

NOVEMBER 2020 • VOLUME 19, NO. 10

6 G'S FOR NOVEMBER.....by Pastor John Cunningham

Thank you for the welcome I have received as I join you as interim pastor!

My wife Lanet and I are very much enjoying retirement, and then comes the unexpected call from the synod to serve with Pastor Amanda and you during this transitional time. It feels like the Holy Spirit's continuing work of calling, guiding, enlightening, and sanctifying God's people the church (Luther's Small Catechism on the Third Article of the Creed), in the context of Grace Lutheran, Woodstock.

Recently I saw an ad for a 5G network. It occurred to me that there are 5 "G"s that are keys to our faith as Christians. Then I thought of another one! So, here are 6 "G"s:

Of course, the first G is **God**. God is always first! God is constantly supporting us with countless blessings for life—both now and forever, through our savior Jesus. God is here for us, in love, no matter what, in times of joy or sorrow. We can always turn to God and depend on God to care.

Another G is **grace**. How appropriate to name a congregation Grace! God is eager to be merciful and invite everyone into life together. God's grace goes far beyond our imagination. How often people have been surprised and inspired to find God's grace at work. Just one example—long ago a former slave trader who turned to Jesus and reformed his life wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace".

We respond with another G, **gratitude**. The theologian John Douglas Hall writes that gratitude is the main response of a Christian to all of life. The more we understand God's grace, the more we will be thankful. The old song "Count Your Blessings" remains true—no matter what, we are surrounded by more good gifts of God than we can ever imagine. (oops—more Gs!)

Gratitude leads to another G, **generosity**. In gratitude for God's grace, we want to share it with others by being kind and caring. The more we understand God's blessings to us, the more we want to be generous in blessing others in whatever ways we can. That includes offerings, of course, but much more—our time, our talents, a supportive word, a smile.

In all of our Christian living, we look to God for **guidance**. We have really experienced this need as we have to keep dealing with the COVID pandemic. In terms of congregational life, Grace's leadership continues to seek God's guidance in everything from safely returning to worship together, to how to support individual members within our community of faith.

Finally, it occurred to me to add the G of **grow**. I've read more than one article asking if we have learned anything during the pandemic. In terms of our faith, we have been reminded that the church is the people, not the building! There has been a lot of creativity as congregations have found ways to worship, for instance. It sometimes seems that life now is a lot like wandering in the wilderness, but we know that story. God is there even in the wilderness, with something new—manna—to sustain the people on their way to the promised land.

A lot more could be said about these 6 "G"s! Let's explore them together. May the Spirit guide us as we trust God, live by grace in gratitude and generosity, and grow in our faith and life! Please continue to pray for Pastor Amanda, the staff, the Council, teams/committees, and volunteers, and me, as we seek the opportunities to move ahead in faithful ways.

EARLY NOVEMBER WORK DAY; DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON— Please come out and help keep Grace beautiful by doing some outdoor work. We can join together as a congregation and rake leaves together for Ken to dispose of. We will be observing safety measures by staying at least 6 feet away from each other and wearing masks at all times. Please bring your own rakes and gloves.

REOPENING TEAM UPDATE— Grace's reopening team is now meeting regularly to prepare plans to increase building usage for the possibilities of in-building worship and small group usage. Grace's mission priorities continue to be best care for one another and community in this time. We all look forward to opportunities for safe gathering. As plans are prepared, we will continue to keep everyone informed. Thank you for your prayerful support.

--Nancy Kreznor, Mike Liedtke, Matt Meiners, Bill Nattress, Pastor Amanda & Pastor John.

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 Jeff Clements, synod staff & their families, those serving in military conflicts, Arusha Town Lutheran Parish in Tanzania (our companion parish), Scott Bunch serving in the military.

Woodstock: Pastor John Cunningham & his family; Pastor Amanda Bergstrom & her family; Grace Staff; Grace Council

Health Concerns: Charlie Bell (friend of Jamielynn Wedoff), Mary Sue Boerner (friend of Paul Lockwood & Diane Baker-Lockwood), Myron Callihan (brother of Susan Payton), Jim Davis, Nancy Davis, Lori Dechant, Patrice Dunn, Robert Giron (brother of Patty Kozlow), Tom Goggin, Hal Goodman (friend of Bob & Janice Laird), Becca Guenther (niece of Gretchen & Claude Hutchens), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Steve Kosmen (loved one of the Koehn family), Elayna Kuipers (friend of the Wedoff Family), Colleen Laird, Anna Larsen (sister of Al Henniges), Elizabeth Lynd Loser, Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Kem Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Collene Nelsen (cousin of Debbi Lynd), Gloria Ogle, Andrea Paetsch (aunt of Debbi Lynd), Linda Page (friend of Joe Evanoff), Georgia Petersdorf (sister-in-law of Gladys Renner), Pat Peterson, Carol Raffel, Bruce Randolph (husband of Ila Randolph), Carol Rank, Shawn Rank (son of Carol Rank), Barbara Readell, Sheila Readell, Jayne Reicher (great niece of Barb & Wayne Japp), Herb & Bev Renner (brother & sister in law of Ken & Gladys Renner), Jessie & Sue Robertson (friends of Ron, Mary & Kimberly Koehn), Maria Rossini (family friend of Heidi Olsen and Tammy Goggin), Nicholas Ruffino (brother of Nathan Ruffino), Joan Russell (mother of Sheri Conover), John Rust (Aavang family friend), Colton Sciluffo (infant son of a friend of Joy Oberman), Nathaniel Shipp (family friend of Brian Meyers), Ann Sinnett (friend of Shirley Berna), Elsie Stoddard, Andrea Strayer (mother of Lisa Wahkowiak), Ginny Stroh (mother of Fay Wilson), Dave Sundby (brother-in-law of Deborah Evanoff), Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahon), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Bev Visconti, Addie Jo Wedoff, Nick Wedoff, Esther Wienke, Ruth Zirves

Sorrow: John Holman (brother of Mary Johnson)

Joys: Baptism of Luke Thomas Nenni (son of Nicholas & Karli Nenni)

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 week and may be renewed. Submissions to the *Friends in Prayer* e-mail and phone teams may also be submitted by telephone to the church office or by e-mail to 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 office.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER—The deadline for the October newsletter is **November 15**. Please send articles to Lauren Kleinjan at Kleinjan@gracewoodstock.org, or the church office. Questions: Call the office at 815-338-0554.

BLESSING.....by Pastor Amanda Bergstrom

“The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.” -Numbers 6:22-24

A few months ago, one of my friends emailed me their ‘covid theme song,’ a song they had been listening to each day as an important reminder. I’ve now been listening to this song several times a week too, and it calms me and centers me in God’s blessing, promises, enduring faithfulness, and love.

You can find “The Blessing” (by Chris Brown, Cody Carnes, Kari Jobe, Steven Furtick) and listen and pray, too. (try here on [Spotify](#) or [Apple Music](#)).

Dear friends in Christ, so many things are so hard right now. There is such heartbreak, anxiety, division, uncertainty, fear, exhaustion, and death; and, there is tension that even in the midst of all that, there is still joy, peace, life-giving relationships, possibility, hope, rest and new life.

Please join me in remembering that at the core of our being we are God’s beloved children, that God is for us, that God is faithful for thousands of generations. God is with you, dear church. God’s presence and love surrounds us in all things—God goes before you, behind you, beside you, all around and within. By day and night, in joy and sorrow, God is with you.

May God’s blessing bring you strength, good courage, calm, and a centering reminder. May Christ give you peace, now, and always. Verily, truly, let it be so; Amen.

PICTURE OR VIDEO SUBMISSION—BLESSINGS—We’d love to see your faces and hear your voices in another gathering of pictures & short videos. Earlier this year, Lauren Kleinjan prepared a video compilation of your photos during late spring/early summer. Now, we invite you to share a picture or video greeting to be a part of our Thanksgiving Eve worship service.

Please send a picture or video that answers the following:

I/we thank God for the blessing(s) of _____

Please submit your blessings photo or short video greeting to lkleinjan@gracewoodstock.org by **November 8th**. You are welcome to send in either 1 per person or 1 per household, and we ask that videos are less than 30 seconds. By submitting photo/videos, you are agreeing to have them published and released in a video compilation that will be shared online in a worship video and with Grace’s email list and Facebook group.

If you have any questions, please contact Lauren Kleinjan at lkleinjan@gracewoodstock.org or call/text at (815) 353-1600.

SUNDAY BOOK CLUB ON ZOOM—Sundays beginning November 1st from 10:00 - 11:30. Join us on ZOOM for an interesting discussion on Cristy Fossum's latest book "Beyond the Gate". She is the author who wrote the Sunday by Sunday series of books that originally began the Book Club at Grace. Discussion Questions are emailed out weekly. To join, please contact Shirley Busse at shirleybusse@comcast.net.

COLLEGE AGE/YOUNG ADULTS— Dear friends, while we won’t be able to gather as usual this year for the tradition of Breakfast with the Pastors on the day before Thanksgiving, we’re hoping to still find a time to connect online this month. Could you please send your email address/contact info to Pastor Amanda at abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org or 630-664-9016. Thanks & hope to see you soon!

WORSHIP THIS NOVEMBER—In this time of changing seasons, thanks be to God for the faith practice of worship. The act of worshipping God to give thanks and praise, hear God’s good news, and be forgiven, nourished, and sent forth in God’s beloved world.

We are grateful for the time and commitment of volunteers and staff to prepare and lead worship, and for the ways we are each able to still worship God in this time- from pre-recorded worship videos, to parking lot worship services, to the next season of change ahead.

We plan to gather for our last parking lot worship service this fall on November 1. We are then planning to try ‘new-to-Grace’ technology options to livestream worship services each Sunday from the sanctuary, and at the same time the Reopening Team is preparing plans for the possibility of in-building worship services. As both livestreaming and in-building worship options are in process, more information will follow as updates are available. Now, and for the foreseeable future- worship services will also continue to be available online.

Here are a few additional notes about upcoming worship opportunities this November.

- On **All Saints Sunday, November 1**, we will gather for our last parking lot worship service this fall, with Holy Communion at **9 a.m.** We thank God for all the baptized, both the famous and the forgotten, both those who lived in the past and those around us today.

During worship you will be invited to a time of candle lighting and reflection in remembrance of family and friends who are with God eternally. You can bring your own candle and lighter in your vehicle for worship in the parking lot, use a flashlight on your phone, or include a candle at home as you prepare a space to worship alongside the video posted online. Candles will be lit near the altar in thanksgiving for each person baptized at Grace this year.

- **Sunday, November 15, 10:00-11:00 A.M.**, this weekend you are invited to drive thru the parking lot to pick up consecrated Holy Communion elements from the morning worship service. Please arrive at Grace through the Kishwaukee Valley Road driveway entrance. If you have items to donate for the Food Pantry, you’ll see a drop off location first, then you can continue to the building’s main entrance to drive through the half circle and receive the Holy Communion elements in your vehicle.
- On **Thanksgiving Eve, November 25**, a worship video will be available online by 6 p.m. We hope you have an opportunity to worship that evening, or over the Thanksgiving holiday, as you are able. Let us give thanks and praise to God, even now, and always.
 - * Then, you are invited to an all-congregation Zoom call on Wednesday, November 25 at 7:30 P.M. Watch *Constant Contact* for more information. B.Y.O. Pie. and share an evening gathering online in community.



- **Sunday, November 29** marks the **first Sunday in Advent**. This year we will be journeying through this season around the theme, "Those Who Dream."

GOD’S FAITHFULNESS ENDURES FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION—Last month we celebrated Commitment Weekend by bringing or sending our Estimate of Giving Cards to indicate our intentions to give in 2021. Thank you for your generous and faithful stewardship; we are grateful for your commitments to give in the year ahead. If you have not yet had a chance to indicate your giving plans for next year, please return your Estimate of Giving Card by mailing or dropping it off in the church office. These estimates mark our intentions to give and can be changed as needed. Thank you for sharing in generous giving to God, thank you for sharing in the life of this faith community!

GRACE EMAILS—CONSTANT CONTACT— Do you receive emails from Grace Lutheran Church? In addition to this monthly newsletter, we often have other news to share via email and hope to connect with you in this way. Please call the church office or email Denise (dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org) to add your email address(es) to Grace’s email list.

THANKSGIVING DRIVE-THRU FOOD DRIVE—This year’s Thanksgiving Food Drive for the Woodstock Food Pantry will be held as a drive-thru donation drop-off on **Sunday, November 15**, from **10:00-11:00 A.M.** in Grace’s parking lot.

A group of volunteers will be in the parking lot to receive your donations. If you have questions or would like to help sort items that day, please contact Lanna Einspahr, 815-245-5729.

If you are here for worship in the parking lot on November 1, you can pick up a grocery bag with a list of suggested items; or please see that list below, and bring items to drop-off at Grace on November 15 from 10-11 a.m.

GRACE THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE

Suggested items: cash, beef stew, canned tuna, corn, peas, beans, peaches, pears, fruit cocktail, oatmeal, soups: mushroom, vegetable, tomato; cereal, pancake mix, peanut butter, jelly, jello, pudding, macaroni & cheese, rice, shampoo, bath soap, toilet tissue, granola bars, stuffing mix, boxed potatoes, anything non-perishable- canned or boxed.

Thank you. May your family have a blessed Thanksgiving.

GRACE PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR—Are you creative? A self-starter? Looking to make a difference? A believer in faith-based education? Grace Lutheran Church is looking for a motivated individual to serve as Preschool Director. This position would be part-time (25 hours per week) beginning in January to help re-establish the preschool for the fall of 2021 following a hiatus in 2020. The director would work collaboratively with an established preschool board.

Grace Lutheran Church is a welcoming community of faith rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ and dedicated to our mission of **Sharing God’s Grace**. We achieve this mission by living out our vision of worship, outreach, ministry with the poor, spirituality, discipleship, youth and leadership.

Qualified individuals will be over 21 and possess the required State of Illinois and DCFS certifications; have excellent oral and written communication skills; a knowledge of early childhood curriculum and pedagogy; a working knowledge of finances; and a commitment to faith-based education.

To apply, please submit a resume to lkleinjan@gracewoodstock.org.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AT GRACE – Help provide decorations for our sanctuary this Christmas. Give a gift in “honor of someone” or “in memory of a loved one” or “to the glory of God.” Mail in your coupon below, along with your \$14.00 gift to Grace Lutheran Church, 1300 Kishwaukee Valley Rd., Woodstock, IL 60098. Please **print clearly**, as you want it to appear in the bulletin. Payments due in the office by **December 6, 2020**.

We hope to have poinsettias available for pickup in the vestibule before Christmas, December 22-23 from 10 am and 3 pm. Just call the office to make sure there will be someone there to buzz you in.

Amount: _____

CHOOSE ONE PER COUPON: (Please print)

In Memory Of: _____

In Honor Of: _____

To the Glory of God: _____

GIVEN BY: _____



October 2020

Presence Light Sponsors:

November 1

- In memory of my dear husband Bert, who went to be with the Lord three years ago, given by Carol Rank

November 8

- In honor of our 49th wedding anniversary, given by Ken & Gladys Renner

November 15

- Belated birthday wishes to Bill (November 9), given by Nancy Kreznor

November 22

- In celebration of Benjamin's 15th birthday on November 21, given by Larry & Laura Lagerhausen

November 29

- In memory of Dorothy Bartram, given by her family

Bulletin Sponsors:

November 1

- In loving memory of Reed G. Larson, given by Dallas, Ellen, Kirk and Evan Larson

November 8

- In honor of family, given by Diane Schulz
- In honor of our 49th wedding anniversary, given by Ken & Gladys Renner

November 16

- In honor of Kirk and Danielle Larson's birthdays!, given by Dallas & Ellen Larson

November 25

- To the glory of God and in thankfulness for all our blessings, given by Don & Marylee Steinwehe

We currently have openings available in December and into next year 2021, for bulletin & presence light sponsors

Even though we are not in the church building yet for our services, this ministry continues. It is a great way to celebrate occasion's, and honor or grieve loved ones with your church family. Please contact Carrie or Denise in the church office if you are interested in sponsoring. 815-338-0554

eGIVING OPTIONS- In addition to weekly offering envelopes, Grace has additional electronic giving options available. Please give in the way that is most convenient for you and let us know if you have any questions.

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 4 business days in advance of a scheduled contribution.

Give Online at our website: www.gracewoodstock.org

Give by Text by texting **877-698-3604**

1. **Get Started:** Enter the 10-digit GivePlus Text number (877-698-3604) and the amount you wish donate, then press send.
2. **Register:** You will receive a registration link. Click the link and enter your contact and payment information. Tap "Process."
3. **Give:** After registration is complete, you will receive a verification text as well as a receipt via email.
4. **Repeat:** For future giving, simply send a text with the amount you wish to give, and it will process automatically.

Give through Give+ Mobile App by downloading the app

- Download the FREE app on your Apple or Android phone by searching for "GivePlus Church" in your app store
- Make one-time or recurring donations using your debit/credit card or checking/savings account
- Securely and conveniently manage donations using Touch ID/Fingerprint, PIN or password
- Log in or donate as a guest

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Visit the Grace website for the most up-to-date information for all that is happening at Grace! gracewoodstock.org