

AUGUST 2025 • VOLUME 24, NO. 8

It is well,
it is well
with my soul

I picked up a new camp T-shirt this summer — it met all my quick shopping criteria: the right size, good message, it was one of those soft, comfy T-shirts, and it was on the clearance rack.

The first day I wore it, my family noticed and asked about it, and I quoted the shirt's message: "It is well with my soul," I said, "even though it doesn't feel that way right now," I added.

It was a particularly difficult day, and I was wearing a shirt that said something different than a sarcastic, wishful "I'm fine, it's fine, everything's fine." Instead, the text claims that "It is well, it is well with my soul."

I shared briefly about the hymn text's tragic origins, but my kids would have preferred not to hear that story. If you're not familiar with it, you can look up the horrible losses the author of the hymn experienced, and how these words rose up within him, "When peace like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll; whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say, 'It is well, it is well with my soul.'" (Horatio G. Spafford)

But I assured my kids and convinced myself again of the hymn's claim: a deep abiding wellness within. Current event disasters and really bad days aside, what is more enduring and everlasting is a deep abiding wellness. Through uncertainty, sorrow, stress, tragedy, more of the same, and unthinkable next steps — there is a wholeness and wellness we have by grace through faith.

Holding me and each of us together is the promises of God's love and grace through Jesus. We are recipients of unwavering commitments to abundant life, joy, justice and peace, an eternal wellness holds us in God's promises. Through it all and at the end of each and every day, for all times, is an abiding wellness made known in Christ.

I pray that you, too, will be reminded anew of the peace of Christ that surpasses all understanding, and that you will hold onto knowing that you are beloved when you're told to think otherwise of yourself or someone else. And I hope that you'll live out your faith in a way that shares this blessed assurance with others.

Peace to you, dear people of Grace Lutheran Church. Blessings on this time of change, summer adventures and a new school year ahead, as you carry this peace within throughout each day and night.

*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 Fidar, 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 Beardseely, Charlie Bell (friend of Jamielynn Wedoff), Butch Borchardt (friend of Barb Aavang), Elaine Burcham, Barb Carmichael, Jim Davis, Patrice Dunn, 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, Marie Grob (family member of Kevin & Carrie Jarnecke), Becca Guenther (niece of Gretchen & Claude Hutchens), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Dan Hess, Gloria Holy, Denise Hoover, Wayne Japp, Anne Johnson, Nicholas Karasch (nephew of Jamielynn Wedoff), Tiffany Kurth (niece of Sue & Al Beckman), 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, 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: Bill Marlott (father of Diana Frisbie)

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 are admitted to the hospital, please call the church **(815-338-0554)**.

Sunday Book Club This Month

Sunday Book Club will meet after church in the parlor each Sunday in August except for Aug. 24. We are in the midst of reading "The Hiding Place" by Corrie ten Boom. At the time this copy was written, we are covering the year 1943 in Holland which has fallen to Germany. Corrie and her family are very active in the Christian underground community, helping Jews to survive the Holocaust.

Corrie's life story shows how God governs all things, even those that appear to us as senseless or cruel; how He supplies grace for the present need and that He wills us to give thanks. There's room at the table for you; we even have an extra copy of the book waiting for you!

--Sally Sheahan



New Office Position

Grace Lutheran Church is now hiring for a **new office position**. Job descriptions are posted on Grace's website at <https://www.gracewoodstock.us/current-openings/>. If interested in the office coordinator position, please submit a cover letter and resume to jobs@gracewoodstock.org.

Additional Openings

Applications are also requested for the following part-time jobs: Director of Youth Education and Director of Worship & Music.

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

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses ..." (Hebrews 12:1).

Beloved of God, you are invited to gather in worship as a faith community. Share in hearing and telling others of the good news of Jesus. Hear the stories of God's faithful people and receive God's forgiveness and mercy as we look to Jesus in the living of these days.

See you soon for worship together on Sundays at 9 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.
- If you'd like to join in sharing a children's sermon message, please contact Mary Noe.
- There are currently four volunteers 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.
- See below for more information about trying or joining a choir or music group (youth to adult choirs, adult handbell choir, and band)!



Worship And Music

Each week we gather around word and sacrament, in the pattern of gathering, word, meal, and sending.

A part of our shared act of worshipping God includes the gift of music. This fall, you are invited to join a musical group or reach out to learn more if you are interested in being a part of the worship life of our congregation through music.

All of these groups will be gathering for rehearsals in the coming weeks. Consider trying something new and reaching out with any questions. Contact the office at 815-338-0554 with questions or contact the director as listed to the right.

- **Cherub Choir** (3 years - 1st grade), Wednesday evening rehearsals at 5:30-5:45 p.m.; first rehearsal: Sept. 10. Contact Cindy Meyer.
- **Joyful Messengers Choir** (2nd - 6th grade choir), Wednesday evening rehearsals at 5:45 - 6:15 p.m.; first rehearsal: Sept. 3. Contact Cindy Meyer.
- **Laudate Choir** (7th - 12th grade choir), occasional Sunday morning rehearsals after worship; first rehearsal: Sept. 21; contact Carrie Filetti.
- **Chancel Choir** (adult choir), occasional Wednesday evening rehearsals at 7 - 8 p.m.; first rehearsal: Sept. 17. Contact Carrie Filetti.
- **Revelation Ringers** (adult handbell choir), occasional Wednesday evening rehearsals at 6 p.m.; first rehearsal: Aug. 20. Contact Terry Aavang.
- **Grace Tones** (instruments & singing), occasional evening rehearsals; next rehearsal: early August. Contact Jon Bergstrom.
- **Instruments & Small Groups** do you play an instrument or would you be interested singing occasionally in a small group? If "yes," contact Jan Burns.



Pinochle

Pinochle meets on the first & third Wednesdays each month. In August, the group gathers in the lower level at 1 p.m. in room 101 Aug. 6 and Aug. 20 games and conversation. Contact Sally Sheahan for more information.

--Sally Sheahan

Sewing Circle

Grace Sewing Circle is still working hard and having fun. We could happily repurpose your old sheets (any kind). We could also use more fabric if anyone wants to clear out their sewing stash. Other items we continue to use are quilt batting, pillow stuffing, thread, yarn, rotary cutting blades and Thrivent Action Team cards.

We continue to meet on the first and third Tuesdays from 8:30 a.m.-noon in Grace Center. This month that will be Aug. 5 and Aug. 19, and we always welcome new faces. We also have sewing kits to take home if you have interest. We would love to see more friends! Questions? Contact Tammy Hansing.

--Tammy Hansing

ELCA Service Day ... 'God's work. Our hands.'

Mark Sunday, Sept. 7 for Our ELCA Service Day

Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 7 for worship at 9 a.m., a group picture at 10:10 a.m. and an hour or two of service work to follow as we join together to practice loving God and neighbor. (The Bears don't play till

Monday night, and the Packers play later in the afternoon.)

This annual event began in 2013 and has continued to be a wonderful opportunity to get to know people as you volunteer and to connect with community partners and learn more about living out our faith in daily living.

We are gathering a variety of service projects offsite and a couple will be held onsite as well. Talk with Pastor Amanda now if you can take the lead on a small group (check in with site the week of and share details with your volunteer group), or if you have a new site idea.

Sign up sheets will be posted in the narthex and in weekly *Grace Notes* email. The awesome yellow "God's work. Our hands." T-shirts will be available again in the narthex in August.

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.



"God's work. Our hands." Sunday is Sept. 7! As a part of this day focused on service, we will be assembling 120 school kits for distribution by Lutheran World Relief. These kits help make school possible for children around the world.

We need your help to collect the supplies needed to create these kits. **Please** visit the bulletin board in the narthex to see what items are needed. Back-to-school sales have started, so it's the perfect time to help provide the school kit items. Cash donations are also welcome to fund non-donated items.

If you are worshipping from home and would like to make a donation, please email or call me, and I will happily coordinate that with you.

Items may be returned to the labeled bucket in the narthex.

It is a huge help to have all of these items returned to the church by August 24, to allow time to purchase any additional items that may be needed. Contact Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia ([815-245-1242](tel:815-245-1242) or mbmartinbellavia@gmail.com) with any questions about the school kits. Thanks.

--Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia



Last year on "God's work. Our hands." Sunday, volunteers filled up bags with donated school supplies from our parish for Lutheran World Relief distribution. Check out the bulletin board in the narthex for the list of supplies needed.

Card Shower & Cake Reception

Members of Grace, as you know, Denise Klabunde has resigned from her position as Administrative Secretary effective the end of August. We would like to invite you to help us celebrate Denise's 23 years of service to Grace by contributing to a card shower for her retirement. Writing a note of thanks to Denise for all that she has done for Grace would be a wonderful testament to her of how much she has been appreciated during her time at Grace. A basket will be on the welcome table for the cards.

We also invite you to gather for worship on August 24 and stay for a cake reception to join in celebrating and expressing gratitude for Denise and her commitment to Grace.

Peace,
The Grace Council



Denise Klabunde

Youth Education

This summer has been a full and faithful time to learn, grow, pray and play as we share and encourage one another in growing in faith. Children, youth and adult volunteers journeyed beyond what we could think or imagine in Bible stories, science, games, snacks, songs and crafts through Vacation Bible School. Confirmation students shared a week of confirmation camp in the beautiful valley of Sugar Creek Bible Camp. From elementary-age to incoming freshmen, students attended four different program offerings at Lutherdale, and high school students shared in a service learning overnight trip to Milwaukee in late July. Thanks be to God for all who gather in community and support these wonderful ministries!

As we approach the start of the school year and hope for a meaningful faith formation program year, you are invited to consider how you can support Youth Education this year at Grace.

We invite you to consider and share the open Director of Youth Education job posting <https://www.gracewoodstock.us/current-openings/>.

And, you are invited to serve in one of these ways as we strive to launch the education program year soon.

- **Sunday School Teachers:** We have a great team of Sunday School teachers and substitutes and are looking for a few more new teachers and substitutes. Teachers lead in teams of two teachers per age group. Sunday School meets twice a month, and curriculum is provided. *Please let Pastor Amanda or Mary Noe know if you can join the teaching team this year (two Sunday mornings per month, 10-11 a.m.)*
- **Confirmation Guest Teachers:** Our confirmation program has been wonderfully supported by adults in the congregation who are willing to be a guest teacher once or twice a semester or class year. It has been a gift for students to meet other people in the congregation and hear a bit about their lives of faith. Lesson curriculum is provided, and this year we will be studying the Bible, beginning with Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in the fall and the New Testament in the new year. *Please let Pastor Amanda know if you are interested in teaching a class this year (Wednesday evenings, 6:30-7:30 p.m.)*
- **Youth Standing with Jesus (YSJ)- High School Youth Group:** Kirsten Green has served with other volunteers as adult leaders for Grace's high school youth group and is looking for 1-2 new adults to join the coordinating team. YSJ has gathered for service opportunities, Wednesday night drop-ins, and summer trips such as the ELCA Youth Gathering. *Please let Kirsten Green or Pastor Amanda know if you'd be willing to learn more about supporting high school youth group at Grace.*

Sunday School Registration

Watch weekly emails, *Grace Notes*, for a registration form and class dates as we look forward to students gathering to learn and serve through Sunday School in the year ahead.

Confirmation Student & Parent Meeting

Students in 7th & 8th grade are invited to consider committing to Grace's Confirmation Program, which includes two years of classes (August-May, Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m.), intentional worship participation and notes, service opportunities, and summer camp. A required student & parent meeting to learn more and register for confirmation will be held on Aug. 20, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Invite friends, and please contact Pastor Amanda to sign up or learn more.



Students, teachers and school staff are invited to share in a time of blessing at the start of the school year. You are invited to bring your backpack, bag, and/or school items to worship with you, or simply plan to be present and receive prayers and a blessing. Join us in worship at 9 a.m. on Aug. 10, and stick around for fellowship as a faith community to reconnect after worship.

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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.

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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 (815-355-5729).

Presence Light Sponsors:

August 3:

- In memory of Marlene L. Teuber and in honor our Robert W. Teuber; given by Robert B. Teuber.

August 10:

- In memory of Bill's sister Kelly McMahon; given by Bill & Nancy Kreznor.

August 17:

- On the occasion of her parents' 65th wedding anniversary on August 13; given by Janice Malinasky Laird.

August 24:

- In memory of Jim Reinhard; given by Karen Reinhard.

August 31:

- In memory of Nancy's sister, Kathy Kessinger; given by Nancy & Bill Kreznor.

Bulletin Sponsors:

August 3:

- In honor of Leslynne's 5th birthday; given by Geeg & Pop Klabunde.

August 10:

- In honor of our 45th Wedding anniversary; given by Mark & Beth Miller.

August 17:

- In honor of all our wonderful August celebrations; given by Andy & MB.

August 24:

- In memory of Jim Reinhard; given by Karen Reinhard.

August 31:

- In memory of Marlene L. Teuber and in honor our Robert W. Teuber; Given by Robert B. Teuber.

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

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Building Supervisor

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Custodians

Chris & Kim Ethridge

Council

Carlos Acosta, Michelle Anderson,
Brian Gerloff, Carrie Jarnecke,
Nancy Kreznor, Luigi Licastro,
Michael Liedtke, Mark Miller,
Mary Noe, Adele Petersen

Treasurer

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