

OCTOBER 2026 • VOLUME 25, NO. 10

Beside You

In the beloved words of the 23rd Psalm, we hear of our shepherding, leading, guiding, protecting, and ever accompanying God, ever at your side.

I find comfort in these words of promise for the whole of our lives. In God's care, we are led beside places of rest and renewal, for God goes with us, ever by our side in the deepest of valleys. God promises to be by your side in abundance, too, pursuing you with goodness and mercy forever.

In these nearing days of fall, of changing seasons and rhythms, I give thanks for the ways God-beside-you makes a difference in our lives and in the ways we live out our faith.

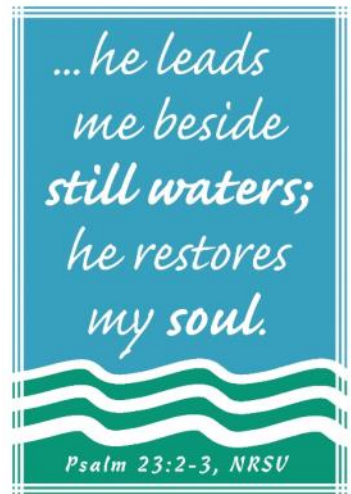
October holds a host of ways to practice accompaniment, through a variety of ways many people choose to walk alongside others to show up for each other, raise awareness and support, and connect with one another to share resources and care.

We are a community who can choose to support and be supported by many organizations, and I give thanks for our greater community's witness to God's work through so many hands.

As members of Grace share meaningful events and walks this month, I invite you to hold a few of these October events in prayer.

God in your mercy, hear our prayers for the NAMI Walks McHenry County in Emrickson, Crop Walk and Walk to End Alzheimer's in Crystal Lake, the Turning Point Domestic Violence Candlelight Vigil in the Woodstock Square, and Family Health Partnership Clinic's Care4 Breast Cancer Hybrid 5K in Woodstock. Let us pray in thanksgiving for these communities of care, support, research, and love for neighbor and for all who will gather in community this month.

Beloved, you are not alone. God journeys beside you in all things and is at work in the world through so many caring individuals and community partners. May you be encouraged by our shepherding God to receive care and resources and strive to share God's love and compassion with one another in this new season and always.



Peace,
Pastor Amanda



The Living Room of NAMI McHenry County is a calm, welcoming space for adults experiencing emotional distress or a mental health crisis for peer support without the emergency room. Learn more at namimch.org/livingroom	Turning Point of McHenry County offers domestic violence services such as emergency helpline, legal advocacy, emergency shelter, alternative programs, education and prevention. Learn more at turnpt.org/	People in Need is a directory of community resources in McHenry County. Learn more about neighboring organizations connecting people and resources throughout our community at mchenry.edu/pin/PIN-eng.pdf
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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, 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), Karen Hanus (friend of Kari Gippert), Cindy Hertrampf (sister of Tammy Hansing), Janette Hess, 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), Natalie Miller (sister to Mary Johnson), Kem Moran (friend of Barb Aavang), Jenny Perrone (friend of Cindy Walters), 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)

Sorrow: Donna Freeman, Denise Hoover, Ben Miller (nephew of Mary Johnson), Joe Pienschke

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 Oct. 13 & 27. 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 at 1 p.m. In October, the dates are Oct. 7 and 21. 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 **November 2026** newsletter is **October 15**. Please send articles to Kari Gippert at kgippert@gracewoodstock.org, or the church office. Questions: Call the office at **815-338-0554**.

WORSHIP WITH US IN OCTOBER

"Called by God to serve as stewards till earth's garden greens and thrives, can we learn in time to listen? Can we turn and change our lives?"

—"Can You Feel the Seasons Turning" ACS 1065

This fall we gather in worship, noticing signs of change around us and remembering our heritage of change and reform as we live into our continued call to proclaim the good news of Jesus and God's amazing grace. Share in life among God's faithful people as we gather in community for worship on **Sundays at 9:00 a.m.** or as you set aside space and time for worship through the weekly [YouTube livestream](#) or the posted worship videos on our website.

Animal & Pet Blessing. October 4 is the annual commemoration day for Francis of Assisi, renewer of the church, who died in 1226. Born into the family of a wealthy merchant, Francis gave up his inheritance to serve poor people. He formed the Order of Friars Minor (called Franciscans), who took on poverty and the task of preaching "using words if necessary." Francis had a spirit of gratitude for all of God's creation.

You and your pets (and/or bring pictures of beloved animals in your life) are invited to return after worship on **Sunday, October 4 at 10:45 a.m.** for a brief service of scripture, song, and blessing for all of God's beloved creation. You can park in the lower-level parking lot to access the outdoor chapel just past the play area.

80+ Senior Worship Service. The worship & music committee and senior calling team look forward to hosting a dessert reception following the 80+ Senior Worship Service on **Thursday, October 29 at 1 p.m.** Please RSVP to the church office or sign up in the Activity Binder by October 23. If you are interested in a ride to worship that day, please contact Sally Sheahan.

Upcoming Worship Save-the-Dates

Animal & Pet Blessing	Sunday, October 4, 10:45 a.m.
Reformation Sunday	Sunday, October 25, 9:00 a.m.
80+ Senior Worship Service	Thursday, October 29, 1:00 p.m.
All Saints Sunday	Sunday, November 1, 9:00 a.m.
Thanksgiving Eve	Tuesday, November 24, 7:00 p.m.
Christmas Eve	Thursday, December 24, 4:00 & 7:30 p.m.

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](#).
- If interested in joining this A/V team rotation, please contact Bill Nattress.
- To join the rotation for children's sermons, please contact Carrie Steckl.
- 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, please contact the church office for upcoming rehearsal information.

Cherub Choir, age 3-1st grade youth vocal choir rehearses two Wednesdays, 5:45-6 p.m.

Joyful Messengers, 2nd-6th grade youth vocal choir rehearses two Wednesdays, 6-6:30 p.m.

Revelation Ringers, 7th-12th grade and adult handbell choir, three Wednesdays, 6-7 p.m.

Laudate, 7th-12th grade vocal choir rehearses two Sundays at 10 a.m.

Grace Tones, youth & adult contemporary band rehearse one evening.

Chancel, adult vocal choir rehearses two Wednesdays, 7-8 p.m.



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Mobile Food Pantry

The mobile food pantry operates on the second Monday of each month. This month that is Oct. 12.

Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB) supports us by sending a truck with palletized food by 3 p.m. Our

volunteers sort the food by 3:15 and fill boxes, which get loaded into the cars of neighbors who arrive to receive food. **No registration or proof of residence is needed.** The boxes contain various food items for

each family, including fresh produce, meat, assorted shelf-stable items and snacks.

We serve until all food is distributed, generally between 3:45 and 5 p.m.

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	August 2026			8/31/26 Year-to-date		
	Actual	Budget	Difference	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$45,857.41	\$34,778.76	\$11,078.65	\$307,132.78	\$285,274.08	\$21,858.70
Expense	\$36,634.51	\$40,867.36	\$4,232.85	\$324,606.40	\$340,434.68	\$15,828.28
Balance	\$9,222.90	(\$6,088.60)	\$15,311.50	(\$17,473.62)	(\$55,160.60)	\$37,686.98

Quarterly giving statements will be emailed in mid-October (or placed in the mail if we do not have your email address). Please contact the church office with any questions (815-338-0554).

Ministry support. Your offerings make a difference in equipping this congregation to live out our mission in response to God's grace. Thank you for your response to God's generosity.

"God's work. Our hands." ELCA Service Day



Thank you for your involvement in this year's "God's work. Our hands."

Thank you to our team of 82 volunteers who gathered to serve in community for the 14th year of the annual "God's work. Our hands." ELCA Service Day. It was a beautiful day to assemble 120 school kits and 50 personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief, participate in Grace's Sewing Circle,

collect \$347 and 414 pounds of food donations at Jewel for the Woodstock Food Pantry, and tend to the grounds outside the new Woodstock Food Pantry site and at Aarrk Gardens in Hebron. Thanks be to God for this opportunity to serve together.



Andrew Thomas carries trimmed branches to a brush pile on the grounds of the new Woodstock Food Pantry.

Congregational Treasurer Needed

Each year a member of the congregation is elected to serve as Treasurer to work with the Finance Committee to oversee the finances of the congregation alongside Grace's financial secretary staff member who performs bookkeeping and payroll functions.

Please consider if you, or someone you know, may have the skillset and support for Grace's ministry to serve as treasurer.

The treasurer provides monthly financial reports for the Congregation Council and financial reports for congregational and annual reports and assists in the preparation of the annual budget.

If you are interested in this volunteer position or would like to learn more, please contact the church office or a council member.



At Aarrk Gardens, Andrea Johnson tends gardening.



Owen Kleinjan pulls weeds at Aarrk Gardens.

Sunday School

Families will participate in a service project on Oct. 11 to stock the Blessing Box, and students and teachers gather for class on Oct. 25 to learn about David and Goliath.

Confirmation

Students have been learning about elements of worship and in October will be exploring the sacraments, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, in addition to beginning a class service project. This month, we welcome a guest educator for parent and student presentations on healthy relationships.



All Welcome to Join Hymn Sing Oct. 24

The Worship and Music Committee is happy to announce the date of our next Hymn Sing: Saturday October 24.

We will have a potluck dinner in Grace Center at 6 p.m. followed by the Hymn Sing in the sanctuary at 7 p.m.

Please bring a dish to pass. All ages are welcome. Bring your friends!

Contact Beth Miller or the church office if you have any questions.

—Judy Reilly

Sunday Book Club

Sunday Book Club will meet all four Sundays in October, after starting "Theo of Golden" on Sept. 20. plan to conclude this book on Jan. 24, 2027.

If you have any questions, please contact Paul Lockwood or Sally Sheahan.

Please join us in reading this No. 1 New York Times bestseller by Allen Levi. We

—Sally Sheahan

Invitation to Join Funeral Hosting Team Luncheons

Did you know that a committee of volunteers has been formed to make funeral lunches available on-site at the church?

We would be glad to have others join us in this effort to provide a place for family and friends to gather after the funeral and have a meal together and find comfort in each other's company.

A big thank you to those who have helped to re-establish this ministry for those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. If you would like to participate to help set up, serve or clean up, please let me know and I will add you to the list.

Sewing Circle

As always, Sewing Circle busily created items for others this year. At the press time, we are ready to take 83 Lutheran World Relief quilts to the drop-off site to be shipped to people in need. (Displayed in church on Sept. 27). We also will distribute walker bags, wheelie bags, cell phone bags, poly bags, crocheted blankets, lap quilts and neck & small pillows to our 10 local nursing homes. We give small quilts and nap pillows to three local places that help needy children. Actual numbers of distributed items will be available at a later date.

You may also want to pick up any of our items for yourself or a loved one at the 80+ Senior Worship Service.

We meet on Oct. 6 & 20 from 8:30-noon. Contact Tammy Hansing (hansings1981@gmail.com) or the church office for more information.

—Tammy Hansing

Presence Light Sponsors:

October 4:

- To the Glory of God; given by the Steckl Family.

October 11:

- Given to the Glory of God.

October 18:

- Given to the Glory of God.

October 25:

- In honor of our daughter Abigail & Nathan's first anniversary; given by Bill & Nancy Kreznor.

Bulletin Sponsors:

October 4:

- In honor of our 47th anniversary; given by Sheri & Mike Conover.
- To the Glory of God; given by the Steckl Family.

October 11:

- In memory of my brother, Robert Heckler; given by William & Nancy Kreznor.

October 18:

- In memory of my dad, Ferd Raffel; given by Janette Hess.
- In honor of their October 17th wedding at Grace; given by Paul & Lauren Lockwood.

October 25:

- In memory of my dad, Don Phillips; given by Mike Phillips.

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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Building Supervisor

Ken Zank

Custodians

Chris & Kim Ethridge

Council

Carlos Acosta, Michelle Anderson,
Brian Gerloff, Carrie Jarnecke,
Nancy Kreznor, Mary Noe,
Adele Petersen, Mike Phillips,
Jeremy Schaaf, Carrie Steckl

Treasurer

Jane Gerloff

