by a trained volunteer pedaling and steering. The front bench seat is very comfortable, with foot rest and seat belts. Just sit back and enjoy the scenery and sunshine.

Cycling Without Age is an

international organization with over 3100 chapters worldwide that provides rides to older adults. The local chapter provides rides throughout McHenry County at senior living communities and also through scheduled public rides.

In addition to our Grace Lutheran ride day, you may also sign up for scheduled rides by visiting www.rides4elders.com.

Sign up at Grace (Information Desk or calling the church office) to reserve a ride on the trishaw on July 27 (rain date Aug 3).

... and Bike Blessing

If you and/or your family would like to follow the trishaw rides, everyone is invited to bring your bike to worship on Sunday, July 27, and follow the trishaw across to Emricson Park. We'll gather at the new playground for time together after biking the loop.

Northern Illinois Synod Assembly



Grace's voting members participated in the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly at Augustana College, together with congregations across the synod. Visit <https://www.gracewoodstock.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2025-Synod-Assembly-Highlights.pdf> to learn more about this year's synod assembly.

PrideFest & Parade



Thank you to those for sharing God's grace with a witness to God's love for all during Woodstock's Pride Parade and Fest as we partnered with neighboring ELCA congregations.



Mark Sunday, Sept. 7, for worship at 9 a.m. & service to follow as we join together to practice loving God and neighbor. This year marks our 13th ELCA Service Day! Stay tuned for school kit donations and contact Pastor Amanda if you would like to be a site leader or have a community partner service opportunity in mind.



O God, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.
+ Psalm 104:24

	May 2025				5/31/25 Year-to-date		
<i>Operating</i>	Actual	Budget	Difference		Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$30,033.12	\$27,564.80	\$2,468.32		\$194,391.30	\$174,961.27	\$19,430.03
Expense	\$35,056.50	\$41,143.63	(\$6,087.13)		\$206,552.10	\$209,863.21	(\$3,311.11)
Balance	(\$5,023.38)	(\$13,578.83)	\$8,555.45		(\$12,160.80)	(\$34,901.94)	\$22,741.14

Quarterly giving statements will be mailed mid-July.
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.

Come Listen to Good Music, Show Your Patriotism

All are invited to The City Band Concert Wednesday, July 2. We can sit together on the southeast side of the Woodstock Square.

BYOP - Bring Your Own Picnic

Music starts at 7 p.m.

Theme - America, The Beautiful

Ice cream sponsored by Friends of the Old Courthouse

--Nancy Kreznor

Grace Weeding Meetup

You are invited to gather with a small group on Monday mornings at 9 a.m. to beautify the grounds at Grace by keeping the grounds free of weeds and debris. All are welcome to tend the grounds, share fellowship or time for silent prayer, and enjoy God's fresh air. Bring your favorite garden gloves and tools, something to keep yourself hydrated, and a smile. Contact Adele Petersen for further questions

Winners named at Last Month's Grace Friendly Contest



At the City Band concert on June 4, Grace hosted a picnic before the event and held a friendly competition for the best table design. The concert theme that evening was Planes, Trains, & Beyond. Pictured on the left was the top prize winner created by Cindy & Paul Meyer with the theme, "Music." Nancy and Bill Kreznor's table, pictured right, came in second with the theme, "Planes, Trains, Automobiles and more."

Columbarium Task Force Formed

At our June Church Council meeting, a task force to pursue the possibility of establishing a columbarium on the grounds of Grace Lutheran Church was approved. A columbarium is a structured and designated space to hold cremated remains. Grace members have expressed interest in this in the past and again during our 2025 "Conversations." Anyone interested in joining this task force, please contact Mary Noe at 815-347-5988 or mnoe48@outlook.com.

--Mary Noe

Online Bible Studies for 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly

Join ELCA Churchwide Assembly voting members in preparing for the assembly! All are welcome to participate in the online Bible studies that will be held Wednesday evenings in July (July 9, 16, 23). Each session will focus on the assembly theme “For the Life of the World” through one of three lenses: climate justice, gender justice, and war/conflict and reconciliation, followed by engagement with these Bible study presenters:

- July 9—Willie Korboi (climate justice lens)
- July 16—Deacon Clare Josef-Maier (gender justice lens)
- July 23—Rev. Atahualpa Hernández Miranda (war/conflict and reconciliation lens)

More information about registering for the webinars will be posted at <https://www.ELCA.org/cwa>. The 2025 Churchwide Assembly will take place July 28–Aug. 2 in Phoenix, Ariz. Watch the live video of worship and plenary sessions at <https://www.ELCA.org/cwa>.

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SUGAR CREEK BIBLE CAMP



Confirmation students shared a week at Sugar Creek Bible Camp in Ferryville, Wis., in June as they shared congregation time, song, adventure, time alongside horses and creation in the valley and bluffs, and celebrated how God’s word comes near to us.

First Communion



We welcomed three children to Jesus’ table on Sunday, June 8, as they received their first communion. Congratulations to Aubrey Emery, Vivienne O’Leary, and Leighton Behrns (pictured right to left.)

Grill Night Potluck: July 31

Save the date & plan to join us on the beautiful Grace grounds for dinner on Thursday, July 31. We’ll gather at 5:30 p.m. for dinner and fellowship. The main dish off the grill will be provided, you are invited to bring a side or dessert to share. Sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050544A5AB29A0F94-50128507-grill#/> to help us prepare the main dish.

Save Sunday, Aug. 24, on your



calendar for our Congregational Meeting. It will be held at 10:15 a.m. following our 9 a.m. worship.

Vacation Bible School Accomplished Teamwork, Fun for Adults & Youth



With more than 30 daily participants and nearly 25 volunteers for event setup, takedown, and engagement, Vacation Bible School’s June 9-12 launch and landing was a success, filled with fun, learning, and teamwork. During the Sunday, June 15, worship, volunteers and the VBS children sang two songs for the congregation.

Presence Light Sponsors:

July 6:

- To the glory of God for Iris & Nora Speder, my grandnieces; given by Mike Phillips.

July 13:

- In memory of Sheri's mom, Joan Russell, & Mike's mom, Susan Moyer; given by the Conover family.

July 20:

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

July 27:

- In honor of Mark's birthday on July 31; given by Beth Miller, Roger & Carole Long & Gerloffs.

Bulletin Sponsors:

July 6:

- In memory of Jerry; given by Mary Johnson.

July 13:

- In honor of Andy's birthday; given by Mery Beth.

July 20:

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

July 27:

- In honor of the marriage of Laura Miller and Sam King on July 26; given by Mark & Beth Miller.
- For those diagnosed and dealing with cancer; given by Adele Petersen.

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

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

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Terry Aavang, Jon Bergstrom,
Carrie Filetti, Cindy Meyer

Building Supervisor

Ken Zank

Custodians

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