



GRACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Grace *for* Today

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GRACE for today.....by Pastor Amanda Bergstrom

The one year ago memories are adding up. One year since a last visit, a last shared meal, the last regular school day, the last unlimited size gathering for worship with communal singing, the last days of being so blissfully unaware of all that I and we take for granted. It's been a year, friends. May God's peace that surpasses understanding guard your hearts and hold you together through these days.

Although we never could have imagined all this, here we are. And even though the next days and months and year are still uncertain too, here we are. But God is here too. In my own impatience for change and eagerness for future plans and dreams, I've been moved to joy and hope by more immediate things: God's grace, grace enough, even if just for this day.

I've been hearing God's grace in these birds outside, who seem not to have noticed the depths of snow and freezing temperatures. For though it seems a bit early, they've starting chirping and singing out early in the morning. God's grace for today, that spring is on its way, and with it, new life.

My heart has swelled and tears form in my eyes, with a joy that catches me be surprise each time I hear someone has received their first (or second!) dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. I am overwhelmed by the hopefulness of hearing how you, people I know and love in this faith community, as well as some of my friends and family, are starting to receive access to appointments and vaccination. And though we have quite a long way to go for equitable access and increased distribution, oh it is grace for the day each time I hear someone has received a vaccine. God's grace for today, that there will be a way out of this pandemic.

Where are you encountering God's grace, grace enough for this day? What is being immediately made know to you today about God's love? How does even the faintest hint of grace—in creation, in someone else, in a difficult but honest conversation—also stir up hope in God's future?

As a people gathered around a mission of sharing God's grace, I pray that God's amazing, life-giving, and redeeming grace is a blessing to you and to all, grace enough for this and every day that God has made.

Vaccine Questions? In addition to contacting your primary care provider, the McHenry County Department of Health has a COVID-19 Call Center from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, at (815) 334-4045, that you can call with questions or to enroll for the vaccine as you are eligible and interested. The State of Illinois also has a website with information about where and how to schedule an appointment with local pharmacies (such as Walgreens or Jewel-Osco) at <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location>.

SENIOR MINISTRY – Senior Ministry is alive and well, and we are continuing to reach out to our older members with a monthly phone call. If you are not receiving these calls and would like to, please give call me at (815) 338-9063 and I will set you up with a phone buddy. We will also be delivering a live Easter Plant to all members 80 and over on March 20th, the First Day of Spring! If you are sensitive to floral fragrances please give call me and I will see that you receive an alternate gift. Other members over 75 will be receiving a small gift in the mail. Please know we are thinking about you during this difficult time and dearly loved by your church family.

SUNDAY BOOK CLUB – The Sunday Book Club as been meeting every Sunday from 10-11:30am on ZOOM, but you can also join by phone. We are reading the book “The Gift of Years” by Joan Chittister. New members are always welcome and discussion questions are emailed out weekly. Please call Shirley Busse at (815) 338-9063 to receive the questions and for the Zoom link to join in.

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 Amanda Bergstrom & her family; Pastor John Cunningham & his 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), Denise Hoover, Anne Johnson, Nicholas Karasch (nephew of Jamielynn Wedoff), Steve Kosmen (loved one of the Koehn family), Elayna Kuipers (friend of the Wedoff Family), 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, 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), Dave Sundby (brother-in-law of Deborah Evanoff), Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahan), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Bev Visconti, Addie Jo Wedoff, Nick Wedoff, Esther Wienke, Ruth Zirves

Sorrows: Elsie Stoddard, Wayne Bell

Joys: Baptism of Lauren Huffer and Harrison Learman (son of Michael Learman & Lauren Huffer)

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 April newsletter is **March 15th**. Please send articles to Lauren Kleinjan at lkleinjan@gracewoodstock.org, or the church office. Questions: Call the office at 815-338-0554.



LENT AND SPRINGTIME.....by Pastor John Cunningham

I have a note to order a fruit tree that was sold out last year. My note says to order it as early as December. That seemed way too early! But now, with all the snow and freezing temperatures, although mid-February still seems much too soon, I place the order. And as I do, I'm already anticipating eating the delicious fruit that it will produce (in three years . . .).

Even now, gardeners imagine the harvest (or the flowers) as we plan what and when to plant.

The word "Lent" comes from a word that means "lengthen" and so "springtime", when days lengthen. Do you notice the change? Even on cloudy days there's ever-increasing daylight. The whole season is gradually and constantly on the move to warmth and another growing season.

Lent gives courage for living in the present because we have confidence about the future. The traditional Lenten disciplines help to connect us to the solid, dependable, continuing presence of God that we might otherwise not notice or take for granted. Yet God's presence is as reliable as the lengthening days of spring!

Lenten disciplines include Bible study, worship, prayer, "giving something up for Lent" (or taking on something that helps others). Grace offers midweek worship/conversation opportunities (on zoom), and Lenten devotionals, in addition to our Sunday and holy Week worship services.

During Lent we remember that Jesus did not escape the realities of human living. He was tempted. He saw plenty of suffering in others and experienced it himself. Death, too!

Yet throughout his life (and death and beyond), Jesus was grounded in God and the promises of a glorious future. He announced: "the kingdom of God has come among you." He was willing to go to outcasts and sinners, people who were considered "hopeless cases", because he knew God's power for forgiveness, healing and life. Expressing God's grace and abundant love, in words and actions he taught love for God and neighbors, justice, reconciliation, and peace.

Lent is a season of encouragement for us to connect the vision of God's will and God's kingdom that Jesus provides, to our words and actions as we live day by day.

2021 CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCING EVENT (CRE) - The annual synod-wide event which provides workshops on various areas of ministry to congregation members and leaders will be held Saturday, **March 13, 2021**, via Zoom 8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. Participant registration for the CRE is now available at <https://nisynod.org/pages/registration> and registration closes on March 7. The Registration Form lists the workshops being offered and the Session in which they will be held. Those registering will register for specific workshops and, prior to the Event, will receive information on how to participate in the Event and how to join the workshops for which they registered.

HOUSEHOLD GETAWAYS—Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center is an ELCA camp located in Oregon, Illinois that is offering a variety of different programs due to COVID-19. One option includes a Household Getaway, <http://lomc.org/family-getaway/> for immediate households to spend time together away from home.

BUILDING ENTRY & COVENANT OF CARE—At Grace we are asking everyone who enters the building to commit to care for one another through posted guidelines and entry procedures. All staff and building guests are to practice health safety precautions, including wash/sanitize hands, wear a mask, and stay a minimum of six feet apart. If you test positive for COVID-19 within the next two weeks of being in the building, you commit to informing the church office ASAP. We ask everyone to review three screening questions about COVID-19 diagnosis, exposure, and symptoms within the last 14 days each time you arrive at the building. Please call the office first at (815) 338-0554 if you need to stop by during the week.

NEW GRACE PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR—We are pleased to announce that Casey Dezwijger is the new Grace Preschool Director! Welcome Casey!

Hello Grace Lutheran Church!

My name is Casey A. Dezwijger (dez-why-gur). I have loved working with young children and in early childhood education for 10 years. I have held multiple different positions such as: Assistant Teacher, Lead Teacher, Substitute Teacher, Preschool Lead Teacher, Assistant Director, and now Director. I have my Bachelor of Science in Education, with specialization in Early Childhood Education/Special Education. I have worked and expanded my knowledge at early childhood care centers and a Head Start preschool before joining the Grace Lutheran Preschool team.

My birthday is March 27th and can't wait to celebrate my next birthday. I married my long-time partner Adrian Krynski in June a couple years ago. My main passions are: reading, coffee, cooking, baking, crafting, decorating, gardening, travel, and anything to do with Disney or turtles. I love having everything organized and in its place. I have one pet cat named Cleo short for Cleopatra. I come from a large extended family and immediate family is a very important aspect of my everyday life. I also enjoy singing and listening to all kinds of music from around the world. My most recent craft hobby is creating and making "Cricut" items. I'm still learning how to use it, but excited to see what I can make in the future.



If you have any questions or we share interests I'm available to talk at any time! I'm looking forward to meeting and getting to know each person at Grace Lutheran Church!

Casey A. Dezwijger

EASTER FLOWERS AT GRACE—Help provide decorations for our sanctuary this Easter. Give a gift in "honor of someone" or "in memory of a loved one" or "to the glory of God." Mail in your request, along with you \$15.00 gift to Grace Lutheran Church, 1300 Kishwaukee Valley Rd., Woodstock, IL 60098. Please print your request clearly, just as you want it to appear. Payments are due in the office by **March 19, 2021**. Sponsors will be printed in the April Grace for Today.

Easter Lilies can be picked up outside following Easter worship on Sunday and if any are left over, we are going to share them with our homebound members.

Amount: _____

CHOOSE ONE PER COUPON:

In Memory Of:

In Honor Of:

To the Glory of God:

Given by: _____





LENT 2021

Sundays. Worship services continue to be livestreamed on [Grace's YouTube channel](#) at 9 A.M. on Sundays. You can subscribe to the channel and turn on notifications to be alerted each time the livestream begins, or you can find the YouTube channel to worship at a later time. Worship service videos will continue to be posted to the Grace website later each day for you to worship when you are able.

Being Church - Lent Midweek Gatherings. What does this mean? Does being the church matter? This Lent, we invite you to gather on Zoom on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. We will share 30 minutes together around Holden Evening Prayer & conversation and reflection on being church together. Please see Constant Contact emails for the Zoom link.

3/3	7:00 P.M.	We are Lutheran.
3/10	7:00 P.M.	We are church together.
3/17	7:00 P.M.	We are church for the sake of the world.
3/24	7:00 P.M.	What difference do we make?



Lenten Devotionals. Printed copies of a daily Lenten devotional booklet are available for pick up from a bin outside the main entrance. We hope you will incorporate daily devotions in your Lenten practice this year. You can also request a tablet/computer version of the devotional by emailing Denise in the church office (dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org)

Holy Week & Easter Sunday 2021

Palm/Passion Sunday- March 28, 9:00 A.M.

Livestream via [Grace's YouTube channel](#) & video available later that day

Maundy Thursday- April 1, 12:00 P.M.

Livestream via [Grace's YouTube channel](#) & video available later that day

Good Friday- April 2, 12:00 P.M.

Livestream via [Grace's YouTube channel](#) & video available later that day

Vigil of Easter- April 3, 4:00 P.M.

Parking lot worship service (89.3 FM) & Livestream ([Grace's YouTube](#))

Easter Sunday- April 4

9:00 A.M. *Livestream via [Grace's YouTube channel](#) & video available later that day*

11:00 A.M. *Parking lot—full worship service with Holy Communion (89.3 FM)*

Presence Light Sponsors:

March 7

In memory of Scott Freeman, Rusty Freeman and Sherry & Sonny Bukowski, given by Denise Klabunde

March 28

To the glory of God for my birth 101 years ago on Palm Sunday, given by Marge Birk

Bulletin Sponsors:

March 28

To the glory of God for my 101st birthday on Palm Sunday, given by Marge Birk

We currently have many openings available in 2021, for bulletin & presence light sponsors

This ministry continues whether we are in person, watching from our home or from our parking lot. It continues to be 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

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

GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

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