

SEPTEMBER 2025 • VOLUME 24, NO. 9

God's work. Our hands.



"Yes! I can do that!" In my weary moments, I'm surprised by other people's joyful generosity. I'm caught off guard sometimes and so delighted by the willing spirit of people who serve others.

Giving of our own time, sacrificing and receiving, humbly tending to other people and the common good, this is the gift, challenge and joy of living out our faith in daily living.

You and I cannot do everything, but we can do some things. In this turning of seasons, the changing from summer to fall, how have you been renewed in body, mind, and spirit to notice what is yours to do? What is the work right before you that you might be willing to tend, lend a hand, and be surprised by the joy of serving?

Each September, since 2013, we have marked this change in seasons and entry to a 'church program year' by serving. We carve out a block of time to say yes to loving and serving God and neighbor. We venture out beyond the walls of the worship space, to meet with community partners or prepare quilts and school kits to be shared across the world, and while we can't all do each of the tasks, we find the ways we can serve, and say yes, I can do that.

I hope that this invitation and practice continues to shape your days throughout the year. How might you be willing to volunteer and share in the life of this faith community? How might you engage in a brief time audit of your days, and notice the spaces you might choose to share of your gifts and talents in love, care, and service of neighbors?

It is such a relief and joy to trust it is God's work being done through our hands, and I find such good courage and renewal when we serve side by side. May you be blessed by meaningful connection and community as you live among God's faithful people, care for one another, and say yes to sharing in God's creative and redeeming work in the world.

*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: 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), Marlene Botts, Elaine Burcham, Barb Carmichael, Jim Davis, Patrice Dunn, Marshall and Paige (Behrens) Fink (great granddaughter of Joy Aavang and great niece of Barb Aavang), Sean Ferrell (friend of Kari Gippert), 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), Cindy Hertrampf (sister of Tammy Hansing), Dan Hess, Gloria Holy, Denise Hoover, Wayne Japp, Anne Johnson, Nicholas Karasch (nephew of Jamielynn Wedoff), Tiffany Kurth (niece of Sue & Al Beckman), Elminster Lovejoy, 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 Sinnott (friend of Shirley Berna), Kathy Stone, Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahon), Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Marilyn Vanskike, Mary Widmayer, Caitlin Wilcox (niece of Anne Johnson)

Sorrows: Phyllis Aavang, Susan Bratanick (mother-in-law of Rachel Beckman Bratanick), Ray Konieczny (father of friend of Kari Gippert)

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**).

Educational Offering:

Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body

On Sept. 21, from 10:15-11:15 a.m., you're invited to Grace Center and hear Alzheimer's Association members provide insights into how to optimize our physical and cognitive health as we age. We'll learn about research in the areas of diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity, and social engagement, and use hands-on tools to help us incorporate these recommendations into a plan for healthy aging. Refreshments will be served.

Current Job Opening

Applications are requested for the following part-time job:

Applications are requested for the following part-time jobs:

- **Director of Youth Education**

- **Director of Worship & Music**

We invite you to encourage interested candidates to submit a cover letter and resume. These job descriptions are posted on Grace's website at

<https://www.gracewoodstock.us/current-openings/>.



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

"They are like trees planted by streams of water" Psalm 1:3

Beloved of God, plant yourselves in the waters of baptism, the word of God that speaks to us in all times, the gifts of God present among us in Holy Communion.

This September, we hope you will gather for worship. We pray for and anoint hands for service, gift students with Bibles and prayers for their faith formation journeys and gather around God's promises as a worshipping community.

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.
- Make a joyful noise and consider trying a choir or music group (youth to adult choirs, adult handbell choir, and band)! Contact the group's director or Jan Burns for more information.

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. It's not too late to consider trying something new. Contact the office at 815-338-0554 with questions or contact the director as listed to the right.

- **Cherub Choir** (3 years - 1st grade), occasional 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 was Aug. 20; contact Terry Aavang.
- **GraceTones Band** (instruments & singing), occasional evening rehearsals; 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.

Grace Forums

The Church Council would like to invite everyone at Grace to attend one of the three forums being offered to discuss the possibility of selling the 10-acre property east of the church. Council members and a

recommended realtor will be present to listen, discuss, and answer questions. Please mark your calendars and try to attend one or all of the forums in Luther Hall.

Sunday, Sept. 28, 2025, at 10:15 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 29, 2025, at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2025, at 11 a.m.

Grace and Peace,
Grace Lutheran Church Council

ELCA Service Day Just Around the Corner



On Sunday, Sept. 7, we gather 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.

Sign up now (online [here](#) or on the bulletin board in the narthex) to serve. Find your yellow "God's work. Our hands." T-shirts at home or pick up a new one in the narthex.

We are looking forward to a variety of service projects offsite and a couple will be held onsite as well. Sites include the current and new locations for the Woodstock Food Pantry, Aarrk Gardens, Home of the Sparrow, New Directions Addiction Recovery Services, Grace's Sewing Circle, and assembling school kits for Lutheran World Relief.

Meet our Office Coordinator

Kim Smith joined Grace's office staff last month as our Office Coordinator.

She comes to us after seven years working in Chicago at Adler Weiner Research, a marketing research company.

Kim lives in Campton Hills, Ill., with her two cats, Max and Elise (Nicknamed Ellie).

Please extend a warm welcome to Kim.



Kim Smith

The Rev. Yehiel Curry Elected ELCA's Bishop

During July's Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Rev. Yehiel Curry was elected to serve a six-year term as Presiding Bishop of the ELCA.

Meet the Bishop-elect here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-P_fMDfj4U and read about him at <https://www.elca.org/news-and-events/yehiel-curry-elected-presiding-bishop-of-the-elca>.



The Last Few Weeks of Summer, We ...



... gathered as a community for a Grill Night Potluck.



... shared bike rides with Cycling Without Age in our beautiful, local surroundings.



... came together for a back-to-school blessing for educators, staff and students.



The Woodstock Food Pantry (WFP) would like to thank Grace Lutheran Church for its support of volunteers, food and funds since the pantry's beginning more than 45 years ago. In 2024 alone WFP served approximately 4,500 families that included 4,700 children.

Due to the large increase in need and food insecurity in our area WFP has embarked on the purchase of a much larger building to meet the growing need for distribution of food among our residents. There are many ways the churches and wider community can help which we will share in the coming months. Please learn more about WFP and its mission by visiting our website at www.woodstockfoodpantry.org and access our informational YouTube video at <https://youtu.be/ReNWpj6GCzA>.

Youth Education

Thank you for living into the promises we make as a faith community at baptism, to support and pray for one another in new life in Christ. We are grateful for the time and support of volunteers to teach and lead youth education ministries as we launch into a new school year.

Here are a few ways you can consider supporting faith formation at Grace:

- **Sunday School Teachers:** We have a great team of Sunday School teachers and substitutes and welcome additional substitute teachers and coordinators for a few special projects this year. Teachers lead in teams of two teachers per age group. Sunday School meets twice a month, and a curriculum is provided. *Please let Pastor Amanda or Mary Noe know if you would like to help plan a special project or be added to the substitute teacher list.*
- **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 Begins Sept.14



Join us in worship on Sept. 14, at 9 a.m. to install Sunday School teachers and present student Bibles. The first Sunday School class then meets after worship (10:00-11:00 a.m.) and will meet primarily on the second & fourth Sundays this school year.

Families are encouraged to [sign up online to register](#) for youth programming (Sunday School, choirs, confirmation, YSJ). Invite friends & see you soon!

Sewing Circle: Where Every Stitch Tells a Story

Sewing Circle continues to meet on the first and third Tuesdays of the month from 8:30 a.m.-noon. This month, that's Sept. 2, and 16. We welcome new recruits so please come and check us out. We have jobs for sewers and non-sewers alike to do at church, or, if you wish, to help at home; we can accommodate you with a sewing kit or two.

Home sewing kits are available with instructions in the bin over the coat rack in the narthex. Any questions please contact Tammy Hansing at hansings1981@gmail.com.

--Tammy Hansing

Confirmation

Confirmation students and parents met in August for an initial meeting and started a year of classes. If your seventh or eighth grade student is interested in learning more, please reach out to Pastor Amanda.

Sunday Book Club

Sunday Book Club will not meet on Sept. 7, so that everyone can participate in the "God's work. Our Hands." activities that day. On Sept. 14, our reading of "The Hiding Place," by Corrie Ten Boom, will conclude, with a vote on our next book and a potluck lunch to celebrate.

After a break Sunday, Sept. 21, which will allow everyone to purchase the new book and organize a schedule, a new book study will begin after church on Sept. 28, in the parlor. There is room at the table for more to join us for thought-provoking discussion as we read and discuss in a small group how to apply it to our daily lives. Contact me or Paul Lockwood for more information.

--Sally Sheahan

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 (815-355-5729).

Pinochle

Pinochle is Sept. 3 and 17 at 1 p.m. If you have questions about Pinochle, contact Sally Sheahan.

--Sally Sheahan

Presence Light Sponsors:

September 7:

- In memory of my sister Kathy Kessinger; given by Nancy & Bill Kreznor.

September 14:

- In honor of our 60th wedding anniversary; given by John & Mary Widmayer.

September 21:

- In memory of Clark Phillips; given by Cindy and Paul Meyer.

September 28:

- In honor of John's 81st birthday; given by Mary Widmayer.

Bulletin Sponsors:

September 7:

- To the glory of God; given by Robin Gibbs.

September 14:

- In honor of the Worship Volunteers; given by Nancy & Bill Kreznor.
- In honor of Samantha & Mike's 40th & 70th birthdays; given by the Conover family.

September 21:

- In honor of our 41st wedding anniversary; given by Karl & Denise Klabunde.
- In memory of Clark Phillips; given by Cindy and Paul Meyer.

September 28:

- In memory of my dad, Richard Martin; given by Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia.
- To the glory of God; given by Marylee Steinwehe.

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
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Organist & Interim Coordinator of Worship & Music

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Music Group Directors

Terry Aavang, Jon Bergstrom,
Carrie Filetti, Cindy Meyer

Building Supervisor

Ken Zank

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

Jane Gerloff