

JULY 2022 • VOLUME 21, NO. 7

A Few of My Favorite Things

The unscripted, impromptu, and caring conversations that just happen when people gather in the same space and time are one of the things I missed most when we entered into that season of physical distance. As we find ourselves reclaiming space and gathering opportunities, it's these unexpected conversations that I find so life-giving and honest and renewing.

Oh what a gift to share in meaningful connections—there is so much joy shared among the volunteers at the food distribution events every other Monday. At spring or fall workdays people pause from weeding and mulching for conversation; or each Sunday in the narthex before or after worship some people check in on one another's week. Out and about on the Grace grounds when people have met for Pray & Play gatherings or the recent Summer Kickoff there is such beauty in sharing in one another's company. Each year it is a delight to see people who may not know each other journey as a small group of voting members to represent Grace at synod assembly. And then by fall, I rejoice when we share in the ELCA Service Day—where we are committed to serving with neighbors in the local and global community, yes; but also where we get to know each other and meet new people as we serve side by side.

These are a few of my favorite things—seeing you, talking with you, and witnessing how you use your gifts and passions and capacity to care for others by simply being in meaningful relationship with one another. As you show up and be a part of those unscripted, impromptu conversations that can bring such insight and purpose and connection to life, we get to see the Holy Spirit weaving together a vibrant community of God's beloved people.

This is God's work being made visible *and* nurturing community requires a bit of mutual effort and commitment. As this summer brings opportunities to rest and renew, perhaps to travel, to pause or begin different commitments—I ask you to dedicate some portion of your energy and time to meaningful connections with others. Be present with the people you know that need caring companions, summon up the courage to reach out to people you may not know, and show up for yourself and for others so you can be a part of those conversations of care and connection.

And then, I pray you will be discerning how to lead and support the mission opportunities of Grace Lutheran Church. This month you are invited to consider the invitation to complete a nomination form if you are interested in positions of elected leadership—on Church Council, the Endowment Board, Nominating Committee, and next year's voting members for the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly.

Next month, you are invited to be a part of a ministry fair, to gather around shared interests and ministries, to renew leadership and commitments, and together live into Grace's mission to share God's grace.

Those things we love or miss or have yet to create in this faith community, I trust the Spirit is at work stirring up newness of life, and I also believe they require authentic presence, active participation, and a renewed commitment to live among God's faithful people for the sake of sharing the good news of Jesus and God's love. I hope to see you soon, beloved of God.

Peace,

Pastor Amanda



WEEKLY GRACE NOTES - In addition to this Grace for Today newsletter, we have additional updates and news shared through our weekly Thursday emails. Please call the office or email Carrie Fiorina cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org to add or update your email address if you do not already receive these emails.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK - If you are on Facebook, please join us at the public group "Grace Lutheran Church, Woodstock, IL" for community news, pictures, and event information.

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)

Woodstock: 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), Nancy Brown, Myron Callihan (brother of Susan Payton), Jim Davis, Lori Dechant, Patrice Dunn, Joe Evanoff, Stephane Fylpaa-Asher, Barbara Gehrke, Robert Giron (brother of Patty Kozlow), Stuart Given, Tom Goggin, Hal Goodman (friend of Bob & Janice Laird), Becca Guenther (niece of Gretchen & Claude Hutchens), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Leonard Haulotte (brother of Laura Boal), Denise Hoover, Anne Johnson, Marcia Kalisik (daughter of Barb Murray), Nicholas Karasch (nephew of Jamielynn Wedoff), Steve Kosmen (loved one of the Koehn family), John Kunzie, Judie Kunzie, Roger Long, Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Kem Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Linda Nogan (sister of Sheila Readel), Gloria Ogle, Alan Page (friend of Joe Evanoff), Linda Page (friend of Joe Evanoff), Georgia Petersdorf (sister-in-law of Gladys Renner), Pat Peterson, Barbara Readel, Sheila Readel, 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), Jessie & Sue Robertson (friends of Ron, Mary & Kimberly Koehn), Diane Rouse (cousin of Lisa Washkowiak), Nathan Ruffino, Nicholas 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), Hollis Shutt, Ann Sinnett (friend of Shirley Berna), Kathy Stone, Dave Sundby (brother-in-law of Deborrah Evanoff), Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahon), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Bev Visconti, Addie Jo Wedoff, Nick Wedoff, Esther Wienke

Joys: Baptism of Benjamin Edward Ayala (son of Israel Ayala & Jennifer Johnson) and Easton Nicholas Behrns (son of William & Leslie Behrns)

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 **August** newsletter is **July 15th**. Please send articles to Tammy Baier at tbaier@gracewoodstock.org, or the church office. Questions: Call the office at 815-338-0554.

Worship this July

This summer, we hope you will gather for worship as you are able, and/or worship at home as needed. We gather for worship on **Sundays at 9:00 A.M.** in the sanctuary, via [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website.

Please **sign up to serve** as [Ushers](#), [Greeters](#), [Reader](#), and [Communion Assistants](#), and see additional opportunities to volunteer below:

If you are interested in learning to be a camera operator, sound, or livestream technician, please contact Bill Nattress bill.nattress@gmail.com

If you would like to join the newly reforming altar guild rotation, please contact Karen Reinhard, kereinhard@yahoo.com

If you are interested in joining the rotation for Children's Sermons, please contact Carrie Fiorina, cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org

If you have questions about volunteering as a Reader, Greeter or Usher - please contact Fay Wilson faymwlsn@yahoo.com

NEW MEMBERS-

On Pentecost Sunday in June we welcomed new members! Please introduce yourself on Sundays and join in welcoming and getting to know one another this summer. Here's a brief introduction to a couple of our new members:

Carlos Campos

Current Hometown: Woodstock

Interesting facts about you: always trying to volunteer, love the Cubs, Bulls, Bears, Blackhawks, and like any team playing the White Sox

Activities or hobbies that you like to do: roller skating on Saturday nights, Farmer's Market and meditation at Blue Lotus on Saturdays.

Louis Licastro

Current Hometown: Woodstock

Activities or hobbies that you like to do: hiking, climbing, camping, travel, bowling, gardening, cooking, and time with family.



<p>LEADERSHIP NOMINATIONS - As we look ahead to our Congregational Meeting on August 28, you are invited to prayerfully consider submitting a nomination form for positions of leadership on Church Council, Endowment Board, Nominating Committee, and as voting members for the 2023 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly. Please consider how you might be called to serve in our faith community and return a completed nomination form by July 11 to the church office (printed copies at the Information Desk or electronically through Grace Notes weekly email).</p>



Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center

Prayers for Summer Camp! Please join in praying for Grace's confirmation students and YSJ- High School Youth, and their leaders as they share a week at camp, July 24-29 at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center in Oregon, IL. Join Grace's Facebook group, and you can also follow LOMC on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/LOMCROCKS> to see pictures posted throughout the week.

ADULT BOOK CLUB- DISCUSSING NEW MITCH ALBOM NOVEL

Mitch Albom, author of bestsellers like "The Five People You Meet in Heaven" and "Tuesdays with Morrie," is the writer of the latest book being discussed at the Adult Book Club in the Parlor each Sunday after worship (approximately 10 a.m.). In Albom's "The Stranger in the Lifeboat," a novel just released last year, a group of shipwrecked passengers must face the question: What would happen if we cried out to God for help, and someone claiming to be God appeared before us? "Thank the Lord we found you," a passenger says to a mysterious man floating in the waves who they've just pulled into the lifeboat "I am the Lord," the newcomer says.

Is he? He says he can save everyone in the lifeboat but only if all of them believe in him. Would you believe? The publisher says "The Stranger in the Lifeboat" is a "uniquely uplifting story that will leave you examining your own beliefs, while suggesting that answers to our prayers may be found where we least expect them."

We just started this book on June 19, so you're welcome to catch up and start talking about this intriguing book on July 10 (we aren't meeting on July 3). You can join us in person or on Zoom. If you have any questions, just reach out to Howard Hoyt, Sally Sheahan, or Paul Lockwood. See you soon!

GRACE SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS - The Endowment Committee at Grace Lutheran Church is responsible for administering the Readel Memorial Scholarship Fund and Allen Memorial Scholarship Fund. Both of these scholarships are for post high school education. The Readel Memorial Scholarship Fund is available to students pursuing a full-time Christian vocation or related areas. The Allen Memorial Scholarship is for students attending an accredited Lutheran institution. These funds are for active members of Grace Lutheran Church who are in good standing. The money awarded each year depends on the amount available. Monies are to be paid directly to the institution and not to the student or parents. Applications are available through the Church Office or on the Grace website. On the navigation bar at the top go to education, then scholarships. Scholarship applications for both the Readel and Allen funds are due into the Grace Lutheran Church Office by **July 1, 2022**. All scholarship applications are reviewed by the Endowment Committee and voted on during the quarterly meeting in July; payments are made in August.

CURRENT OPENINGS- After gathering for conversation and listening sessions as a congregation at the beginning of the year, Grace's council met to review themes for future mission priorities, which included worship & music, relationships, education & youth, outreach, and communication. Last month job descriptions were posted and applications are requested for the following part-time positions: Director of Youth Education, and Director of Worship & Music. We invite you to encourage interested candidates to submit a cover letter and resume; job descriptions will be posted on the front page of the website until positions are filled.





NORTHERN ILLINOIS SYNOD - BISHOP ELECT-

At the June Synod Assembly, a new bishop was elected to a six-year term for our Northern Illinois Synod. The Rev. Stacie Fidlar will begin serving as Bishop of the Northern Illinois Synod on September 1, and further information regarding an Installation Service will be available through the synod website: <https://nisynod.org/>

2022 ELCA CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

- Our congregation, Grace Lutheran Church, is a part of the Northern Illinois Synod, which is one of 65 synods in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Every three years voting members from across our denomination gather for the ELCA Churchwide Assembly. Please join in prayer for the upcoming 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly which will be held in Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 8-12, <https://www.elca.org/CWA-2022>

PASTORAL CARE- As a reminder, hospitals do not notify churches or pastors when a member is hospitalized; please call the church office if you or a member of your family would welcome prayer and pastoral care. When Pastor Amanda is away for continuing education or time off, our office staff will connect you with the pastor available for pastoral coverage while she is away.

KITCHEN- Do you enjoy cooking and hosting meals? Are you already or would you be willing to become a Certified Food Safe Manager and support the use of Grace's kitchen? If so, please call the church office (815-338-0554).



QUARTERLY STATEMENTS - This July, quarterly giving statements will be sent by email (or placed in the mail if we do not have your email address). Please contact the church office with any questions (815-338-0554). Thank you for your financial offerings in support of mission and ministry through Grace Lutheran Church.

50FORWARD EVENTS AT LUTHERDALE- *50Forward* events are faith formation and educational programs designed specifically for adults in their 3rd chapter of life. Time together includes prayer, Bible Study, conversation, lunch and a program led by a resource leader. Attend one or attend all—and be sure to invite friends to join you. See Lutherdale's website for more information about upcoming events: <https://www.lutherdale.org/50forward>



July 13 – Pinochle 1 p.m. in rm 102
July 27 – Pinochle 1 p.m. in rm 102

August 21 – We will be holding a ministry fair in Luther Hall after worship. More information on committees and other ways to volunteer and serve will be available.

August 28 – Congregational Meeting after worship. Ministry updates and elections.

INVITATION- Bishop Clements' Farewell Reception-

As the Northern Illinois Synod prepares for Bishop Jeffrey Clements' retirement this fall, all are invited to send notes of appreciation to Bishop and Paulette at the following address, Northern Illinois Synod, 639 38th Street, Sorensen Hall 322, Rock Island, IL 61201, and all are invited to contribute a gift of any size in their honor towards Lutheran Disaster Response.

Presence Light Sponsors:

July 3rd:

- In Gratefulness for all Veterans who have served to keep us free and to those who made the ultimate sacrifice. May we always be Grateful and never forget, given by Adele Petersen

July 10th:

- In honor of the volunteers & staff that keep the church grounds looking great. Thank you, given by Nancy & Bill Kreznor.

July 17th:

- In honor of Joan Russell, Sheri Conover's Mom on her 94th birthday, July 16th, given by the Conover family.

July 24th:

- In honor of our daughters Kim & Tracie's birthdays, given by Ken & Kathy Zank.

July 31st:

- To the glory of God, given by Andy & Mary Beth.

Bulletin Sponsors:

July 10th:

- To the glory of God, given by Bob & Joyce Shook.

July 17th:

- In honor of Andy's birthday, given by Mary Beth.

July 24th:

- In honor of our daughters Kim & Tracie's birthdays, given by Ken & Kathy Zank.

July 31st:

- In honor of Mark Miller's birthday, given by Beth, Laura, Ryan & Bailey Miller.

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 Online at our website: gracewoodstock.org

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

- Enter the 10-digit number (877-698-3604) and the amount you wish 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 4 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
abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org

Administrative Secretary

Denise Klabunde
dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org

Office Assistant/Bookkeeper

Carrie Fiorina
cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org

Interim Director of Communications

Tammy Baier
tbaier@gracewoodstock.org

Parish Musicians

Terry Aavang, Jan Burns,
Tammy Baier, Carrie Filetti

Building Supervisor

Ken Zank

Custodians

Chris & Kim Ethridge

Officers & Council

Andy Bellavia, Lisa Gerloff-Banker,
Diana Frisbie, Gayle Hoch,
Kevin Kleinjan, Paul Lockwood,
Mike Liedtke, Matt Meiners, Mary Noe,
Robert Teuber
council@gracewoodstock.org