GRACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
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Grace for Today

November 2026 ● Volume 25, No 11

Who & Whose

"See what love the Father has given us,
that we should be called children of God,
and that is what we are." 1 John 3:1a

Beloved of God, as we gather this November, we remember. We remember our loved ones who have died as we light candles on All Saints Sunday. We remember the world continues to spin beyond a news cycle. We remember there is beauty in change as we see vibrant colors in falling leaves. We remember veterans and their families, service and sacrifices. We remember gratitude around meal traditions, and we hope for gatherings with friends and/or family. We remember people in need and give food and share gifts around upcoming holidays. We remember we are called to live out our faith in daily living.

In all times, we are called to remember who we are and whose we are. We are first, above all and forever, beloved children of God. See how much God loves us. See how God names and claims you beloved. Remember who you are, no matter what happens, no matter what you do or is done to you: **you are a beloved child of God,** *and Jesus loves you.*

And we are called to remember whose we are. We are God's. We are God's beloved, whom God so deeply loves. In the waters of baptism, God says we belong. We belong to Christ in whom we are baptized, a promise we remember throughout our lives, at our death, and as we trust in God's eternal care: **we belong to Christ**, *for if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*

As seasons turn, we remember together that these truths of identity and belonging are forever: we are beloved children of God, and we belong to Christ. In the months ahead, Grace will hold onto these promises as we near the end of this year and prepare for the beginning of another year in faith. Next year will mark 120 years of Grace Lutheran Church as a congregation, and I trust God is calling this faith community into newness of life this year and beyond.



"The Church of Christ, in Every Age" ELW 729

Over so many years of faithful living, commitments to community, continual change, wondrous works of the Holy Spirit, a firm foundation in Christ, and newness of life, what a gift to be beloved children of God in this time and place together. Blessed by generations before us, present in this current expression of living among God's faithful people, and in anticipation of an unknown future renewed and redeemed by God: we are united with so many people in shared identity and belonging.

Blessings on your remembering. May you remember, claim as good news, and share with others the steadfast love of God that endures from generation to generation and gathers us together into one communion of saints.

Peace,
Pastor Amanda



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.

World: Bishop Yehiel Curry, churchwide staff & their families, Bishop Stacie Fidlar, 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: Butch Borchardt (friend of Barb Aavang), Marlene Botts, Marie Grob (family member of Kevin & Carrie Jarnecke), Family of Denise Hoover, Anne Johnson, Richard Kurth (brother-in-law to Sue and Al Beckman), Roger Long (Father of Carole Gerloff & Beth Miller), John Miller (brother-in-law to Sue and Al Beckman), Vanessa Ramos Mohler (friend of Kari Gippert), Hope Rosenquist (niece of Sue and Al Beckman), Orest Rychtytzkyj, Ryan Rychtytzkyj, David Strayer (father of Lisa Washkowiak), Marilyn Vanskike, Bonita Washkowiak (mother of Matt Washkowiak), Mary Widmayer, Caitlin Wilcox (niece of Anne Johnson), David

Sorrow: Sue Phillips (mother of Cindy Meyer)

Joys: Baptism of Logan Matthew Bratanick, Wedding of Paul & Lauren

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).

Thanksgiving Altar Display Request



For our Thanksgiving altar display, we are in need of pumpkins, squash, colorful gourds, apples, potatoes, Indian corn, and corn stalks.

Please leave your donations in the entryway on the upper level the week of Nov. 22. Please be sure that these items are cleaned of any mud or dirt before you bring them into the church.

All edible produce will be donated to the Food Pantry after November 30th. Any questions, contact Judy Reilly.

—Judy Reilly

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 Nov. 10. Sign up **here** if you want to participate. If you have questions, please call the church office at 815-338-0554.

—Ken & Kathy Zank

Mobile Food Pantry

The mobile food pantry operates on the second Monday of each month. This month that is Nov. 9.

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

(Food Pantry, continued on page 5)

Pinochle

We meet the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 1 p.m. In November, the dates are Nov. 4 and 18. 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 **December 2026** newsletter is **November 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 NOVEMBER

Beloved of God, as we gather to worship God this November, we rejoice in God's nearness. Ever by our side, naming and claiming us in the waters of baptism through the whole of our lives and forevermore, God is with you.

In November, we gather on **November 1** for **All Saint Sunday**, remembering loved ones who have died, giving thanks for newly baptized, rejoicing in God's blessings, as God gathers us together into one communion of saints. During worship you will be invited to share a time of remembrance and candle lighting.

On Sunday, **November 22**, we observe **Reign of Christ Sunday**, the end of the liturgical calendar before we gather to give thanks on Tuesday, November 24, **Thanksgiving Eve Eve,** and then enter into the season of **Advent** on Sunday, November 29.

Come, gather as a community to worship God together 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.

Upcoming Worship Save the Dates

All Saints Sunday ..... Sunday, November 1, 9:00 a.m.
Thanksgiving Eve 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

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.



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AT GRACE

Help provide decorations for our sanctuary this Christmas. Give a gift in "honor of someone" or "in memory or a loved one" or "to the glory of God."

Mail in or drop off your coupon at right, along with your $18.00 gift to Grace Lutheran Church, 1300 Kishwaukee Valley Rd., Woodstock, IL, 60098.

Please **print clearly**, as you want it to appear in the bulletin. Payments due in the office by **December 11, 2026**.



Amount:_____

CHOOSE ONE PER COUPON: (Please print)

In Memory Of: _____

In Honor Of: _____

To the Glory of God: _____

GIVEN BY : _____

120 Years & beyond

Thank you for continuing gifts in support of the mission and ministries of Grace Lutheran Church. We continue to give thanks for your generosity as we hope to reduce the approved deficit budget for 2026.

Your one-time, regular, annual, and additional gifts are a blessing to this community and our shared commitment to respond to God's grace.

	September 2026			9/30/26 Year-to-date		
Operating	Actual	Budget	Difference	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	$30,938.72	$35,003.76	($4,065.04)	$338,071.50	$326,005.91	$12,065.59
Expense	$39,327.83	$38,634.17	($693.66)	$363,934.23	$379,068.85	$15,134.62
Balance	($8,389.11)	($3,630.41)	($4,758.70)	($25,862.73)	($58,791.01)	$32,928.28

As we begin to plan for 2027, we thank you for communicating your giving intentions. You are invited to return your Estimate of Giving in worship on November 1, or by mailing your Estimate of Giving card to the church office or completing the online form option.

Christmas Family Sharing Begins This Month

Christmas Family Sharing (CFS) Giving Tree will be set up and ready for you to stop by beginning Nov. 8!



On the tree and table, located in the narthex, ornaments will highlight the needs of three different ministries which serve people locally and globally. You are welcome to choose as many ornaments as you would like and then return the items to the bins in the narthex.

Locally, we are again partnering with Turning Point and the Family Health Partnership Clinic. Both organizations have shared that their client needs have increased from last year.

Turning Point helps people who are impacted by domestic violence. They are requesting donations of gift cards from a variety of local stores.

The Family Health Partnership Clinic provides health care to uninsured individuals in our county. We will be collecting food for their pantry, items which are used in the clinic, and Walmart gift cards, which are shared to help obtain medications.

Globablly, we partner with ELCA Good Gifts, Ornaments on the CFS Giving Tree for ELCA Good Gifts will have envelopes attached. You can choose from a wide variety of items — from chicks, to goats, to school uniforms — to help support people in need around the world. There will be a form to fill out which you can then return in the envelope with your payment. We will submit one group order from Grace. You may also access ELCA Good Gifts online at www.ELCA.org/goodgifts.

The last date all donations can be accepted is Dec. 6, but items can be returned anytime to the labeled bins in the narthex.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Christmas Family Sharing program! If you have any questions, stop by the table, or feel free to contact Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia.

—Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia

Food Drive to Support Woodstock Food Pantry

Grace is having a fall food drive to fill the shelves at the food pantry. **We will pass out bags after worship on Nov. 15 for you to fill and then bring back on Nov. 22.** All shelf-stable items are welcome, along with cash donations. Items listed above are most needed, but you can choose others that will help our neighbors fill their cart.

canned tuna or chicken; Cheerios; brown rice; strawberry jam/jelly; boxed mashed potatoes; pasta; canned pasta (like Chef Boyardee or SpaghettiOs); ramen noodles; pancake mix; syrup; Sloppy Joe; Pork & Beans; side dishes; apple sauce; canned fruit; toilet paper; paper towels; tea bags; shampoo; deodorant, bar soap; toothpaste: detergent

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.

Columbarium Task Force Fall Update

Since the Church Council approval in August to continue with the pursuit of establishing a coumbarium on Grace Lutheran Church grounds, Columbarium Task Force members have been working diligently toward this goal

Tony Zoia from Zoia Monuments has done a site visit and been instrumental in assistint us in the discussion of costs to make the purchase as initially affordable as possible. Once it is ordered, the columbarium witll take four to six months to arrive in 2027. Bill Kreznor has assisted us in gaining Julie review of the selected site and all utilities have been cleared at the location.

Our chosen location for this 36-niche columbarium is the little section of land north of the sanctuary, south of the handicapped parking lot, east of the circle drive and west

(Columbarium, continued on page 5)

COLUMBARIUM

(Continued from page four)

of the tree line. The special use permit process through the city of Woodstock has begun.

At our Oct. 14 meeting, the members finalized the Grace documents needed for people to complete for niche sign up/ purchase. These documents will be reviewed by the Executive Committee and given to Church Council for approval in November.

We will continue to keep you updated.

—Mary Noe, Columbarium Task Force Chair



Fall Cleanup

Fall Cleanup of the church grounds will be Saturday, Nov. 7 from 8 a.m.-noon. The rain date will be scheduled on Saturday, Nov. 14 from 8 a.m.-noon. See you there!

Food Pantry

(Continued from page two)

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.

In early October Sunday school families shared service learning as they shopped together at a grocery store to restock the Blessing Box at the top of the Grace driveway.

All are welcome to take and give as you need and are able, sharing resources so that all may be fed.

In November, Sunday School students meet after worship on November 8 & 22.

This month students and teachers will gather to plan for upcoming worship participation, decorate ornaments for a tree at the Opera House, and learn together about the story of Elijah and the widow.



Confirmation Program

Confirmation students continue to explore elements of Lutheran worship, learn about healthy relationships, and prepare for their upcoming winter service project. You are invited to join in prayer for our students as they wrestle with questions of faith, learn in community, and share in giving thanks and praise to God.

Sunday Book Club

The Sunday Book Club will continue its study of the No.1 New York Times Bestseller, "Theo of Golden" by Allen Levi, every Sunday in November. Come join us during the Advent season as we read and discuss a story about enduring faith, hope, and love. If you have any questions, please contact Paul Lockwood or Sally Sheahan.

—Sally Sheahan

Sewing Circle

As this is the thankful month of November, I wish to express my thanks for all the wonderful ladies who make up Grace Sewing Circle, and to our generous congregation

Everyone does their own part and when joined together it makes a wonderful ministry, not unlike creating a quilt.

We continue to meet on the first and third Tuesday of the month from 8:30-noon in the lower level at Grace. Our on-going list of needs are fabric, sheets, quilt batting, pillow stuffing, yarn, thread, rotary cutting blades and Thrivent Action Team cards (which are used to purchase needed items).

Please come join us on November 3 and 17 if you are able. We would love to see you and would welcome your help in creating lovely items to help the needy. Any questions, please contact Tammy Hansing at hansings1981@gmail.com

—Tammy Hansing

Animal, Pet Blessing Takes Place Oct. 4

On Oct. 4, Grace held a brief service of scripture, song, and blessing for all of God's beloved creation. Those who wanted could attend the animal & pet blessing with their pets or pictures of their animals. Pictured at right are those who attended this special service.



Presence Light Sponsors:

November 1:
- In memory of Reed G. Larson; given by Ellen, Kirk, & Evan.

November 8:
- Given to the Glory of God.

November 15:
- In honor of our granddaughter's 3rd birthday; given by Dan & Janette Hess.

November 22:
- In memory of Marlene L. Teuber and in honor of Robert W. Teuber; given by Robert B. Teuber.

November 29:
- In memory of Dorothy Bartram (Mrs. B); given by her family.

Bulletin Sponsors:

November 1:
- Given to the Glory of God.

November 8:
- Given to the Glory of God.

November 15:
- Given to the Glory of God.

November 22:
- In memory of Grandmothers, Nancy Gilchrist & Edith Orsett; given by the Conover Family.

November 24:
- To the Glory of God; given by Don & Marylee Steinwehe.

November 29:
- In memory of Marlene L. Teuber in honor of Robert W. Teuber; given by Robert B. Teuber.

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 (877-888-3604) and the amountyou 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
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Organist
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Music Group Directors
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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