

FEBRUARY 2026 • VOLUME 25, NO. 2



## Both/And

I keep seeing a poem being shared online, “the world is both burning and blooming ...” Look for this poem, hear the author affirm we don’t have to choose, we can see and experience the both/ands of living: “rage and reverence, grief and grace.” I trust you know something of this personal and communal tension from simultaneous beauty and pain, growth and destruction, joy and sorrow.

In these trying days at the start of a new year, don’t look away. Don’t look away from what devastates and don’t lose sight of God’s grace being revealed.

Beloved, we are equipped by ancestors in faith to see and call a thing what it is: evil, harm, injustice, goodness, mercy, redemption. We cling to the promise of a faith that is beyond our comprehension. We long for the day where all is made well and whole. And in the meantime, we are to live out our faith in daily life.

In the words of hymns we sing, we trust that “hope blooms in a weary world” (ELW 726). Or in Gungor’s “Beautiful Things,” we notice how God can make beautiful things out of dust and out of us, for “hope is springing up from this old ground; out of chaos life is being found in You.”

Each year, as we gather on Ash Wednesday, we see dusty, messy signs of both death and life. We remember both that we are dust, and to dust we shall return, and we remember that we are named, claimed, and redeemed by the cross of Christ and the promise of Jesus’ resurrection.

Hold on to these things — the world is not as it is intended to be and God still promises to bring forth life and healing. We are equipped and called to participate in God’s work in the world and have gifts of voice, time, resources, hands and feet to be a part of God’s love made known. Blessings on your faithful witness.

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](mailto:dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org).*

**World:** Bishop Yehiel Curry, 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), Charlie Bell (friend of Jamielynn Wedoff), Butch Borchardt (friend of Barb Aavang), Marlene Botts, 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), Christy Goodman (sister of Jennifer Robbins), 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 Sennett (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)

**Sorrow:** Linda Sporleder and Ken Kulas (brother of Kris Paprocki)

## Volunteer Treasurer Wanted

If you have a background working with numbers or own/operate a business, could you find it in your heart to accept the volunteer position of treasurer?

Knowledge of QuickBooks is useful but training will be provided. You do not need to be a Council member or

go to the meetings but will be required to prepare periodic reports for the council and congregation.

If you are interested and would like to find out more, please contact a council member (as listed on the last page of this publication) or the church office.

## 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)**.



This month Sewing Circle meets Tuesday, February 3 and 17, from 8:30 a.m.-noon in Grace Center.

Everyone is welcome. The group needs sewers and non-sewers alike. We always are in need of sheets (hint: buy new for yourself and give us your old ones to recycle ... regular or flannel, fitted or flat sheets -- doesn't matter as all are used.) Other items needed include quilt batting, fabric, pillow stuffing, thread, etc. Come join us! We can find a place for you!

Contact Tammy Hansing at [hansings1981@gmail.com](mailto:hansings1981@gmail.com).

--Tammy Hansing

**GRACE FOR TODAY**—The deadline for the **March 2026** newsletter is **February 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 February



We gather for worship on **Sundays** at **9:00 a.m.** as a faith community, and continue to give thanks for A/V Team volunteers who make worship accessible via the [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website.

On **Wednesday, February 18**, you are invited to worship on **Ash Wednesday** at **noon & 7 p.m.** We gather around the sign of the cross, a reminder of our mortality, the promise of God's grace, and enter into the season of Lent. You are invited to the faith practices of this season: self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love — strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament as we look forward to the day and season of Easter.



### Holy Week & Easter Sunday

*Palm Sunday, March 29, at 9 a.m.; Maundy Thursday, April 2, at noon & 7 p.m.*

*Good Friday, April 3, at noon & 7 p.m.; Easter Sunday, April 5, at 8 & 10 a.m.*

**Thank you** for being a part of Grace's worshipping community. We give thanks for your time and presence.

- Sign up here to serve as an [Usher](#), [Greeter](#), [Reader](#), or [Communion Assistant](#), for additional questions, please contact Fay Wilson.
- If you'd like to join in sharing a children's sermon message, please contact Nyji Sirreayah.
- If interested in joining this A/V team rotation, please contact Bill Nattress.
- To learn more about participating in the altar guild to set up or clean up communion, please contact Karen Reinhard.
- Contact Jan Burns to learn more about vocal and handbell choirs, contemporary band, instrumentalist, soloists, and small group opportunities.

# ANNUAL MEETING



Please plan to attend **Grace's Annual Meeting** on Feb. 1, at 10:15 a.m. after worship in the sanctuary or via Zoom. A quorum is needed. See you then!



**FEBRUARY 1, 2026**  
**10:15 A.M.**





	December 2025				12/31/2025 Year-to-date		
<i>Operating</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Difference</i>		<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<b>Income</b>	\$55,754.63	\$63,923.36	(\$8,168.73)		\$446,175.94	\$466,068.49	(\$19,892.55)
<b>Expense</b>	\$45,904.15	\$44,785.46	(\$1,118.69)		\$479,086.33	\$495,645.30	\$16,558.97
<b>Balance</b>	\$9,850.48	\$19,137.90	(\$9,287.42)		(\$32,910.39)	(\$29,576.81)	(\$3,333.58)



Welcome to **Rooted & Renewed** -- your monthly reset.

It will be a space just for adults and parents to unplug, laugh, connect, and refill your cup. This isn't another meeting or responsibility ... it's a breath of fresh air.

Once a month (usually the last Wednesday),--this month we meet Feb. 25 from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.--we come together to ground ourselves, build real connections and enjoy genuine fellowship in a relaxed, welcoming environment. Think encouragement, community and good energy. All in one place.

Come as you are. Leave refreshed, renewed and reminded that you're not doing life alone.

If you have questions, contact Nyji.

## Congregational Resourcing Event

Join for a day of learning and networking across the Northern Illinois Synod at the 2026 Congregational Resourcing Event on March 7, 2026 at Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon.

The theme for our synod for 2026 is Going Deeper. We will be focusing on asking the hard questions that will help us grow in faith and service. Registration is now open at <https://nisynod.org/programs/cre>.



## Lower-Level Classroom Windows to be Replaced

As indicated at our 2025 Annual Meeting, we needed to have some church windows repaired. Church Council accepted the 2025 and 2026 bids from Blue Ribbon Millwork to completely replace all the lower-level classroom windows. Replacements should begin soon.

## Sunday Book Club Plans This Month

Grace Book Club will not meet on Feb. 1, so that members can attend Grace's Annual Meeting. The Sunday Book Club will meet on Feb. 8, after worship service in the parlor. On Feb. 15, we will conclude our study of "Saving Grayson," written by Chris Fabry, vote on a new book, and celebrate with a potluck. No book club will meet Feb. 22, allowing time for members to get their books.

We will start our new book on March 1. Come join us! Contact Paul Lockwood if you have any questions.

--Sally Sheahan



Attention families of all ages!

Grace Lutheran Church is excited to launch something new for our children and families called Faith Factory Fridays! Our first night will be Friday, Feb. 27, from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. and is open to all ages. You must be registered to attend. Faith Factory Fridays is a fun, faith-filled evening with games, activities, and Bible exploration where kids can play bold, love big, and grow in faith. Friday Faith Nights will be held on the last Friday of every month. We hope to see many of our families there!

To register, click [here](#) or scan the QR Code.

In February, our Sunday School children will meet Feb. 8 & 22 to dive into the inspirational stories of **The Woman At The Well** and **The Storm**. These stories share the amazing grace of Jesus and the power of faith above all.

We invite our families to prayerfully consider giving a love offering to support our Sunday School ministries. Your generosity helps us continue providing exceptional



Bible-based teaching, engaging lessons, and meaningful extracurricular activities that nurture our children's faith and growth. Thank you for investing in the next generation.

### This Month in Pinochle

The Pinochle Club will resume meetings for February on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. The group meets Feb. 4 and 18, at 1 p.m. in room 101 in the lower level. If you have any questions, please contact Judi Mason by phone.

--Sally Sheahan

## Columbarium Task Force Update After January 2026 Meeting

The Columbarium Task Force met on January 12, 2026, to review the responses to our two-month churchwide survey regarding interest in Grace Lutheran Church establishing a columbarium on our grounds.

We had a good response from interested Grace members and so we invited our guest, Ralph Wehnes, chair of the columbarium committee of Shepherd of the Prairie Lutheran Church in Huntley, to share his insights into our next steps. His church recently completed a beautiful columbarium.



We shared a potential location near the northeast corner of our church building and the desire to have a two-sided wall-style columbarium starting with 24 niches. This is similar to the Calvary Catholic Cemetery site.

Ralph was able to give us excellent recommendations to assist in planning for growth and ensuring this

as an easily accessible and meditative spot.

It is important to remember that the columbarium expenses are paid through the purchases of the niches, not through the church's operating budget.

Our next steps are to pursue the local and state permit requirements and solicit bids from area suppliers of columbariums. We will keep you updated.

--Mary Noe, Columbarium Task Force Chair

## Presence Light Sponsors:

### February 1:

- In memory of Bob Unglaube; given by Bev and family.

### February 8:

- In memory of Bill's mom, Fay Kreznor; given by Bill & Nancy Kreznor.

### February 15:

- In memory of my husband, Virgil Boal Jr; given by Laura Boal.

### February 22:

- In honor of our 60th wedding anniversary; given by Ken & Kathy Zank.

## Bulletin Sponsors:

### February 1:

- In memory of Bob Unglaube; given by Bev and family.

### February 8:

- In honor of our grandson Dominic Arthur Meyer's birthday; given by Paul & Cindy Meyer.

### February 15:

- In memory of my husband, Virgil Boal Jr; given by Laura Boal.
- In memory of Joan Russell, Sheri's mom, who passed 2 years ago; given by the Conover Family.

### February 22:

- In honor of our 60th wedding anniversary; given by Ken & Kathy Zank
- In memory of Marlene L. Teuber and in honor of 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](http://gracewoodstock.org)**

## GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

### **Lead Pastor**

Rev. Amanda Bergstrom  
[abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org)

### **Office Coordinator**

Kim Smith  
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### **Financial Secretary**

Carrie Fiorina  
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### **Communications Coordinator**

Kari Gippert  
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### **Director of Youth Education**

Nyji Sirreayah  
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### **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**

Carlos Acosta, Michelle Anderson,  
Brian Gerloff, Carrie Jarnecke,  
Nancy Kreznor, Michael Liedtke,  
Mary Noe, Adele Petersen,  
Jeremy Schaaf

### **Treasurer**

Jane Gerloff