

SEPTEMBER 2026 • VOLUME 25, NO. 9

Who are you inviting?

Last month in worship we heard a heartfelt invitation to be a part of the many hands sharing in God's work. We heard an invitation to share in some of the treasured and valuable components of our children's ministries (and we heard teenagers don't bite).

Last year we had teenagers literally jumping for joy at the start of their confirmation year. Their friends had invited them to class and they were so excited to be a part of something new and faithful.

Beloved, our children are talking about what God is up to in their lives and they are inviting friends. Are you?

Who are you inviting these days, and what are you inviting people into?

We choose to keep drawing near to the mystery of our faith, and we are blessed to keep receiving such amazing grace; how can we keep from singing and sharing and telling the story of Jesus' love?

Here are a few ways you might choose to live out your faith in the days ahead to practice inviting others into community:

Let your light so shine before others, that they see your good works and glorify God. Live your life in a way that invites curiosity. How are you building up community, relationships, and wonder about the goodness of God at work in your life? May your words and actions reflect the life-giving, healthy relationships God calls us to nurture.

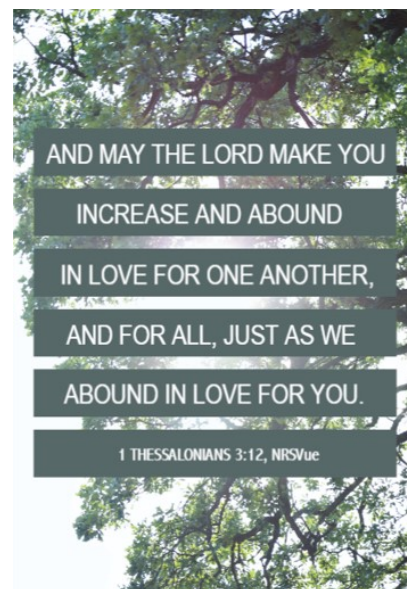
Share in prayer. How might you be willing to be vulnerable and trustworthy? Is there something you would invite someone else to pray for with you? Could you offer to pray for someone else this month?

Serve in community. Is there a meaningful way you share your time in love and service of neighbors that you could invite someone to join you for a day? Is there a serving ministry or community organization that's caught your attention you'd like to learn more about; you could invite someone to try with you?

Share the good news. Beloved, Jesus loves you, this we know. We are witnesses of God's mercy, welcome, grace and love for all. How will you invite others to know and remember and reflect this love?

May you find joy in your faithful living, praying, community building, and proclaiming. May you be blessed in inviting others to know God's grace and be blessed by the invitations you receive to share in life together among God's faithful people.

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, Donna Freeman, 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), Karen Hanus (friend of Kari Gippert), 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), Kern Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Jenny Perrone (friend of Cindy Walters), Joe Pienschke, Dorothy Potoczky, Vanessa Ramos Mohler (friend of Kari Gippert), 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)

Joy: Rowen Ann-Marie Clancy, Raelynn Jo Price

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 Sept. 8 & 22. 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 September, the dates are Sept. 2 and 16. 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://](https://www.gracewoodstock.us/current-openings/)

www.gracewoodstock.us/current-openings/.



GRACE FOR TODAY—The deadline for the **October 2026** newsletter is **September 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 September

This September we gather in worship around a new celebration in the liturgical year, Creation in Christ Sunday, and we will hear stories of forgiveness and parables that reveal God's mercy. Join in worship, center your days in prayer, be fed at Jesus' table, and hear the good news once again of God's love for you and for all.

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.
- To participate in vocal and handbell choirs, contemporary band, instrumentalists, soloists, and small group opportunities, see first rehearsal dates below or contact the church office.

Choir Rehearsals

Grace's choirs are gathering this fall and you are invited! Each group meets for rehearsal(s) before participating in a Sunday service, and you are welcome to join when you are available.

Please reach out to the church office to learn more and/or let the group's director know you plan to be there. Thanks for creating music together to worship God.



	Ages & Typical Rehearsals	1st Rehearsal	Director
Cherub	Age 3 – 1 st Grade Youth Vocal Choir; 2 Wednesdays 5:45-6:00 p.m.	September 23, 5:45 p.m.	Cindy Meyer
Joyful Messengers	2 nd – 6 th Grade Youth Vocal Choir; 2 Wednesdays 6:00-6:30 p.m.	October 14, 6:00 p.m.	Cindy Meyer
Laudate	7 th – 12 Grade Youth Vocal Choir; 2 Sundays, usually 10:00-11:00 a.m.	September 13, 10:00 a.m.	Carrie Filetti
Chancel	Adult Vocal Choir; 2 Wednesdays 7:00-8:00 p.m.	September 2, 7:00 p.m.	Carrie Filetti
Revelation Ringers	Adult (+7-12 th Grade) Handbell Choir; 3 Wednesdays 6:00-7:00 p.m.	September 30, 6:00 p.m.	Terry Aavang
Grace Tones	Youth & Adult Contemporary Band; 1 hour weekday evening rehearsal	TBD week of 9/13	Jon Bergstrom

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

Fall Fellowship

You are invited to gather at Grace on Wednesday, Sept. 23, 6:15-7 p.m. for s'mores and a campfire. Park toward the lower level and meet at the gazebo and fire pit for good conversation and a tasty treat this fall.



What We Can Do

God's generosity is a blessing in our lives, and together we can respond to God's grace as we strive to live as Jesus calls us.

Operating	July 2026			7/31/26 Year-to-date		
	Actual	Budget	Difference	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$33,853.76	\$34,778.76	(\$925.00)	\$261,275.37	\$250,495.32	\$10,780.05
Expense	\$35,961.37	\$42,987.32	\$7,025.95	\$288,533.71	\$299,567.32	\$11,033.61
Balance	(\$2,107.61)	(\$8,208.56)	\$6,100.95	(\$27,258.34)	(\$49,072.00)	\$21,813.66

Thank you for your gifts and support for ministry. Your regular and one-time offerings are making a difference in Grace Lutheran Church's commitments to share God's grace in ministries of welcome, faith formation, and service as we gather in community to worship God and share good news.



As a community of faith we are called to care for one another in times of joy and sorrow as we extend compassion and support.

One of Grace's ministries of care includes notes of support following the death of a loved one. If you are interested in learning more about supporting this ministry of writing notes and joining in prayer, please contact the church office.

Sewing Circle

Sewing Circle meets three times this month. Our usual first and third Tuesdays of the month Sept.: 1 and 15. Then we will be a site for "God's work. Our hands." on Sunday, Sept. 13, from 10:15 a.m.-noon.

Any questions, please contact me at hansings1981@gmail.com.

—Tammy Hansing

ELCA Service Day, 'God's work. Our hands.' On September 13



Ready, set, serve. Dear friends in Christ, thank you for the strong support for donating school kit and personal care items for our upcoming service day. We hope you will plan to share in God's work with your hands at one of our service sites on Sunday, Sept. 13.

We gather for worship 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](#) online for one of this year's service sites. Sites this year include assembling 120 school kits and 50 personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief (Grace gym), participating in Sewing Circle ministries (Grace lower level), at the Aarrk Gardens (Hebron), and supporting the Woodstock Food Pantry (outside Jewel AND outdoors at new location).

If you don't yet have a "God's work. Our hands." yellow T-shirt, pick one up in the narthex. Thanks for your time to love and serve God and neighbor.

Truck Sale

Grace Church Council accepted the highest bid of the four-sealed bids at the June 25 Council meeting at \$22,500.

Unfortunately, the bidder was not able to secure financing. The truck was sold to the second-highest bidder for \$21,501.

Our other two bids were \$19,175 and \$18,600. Council voted to divide the money with a tithe to the ELCA Northern Illinois Synod, 45 percent to our Capital Reserve Fund, and 45 percent to our operating budget.

Internal Audits Completed

Thanks to the hard work of our current Audit Committee members — Deb Kahoun, Ann Metze, and Bev Unglaube — the Internal Audit Report 2024 was completed in May and accepted by Church Council on May 21.

The Internal Audit Report 2025 was completed in July and accepted by Church Council on July 23. We truly appreciated your diligence and efforts to get us caught up in our financial reviews. After Church Council acceptances, the reports were shared with our Finance Committee.

Columbarium Task Force Update

The Columbarium Task Force was able to review bids from three separate companies on structures containing a variety of niches. At the July 22 meeting, Zoia Monuments-Woodstock was the company we decided to use. We have begun document reviewing, structure and location discussion, and meetings with Tony Zoia and members of the Woodstock City Hall. At the Aug. 20 meeting, Church Council granted approval to allow us to further pursue our establishing a columbarium on Grace Lutheran Church grounds.



Grace held a Back-To-School Blessing on Aug. 9 for teachers, students and staff from local school districts. Elementary and middle school students shared songs from

summer camp at Lutherdale and Confirmation Campers' families hosted coffee hour after worship.



Sunday School students (three years old through sixth grade) gather following 9 a.m. worship for lessons and occasional off-site service projects on most second & fourth Sundays of the month (late August through May). Class time begins with music, then breaks into small group classrooms before dismissal at 11 a.m.

This month, families are invited to sign up to serve at one of the service day sites on Sept. 13 and, then students and teachers gather on Sept. 27 for class to learn about Naomi & Ruth.

Invite friends, sign up [online](#) and make plans for sharing in this time of faith formation.

Thank you for supporting growth in faith!

In August our faith community was invited to consider the ways you will step up to support children's ministries. Thank you for so many responses, and please continue to consider how you will serve.

Additional opportunities include joining our substitute Sunday School teachers list, preparing for the Easter Egg Hunt, guest teaching a

confirmation class, supporting High School Youth Group, class support for Holy Communion, coordinating Vacation Bible School, and hosting one-time intergenerational faith formation and fellowship events.

Stop by the information and sign-up sheets posted in the narthex, and/or please reach out to Jamielynn or Pastor Amanda to learn more.

Confirmation Students to Learn About Worship

Students in 7th & 8th grade 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.

Classes began in August with a student and parent meeting and a class dinner offsite with games and fellowship.

This month students begin learning together about worship — what it

is, the elements of a worship service and the rhythms of a church year.

Contact Pastor Amanda if your student is interested in joining the confirmation program.

Sunday Book Club

"What better adventure to go on than understanding ourselves?" says Matthew McConaughey, an American actor and writer.

And that is what we do on Sunday mornings after church in the parlor at "Book Club". It may come in the form of reading a book together with "homework" questions to discuss, but

what we are really doing is learning by sharing experiences with other Christians.

Come join us on Sunday, Sept. 20, as we begin a new book. Look for more information in "Grace Notes". Contact Paul Lockwood or Sally Sheahan for additional information.

—Sally Sheahan

Presence Light Sponsors:

Sept. 6:

- In memory of our grandson, Alex Zank-Bauman; given by Ken & Kathy Zank.

Sept. 13:

- In memory of my sister Kathy Kessinger; given by Nancy & Bill Kreznor.

Sept. 20:

- In memory of the Techmer family; given by Mike Phillips.

Sept. 27:

- Given to the Glory of God.

Bulletin Sponsors:

Sept. 6:

- In memory of our grandson, Alex Zank-Bauman; given by Ken & Kathy Zank.

Sept. 13:

- In memory of Marlene L. Teuber and in honor of Robert W. Teuber; given by Robert B. Teuber.
- In honor of our 61st wedding anniversary; given by John & Mary Widmayer.

Sept. 20:

- In memory of my dad, Richard Martin; given by Mary Beth.
- In memory of Clark C. Phillips and in honor of our daughter-in-law Karen's Birthday; given by Cindy and Paul Meyer.

Sept. 27:

- In honor of Elena's 1st birthday; given by Andy & Mary Beth.
- To the Glory of God; given by Don & Marylee Steinwehe.

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**

GRACE STAFF & COUNCIL

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