

AUGUST 2022 • VOLUME 21, NO. 8

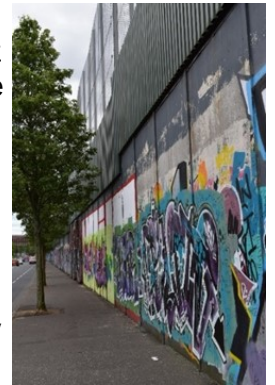
Divided

I recently had the opportunity to visit Scotland and Ireland, with a day in Northern Ireland, during the postponed international travel portion of the Lilly National Clergy Renewal Grant. I encountered such beauty and wonder in the people we met and places we visited, and I am so grateful for this renewal experience.

Woven throughout our travels were stories of faithfulness—of loss and change, revival and persistence, pain and grief, healing and hope. Like each of our individual lives, like our church community, like generations of God's faithful people—joy and sorrow continue to find ways to simultaneously exist and endure.



In between a week of living in community at the Iona Abbey in Scotland and a week of traveling as a family around Ireland, we went on a guided tour to the Giant's Causeway and Belfast. I stood beside this "peace wall" (see pictures) in Belfast, frozen in a flood of memories. I thought of the border wall I had stood beside dividing the United States and Mexico, where a fence extends out into the ocean. I thought of the separation wall I have stood beside in the West Bank between Palestine and Israel. There in Belfast, I stood beneath these walls that separate neighboring communities divided by religion and politics. These so-called "peace walls" were originally intended as temporary efforts to reduce violence between peoples.



These separating walls make painfully clear how humanity is divided in far too many ways, places, and times. Each of these communities carry heart-breaking traumas, complex histories, varied perspectives, and devastating division. *O Lord, hear our prayers and reconcile your people.*

As I stood there in Belfast, recalling the other places and stories that have formed and shaped my heart—I thought too of the less visible, though no less structural, ways we are divided—divided by class and race, theological interpretation, personal preferences, politics, science, passion, and indifference. We may not live under an imposing physical wall, but we dwell pretty well entrenched in sides of the aisle and opinion. These divisions cannot be the world as God intends. For by God's grace, love, and work we are united by Christ, reconciled and restored to relationship with God and neighbor.

I hope you will consider your options and actions as a people whom God has called beloved, whom God has called to live in community. In the words of a hymn we will sing in August, how might you hear God's call to "build a longer table not a higher wall" (ACS 1062)?

For our lives are filled with so many options and possibilities—and I pray you will choose to share God's grace. Choose to cultivate community and connection over festering in division. Participate in God's mission, not because it is self-serving but because we are called to love and serve God and neighbor. And I hope you will show up—for the sake of a world in need, for the well-being of people who are far too divided and distant, for love of the world as God intends.

This August, we will continue to gather in Jesus' name, and I hope you will be there to worship God, bless the start of the school year, witness confirmands affirm their baptism, engage in the ministry fair, and participate in the congregational meeting. I look forward to seeing you soon and witnessing and sharing in the amazing ways God in Christ gathers people together.

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, Lucille Fergen (mother of Karen Hansen), 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, 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, Ila Randolph, 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

Sorrow: Helen Stanger

Joy: Baptism of Amelia Jean Baartz (daughter of Melissa & Justin Baartz)

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 **September** newsletter is **August 15th**. Please send articles to Kari Gippert at kgippert@gracewoodstock.org, or the church office. Questions: Call the office at 815-338-0554.

Worship this August

See you soon, dear church, as we gather in Jesus' name to worship God together. 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.

Backpack & Back to School Blessing- on **Sunday, August 14** you are welcome to bring backpacks to worship share in a time of prayer and blessing before the start of the new school year ahead.

Affirmation of Baptism- Confirmation- join in worship on **Sunday, August 21** to witness and celebrate with confirmands as they affirm their baptism at the conclusion of their confirmation classes.

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

DRAWN TO THE WORD WORSHIP SERVICE- One part of Grace's Lilly National Clergy Renewal Grant that has been postponed a couple years is now coming soon! Please make plans to worship on **Sunday, October 16** at 9 A.M. as we share in a special worship service as a part of our congregational renewal activities. Experience a *Drawn to the Word* worship and artistic experience where Artist and Pastor Paul Oman will paint a larger-than-life sized mural before your eyes at Grace Lutheran Church, October 16 at 9:00 A.M. This story will unfold artistically, musically, narratively and Scripturally during the event. All are welcome. Come and see!

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING- Sunday, August 28 @ 10:15 a.m.

This year's Congregational Meeting will be held in hybrid format. If you are unable to attend in person, you may attend via the zoom link below. Elections will be held — a remote voting procedure will be explained at the meeting if you are participating via zoom; in-person attendees will vote via paper ballots as in the past. Following the official meeting, we will have a short Ministry Matters session with updates on Pastor Amanda's sabbatical travel and church mission.

Please plan on attending to participate in the continuing life of Grace Lutheran Church.

If you can not make it in person, Grace Lutheran Church is inviting you to join us via Zoom.

Topic: Grace Congregational Meeting

Time: Aug 28, 2022 10:15 AM Central Time

To join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89085636707?pwd=TXJwamh0RXpwWGJZZ0kwNmhwR3ZwQT09>

Meeting ID: 890 8563 6707

Passcode: 018220

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,89085636707#,,,*018220#

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799

MINISTRY FAIR – August 21—As the seasons change, we hope that you will all take time to re-evaluate the role you believe the church should have in your lives and in the life of the greater community. What will your place be in that church body?

To that end, we will be hosting a Ministry Fair in Luther Hall after worship on Sunday, August 21. Tables will be set up for people to review the goals of our existing committees and to talk with others about what those committees might look like as we re-establish our lives together.

Please consider how you might be involved in what matters most to you about Grace. Where is God calling you to participate? Which of the ministries are exciting to you? If you've served on one committee for years, prayerfully consider if a change might be right for you.

This is a list of Grace's existing priority ministries. Where might you be called to serve?

Adult Education – includes Bible studies, book studies, social issues studies.

Christian Education– includes Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, confirmation, high school youth, college age/young adults.

Congregation Care– care for the congregation including home communions, ministry to seniors, gift baskets, phone calls, grief care, and fellowship events.

Evangelism– announcements and invitations to nonmembers, welcome and hospitality, welcoming new members, encouraging those who aren't attending.

Outreach– serving human needs, locally and globally, advocating for the poor and powerless, seeking dignity, justice, and peace; Meals on Wheels; food pantry; PADS; WACM/DAP; Christmas family sharing; Good Gifts.

Property– maintenance and cleaning of Grace's facilities and grounds; work days.

Stewardship – motivating financial support so that Grace's ministries are possible.

Worship and Music – aiding in implementing weekly and special services; supportive aspects of worship such as choirs, readers, and altar guild.

We are reminded of Romans 12:4-5 "For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of one another."

We look forward to continue working together to be the church.

Blessings,

Lisa Banker, Andy Bellavia, Pastor Amanda Bergstrom, Diana Frisbie, Gayle Hoch, Kevin Kleinjan, Mike Liedtke, Paul Lockwood, Matt Meiners, Mary Noe, Robert Teuber

Grace Lutheran Church Council

"God's work. Our hands." Sunday



ELCA SERVICE DAY- Save the date for our annual "God's work. Our hands." Sunday, where we join with community partners, and with congregations across our denomination for a day of service. This is the 10th year of this incredible day of service, to be church together, to be church for the sake of the world. If you would like to be a part of the planning, are interested in serving as a team leader, or have a community partner connection or service project idea—please reach out to Pastor Amanda.

Look for specific sign-up opportunities over the next month & make plans to be in worship that Sunday at 9 a.m. and then be sent out to serve in the community after worship.

CURRENT OPENINGS- 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 are posted on the front page of the website until positions are filled.



GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS- Mark your calendar for **September 11**, God's Work Our Hands Sunday! As a part of this day focused on service, we will again be assembling 100 school kits for distribution by Lutheran World Relief. These kits help make school possible for children around the world. We need your help to collect the supplies needed to create these kits. Starting July 24, please visit the bulletin board in the narthex to see what items are needed. Back to school sales are starting, so it's the perfect time to help provide the school kit items. Cash donation are also welcome to fund non-donated items. If you are worshipping from home and would like to make a donation, please email or call me, and I will coordinate that with you. Items may be returned to the labeled bucket in the narthex. It is a huge help to have all of these items returned to the church by **August 28** in order to allow time to purchase any additional items needed. Contact Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia (815-245-1242, mbmartinbellavia@gmail.com) with any questions about the school kits. Thanks!

2022 ELCA CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY - 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>

STAY AND PLAY- After worship on **August 14**, we invite you to stick around for fellowship & fun. We'll gather on the Grace grounds near the playground for conversation, lawn games, and time together. All are welcome, we hope to see you there!

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-



PINOCHLE CONTINUES- Join the super fun Pinochle Group on **August 10 and 24** at 1pm in room 102. The bottom door will be unlocked for entry. Come in from the hot summer and enjoy the game and conversation with fellow Christians. Beginners are always welcome and treats are served. Then mark your calendar for more pinochle fun on September 14 and 28. If you have any questions, contact Sally Sheahan at 314-910-0541.

THANK YOU, TAMMY & WELCOME, KARI! - We give thanks to Tammy Baier for serving as Interim Communications Coordinator over the past few months and preparing *Grace for Today* for our congregation. We are also grateful to welcome Kari Gippert to Grace as our new Communications Coordinator.

Communications Coordinator- As we all work to build our future together, guided by our small group discussions and continuing discernment by the Council, we are excited to announce that Kari Gippert is our new Communications Coordinator beginning mid-July. Kari lives in Woodstock and has a wealth of experience in the communications field. She has served as a marketing specialist at Centegra as well as the corporate communications coordinator at Dura-Bar (Well Mfg.) for many years. We believe that Kari's personality and experiences will be a valuable asset to our ministry team here at Grace and we look forward to welcoming her into our faith community.

CONFIRMATION- CAMP, WORSHIP SERVICE, CLASSES-At the end of July, Grace's confirmation students are sharing a week of camp together at LOMC, Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center. This month, on **Sunday, August 21** during worship at 9 a.m., last year's 8th grade confirmation students will be affirming their baptism during worship. As we look to the new school year ahead, families of 7th & 8th grade students are invited to look for fall class registration information in the weeks ahead. If you are interested in supporting Grace's confirmation ministry and/or being a guest teacher, please reach out to Pastor Amanda.

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.

Presence Light Sponsors:

August 7th:

In honor of Leslynne Denise Bartels, on her 2nd birthday, given by Denise and Karl Klabunde.

August 14th

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

August 21st:

To the glory of God, given by Diane Schulz.

August 28th:

In memory of my mom, given by Janette Hess

Bulletin Sponsors:

August 7th:

In honor of family and friends, given by Gayle Hoch.

August 14th:

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

In loving memory of Dick Boehmke, given by Betty and Philip.

August 21st:

In honor of family, given by Diane Schulz.

In honor of our August celebrations, given by Andy and Mary Beth.

August 28th:

In memory of my mom, given by Janette Hess.

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
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Parish Musicians

Terry Aavang, Jan Burns,
Tammy Baier, Carrie Filetti

Sunday School Coordinator

Jamielynn Wedoff

Building Supervisor

Ken Zank

Custodians

Chris & Kim Ethridge

Officers & Council

Andy Bellavia, Lisa Gerloff-Banker,
Diana Frisbie, Gayle Hoch,
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