GRACE NOTES

NEWSLETTER OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

GRACE LUTHERAN'S MISSION STATEMENT

God's purpose for Grace Lutheran Church is to be fed and to feed our neighbors: mind, body and soul.

May 2026

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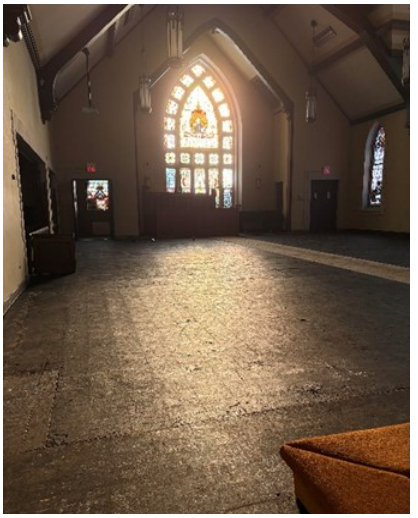
PASTOR'S PAGES



Can you believe it was only last summer that we worshiped at First Presbyterian Church while our Nave flooring was removed and renewed? Having missed out on them last summer, I have heard how much people are looking forward to resuming our weekly summer brunches that follow our 9:15am Sunday worship.

When we agreed to replace the flooring last summer, we also agreed to give ourselves one year to experience seating flexibility. On **Sunday, May 3** Grace Forum (10:30-11:30am in the fellowship hall) will review what we have learned, and discuss what options that gives us forthwith. On **Sunday, May 17** Grace Lutheran Church will hold a special Meeting of the Congregation to take action on the degree of flexibility we will have in our worship space.

I thank people of Grace for your giving and patience as we have been partnering with our brothers and sisters in Christ at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Lincoln since Feb 1, 2025. During their pastoral vacancy weekend worship has been led by CSIS Synod Authorized Minister (SAM) Dave Griffiths. My role has been to attend their Council meetings, supervise Dave, preside at their funerals, and visit their shut-ins in the Springfield area. Immanuel Lutheran is in conversation with St. John's Lutheran Church, Hartsburg regarding the possibility of sharing a pastor - and it is my hope (and I am sure theirs as well) that this will come to fruition this year.

I will be vacationing as needed May 4-8 to be with Michelle following surgery that Monday. If you have pastoral care needs the first week of May, please call the church office.

Grace Forum is blessed by educational opportunities, and since mid-January many of these have directly related to our learning and faith formation with people LGBTQ+ and POC. First Presbyterian Church is also offering three independent six-hour anti-racism training sessions; the next two being June 7 or June 27 (please consider signing up).

RECONCILING IN CHRIST

As we continue our Reconciling In Christ journey, the next steps include the development of a Welcome Statement, and a corresponding survey for active members of our congregation. Before the end of this year we may know if we are ready to vote to adopt the Statement that is soon to be created. I am grateful for your participation, and for the Spirit's presence among us.

Speaking of the Spirit's presence, the festival of Pentecost is May 24, and it marks the fifth anniversary of when you and I first worshiped together *indoors,* after responsibly and faithfully protecting one another through a pandemic that didn't need to but still claimed over 1 million American lives.

The Spirit of God ignited the disciples to share the good news at Pentecost nearly two-thousand years ago (Acts 2), and that same Spirit is no less present amongst us now! The Spirit inspires us to be fed and to feed our neighbors: mind, body and soul.

Pastor Krieger

Giving from Your IRA – A Tax-Wise Way to Support Grace

As we seek to be faithful stewards of all God has entrusted to us, there is a special opportunity available to those age 70 ½ and older. Through a Qualified Charitable Contribution (QCD) from your traditional IRA, you can direct a gift from your IRA to Grace. Also, if you are taking a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from a traditional IRA, this gift can count toward your RMD while being excluded in your taxable income.

This can be a meaningful way to support the ministry of Grace while also stewarding your resources wisely. For example, excluding a $5,000 distribution directed to Grace from taxable income could reduce federal income taxes by approximately $1,100 for someone in the 22% marginal bracket, though actual savings depend on individual circumstances. You may give gifts throughout the year, as long as they don't exceed the IRS limit ($100,000 per year adjusted for inflation annually).

Making a Qualified Charitable Distribution is straightforward. First, contact your IRA custodian and request that the distribution be sent directly to Grace Lutheran Church—either by check payable to Grace or by electronic transfer. The gift must go directly from your retirement account to the church; if you receive the funds personally, it will be treated as taxable income. Be sure the transfer is completed before December 31 to count this year. Grace will include the transfer on your annual giving statement. As always, consult your tax advisor or financial professional to ensure this strategy fits your individual circumstances.

Your faithful generosity continues to strengthen the ministry of Grace as we feed ourselves and our neighbors.

Notes from the Cantor JB George…

The Public Witness of Singing Together

Brian's spring choral concert at Eastern Illinois University included sections of *poor hymnal* (all lower-case, like e.e. cummings) by David Lang. The composer collects old hymnals and marvels at how their pages shaped the belief and practice of the communities of faith who sang their contents together. While *poor hymnal* is a secular work, it quotes and paraphrases many religious texts, including both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. Songs of faith unify and form the people who sing them, because they put in our mouths who we say we are and what we say we believe. The *poor hymnal* collects texts which we might imagine to be things a wider society might (or *should*) believe. Movement #5, "the least of us" quotes Jesus in Matthew 25:35-36 and the "Golden Rule" in Leviticus 19:18.

I was the stranger
I was the least of us
I was sick you comforted me
I was imprisoned you came to me…
you saw me and you loved me
as you love yourself
the least of us, the least of us
who we are to the least of us
is who we are *[emphasis mine]*

Our identity as people of loving generosity is not dependent on being wealthy and able to give huge amounts of time or resources: it is an attitude of the heart. Likewise, our ability to join with others in songs of encouragement and solidarity is not dependent on our relative musical training: again, it requires only an attitude of heartfelt openness to our shared song.

Please take a moment to listen to *poor hymnal* (especially "the least of us," #5) on your favorite music streaming service, or follow this YouTube link if you're reading *Grace Notes* online.

During the Summer…the weekly brunches following worship (approx. 10:30 am) June through August will be a time of fellowship and food. A sign up sheet will be on the white board for any and all who would like to bring tasty items, along with those committees. Keep watch.

Parish Nurse — Your Health News, Diana Weyhenmeyer

I was asked by a member of the congregation to talk about the role of sodium in the body. Sodium plays a crucial role in regulating fluid balance, nerve function, and muscle contraction in the body. It helps maintain blood volume and pressure by controlling the amount of fluid in and around cells.

However, excess salt intake can be dangerous for health. Eating too much salt not only increases blood pressure, but diets higher in sodium content can put you at higher risk for heart disease and stroke — two conditions that people with diabetes are already at increased risk of developing. Excess levels of sodium can lead to increased water retention that leads to puffiness, bloating and weight gain.

Sodium naturally absorbs water. When ingested through a high-sodium diet, it draws water into the bloodstream, pumping up blood volume and thus increasing blood pressure. Chronic high blood pressure is known as hypertension. When someone lives with hypertension, their heart has to work harder to pump blood around their body, which can cause damage to vital organs including the brain, eyes, kidneys, and, of course, the heart.

Over time, for conditions such as heart attack, stroke, heart failure, kidney disease and failure, and vision loss. When combined with a diabetes diagnosis, the health consequences are even greater.

Where does sodium come from?

More than 70% comes from processed and restaurant foods
About 11% is added while cooking or eating
More than 14% occurs naturally

3,400 milligrams

Amount of sodium an American consumes on average in a day

1,500 milligrams

Recommended by the American Heart Association for ideal heart health

The Benefits of Lower Sodium Intake

Adopting a low-sodium diet can lead to numerous health benefits:

Reduced Risk of Hypertension: Lowering sodium intake can significantly decrease the risk of developing high blood pressure.

Improved Heart Health: Heart disease is a leading cause of death among seniors. Reducing sodium helps protect heart health.

Better Bone Health: High sodium intake can lead to calcium loss, affecting bone density. A low-sodium diet supports stronger bones.

Enhanced Kidney Function: Excess sodium can strain the kidneys. Lower levels help maintain kidney health, vital for seniors.

Information for this article came from the American Heart Association, Diabetes Strong and Healthline.

In Christ's Love, Diana

EASTER BASKET HONOREES

Nearly 90 Easter Baskets were taken to Black Hawk, Franklin, McClernand and Jefferson schools, as well as some in need. We thank you for your generosity; this will help with Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets too.

Joyce Abrams — Remembering Bob Abrams

Curt & Valerie Benanti — Remembering Clara and John Benanti, Carolyn Benanti, Betty and George Clough, Edna Nation, Russ Nation and Helen Moore

Pat Casper— Remembering my family members who are in our heavenly home

Ann Evans — Honoring my grandchildren

Larry & Leona Garrison— Remembering Verne and Florence Garrison, Charles and Laura Thompson

James, Karen and Alaina Hawker

Trudy & Cary Israel — Remembering our parents

Corinne Kircher — Remembering Frank Kircher

Harold & Kim Janssen — Remembering Louis and Rochelle Suttory, Nellie and Anna Janssen

Adam, Heidi & Adalyn Lowery — Remembering our daughter, Adysen Lowery and mother, Susan Cane

Carol Morris— Remembering Marty Morris

Carolyn Nelson — Remembering loved ones

Chuck & Diana Weyhenmeyer — Remembering family and friends

SAVE THE DATES….*We will celebrate the end of Sunday School May 17th along with the congregational meeting about the pews. We hope all families will join us for fun and science, 10:30 am in Grace's fellowship hall following worship!*

***Pentecost** is May 24, 2026 All are welcome to wear red.*

FOOD PANTRY REPORT

As Christ fed the multitudes, the mission of
Grace Lutheran Church Food Pantry is to feed the hungry.

Our Volunteer Appreciation Lunch will be at noon Wednesday, April 29th.

One of the welcome rites of spring for the food pantry is the annual Scouting for Food Drive through which several local groups donate non-perishable foods. This year we received 1.020 items from Pack 38, Troop 38 and Troop 210, which meet at St. John's Lutheran Church, and 320 items from Troop 3, which meets at Douglas Avenue Methodist Church.

The increasing community-wide awareness of our work has been evident again in recent weeks as we have been contacted by three separate sober living houses to make arrangements to pick up food and personal items for their residents. We have served 47 of their residents in the past month and anticipate monthly visits from them. We also continue to serve 35 residents of the Capitol Retirement Village each month.

Through the end of March we had served 2,638 households, an increase of 23 percent over the same period a year ago, and 7,299 individuals, a 26 percent increase.

Fortunately, our strong end-of-2025 account balance has enabled us to maintain a good financial footing through this latest growth spurt in client numbers. Year-to-date through the end of March expenses of $51,667 had exceeded donations of $48,803 by $2,864, but our month-end account balance of $92,597 was nearly $13,000 more than the $79,887 in the account at the same time last year.

We look forward to Grace's annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on Wednesday, April 29, and invite everyone to dine in or drive through at Culver's on Wabash between 5 and 8 p.m., Tuesday, May 5 for a "Dine and Donate" event through which a portion of Culver's proceeds will be donated to the pantry.

Doug McFarlan, Director

MAY

Sun	Mon	Tue
3 ***RACHEL'S DAY*** 9:15 am Worship 10:30 am Grace Forum Nave flexibility discussion	4 *11:00-1:00 Food Pantry* ***Pastor on vacation***	5 *11:00-1:00 Food Pantry* 5:00 pm Culver's Food Pantry Fundraiser 6:00 pm Twisted Stitchers
10 9:15 am Worship 	11 *11:00-1:00 Food Pantry* 1:00 pm Evangelism	12 10:30 am Property *11:00-1:00 Food Pantry*
17 *Blood pressure checks* 9:15 am Worship 10:30 am Sunday School Celebration Day Congregational Meeting	18 *11:00-1:00 Food Pantry*	19 12:00 pm Admin & Finance *11:00-1:00 Food Pantry* 6:00 pm Ruth Circle
24 9:15 am Worship 31 9:15 am Worship	25 ***Memorial Day*** *Food Pantry* *AND* Office Closed	26 9:30 am Staff Meeting *11:00-1:00 Food Pantry* 6:00 pm Council

2026

	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	6 **National Nurses Day** Thank you to our Parish Nurses!!! 12:30 pm Faith/ Grace Circle 4:30 pm Choir	7 *11:00-1:00 Food Pantry* 12:10 pm Brown Bag Bible Study 7:00 pm AA Meeting	1 7:00 pm Fly& Shine LLCC/ UIS choir at Grace 8 4:00—5:00 pm CSIS Deans	2 7:00 pm Barber-shop Concert at Sugar Creek Methodist 9
	13 4:30 pm Choir 6:00 pm RIC Welcome Team	14 *11:00-1:00 Food Pantry* 12:10 pm Brown Bag Bible Study 7:00 pm AA Meeting	15 10:00 am CPR Training	16 Pride Fest Downtown Old Capitol Art Fair Downtown Library Book Sale with WELCA Bake Sale
	20 4:30 pm Choir	21 *11:00-1:00 Food Pantry* 12:10 pm Brown Bag Bible Study 1:15 pm Stewardship 7:00 pm AA Meeting	22 Grace Notes	23
	27 4:30 pm Choir	28 *11:00-1:00 Food Pantry* 12:10 pm Brown Bag Bible Study 7:00 pm AA Meeting	29 **JB to training 29-31**	30

Serving the Assembly in May

May 3
Greeter: Jean Scherer
Ushers: Frank Beckman & Paul Derlitzki
Reader: Pat Casper
Communion Asst.: Pat Ekle
Altar Guild: Toni Klit

May 10
Greeters: Mary Jo Anderson
Ushers: Mark & Cindy Anderson
Reader: Arlene Lenser
Communion Asst.: Chuck Weyhenmeyer
Altar Guild: Kim Gietl

May 17
Greeter: Laurie Farrell
Ushers: Chris & Mary Schofield
Reader: Mary Plymire
Communion Asst.: Kim Gietl
Altar Guild: Debbie Rigg

May 24 PENTECOST
Greeter: Gari Hurst
Ushers: Jack & Judy Wheaton
Reader: Cindy Anderson
Communion Asst.: Randy Heidorn
Altar Guild: Kim Gietl

May 31
Greeter: Pat Casper
Ushers: Jean Scherer & Ed Wollet
Reader: Verne Nelson
Communion Asst.: Jack Wheaton
Altar Guild: Toni Klit

Weekend	Date	Attendance
Lent 2 / Bold Women's Day	3/1/2026	58 In-person
Midweek 2	3/4/2026	24 In-person
Lent 3	3/8/2026	46 In-person
Midweek 3	3/11/2026	24 In-person
Lent 4	3/15/2026	66 In-person
Midweek 4	3/18/2026	21 In-person
Lent 5	3/22/2026	64 In-person
Palm Sunday	3/29/2026	69 In-person
Maundy Thursday 12:15 pm	4/2/2026	11 In-person
Maundy Thursday 6:30 pm	4/2/2026	37 In-person
Good Friday 12:15 pm	4/3/2026	7 In-person
Good Friday 6:30 pm	4/3/2026	47 In-person
Easter Sunday	4/5/2026	98 in-person

Stephen Ministry

Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing…. **Just a reminder…you are not alone.** Stephen Ministry equips a team of lay caregivers to provide one-on-one, Christ centered care to people experiencing life difficulties. Your contact is confidential, whether or not you decide to accept our services. Stephen Ministry is available in our congregation! We are here to help!

Prayers OF GRACE MINISTRY

The Holy Spirit does and will offer our prayers for us. Romans 8:26 tells us, *"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words".* If you have a specific prayer request that you would like added to the Prayer Chain or if you would like to be added to the Prayer Chain email list please contact Kim, in the office, k.gietl15@yahoo.com, Pastor Krieger tomkrieger63@gmail.com or Sara Oehlert soehlert@aol.com

MEMBERS HOMEBOUND OR LIMITED MOBILITY

SANDY BENANTI	ANN EVANS	JUDY RAKE
CHARLOTTE BLUMLE	LEORA HARRY	DON THANNEN
MARY BLUMLE	MARCELLA MCGOWAN	ROBERTA VOLKMANN
GLENDA BOWLES	TOM & KATHY MYERS	

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Council met March 24, 2026 the following are highlights:

- ◊ CD's renewed
- ◊ For the time being there will be no monetary help for rental assistance.
- ◊ Discussion was had on the Other Music budget line item and Dedicated Music line donations given for those who are paid to sing Sunday mornings.
- ◊ **MOTION** that Scott Noel and Dawn Holm become members by Affirmation of baptism on April 12th. **-Approved**
- ◊ Staff will take CPR in May, to be paid for by Thrivent Dedicated line with others paying out of pocket. **MOTION—**that funds be used for CPR for staff out of Thrivent Dedicated line. **-Approved**
- ◊ Met with Troxell for new insurance for Grace. Also still in contact with Gallagher (current company) for rates and coverage.
- ◊ April 12th Madagascar Day during Grace Forum
- ◊ April 29th Volunteer Luncheon.
- ◊ WHY? Strategic Planning electronically sent to each committee. Committees will report their goals, questions and feedback.
- ◊ The next Council meeting will be at 6:00pm.
- ◊ Resolution to Authorize the Establishment of an Account at Vanguard **MOTION to approve resolution—Approved**

FINANCIAL REPORT

March 2026	**March 2025**
$27,731 Income	$46,074 Income
$36,391 Expense	$44,796 Expense
DEFICIT ($8,660)	SURPLUS $1,278

YTD 2026	**YTD 2025**
$95,140 Income	$113,737 Income
$110,633 Expense	$121,255 Expense
DEFICIT ($15,493)	DEFICIT ($7,517)

Women of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

ALL WOMEN of Grace are welcome at the Women's Circle meetings and other WELCA events.

Faith/Grace Circle Wednesday, May 6 at 12:30 pm in Grace's fellowship hall.

Ruth Circle Tuesday, May 19 at 6:00 pm in Grace's fellowship hall.

Rachel's Day is May 3rd. In 1994, one woman urged her Bethel Lutheran Church Congregation on the West Side of Chicago, to support children who were facing violence. In 1996, the convention passed the Memorial, resolving that "ELCA Women encourage their Congregations to recognize the first Wednesday in May each year as 'Rachel's Day' (wherein Rachel grieved for her children, based on Jeremiah 31:15-17) Did you know that every 30 minutes a child or teen dies or is injured from a gun? Rachel's Day is now observed by Women of the ELCA annually on the first Sunday in May. It is a time set aside to mourn the loss of our children and to renounce the forces of violence and fear.

TWISTED STITCHERS… is a group of ladies that get together the first Tuesday evening of the month and have an evening of fellowship and stitching crafts (knitting, crochet, cross-stich, quilting or anything else). If you are interested, please contact Cathy M. for details, her email is basson2@comcast.net

SAVE the DATE…Tuesday, June 16th is the Annual WELCA picnic that starts at 6:00 pm. 5:00 pm for set up. Place still to be determined.

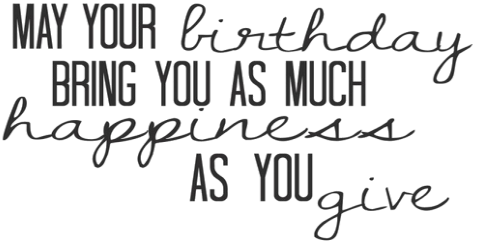
CONGREGATIONAL ONLINE DIRECTORY Sign up today or contact Aaron Babel (aaronbabel@yahoo.com) to get added to our online directory. Sign up at this address https://gracelutheranil.ctrn.co/signup.php

Thank You's

- Thank you for all the help with the Lenten dinners including set-up, clean-up and to Gari Hurst and Debbie Rigg along with Parish Life Committee, for all the dinners provided.
- Thank you to Jean Scherer for her leadership for CSIS Madagascar Day April 12, 2026. There was fun and food and information galore!
- Thank you to all who participated in out first Madagascar Day! We enjoyed our food, learned about our Malagasy Lutheran Church companion synods, lemurs and fossa. There were many Bingo winners! Thanks also to the Malagasy/African cooks: Diana , Gari, Josie, Tracy, Craig, and Jean. Thanks to Randy for helping with the Power Point and Kim for handouts, set up, etc.
- Thank you to Tracy Clemons for the reorganizing and cleaning of the lounge/kitchenette. It looks very cared for.
- Thank you to Wanda Williams for dishwashing and organizing the Communion cups nearly each week.

May Birthdays

May 2 Jenny Jackson
May 3 Toni Krone
Joseph Matteson
May 4 Robin Mahnken
May 5 August Appleton
Ellie Tarr
Judy Wheaton
May 11 Anna Cheek
Kelly Zoelzer
May 12 Monica Weakley
May 13 Jim Schlouch
May 16 Harmon Janssen
Ardina Voelker
May 18 Jerry Janssen
May 19 Alaina Hawker
May 20 Page Rehwald
May 21 Karen Carlson
Ed Wollet
May 24 Marcella McGowan
May 25 Paul Derlitzki
May 28 Annabelle Clemons
Danielle Clemons



COUNCIL MEMBERS AND THE COMMITTEES THEY REPRESENT

President, Pastor Tom Krieger
Vice President, Mike Darling
Treasurer, Brenda Poston
Secretary, Jean Scherer
Administration & Finance: Ed Wollet
Christian Education: Amelia Cheek, Verne Nelson, Jean Scherer
Community Ministry: Jean Scherer
Evangelism: Aaron Babel, Julie Harvill
Fellowship: Brian Dees
Parish Life: Tracy Clemons
Property: Craig Schattschneider
Stewardship: Aaron Babel, Julie Harvill
Strategic Planning: Mike Darling, Julie Harvill, Ed Wollet
Worship & Music: August Appleton, Verne Nelson
Youth: Jerry Janssen, Amelie Janssen

REMINDER: *Committee chairs and/or secretaries please stop at the work room every week so that you can sign off on transactions vouchers. Thank you for giving your time.*

Join us for worship online:
FACEBOOK, YOUTUBE, OR BY EMAIL

You can go to either our website at www.gracelutheran-springfield.org to our YouTube Channel: Grace Lutheran Church Springfield IL and you will be taken to a link that will allow you to view the LIVE video of the services for the weekend.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

ORGANIZATION
GRACE EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
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SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62701

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DATED MATERIAL – USELESS IF DELAYED

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Grace Food Pantry operating schedule is Mon, Tues, Thu 11:00 am-1:00 pm

CHURCH PHONE: 217-522-3965

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:

YouTube

gracelutheran-springfield.org

Like Us On facebook

OUR STAFF

PASTOR
Tom Krieger

CANTOR
J.B. George

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Kim Gietl

CHURCH CUSTODIAN
Aaron VonHolten

PARISH NURSE
Diana Weyhenmeyer

WEBSITE ADMIN
Aaron Babel