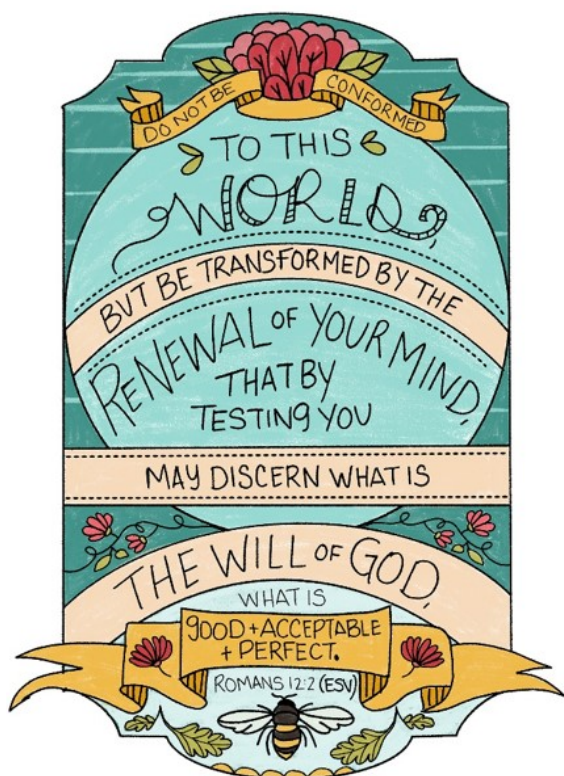


AUGUST 2026 • VOLUME 25, NO. 8

Transformed by the Renewing of the Mind



A friend told me they once wrote the following words on their middle school Trapper Keeper: “Be transformed by the renewing of the mind.” It must have been quite the phrase to see each day in school, and it is from the letter to the Romans where we hear this call:

“Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Romans 12:2

As we keep drawing nearer to the start of the school year, and soon a changing of seasons, may we each be so moved to open our eyes, hearts, and minds to something new that God is revealing, a renewal of our faith, outlook, or understanding.

In the coming month, we’ll hear from the book of Romans in our weekly worship, and I wonder if you’ll keep your heart and mind and ears open to your own word or phrase that might guide your prayer, reflections, and actions.

Perhaps you’ll feel called to *speak the truth in Christ* or dwell in the wonder of *God’s word drawn near to you, in your mouth and in your heart*. Maybe you’ll reflect on *God’s irrevocable gifts and calling*, or maybe you’ll notice the variety of gifts in other people as *we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another*. Or maybe you’ll slow down to think and see clearly as you strive to *let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; and love one another with mutual affection*.

As you enter a new season before us, may you do so with faithful intention. May you be open to some new thing that God is up to within, may you be mindful of the gifts of living in community, and may you be renewed in the love of God in Christ for the sake of the world.

Peace,
Pastor Amanda

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 grace@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), John Bleile (family of Kristy Nellessen), 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), Janette Hess, 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 Readell, 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 McMahon), Brian Tobin (grandson of Enn Teetsov), Marilyn Vanskike, Cindy Walters, Mary Widmayer, Caitlin Wilcox (niece of Anne Johnson), Judi (friend of Cindy Walters)

Sorrows: Frank Filetti (father of Brent Filetti), Dallas Larson, Andrea Strayer (mother of Lisa Washkowiak)

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.

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**).

Attention Mahjong Players

We started group play on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 6:30-8 p.m. This month, we play on Aug. 11 & 25. Sign up [here](#) if you want to participate. If you have questions, please call the church office at 815-338-0554.

—Ken & Kathy Zank

Pinochle

We meet the first and third Wednesdays of the month. In August, the dates are Aug. 5 and 19. Contact Sally Sheahan for more information.

—Sally Sheahan

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/>.



GRACE FOR TODAY—The deadline for the **September 2026** newsletter is **August 15**. 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

The kingdom of God looks like abundant feeding, awe-inspiring calm, expansive healing, bold professions of faith, and costly discipleship. Gather in worship to hear the word of God, sing praise, pray for the world God loves, be nourished and sent forth in mission.

See you in worship on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. or when you set aside space and time for worship through the weekly [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website.

Thank you for being a part of Grace's worshipping community and for your role in extending hospitality to all who gather to worship God.

- Please sign up here or call the church office to serve as an [Usher](#), [Greeter](#), [Reader](#), [Communion Assistant](#), or to join in sharing a children's sermon message.
- 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.

ELCA Service Day 'God's work. Our hands.' Scheduled Sept. 13

This fall we gather for our 14th annual service day. We gather to worship God at 9 a.m., take a group picture, and set out to serve our neighbors for an hour or two. See the bulletin board in the narthex or sign-up link in weekly *Grace Notes* to sign up for one of this year's service sites. If you have an



additional community partner or service project idea, please contact Pastor Amanda.

"God's work. Our hands." yellow T-shirts will be available at Grace in advance if you'd like a shirt. Thank you for sharing your time as a commitment to serving alongside one another as we live out our faith.

Grace Collects LWR Kit Supplies This Month

Mark your calendar for September 13, "God's work. Our hands." Sunday! As a part of this day focused on service, we will be assembling 120 school kits for distribution by Lutheran World Relief (LWR). These kits help make school attendance possible for children around the world.

We are also assembling 50 personal care kits. There is a special need for these kits right now which help individuals stay clean and healthy amidst harsh living conditions.

We need your help to collect the supplies needed to create these kits. Starting July 19, 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 kit items. Cash donations 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 happily coordinate that with you.

Items may be returned to the labeled bucket in the narthex. Having all of these items returned to the church by **Aug. 30** will be helpful to allow time to purchase any additional items needed.

Contact Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia (815-245-1242, mbmartinbellavia@gmail.com) with any questions about these LWR kits. Thanks!

—Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia



Sewing Circle Meets Aug. 4, 18

Sewing Circle meets from 8:30 a.m. to noon in the lower level at church on Aug. 4 & 18. All are welcome to join this fun and rewarding ministry! We could use more sewing friends, both sewers and non-sewers alike, as many hands will make light work. Please consider coming to spend a little time with friends old and new, and spend the time to create warmth and joy for people in need. We have several different ways people can serve, so please

come and check us out! If you can't join us at our regular meeting times, we have things you can do at home or we can always use more fabric, batting, pillow stuffing, yarn and — to purchase supplies — Thrivent Action Team cards. We would love to see your smiling faces.

Make note for next month, we will be a service project for "God's work. Our hands." Any Sewing Circle questions, please contact Tammy Hansing.

—Tammy Hansing



Operating	June 2026			6/30/26 Year-to-date		
	Actual	Budget	Difference	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$34,268.23	\$34,778.76	(\$510.53)	\$227,421.61	\$215,716.56	\$11,705.05
Expense	\$42,563.29	\$39,007.27	(\$3,556.02)	\$252,572.34	\$256,580.00	\$4,007.66
Balance	(\$8,295.06)	(\$4,228.51)	(\$4,066.55)	(\$25,150.73)	(\$40,863.44)	\$15,712.71

What can we, as God's people, do with the generosity shown by God? We can use it to love our neighbors, to teach our children about Christ, to support those in need, and to build a stronger, more vibrant community of faith.

Your faithful and consistent [giving](#) makes the church a place of hope and grace. Thank you for your support for mission and ministry through Grace Lutheran Church.

Help Us Celebrate Pastor Amanda's 15 Years at Grace

This year marks a very special milestone as Pastor Amanda celebrates **15 years of faithful ministry at Grace Church**. We are incredibly grateful for her dedication, compassion, and unwavering commitment to sharing God's love with our church family and our community. Throughout the years, Pastor Amanda has walked alongside us in times of joy and sorrow, offered words of encouragement and hope, and faithfully led us in worship and service. Her ministry has touched countless lives, and we thank God she has been at Grace Lutheran Church.

We invite everyone to join us to express our appreciation. Whether through a card, a note of encouragement, a favorite memory, or by participating in a small celebration at 10 a.m. on Aug. 30, before the Congregational Meeting. Help make this anniversary truly meaningful.

"The elders who direct the affairs of the church well, are worthy of double honor, especially those who work in preaching and teaching"

— 1 Timothy 5:17



In 2011, Pastor Amanda was ordained.

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



Save Sunday, August 30, on your calendars for our Congregational Meeting. It will take place at 10:15 a.m. following our worship and will meet in person or via online meeting.



Join us in worship at 9 a.m. on Aug. 9, and stay for coffee hour hosted by confirmation campers as we pray for students, teachers and school staff at the start of the school year.

You are invited to bring your backpack, bag, and/or school items to worship with you, or simply plan to be present to share and receive prayers and a blessing.

Come Join the Fun!

Grace is looking for **two volunteers** to help staff our booth at **Woodstock's Family Fun Days** on **Sunday, August 23**, from **noon - 4 p.m.** Each volunteer will serve a **two-hour shift**.

Volunteers will supervise the children's game, hand out prizes, and invite families to worship with us at Grace. It's a wonderful opportunity to connect with our community and share Grace's mission.

If you're willing to help, please contact me at **815-245-0645** or email **nkkreznor@gmail.com**.
—Nancy Kreznor



In 2025, Grace staffed a booth at the Woodstock Family Fun Days. We would love to have two volunteers on Aug. 23, 2026, for Woodstock Family Fun Days.



Confirmation Student & Parent Meeting



Students in seventh & eighth grades are invited to consider committing to Grace's Confirmation Program, which includes two years of classes (August-May, Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m.), intentional worship participation and notes, service opportunities, and summer camp. A required student & parent meeting to learn more will be held on August 19, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Invite friends, and please contact Pastor Amanda to sign up or learn more.

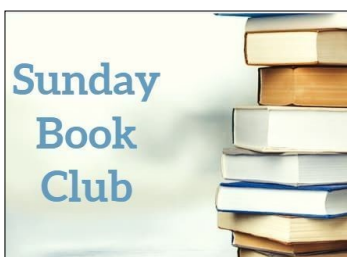


The first Sunday School class this school year will be on Sunday, August 23. Join us in worship to install Sunday School teachers and meet for class (10-11 a.m.).

Sunday School will meet primarily on the second & fourth Sundays. Invite friends, sign up [online](#) and make plans for sharing in this time of faith formation.

Sunday Book Club will meet in August after church in the parlor each Sunday, except Aug. 16, and will conclude discussion and reading of "The Great Divorce" on Aug. 23.

A new book will be chosen on that



date, and Book Club will resume in September.

Join us as we tackle a thought-provoking fantasy about heaven and hell by the bestselling author C.S. Lewis.

All are welcome.

Contact Paul Lockwood or Sally Sheahan for more information.

—Sally Sheahan

Sunday School & Confirmation Teachers

As we approach the start of the school year and prepare for faithful youth education ministries, you are invited to consider two teaching opportunities.

• **Sunday School Teachers:** We have a wonderful team of Sunday School teachers and substitutes and are looking for a few more teacher substitutes. Teachers lead in teams of two teachers per age group. Sunday School meets twice a month, and curriculum is provided. *Please let Mary Noe or Pastor Amanda know if you are interested in learning more about serving with the teaching team this year (two Sunday mornings per month, 10-11 a.m.)*

• **Confirmation Guest Teachers:** Our confirmation program has been blessed by the support of adults in the congregation who are willing to be a guest teacher once or twice a semester or class year. It has been a gift for students to meet other people in the congregation and hear about their lives of faith. *Please let Pastor Amanda know if you are interested in teaching a class this year (Wednesday evenings, 6:30-7:30 p.m.).*

Presence Light Sponsors:

August 2

- Given to the Glory of God.

August 9

- In memory of my sister Kelly McMahon; given by Bill & Nancy Kreznor.

August 16

- Given to the Glory of God.

August 23

- Donated for love of God; given by Bev Unglaube.

August 30

- In memory of Sheri's Uncle Einar Orsett, on his heavenly birthday, given by the Conover family.

Bulletin:

August 2

- Blessing & joy on the birth of our grandson Logan Matthew Bratanick; given by Al & Sue Beckman.

August 9:

- In honor of our 46th anniversary; given by Mark & Beth Miller.

August 16:

- In honor of our many August celebrations; given by Andy & MB.

August 23:

- Donated for love of God; given by Bev Unglaube.

August 30:

- In memory of Marlene L. Teuber and in honor of Robert W. Teuber; given by Robert B. Teuber.
- In honor of our 35th wedding anniversary; given by Paul & Cindy Meyer.

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.*

GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

Lead Pastor

Rev. Amanda Bergstrom
abergstrom@gracewoodstock.org

Office Coordinator

Kim Smith
ksmith@gracewoodstock.org

Financial Secretary

Carrie Fiorina
cfiorina@gracewoodstock.org

Communications Coordinator

Kari Gippert

Organist

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, Mary Noe,
Adele Petersen, Jeremy Schaaf

Treasurer

Jane Gerloff

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