

DECEMBER 2022 • VOLUME 21, NO. 12

Gathered together in Jesus' name

Through conversation and discernment at the start of 2022, your church council and staff gathered to look ahead toward this end of the calendar year to set an intention for a purposeful time in our life together. Together a goal was set for meaningful fellowship events so that faithful and hopeful ministry in this season would look like a strong, interconnected, nurturing church community that is also able to offer outreach.

It is a joy to see people continuing, and newly returning, and first arriving to gatherings for worship, learning, and service opportunities. How beautiful it is to reconnect with someone you have not seen for some time, how lovely to meet new people, how faithful to welcome one another into conversations and community as we gather in Jesus' name.

As we individually navigate changing times and seasons, consider the fragility and precious beauty and limits of life, and weigh our commitments—of time, energy, talents, and resources, we are continually called together by the love of God in Christ. We were created for healthy and life-giving relationships with God, each other, and neighbors.

I am looking forward to this Advent season ahead and hope you will show up for yourself and each other. Take a look at this month's news and consider your response to invitations for generosity—through Christmas Family Sharing, the Mitten Tree, and in your commitment for financial giving in 2023. Carve out time for a series of four different midweek gatherings—a mixture of familiar and new opportunities to gather as a community. Participate in the Advent adult forum, the blood drive, and an exciting Intergenerational Christmas Sunday School. Love one another, pray often, and remember how loved you are.

Then, invite someone to join you in hearing, again or perhaps for the first time, the incredible good news of Jesus' birth. I pray that your days and nights of waiting, watching, and preparing for Christmas are filled with the peace and love of Christ, and I wish you joy and abundant life this Christmas and always.

"Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord." Luke 2: 10b-11

*Peace,
Pastor Amanda*

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 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: 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), Barbara Gehrke, Robert Giron (brother of Patty Kozlow), Tom Goggin, Becca Guenther (niece of Gretchen & Claude Hutchens), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Leonard Haulotte (brother of Laura Boal), Gloria Holy, Denise Hoover, Nicholas Karasch (nephew of Jamielynn Wedoff), Steve Kosmen

(loved one of the Koehn family), John Kunzie, Judie Kunzie, Tiffany Kurth (niece of Sue & Al Beckman), Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Kem Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Linda Nogan (sister of Sheila Readel), Gloria Ogle, 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), Nathaniel Shipp (family friend of Brian Meyers), Hollis Shutt, Ann Sinnett (friend of Shirley Berna), Kathy Stone, Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahon), Josh Tillman, Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Bev Visconti, Addie Jo Wedoff, Nick Wedoff

Sorrows: Pat Hahn, Dr. Kenneth Millar, Bob Shook, Esther Wienke, Jim Johnson (brother of Jerry Johnson)

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 by email to 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 office (**815-338-0554**).

Mitten Tree

Winter is near, and it's time to collect NEW mittens, hats, gloves, scarves, socks, and underwear for children and adults in need. Please bring your donations to the church between **Nov. 20 and Dec. 24**.

Then hang them on the mitten tree in the Narthex. Your gifts will be much appreciated by those in need in our community! If you have any questions, please contact Adeline Arana at adelinearana@gmail.com.

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**).

Current Openings

Job descriptions have been posted and applications are requested for the following part-time positions:

1. **Director of Youth Education;** and
2. **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.



GRACE FOR TODAY—The deadline for the **January 2023** newsletter is **December 11**. This updated deadline reflects holiday office hours. Please send articles to Kari Gippert at kgippert@gracewoodstock.org, or the church office. Questions: Call the office at **815-338-0554**.

Worship this December

O, come, all ye faithful! This December, we gather for worship on **Sundays, December 4, 11, & 18 at 9:00 A.M.** in the sanctuary, via [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website. We'll share midweek gatherings in the season of Advent on **Wednesdays, Nov. 30, Dec. 7, 14, 21 from 7 to 7:30 p.m.** And then we celebrate Jesus' birth on **Saturday, Christmas Eve at 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m., and 11 p.m.** and on **Sunday, Christmas Day at 10 a.m.** See below for more information about upcoming worship opportunities, and we look forward to seeing you soon!
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Advent Wreath and Nativity Candle Lighting. Beginning Nov. 27, each Sunday in Advent and at our Christmas Eve services we will light a candle on the Advent wreath during worship as we prepare for Christmas. One person/family will read a prayer during the lighting of the candle. Click [here](#) to learn more & sign up for a worship service or call the office to sign up.



This Advent, you are invited to Grace for a half-hour gathering on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Together each week we will create space and time to pause from the fast pace of the season, share in the company of God's faithful people, and tend to spiritual practices—in song, action, evening prayer, and worship.

Join us this Advent for Midweek Gatherings. We hope you can gather at Grace for an additional half an hour each week. If able to set aside time at home, please note three of the four Wednesdays will also be available via [YouTube livestream](#).

- **Nov. 30 Advent Hymn Sing** (*Sanctuary & Livestream*) Gather for time set apart and shared together to sing Advent hymns as we enter the season of Advent.
- **Dec. 7 Care & Connection** (*Luther Hall*) We gather in the lower level gym, Luther Hall, for an evening of care and connection. Join us for prayer in action.
- **Dec. 14 Holden Evening Prayer** (*Sanctuary & Livestream*) Let our prayers rise up like incense before God as our souls proclaim God's greatness. God of mercy, hold us in love.
- **Dec. 21 Longest Night** (*Sanctuary & Livestream*) On this longest night, the winter solstice, we come together seeking healing and room to share grief, sadness, loneliness, or confusion when these emotions often feel out of place during the holidays.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We celebrate Jesus' birth on **Saturday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve) at 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m., and 11 p.m.** Also, we celebrate on **Sunday, Dec. 25 (Christmas Day) at 10 a.m.**

Thank you, worship team volunteers! We look forward to seeing you soon and welcome your continuing support for worshipping as a gathered community. *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, sound, & livestream technician, please contact Bill Nattress bill.nattress@gmail.com
- If you would like to join the 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, Usher, or Communion Assistant - please contact Fay Wilson faymwlsn@yahoo.com

Grace Blood Drive on Dec. 18

Grace parishioners and our community can share the gift of life with others on Sunday, **Dec. 18 from 7 a.m. to noon** during a blood drive in Grace Center, as we partner with Versiti Blood Center of Illinois

Versiti's mission is to improve patient outcomes, to advance the field of personalized medicine, and to strengthen the health of communities. To sign up, [visit blood drive](#). For more information, contact Gretchen Guenther-Hutchens at **815-341-7544** or gretchenhutchens@gmail.com.

Deck the Sanctuary

Worship and Music welcomes volunteers to assist in decorating the sanctuary for Christmas the morning of Dec. 10. For more information, contact the church office at **815-338-0554**.

Living Generously

Thank you to all who have communicated intentions to give and support ministry through Grace Lutheran Church in 2023. Your generosity in giving to God equips our faith community for meaningful and faithful mission.

If you have not yet returned an Estimate of Giving Card for 2023, please prayerfully consider your giving intentions and place your card in the offering after worship or drop off or mail it to the church office. Thank you for being a part of Grace Lutheran Church and sharing God's grace.



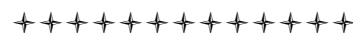
You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.

2 Corinthians 9:11



Sunday School's Intergenerational Christmas Gathering

Sunday School invites the entire congregation to join in an Intergenerational Christmas gathering **Sunday, Dec. 18** from **10 to 10:45 a.m.** in Luther Hall. All ages welcome!



Christmas Family Sharing

Our Christmas Family Sharing (CFS) ministry put up the CFS Christmas tree last month.

You still have time to visit the tree before or after worship but the deadline for donations is near. All donations must be returned to labeled bins in Grace's narthex by **Dec. 4**.

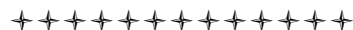
Please call Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia, 815-245-1242 or email her at mbmartinbellavia@gmail.com if you have questions.

CFS ministry thanks you for your support.



Advent Past and Present

Deacon Judy Rooney will host an Adult Forum titled, "Advent Past and Present," on Sunday, **Dec. 4** at Grace in room 102 after the **9 a.m.** service. She will explain Advent's beginning history in the church and explore how that history informs our celebration of Advent today. All are welcome.



Adult Book Club

Each Sunday at **10:15 a.m.**, the Adult Book Club meets in the church parlor or via Zoom to discuss "Under a Cloudless Sky." Contact Paul Lockwood (815-337-0467), Howard Hoyt (224-858-4388) or Sally Sheahan (314-910-0541).

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 or bring in your coupon below, along with your \$15.00 gift to Grace Lutheran Church, 1300 Kishwaukee Valley Rd., Woodstock,

IL 60098. Please print clearly, as you want your gift to appear in the bulletin.

Payments due in the office by Dec. 12, 2022. Poinsettias will be available for pickup after our service on Dec. 25.

Amount: _____

CHOOSE ONE PER COUPON: (Please print)

In Memory Of: _____

In Honor Of: _____

To the Glory of God: _____

GIVEN BY: _____



Pinochle

This month, pinochle meets on Wednesday, **Dec. 7** at **1 p.m.** in room 102. For those who need an evening time, pinochle is offered on **Dec. 13** at **6:30 p.m.** in room 102.

On Wednesday, **Dec. 21**, Sally Sheahan hosts at her home, 14105 Castlebar Trl., Woodstock, a potluck at **noon** followed by the card party.

Beginners are welcome. For more information, call Sally at **314-910-0541**.



High school families: Please check your email inbox for regular YSJ updates. These postings will include event information, sign-up links, and more. Follow Grace Lutheran Church's group on Facebook for info and to see what YSJ is up to!

Mobile Food Pantry High Schoolers needed for this local ministry to help distribute food to more than 500 community members on the first Monday of each month from 3 to 5:30 p.m. The next date is Dec. 5.

Please join in whenever you can!

YSJ—High School Youth “Youth Standing with Jesus”

RSVP's are needed by Thursday, Dec. 1.

Wednesday Drop In Nights look a little different this month. We'll continue to have conversation, activities, service planning and more (no RSVPs necessary) and you are welcome to bring friends.

On **Dec. 7**, arrive at **7 p.m.** to attend the **Advent Service**. Then, from **7:30 to 8:30 p.m.** we will shop together at Walmart for Christmas Clearinghouse donations for kids

age 9 to 13. If you cannot shop on Dec. 7 but would like to make a donation, please bring your item to the church office by Friday, Dec. 9.

On **Dec. 21**, arrive at **7 p.m.** to attend the **Advent Service**. Then, from **7:30 to 8:30 p.m.** attend our Christmas party in the Youth Room.

To RSVP for the Mobile Food Pantry or get your questions about YSJ answered, contact **Kirsten Green** at **815-236-6904** or at stylin1020@gmail.com.

In addition to Kirsten Green, your YSJ co-leaders are Al Wilson, and Gretchen Hutchens.

Confirmation: God's Hands of the Present, Future

By Carrie Fiorina

Confirmation at Grace is such a pleasurable experience for adult instructors and the students. Each student is inquisitive; willing to listen and learn what it means to be involved in a community of loving and helpful Christians.

As in the past, our students volunteer not only in Woodstock—cleaning road fronts, gathering items for both the food pantry and shelters—but also right here at Grace.

In addition to serving as acolytes, they have been challenged by adult instructors to take part in other volunteer opportunities at Grace. Ushering, Greeting, Reading or Assisting Communion are just a few of the ways they participate in our faith community.

Each student is required to serve in some way at least 10 times before the school year ends. This underscores the importance of the idea that the church is our people. We need to work together to uplift and support each other in our faith practices.

In addition, each student is asked to commit to attending worship and listening to the word and observing our worship practices. Each student is asked

to submit worship notes, reinforcing their presence and their attentiveness to the tradition of the liturgical order while discovering the significance of our services relating to today's world.

Each of our students is challenged to question their faith, learn that not all answers are needed right here and now, and that faith is a journey; and that they are needed to take an active part in that journey. These are lessons for us adults to remember, too.

If you are looking to take an active part in your faith journey, we are still looking for “Faith Mentors” to help lead and mentor our confirmation class.

We have been blessed with a few members that have stepped up to the challenge and truly found it rewarding and worthwhile. However, we would love to have a few more to help finish out our year. This is not a heavy time-required task (just 1 or 2 class times). All materials, lesson plans, and even videos are provided for our Wednesday class time.

Please contact Pastor Amanda at abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org, Carrie Fiorina at cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org or call the church office **815-338-0554** if you are interested or looking for more information.

We challenge all of Graces' members to use their hands, to do God's work. “God's work. Our Hands.”



Confirmation students actively involved with Grace programs.

Bulletin & Presence Light Sponsors

The Grace 2023 Bulletin & Presence Light sponsor sheets are available in the Welcome Center. A month prior to your sponsorship, a form will be sent to you requesting information plus a \$20 donation for the Bulletins or a \$10 donation for the . Thank you for helping Grace fund the weekly Bulletins and Presence Lights.

Bread for the Day 2023

Bread for the Day is a daily-use devotional resource with a brief scripture reading, a prayer, and a hymn for each day of 2023. The devotions begin Jan. 1, 2023. If you are interested in a copy of the book, purchase it in the office or at the Welcome Desk for \$10.

Presence Light Sponsors:

Dec. 4:

- In loving memory of Sheri's dad, Stanley Russell, given by the Conover family.

Dec. 11:

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

Dec. 18:

- In memory of John Sorensen, given by his family.

Christmas Day

- In memory of our grandson, Alex, given by Ken and Kathy Zank.

Bulletin Sponsors:

Dec. 4:

- "Lord, let our hearts be good soil." on this World Soil Day, Dec. 5, given by Bill and Nancy Kreznor.

Dec. 11:

- In honor of Beth's father, Roger Long, on his Birthday, Dec. 12, given by Mark and Beth Miller.

Dec. 18:

- To the glory of God for his many blessings, given by Gayle Hoch.

Christmas Eve:

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

Christmas Day:

- In memory of our grandson. Alex, given by Ken and Kathy Zank.

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 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**

GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

Lead Pastor

Rev. Amanda Bergstrom
abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org

Administrative Secretary

Denise Klabunde
dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org

Office Assistant/Bookkeeper & Confirmation Coordinator

Carrie Fiorina
cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org

Communications Coordinator

Kari Gippert
kgippert@gracewoodstock.org

Organist & Interim Coordinator of Worship & Music

Jan Burns

Music Group Directors

Terry Aavang, Tammy Baier,
Jon Bergstrom, Carrie Filetti

Sunday School Coordinator

Jamielynn Wedoff

Building Supervisor

Ken Zank

Custodians

Chris & Kim Ethridge

Officers & Council

Diana Frisbie, Lisa Gerloff-Banker,
Carrie Jarnecke, Kevin Kleinjan,
Mike Liedtke, Paul Lockwood,
Matt Meiners, Mark Miller, Mary Noe,
Robert Teuber