

MAY 2026 • VOLUME 25, NO. 5



“If you need a world to belong to  
look around, you’re already home.  
And what you seek, you’ve already found  
turn around to me, you will see no reason to be lonely.”

“Turn” from “The Book of Rounds”  
Words by Julie Flanders, Music by Emil Adler

I am grateful for the many ways our greater community can gather to celebrate, serve, compete, perform, support and share in life through so many organizations and opportunities to be in meaningful relationships. One of these events is our local school district’s music festivals, where students in choir, orchestra, or band — across elementary, middle, and high school programs — gather together for an evening concert.

At the D200 Choral Festival this year, the closing song “Turn,” was sung by all of the students in a moving round. A simple song, repeated with such a lovely invitation to action and a reminder of steadfast presence. In our mutual and deep human need for belonging, in our seasons of persistent seeking — look around, you’re already home, see no reason to be lonely.

Beloved of God, look around. Turn around in continually returning to God, turn toward people, see how God has chosen to make God’s home among us, how we have been gifted community and companionship and company in life.

Throughout the turning of seasons into spring, into Easter, remembering how Jesus carries us from death to life, what a gift to see and know and feel a sense of home as we strive to live among God’s faithful people.

As we attend to changes, acknowledging hope and newness of life side by side with grief, in our coming and our going, in the endings and beginnings of the nearing close of the school year and graduations and next steps, may you be reminded of God ever choosing to make God’s home right by your side. You are not alone, and God has equipped you to be blessed by and be a blessing to others.

May you find good company and good courage in healthy relationships, may you see anew the people that God has called you to love and serve. May you tend to the home God has created and abides in with you.

*Peace,  
Pastor Amanda*

“See, the home of God is among mortals. He will  
dwell with them as their God; they will be his  
peoples, and God himself  
will be with them.”

Revelation 21:3



# Prayers

## Home Communion

If you are unable to gather for worship and would like communion to be brought to you at home, please reach out to the church office. Grace has a team of home communion ministers who visit and bring communion from worship to you.

## Senior Phone Calling

If you are interested in joining the senior calling team or are a senior who would be interested in learning more about this ministry of conversation and prayer, please call the church office.

## 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](mailto:dklabunde@gracewoodstock.org).

**World:** Bishop Yehiel Curry, 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:** Wayne Aavang (son of Joy Aavang and brother of Barb Aavang), Charlie Bell (friend of Jamielynn Wedoff), Butch Borchardt (friend of Barb Aavang), Marlene Botts, Barb Carmichael, Jim Davis, Patrice Dunn, Marshall and Paige (Behrens) Fink (great granddaughter of Joy Aavang and great niece of Barb Aavang), Connie Fischer, Robert Giron (brother of Patty

Kozlow), Christy Goodman (sister of Jennifer Robbins), Tom Goggin, Marie Grob (family member of Kevin & Carrie Jarnecke), Becca Guenther (niece of Gretchen & Claude Hutchens), Tamasa Gutierrez (mother of Patty Kozlow), Cindy Hertrampf (sister of Tammy Hansing), Denise Hoover, Wayne Japp, Anne Johnson, Nicholas Karasch (nephew of Jamielynn Wedoff), Tiffany Kurth (niece of Sue & Al Beckman), Elminster Lovejoy, Amanda McNally (grandniece of Diane Baker-Lockwood), Ben Miller (nephew of Mary Johnson), Natalie Miller (sister to Mary Johnson), Kem Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Jenny Perrone (friend of Cindy Walters), Joe Pienschke, Dorothy Potoczky, Ila Randolph, Sheila Readel, Jayne Reicher (great niece of Barb & Wayne Japp), Bev Renner (sister-in-law of Ken & Gladys Renner), Nick Resek (son of Tammy Resek-Goggin), Diane Rouse (cousin of Lisa Washkowiak), Orest Rychtytzkyj, Ryan Rychtytzkyj, Nathaniel Shipp (family friend of Brian Meyers), Ann Sinnett (friend of Shirley Berna), Kathy Stone, Samuel Sweeney (nephew of Melissa McMahan), Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Marilyn Vanskike, Cindy Walters, Mary Widmayer, Caitlin Wilcox (niece of Anne Johnson)

**Sorrow:** Herb Renner (brother of Ken & Gladys Renner)

## 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 via email to [grace@gracewoodstock.org](mailto: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 (**815-338-0554**).

## Current Job Opening

Applications are requested for the following part-time job:

### • Director of Worship & Music

We invite you to encourage interested candidates to submit a cover letter and resume. This job description is posted on Grace's website at

<https://www.gracewoodstock.us/current-openings/>.

## Attention Mahjong Players

We would like to start group play on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, beginning June 9, from 6:30-8 p.m. Sign up [here](#) if you want to participate. If you have questions, please call the church office at 815-338-0554.

—Ken & Kathy Zank

## Book Club Meets Every Sunday This Month

The Sunday book club plans to meet every Sunday in May, after church in the parlor. We will finish "Under the Bayou Moon" on the first Sunday in June and celebrate with a potluck.

It's an easy read and enjoyable book with stories of risk and resilience and interesting characters. There is room at the table; come join us!

—Sally Sheahan

**GRACE FOR TODAY**—The deadline for the **June 2026** newsletter is **May 15**. Please send articles to Kari Gippert at [kgippert@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:kgippert@gracewoodstock.org), or the church office. Questions: Call the office at **815-338-0554**.

## Worship this May

This May we begin with a reminder of baptismal promises as we rejoice with our confirmation students affirming their baptism during worship on May 3. Please join in worship as we give thanks together for the gift of faith and God's love as we encourage and pray for one another.

As we gather in community, we are nourished with the good news of the risen Christ who advocates for and prays for God's beloved. On May 24, we give thanks for the work of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday, and observe Holy Trinity Sunday on May 31.

See you soon as we worship together on Sundays at 9:00 a.m., or blessings on your time set apart for worship through the [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website.

**Thank you** for being a part of Grace's worshipping community. We give thanks for your time and presence, and for the many volunteers who shared in meaningful worship services in Holy Week and Easter.

Sign up here to serve as an [Usher](#), [Greeter](#), [Reader](#), or [Communion Assistant](#), for additional questions, please contact Fay Wilson.

- If you'd like to join in sharing a children's sermon message, please contact Nyji Sirreayah.
- If interested in joining this A/V team rotation, please contact Bill Nattress.
- To learn more about participating in the altar guild to set up or clean up communion, please contact Karen Reinhard.
- Contact Jan Burns to learn more about vocal and handbell choirs, contemporary band, instrumentalist, soloists, and small group opportunities.

### Coffee Ministry Update

The Coffee Ministry will be taking a break for the summer months. We look forward to resuming this time of fellowship again in the fall.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Olivia O'Leary for her leadership and support on Sunday mornings. We are also deeply grateful to those who generously gave their time and talents by baking and shopping: Mary Beth Bellavia, Robin Gibbs, Jeanette Hess, Mary Johnson, Vicki Meiners, Marylee Steinwehe, and Bev Unglaube. Your contributions have helped make this ministry a warm and welcoming part of our church community.

If you are interested in assisting with the Coffee Ministry when we resume in the fall, we would love to hear from you. Please feel free to reach out.

—Nancy & Bill Kreznor

### Pinochle

As always, Pinochle will meet on the first and third Wednesdays. This month that is May 6 & 20 at 1 p.m. in the lower level of the church in Room 101. All are welcome!

—Sally Sheahan

### Getting Down to Earth



It's time to roll up our sleeves and breathe new life into our beloved community spaces. Join us Saturday, May 9, from 8 a.m.-noon. The rain date is set for May 16.\*

\*See the story at right



\*—Mulching work is scheduled on May 16. If the rain date must be used for the Spring Grounds Cleanup, the Mulch Work date is TBD.

### Will You Be Grace's Next Treasurer?

Calling All Bean Counters: Our congregation needs a Treasurer.

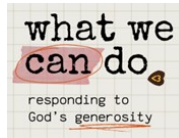
Do you have a background working with numbers? Or owning/operating a business? Would you like to work with dedicated staff and volunteers? Are you willing to serve beyond the offering plate?

Knowledge of QuickBooks is useful, but training will be provided.

You don't need to be a Council member or go to the meetings but will be required to prepare periodic reports for the Council and congregation.

If you are interested in this volunteer position and would like to find out more, please contact a Council member or the office.

—Nancy Kreznor, Council President



	March 2026			3/31/26 Year-to-date		
<i>Operating</i>	Actual	Budget	Difference	Actual	Budget	Difference
<b>Income</b>	\$48,439.00	\$34,636.76	\$13,802.24	\$115,966.11	\$110,650.28	\$5,315.83
<b>Expense</b>	\$45,860.69	\$47,169.94	\$1,309.25	\$130,240.33	\$133,999.58	\$3,759.25
<b>Balance</b>	\$2,578.31	(\$12,533.18)	\$15,111.49	(\$14,274.22)	(\$23,349.30)	\$9,075.08

We are excited for the relaunch of YSJ High School ministry. If you have a high schooler who would love to make new friends, dive deeper in faith and community service, we would love to have them. If possible, please fill out the interest form [here](#). We also are looking for adult volunteers. Please contact Kirsten Green.

### Sharing God's Grace Through Giving — Endowment Update

Grace Lutheran's endowment committee members provide guidance in allocation of funds to support social services, mission and community. Each year the committee reviews several grant requests to support these initiatives. This year the committee is blessed and honored to approve \$73,000 to the entities inside the box below and to the left:

<b>GRACE MISSION ENDOWMENT GRANTS</b>	
<u>Community</u>	
Credit Counseling Services of Northern IL	\$ 4,000
Family Health Partnership Clinic	\$ 5,000
NAMI of McHenry County	\$ 5,000
Woodstock Food Pantry	\$10,000
Youth and Family Center of McHenry County	\$ 5,000
St. Ann's/Grace Woodstock Food Distribution	\$ 6,000
Grief Guide	<u>\$ 2,500</u>
<b>Community Total</b>	<b>\$37,500</b>
<u>Congregational</u>	
Grace Capital Improvements ( <i>Windows</i> )	<u>\$20,000</u>
<b>Congregational Total</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
<u>Global</u>	
One Collective	\$ 5,000
Lunches for Learning	<u>\$ 6,000</u>
<b>Global Total</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>
<u>Synod</u>	
Wartburg Theological Seminary	<u>\$ 4,500</u>
<b>Synod Total</b>	<b>\$ 4,500</b>

**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, including continuing education courses, sabbaticals for further study and other educational purposes.

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, 2026. All scholarship applications are reviewed by the Endowment Committee and voted on during the quarterly meeting in July and payments are made in August.

**ALLEN SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED IN 2025.** The Grace Lutheran Church Endowment Board is proud to have awarded Allen Scholarships in the amount of \$1,407.63 to Madeline Manke and Sam Tafoya for 2025.

**READEL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED IN 2025.** There were no requests for the scholarship in 2025.

## Global Companion Connections

Last year, Grace welcomed guests of the Northern Illinois Synod from our companion synod of the North Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

If you would be interested in learning more about renewing Grace's relationship with our companion congregation, please contact Pastor Amanda or Nancy Kreznor.

## Graduation Blessings

Are you or someone in your family celebrating a graduation this spring? If so, we would love to include you in our prayers. Please contact the church office (email [ksmith@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:ksmith@gracewoodstock.org) or call 815-338-0554) by May 10 to share your name and upcoming graduation.



## Sunday School

The last day of Sunday School is May 10. The topic is Saul to Paul.

On May 17, Faith and Flavors Kids Kitchen takes place from 10-11:30 a.m. Spots are available. Contact Nyji today if interested.



## Confirmation

The Affirmation of Baptism takes place on Sunday, May 3 at 9 a.m. Join us in Worship to Celebrate our second-year students' confirmation.



## Sewing Circle

This month we meet on May 5 & 19 from **8:30-noon**. In the coming weeks in Grace Notes, we will share all the incredible work our team has contributed locally and globally.

All are welcome! Contact me with questions.

—Tammy Hansing

## Local Faith Community Connections

As a congregation, it is a blessing to share in ministry together with local congregations. Grace Lutheran Church gives thanks for the connections and ministries shared with representatives at the Woodstock Food Pantry, the Direct Assistance Program through Woodstock Area Community Ministries, the St. Ann's Episcopal & Grace Lutheran Mobile Food Pantry, and local congregations gathering as ELCA Lutherans for Inclusion and Justice. If you are interested in being a liaison to local faith communities connecting on additional shared ministry efforts and community response opportunities, please contact Pastor Amanda.



## Hey Grace family and friends! Mark your calendars — We're getting ready for Pride Days!

We're hoping to team up with Bethany Lutheran Church — Crystal Lake to host booths in Crystal Lake on June 7 and in Woodstock on June 14.

This is a great chance to share God's Grace in a simple, meaningful way—through kindness, conversation, and showing that all are truly welcome.

More details will be coming soon, including how to sign up. We'd love for you to be part of it!



## 2012 Ford F-350 Super Duty Truck Including a Boss 9.2-foot V-Plow and salt spreader (to be sold as-is, no warranties) Minimum Bid \$30,000.00

Contact the church office if interested in more information, to set up a time to visit, or to submit a sealed bid by **May 20, 3 p.m.**, for consideration.

This 2012 Ford F-350 Super Duty is a rare find with less than 3,000 original miles, making it exceptionally clean for its year and ideal for anyone looking for a heavy-duty truck that hasn't been worn down by years of hard use. Built for serious work, the F-350 offers outstanding durability and capability while still presenting like a lightly used vehicle. Whether for commercial snow removal, property maintenance, or a dependable work truck, this Super Duty is ready to perform. An oil change is recommended since this is a vehicle that is used rarely for snow removal for church parking lots and high traffic spaces.

Included with the truck is a Boss 9.2-foot V-Plow and salt spreader, providing a turnkey snow-plowing setup. The V-plow design allows for straight blade, scoop, and V positions, making it highly efficient for large driveways, parking lots, and roadways. This combination of an ultra-low-mile F-350 and a proven Boss plow and salt spreader is hard to find, and represents an excellent value for a buyer looking for reliable winter equipment that's ready to work immediately.



## Vacation Bible School

Registration is open for VBS — *Road Trip: On The Go with God*. Register [here](#). The dates of the program are June 1-4, 8:30-11:30 a.m. each day. If you have friends or family interested, they can find the link on our website or in our Facebook Group, too. It is pinned at the top of the FB group page.

We have need for VBS volunteers! Our planning meetings are:

- May 10 @ 11 a.m.-noon in Grace Center
- May 24 @ 10-11 a.m. in Grace Center
- May 31 @ 10-11 a.m. in Grace Center

Contact Nyji if interested.

## Presence Light Sponsors:

### May 3:

- Given to the Glory of God.

### May 10:

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

### May 17:

- In memory of Mary Figard; given by Terry Figard & Family.

### May 24:

- In memory of Marlene L. Teuber and in honor of Robert W. Teuber; given by Robert B. Teuber.

### May 31:

- In memory of many, in memory of all; given by William & Nancy Kreznor.

## Bulletin Sponsors:

### May 3:

- Given to the Glory of God.

### May 10:

- In honor of our four grandchildren – Liam, Nolan, Eli, & Jordyn; given by the Conover Family.

### May 17:

- In memory of Gloria & Frank Holy; given by Terry Figard & Family.

### May 24:

- In memory of Marlene L. Teuber and in honor of Robert W. Teuber; given by Robert B. Teuber.

### May 31:

- In memory of my mom, Gladys Martin; given by Mary Beth Bellavia.

## 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 or 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](http://gracewoodstock.org)**

### GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

#### Lead Pastor

Rev. Amanda Bergstrom  
[abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org)

#### Office Coordinator

Kim Smith  
[ksmith@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:ksmith@gracewoodstock.org)

#### Financial Secretary

Carrie Fiorina  
[cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org)

#### Communications Coordinator

Kari Gippert  
[kgippert@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:kgippert@gracewoodstock.org)

#### Director of Youth Education

Nyji Sirreayah  
[nsirreayah@gracewoodstock.org](mailto:nsirreayah@gracewoodstock.org)

#### Organist & Interim Coordinator of Worship & Music

Jan Burns

#### Music Group Directors

Terry Aavang, Jon Bergstrom,  
Carrie Filetti, Cindy Meyer

#### Building Supervisor

Ken Zank

#### Custodians

Chris & Kim Ethridge

#### Council

Carlos Acosta, Michelle Anderson,  
Brian Gerloff, Carrie Jarnecke,  
Nancy Kreznor, Michael Liedtke,  
Mary Noe, Adele Petersen,  
Jeremy Schaaf

#### Treasurer

Jane Gerloff