



GRACE NOTES

NEWSLETTER OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
gracelutheran-springfield.org
OFFICE: (217) 522-3965

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



September 2026

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Not goodbye....

As I reflect on the nearly 12 years you have allowed me to serve as your Administrative Assistant, my heart is filled with gratitude and joy. Serving as both parishioner and staff member has sometimes brought challenges with boundaries, but it has brought even greater joy and fulfillment to be part of my church family each day. Sharing in worship, baptisms, funerals, confirmations, Food Pantry work, and all things Grace Lutheran in both roles has been humbling and deeply rewarding. I thank you for the trust and confidence you have had in me.

God has provided me the opportunity to transition from this office and step out on a new journey at SIU, where I will help those facing mental and physical challenges. I am excited—and honestly, a little fearful—about what the future holds, but I trust that God is with me. I have learned so much during my time here, and this experience has prepared me to move forward in this new role. My last day in the office will be September 11.

I believe deeply in the ministry and mission of Grace Lutheran Church and will continue to be an active member, serving in Christian Education, helping with Sunday worship, and participating in the many ministries of Grace. What we need is here for the present and future of Grace.

You have been an important part of my working life, and I am grateful that you will continue to walk with me on life's journey. With much love and respect, Kim Gietl

Pastor's Pages

Last Fall, Spirit-led disciples of Grace Lutheran Church began a discernment process that culminated in re-discovering WHY we are here now, with the faithful awareness that all we need is here. The resulting mission was identified:

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

Those Fall 2025 discovery workshops with Grace disciple and CSIS Bishop Greg Busboom also lead us to discover four current **Priorities** for Grace Lutheran Church (*not in order of importance*):

- Strengthening financial sustainability

- Engaging 'new' people in community

- Food Pantry as a resource for evangelism

- Growing worship and music, and educational ministries

The eight disciples of our Strategic Planning Committee accepted the charge to keep all parties (committees and Council) involved, providing feedback, and supporting committees accountability to our WHY statement.

At their July 29, 2026 meeting, Strategic Planning came to the consensus that a productive approach may be to have pertinent committees cooperate on each Priority, working together to see how each committee can help one another in these Priorities. For example, here are some of the committees that are encouraged to work together on our four Priorities:

Strengthening financial sustainability

Administration + Finance, Community Ministry, Stewardship

Engaging 'new' people in community

Evangelism

Food Pantry as a resource for evangelism

Community Ministry (including Food Pantry Board), Evangelism,
Worship + Music

Growing worship, music, and educational ministries

Christian Education, Worship + Music

The first letter of our 2026 Stewardship Appeal: **God's work. Our hands.** that many of you received is a product of just that kind of collaboration.

The four topics selected for the last four months of our 2026 Grace Notes newsletter are realized through the networking of our Administration & Finance Committee and Stewardship Committee.

If you are not on any of these committees, it may look like you don't have anything to do, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

Let's consider another example...

On Saturday, September 19 Grace Lutheran Church turns 185 years old, and a celebration of God's work through our hands will be from 1:00pm to 2:00ish at Grace that day.

We'll share in a Sing-Along, and there will be free cupcakes, fruits tray, and drinks. Intermission will provide a little bit of the history of Grace, as well as God's purpose for us now (watch for daily snippets of Grace's history on our Historic Grace Lutheran Church Facebook page in September). Worship & Music Committee is leading the Sing-along and potential Jam session. Parish Life Committee is preparing the refreshments. And Evangelism Committee is the driver behind this 2nd Priority: engaging 'new' people in community.



And this is where **God's work. Your hands.** come in...



**Grace Lutheran
Church is turning**

185

**You are
invited!**

**Sat, Sept. 19, 2026
1:00pm - 2:00ish**

**Grace is found at
7th Street &
Capitol Avenue**

We are going to be celebrating inside of Grace; food in the fellowship hall and music in the sanctuary. 7th Street and Ramp doors will be open for the duration of the event. All interested in stepping into the founding place of Grace will be welcome to walk with Pastor Krieger to the Lincoln Home National Historic Site's Arnold House after the event (open until 4:30pm). The purpose of the 185th, however, is to share this celebration with our neighbors. **Every disciple of Grace (that's you!)** is asked to think about who they know that is unchurched; someone next door, friend(s) in a social group, people who like to sing/make/listen to music, a person experiencing homelessness that you see regularly, a family member, someone who used to come to Grace but isn't worshipping anywhere now, someone working at a restaurant or store you frequent... and invite them *to join you* for an hour or so of fellowship, singing, and simple food at Grace Lutheran Church, where we might be fed and feed our neighbors: mind, body and soul.



Sunday, Sept 20 our worship will
include liturgy from Pastor Springer's
Bible Prayer-Book and use of the original offering plate.

Throughout the month of July, voting members of Grace Lutheran Church completed non-binding surveys for a proposed Welcome Statement in support of people of color (POC), and LGBTQ+. Grace's Welcome Team wishes to thank everyone who participated in this latest step of our faith journey. Sixty of the sixty-two surveys returned (that is 96.7%) expressed support for the proposed Welcome Statement.



Of the two remaining surveys, one indicated that the Statement was "too limited," and the other thought the selection of these two groups minimizes other groups.

The support shown in the surveys exceeds the threshold of Reconciling In Christ (RIC) to proceed to a formal vote of the congregation.

Grace's Welcome Team shared this information with Grace Lutheran Church Council, with the recommendation that a Special Meeting of the Congregation be called for the purpose of voting upon a Welcome Statement. In light of the thoughts expressed by the two NO surveys, as well as similar thoughts shared orally by others, we will vote upon this revised Welcome Statement (which has also been approved by Reconciling In Christ):

God's purpose for Grace Lutheran Church is to be fed and to feed our neighbors: mind, body and soul. Grace Lutheran Church rejoices in God's purpose by participating in the work for racial equity and by welcoming, fully affirming, and walking in love with society's marginalized, including, but not limited to: people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, i.e., all LGBTQIA+ people; neurodiverse and differently-abled people, immigrants, victims of judicial injustice, and people experiencing insecurities of housing and/or food.

A congregational vote that exceeds 75% approval for this Welcome Statement qualifies Grace Lutheran Church to be recognized by Reconciling In Christ as an open and affirming congregation. Reconciling In Christ (aka Reconciling Works) is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) discernment process for congregations to learn about and become recognized as open and affirming of POC and LGBTQIA+. RIC recognition is encapsulated in four Commitments, which were shared by our Welcome Team with the Council in May:

Clearly state a welcome of people of "all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expression" or "LGBTQIA+" and name its commitment to "racial equity" or "anti-racism" in a Welcome Statement. [*Done*]

Be open to calling LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC (Black, Brown, Indigenous, Person of Color) Rostered Leaders. [*This is an openness, not a requirement*]

Allow sanctuary/community space to be used for LGBTQIA+ weddings and blessings. [*Already our policy*]

Make a meaningful contribution annually to support the national RIC program. [*Grace Lutheran Church decides what amount constitutes "meaningful" in light of our financial stewardship.*]

Therefore, a Special Meeting of the Congregation is called for Sunday, September 20 following 9:15am worship. Voting will be by written ballot, with a simple YES (in support), or NO (not in support), of the Welcome Statement. Our Constitution defines voting members as: confirmed members who have communed and made a contribution during the current or preceding year (C8.02.c.).



Notes from the Cantor JB George...

One of the ways we engage our community at Grace is through our hospitality in offering our space for concerts and other musical performances.

Sunday, November 8, at 2pm, we host the **Food Pantry Benefit Concert**, inviting the other anchor churches of the Grace Food Pantry, along with others from the community to join in an afternoon of music. This year, our featured guest ensemble is the Mother Road 'Bones trombone quartet. This is second only the annual Golf Outing as a fundraiser for the food pantry.

Friday, December 4, at 6pm, the **UIS Chorus** will sing their fall concert at Grace. For small ensembles, our space is ideal because we have live acoustics (without much "flutter" like a gymnasium would have), but are not too large of a space to fill. Connie is the accompanist for this ensemble, and they do fine work under the direction of Dr. See-Tsai Chan, who is also the Director of Music at First United Methodist Church.

Sunday in April 25, at 2 pm, The **Mother Road 'Bones** will return to Grace for a full concert, this time including a work for organ and brass with yours truly.

Other opportunities may arise as in the past, with piano recitals, the School of Medicine's Benefit Talent Show, and touring choirs. I will continue to pursue these opportunities for us to share hospitality and let others know a little bit about our congregation!

Serving the Assembly in September

September 6

Greeter: Mary Jo Anderson
Ushers: Frank Beckman &
Paul Derlitzki
Reader: Teresa Paulek
Communion Asst.: Diana
Weyhenmeyer
Altar Guild: Kim Gietl

September 13

Kids and families are welcome
to lead in any aspect of worship.
Please contact the church office if
you would like to participate.
If you would like to read the
lessons, it can be sent to you early.
Altar Guild: Toni Klit

September 20

Greeter: Laurie Farrell
Ushers: Jack & Judy Wheaton
Reader: John Rigg
Communion Asst.: Sara Oehlert
Altar Guild: Debbie Rigg

September 27

Greeter: Pat Casper
Ushers: Chuck & Diana
Weyhenmeyer
Reader: Ed Wollet
Communion Asst.: Pat Ekle
Altar Guild: Teresa Paulek



Worship

WEEKLY ATTENDANCE

Pentecost 9	7/26/2026	71 In-person
Pentecost 10	8/2/2026	56 In-person
Pentecost 11	8/9/2026	63 In-person
Pentecost 12	8/16/2026	72 In-person
Pentecost 13	8/23/2026	57 In-person

Join us weekly for worship in person or online

You can go to either our website at www.gracelutheran-springfield.org or 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 service for the weekend. You can also see past services there as well. If you need pastoral assistance please call the church office.

YOUR HEALTH NEWS...Diana Weyhenmeyer

A Servant's Heart

I have always felt I have a servant's heart to help and serve others. I liked the phrase, "Love God and Serve Others." In my hospital career, I was always trying to make things better in a difficult situation for others. Many people were lost during their cancer diagnosis and I tried to gently guide them to a better place. It brings me great joy when I help someone else. I will do whatever I can and do whatever it takes to serve and uplift others. Hope and joy are my favorite words.



Now that I have retired I am always looking to see what I can do to help others. It is the little things that mean so much to people. Our granddaughter texted and wanted to meet the next day for a meal. She was in Belleville house sitting and we met in Litchfield for dinner last night. She lives in Denver, and I don't get to see her that often. That made my entire day yesterday. Today I still feel happy inside.

I love to give hugs so if you ever want one, I'm your girl. One thing about hugs is boundaries. Some people don't like to be touched. I always ask before giving a hug.

I consider my servant's heart to be a reflection of Jesus's love and compassion for others. Jesus never did anything unkind to others and was always healing the sick and helping others. He set a good example for us all.

In Christ's Love, Diana

Devotionals for October—December, in both regular and large print, are available at the back of the church or if you would like them mailed, just contact the church office.



HOSPITAL VISITS... Let us know if you are going into the hospital so that we may call on you. Also if you or your family has welcomed a baby let us know so that child can be recognized with a rose!



SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL GRACE FORUM

SUNDAY SCHOOL 2026-2027

with upper elementary and middle school youth is on the go with a new curriculum this year, created by our brothers and sisters in Christ @ St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Urbandale, Iowa. **WONDER on the go**'s engaging Bible lessons follow the lectionary, fostering strong values, curiosity, and faith through interactive activities and storytelling. Whether you're a parent or educator, **WONDER on the go** helps young hearts connect with faith. We give thanks to God for our **WONDER**ful educators (including Kari Downey, Amelia Cheek, Mary Plymire, Kim Gietl, and JB George) who will be learning with our children from 10:30-11:00am every second Sunday/month!



Along with Sunday school time... kids of any age and families are welcome to lead worship in any aspect on the second Sunday. In other words, if you or your child would like to read, usher, assist with communion, etc. All are welcome that day. You can contact the church office if you would like to participate. If reading, the lessons can be sent to you beforehand.

GRACE FORUM... This adult Sunday school will begin Sunday, September 13th at 10:30 am. On August 23, we brainstormed twenty topics/agencies for learning!

Parish Life... will be hosting cake and cupcakes on **September 13** for the first day of Sunday School and Grace Forum. Along with those, we will celebrate Kim's time as Administrative Assistant.

Brown Bag Bible Study is Thursdays from 12:10-12:50pm both in the fellowship hall and via Zoom. We will resume our study of the Gospel of Mark on **September 17** (a Zoom link will be sent out by email shortly before). Everyone is welcome, whether you can make it every week, or whether – like Pastor Krieger – you can only make it sometimes.

We will be picking up where we left off, at the transitional moment beginning at Mark 7:24. If you would like to give yourself a refresher of the Gospel of Mark, type **Bible Project** videos into your Search browser, and once you open it, Search for the Gospel of Mark.

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What can we help you find?

Q Mark X

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 Guide

Mark

The good news about Jesus, according to Mark, or "John Mark," a scribe and follower of Jesus who later worked alongside the Apostle Paul.



Prayers of Grace

"Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere."

Ephesians 6:18 (NLT)

In need of prayer?

- Call the church office (217-522-3965)
- Email Sara Oehlert at soehlert@aol.com

**HAVE YOU
TALKED
TO GOD
TODAY?**

Pray For Our



SCHOOLS

*Dear Loving God, we pray for our children in school. We thank You for granting our children immeasurable skills, talents, abilities, and spiritual gifts that they need in order to serve You in their lives. Make available to them trusted teachers and advisers who will teach, train, lead, and mentor them. When they turn to You for help, love, strength and protection, kindly have mercy and hear them. Help them to learn and grow safely and lead prosperous lives. **Amen.***



Bear one another's burdens

CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER...

Stephen Ministry equips laypeople, called Stephen Ministers, to offer emotional and spiritual support to individuals facing challenges such as grief, illness, divorce, job loss, or other life transitions. Each Stephen Minister is typically assigned one care receiver at a time and meets weekly to listen, pray, encourage, and provide consistent, confidential support. To contact us, ask Pastor Krieger or contact the church office. Your contact is confidential, whether you decide to accept our services in faithful accompaniment or not.



Flowers... if you like to see the flowers in the sanctuary space you are welcome to donate for a special occasion or just for the beauty of them. \$20.00 for one vase and \$40.00 for two. Please contact the church office or check the list in the wall board in the fellowship hall. We will list that special occasion in the bulletin that weekend.



Hats, Gloves and Socks Trees

As summer comes to an end, it is time to look ahead to our annual 'Hat, Mitten and Sock' drive. Due to the winter weather setting in around November, we will once again begin our drive this year in September and carry it through the end of October. The donations will then be handed out in November, so that the recipients can stay warm all winter. The trees will be set up after Labor Day in the fellowship area. One tree will be designated for adult donations and the other tree will be designated for student donations. Please note that McClernand is made up of Pre-school through fourth grades, so some of the students will need smaller sizes. Thank you, for your continued support of this annual drive!

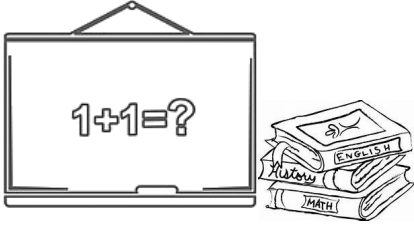
MEMBERS HOMEBOUND/LIMITED MOBILITY

SANDY BENANTI
CHARLOTTE BLUMLE
MARY BLUMLE
GLENDA BOWLES
ANN EVANS

ANNA MAE HANDSHY
LEORA HARRY
JAMES LEWIS
MARCELLA MCGOWAN
TOM & KATHY MYERS

JUDY RAKE
DON THANNEN
ROBERTA VOLKMANN

SEPTEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	
		1 9:30 am Staff Meeting <i>11:00-1:00 Food Pantry</i> 6:00 pm Twisted Stitches	2 12:30 Circle 4:30 p
6 9:15 am Worship	7  Office and Food Pantry Closed	8 9:30 am Staff Meeting 10:30 am Property <i>11:00-1:00 Food Pantry</i>	9 12 noon lunch 4:30 p
13 9:15 am Worship 10:30 am Second Sunday School/Grace Forum Cupcake & Cake Reception	14 <i>11:00-1:00 Food Pantry</i>	15 9:30 am Staff Meeting <i>11:00-1:00 Food Pantry</i> 12:00 noon Admin & Finance 6:00 pm Ruth Circle	16 4:30 p
20 <i>Blood Pressure checks</i> 9:15 am 185th Anniversary Worship Congregational meeting	21 <i>11:00-1:00 Food Pantry</i>	22 9:30 am Staff Meeting <i>11:00-1:00 Food Pantry</i> 6:00 pm Council	23 9:30 a 12 noon Music 4:30 p
27 9:15 am Worship 10:30 am Grace Forum	28 <i>11:00-1:00 Food Pantry</i>	29 9:30 am Staff Meeting <i>11:00-1:00 Food Pantry</i>	30 4:30 p
CSIS Fall Theological Conference September			

ER 2026

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
pm Faith/Grace m Choir Practice	3 11:00-1:00 Food Pantry 7:00 pm AA Meeting	4	5
n Staff gone for m Choir Practice	10 11:00-1:00 Food Pantry 7:00 pm AA Meeting	11	12
m Choir Practice	17 11:00-1:00 Food Pantry 12:10 pm Brown Bag Bible Study 7:00 pm AA Meeting	18	19 9:00 am WELCA Biennial 1:00 pm 185th Birthday celebration!
m Stewardship n Worship & m Choir Practice	24 11:00-1:00 Food Pantry 12:10 pm Brown Bag Bible Study 7:00 pm AA Meeting	25 	26 <i>Weekend road closures around Grace Lutheran travel from 9th St.</i>
m Choir Practice  28-30 ELCA			

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The August Council meeting was held on August 25 at 6:00pm.

- * Discussion was had on the hiring process for the Administrative Assistant job. Grace is working with Express Personnel as well as Indeed for job applicants, offering part time at this point, with one candidate already being interviewed. Staff and members of Admin & Finance will conduct.

MOTION: that the interview group be able to make the decision for the employment of the Administrative Assistant position after a background check has been conducted.—**Approved**

- * C&B down for the month/year but not abnormal for summer months
- * Jim Schlouch gave a very thorough read through of budget and dedicated items.
- * Pay It Forward account at \$16,514.74
- * Vanguard has not been very user friendly and therefore we are seeking other investment brokers for the church's investments. Admin & Finance met with Edward Jones rep. The rate of return for a DWS securities fund on average is 3.73% and we would put 150,000 into this fund. After meeting with the rep, they recommend the following:

MOTION: that council establish a DWS government agency securities fund (\$150,000) through Edward Jones.—**Approved**

MOTION: that the Budget for 2027 continue to be presented at the Annual Meeting January 31, 2027, as opposed to a secondary meeting in December 2026.—**Approved**

MOTION: for approval of Audit Report year end 2025.—**Approved**
With thanks to Mark Anderson and Brian Knop for their work.

- * Community Ministry, 100 people were fed with efforts from the congregation for Helping Hands meal August 16.
- * Evangelism, Parish Life, and Worship & Music working on 185th celebration September 19/20.
- * The dedicated line for Music Fund has been working well to pay those who sing and play in worship, with no payments being made in the summer months. Payments for singers and musicians will resume in September.
- * 1 youth/1 adult so far, interested in National Youth Gathering 2027.

MOTION: The Reconciled in Christ Welcome team recommends to Council the inclusive Welcome Statement be presented to the congregation on September 20 at a special Congregational Meeting—**Approved**

MOTION: to accept the resignations of Chris Schofield from Grace Trust, as well as Kimberly Gietl as Administrative Assistant—**Approved**

FINANCIAL REPORT

July 2026

Income: \$22,537
Expense: \$49,057
DEFICIT (\$26,520)

YTD 2026

Income: \$242,235
Expense: \$279,869
DEFICIT (\$34,644)

July 2025

Income: \$28,207
Expense: \$37,533
DEFICIT (\$9,326)

YTD 2025

Income: \$236,099
Expense: \$282,443
DEFICIT (\$46,344)

Save the Date... October 4, 2026

Thank you for Grace Lutheran Church’s participation in CROP Hunger Walk in 2025. The Springfield Walk raised \$23,788.43 and we thank you for your church's contribution of \$350.00. Twenty-five percent of that total amount was divided locally with Kumler Outreach Ministries receiving 8.75% (\$2,081.49) and Grace Lutheran Food Pantry receiving 8.75% (\$2,081.49) of the total raised. Additionally, Douglas Avenue Methodist Little Pantry, Hope Presbyterian Little Pantry, and Pleasant Plains Community Club each received 2.5% (\$594.71). Pleasant Plains Community Club was supported by Farmingdale Presbyterian. Farmingdale has not contributed to CROP Walk for several years, so we have decided to split their portion between Douglas Ave and Hope Pres. Please let me know if there should be other discussion regarding organizations receiving funds. Our Walk is filled with tradition.

Here are details.

Walk Location: Third Presbyterian Church, 1030 N 7th St., parking lot is across from the church. Thanks to its members for generously sharing their beautiful space with us that day.

Walk Date/Route: Sunday October 4. Registration starts at 1:00 and the Walk begins at 1:30. Wear walking shoes and comfortable clothing. This is a family friendly event. Walk route starts and ends at Third Pres and is about 2.5 miles. You will walk on sidewalks in a group.

Shirts: Springfield’s CROP Walk has a generous sponsor who will provide t-shirts for all walkers.



FOOD PANTRY REPORT

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

With summer drawing to a close, it's time to say thank you to the student volunteers -- mostly children and grandchildren of volunteers -- who have helped at the Food Pantry and are now returning to school. There is always the risk, if not the likelihood, of inadvertently missing someone, so please advise if I have done so in thanking Annabelle and Danielle Clemons; Seraphina, Miles and Margot Galloway; Eleanor Anderson; Henry Appleton; Harrison Allen; Gus and Max Wagner, and Tucker Luckey. We've also been pleased to welcome Lutheran High student Justin Burton for the past several weeks as he has earned service hours for school. It is always a special treat to have the energy (and tireless arms and legs) of young people around the Pantry.

**End Of
Summer**

A couple of other thank you's -- to Wanda Williams for providing us with a new shelving unit inside the pantry room to replace one that was beginning to sag pretty badly, and to Arlene Lenser for regularly donating dozens of items for our mini-bags for unhoused clients over the past several weeks.

And thank you to Debbie and Dick Smith for taking the lead to start a trial run of picking up bread and bakery items for clients from the Bimbo Bakeries' sales and distribution center in Springfield. Headquartered in Mexico and the largest bakery in the world, Bimbo contacted us several weeks ago indicating that they have surplus product that could be made available to us at no charge. The products from our first two runs there look great. We've had mixed success and some starts and stops with bread and bakery from several sources over the years. This looks like it might be our best bet yet in this category -- assuming we can manage the logistics of making a weekly pickup from their warehouse. To that end, if anyone would be interested in being part of a rotation to pick up Bimbo items once every 4-6 weeks, please let the church office know, and we will go over the process with you and see if you might wish to join the team.

Through the end of July we had served 6,734 households this year, a 14 percent increase over the same period last year, and 18,335 individuals, a 19 percent increase. At this pace, we look to serve close to 12,000 households representing 30,000 individuals in 2026.

Financially, we ended July with an account balance of \$56,387 based on year-to-date income of \$126,767 and expenses of \$165,481, a deficit of \$39,704, which we would expect to reduce by year-end if normal donation patterns hold up.

Last year at this time our balance was \$56,481, although the deficit for the year was only \$19,097 at that point. So we're about \$20,000 behind where we were a year ago, which is due to both client growth and a 22 percent increase in expenses.

Donations are up 9 percent so far this year, and we'll have three upcoming opportunities to support the Pantry this fall. In September we'll announce a matching gift program that is intended to replace income from the golf outing we have held in recent years. We'll repeat our "Dine and Donate" event at Culver's on Wabash from 5-8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov.3. Our first Culver's event in May raised \$1,200. And JB George is again organizing the Pantry's annual Benefit Concert, which will be held Sunday, Nov. 8 at the church. This event raised \$10,000 last year.

It will likely be several weeks before we can confirm the details, but we have received notice of a substantial bequest from a friend of the Pantry at St. John's Lutheran who recently passed away. It looks like this will give us a bit of a safety net, or "rainy day" fund, to help manage through the significant annual increases in clients and expenses that seem to have become a way of life. We have been blessed over the years to always find a way to "keep up" with every new challenge, and this unexpected gift is another example of that.

Doug McFarlan, Director

- ♥ Thank you to Gari Hurst for coordinating ladies night out and helping coordinate the food monthly for Capitol Retirement Village.
- ♥ Thank you to Dick and Deb Smith for taking cardboard to recycling almost weekly.
- ♥ Thank you to Jay Edgecomb who takes the can flats to the APL for use as kitty litter boxes.
- ♥ Thank you for all the people of Grace for generously giving items to our fifth and sixth Welcome Home boxes to a new homeowner. This is in coordination with other faith communities and Heartland Continuum of Care and gives a great start in a new home.
- ♥ Thank you Bonnie Williams, Mary Jo Anderson and Pat Ekle for their efforts gathering from the Downtown Farmers Market.
- ♥ Thank you for your help on August 16, our congregation was generous with their time, talents, and gifts preparing the almost 100 breakfast bags and dinner along with cookies for the Helping Hands Shelter. Thanks to all for loving and feeding our neighbors!
- ♥ To whomever donated the hearing loop system for hearing aids—thank you so very much. It is wonderful. Charlotte Blumle

Thank You

For the rest of 2026, our Stewardship Committee will be highlighting a different financial stewardship topic each month, as part of our overall annual Appeal theme: **God's work. Our hands.** In the months to come we will give attention to:

A Growth Giving Chart, to locate where our giving is now, and how it could grow (October)

Electronic Giving advantages and opportunities (November)

Including Grace in your estate planning (December)

This month our focus is upon Qualified Charitable Distribution through an IRA.

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) allows individuals aged 70½ or older to transfer up to \$111,000 per year directly from an IRA to an eligible 501(c)(3) charity. These distributions are excluded from your taxable gross income and can satisfy your Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) without needing to itemize deductions.

Key Rules and Limits

Age Requirement: You must be at least 70½ years old at the exact time the transfer is made.

Annual Limit: Up to \$111,000 per individual for the year 2026 (\$222,000 for married couples filing jointly).

Eligible Accounts: Traditional, rollover, and inactive SEP or SIMPLE IRAs qualify. (Donor-advised funds and active employer plans do not qualify).

Direct Transfer: The funds must move directly from your IRA custodian to the charity. If the money touches your personal bank account first, it counts as a taxable withdrawal.

Tax Benefits

Lower Adjusted Gross Income (AGI): Because the amount goes straight to charity, it is not added to your gross income. This lower AGI can help reduce taxable Social Security benefits and lower Medicare premium costs.

Standard Deduction Friendly: You receive the tax-saving benefit even if you take the standard deduction instead of itemizing.

RMD Fulfillment: Once you reach the age where RMDs are mandatory (age 73), a QCD counts toward fulfilling that yearly requirement.

Contact your IRA custodian to request a direct trustee-to-trustee transfer or to obtain specialized QCD checkbooks if your provider supports them, and first and foremost, to make sure any action you may consider is in your best interest.



The Stewardship Committee is also inviting you to dress for the occasion! Grace Lutheran Church **God's work. Our hands.** apparel are on display in the Fellowship Hall on the coat rack. Try one on for size, and then write in your order on the adjacent stand. Our first order will be placed Sept 14.



Strike A Chord (Stewardship Storytelling Series)



Mary Plymire grew up surrounded by the rhythms of church life and the harmony of the close-knit bond of her sisters. That early foundation of faith stayed with her through the years, even as life took her in new directions.

In the late 1970s, Mary and her husband were raising their young family in Springfield and attending another local church. But on Christmas Eve in 1978, practicality led them to Grace Lutheran Church. Their home church was holding a midnight service—too late for a toddler—so they decided to try Grace instead.

That night, Pastor Paul Flesner's message struck a chord. "We just loved it," Mary recalls. "And the rest is history." That Christmas service became a turning point. In 1979, the Plymires officially joined Grace, and Mary found more than a church - she found a spiritual home. "Grace is like my family," she says. "People have supported me through all kinds of things."

Over the years, Mary has been deeply involved in the life and friendships within the church, including the choir, "Many anthems move me emotionally and spiritually. And we laugh a lot too—like when JB breaks into a British or German accent or plays 'Happy Birthday' at just the right moment."

"As Christians, we need to be fed," Mary says. **"Getting on with others feeds our souls, guides us, and gives us hope."**

One of her most powerful memories is the day the church steeple was restored after a lightning strike. The congregation gathered downtown, singing "Lift High the Cross" as a crane lifted the cross back into place. "It was unbelievable," Mary says. "A moment of resurrection and hope."

"God is with us, and we must celebrate that," says Mary. **"Jesus is risen, and we are his."**

Mary's story is one of faith, friendship, and joyful service—a testament to the enduring spirit of Grace Lutheran Church. And she believes that spirit will endure. "A joke is going around that if a storm hits downtown, it will hit Grace's steeple," she says with a smile. "And the steeple—and the congregation—will rise above and survive."



Join us for the **2026 C/SIS Biennial Convention**

September 19 ~ 9 am to 3 pm
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
3778 N. Water St., Decatur
Registration fee: \$25



Theme: I Am Worthy

I praise you,
for I am fearfully and
wonderfully made.

Psalms 139:14a

For more information or to register
go to the C/SIS WELCA website:
welca-csis.org

Scholarships are available for
first-time attendees and youth under 25
as well as travel assistance for
women in the Southern Conference.

TWISTED STITCHERS... is a group that usually get together the first Tuesday evening of the month in someone's home and have an evening of fellowship and stitching crafts (knitting, crochet, cross-stitch, quilting or anything else). If interested contact Cathy McGuire.

Twisted Stitchers will meet on September 1st.



Please note the following schedule for what is happening:

Faith/Grace Circle will meet September 2nd at 12:30 pm at Grace.

Ruth Circle will meet September 15th at 6:00 pm at Grace.

LADIES NIGHT OUT RECAP... 21 ladies attended this year and enjoyed each others company at Dublin Pub. Thank you to Gari Hurst for organizing this event.



WELCA'S project this year for Lutheran World Relief will be personal care kits. The collection will continue until the 1st of October 2026. The pew in the fellowship hall is clearly labeled for these items.

ITEMS NEEDED:

- ~ Light-weight bath-size towel (between 20" x 40" and 52" x 27") , dark color recommended
 - ~ TWO or three bath-size bars of soap equaling 8 to 9 oz., any brand, in original wrapping
 - ~ ONE adult-size toothbrush in it's original packaging
 - ~ ONE sturdy comb, remove packaging
 - ~ ONE metal nail clippers (attached file optional), remove packaging
- Money donations are always welcome. We appreciate all the support the congregation has given for this project!



thrivent ACTION TEAMS...

If you are able to put together an action team (\$250.00) for the Thanksgiving or Christmas Baskets, this would be greatly helpful and it is an easy process. You can call Jean Scherer 217-725-0301 for help with this process or call Thrivent directly at 800-847-4836. If you are a Thrivent client, please consider giving this to the Food Pantry/Holiday Baskets for these important ministries.

FYI: Kim Gietl and family will be walking in the WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S October 3.

If you are able to donate, go to Kim's Facebook page or directly:

http://act.alz.org/site/TR?fr_id=18571&pg=team&team_id=946898

**WALK
TO
END
ALZHEIMER'S**
ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

September Birthdays

Sept 3	Jim Hobbs	Sept 12	Vanessa Ervin
Sept 4	Theresa Bonnet	Sept 14	Russel Nation
	Mary Schofield	Sept 16	Curt Benanti
Sept 5	Joe Gietl		Lari Garrison
	Mike Hatfill	Sept 18	Amelia Cheek
	Hal Wakefield	Sept 25	Cathy Yokley
Sept 7	Brian George	Sept 26	Chris Tople
	Katie Gonzalez		
	Kylie Nation		
Sept 8	Karen Duckworth		
Sept 11	Brett Best		
	Sue Bryden		
	Ryan Carnduff		
	Randy Heidorn		



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.

Church in Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Please call the church office for any information.

Phone: (217) 522-3965

Email: grace.elcaspfld@gmail.com

Grace Food Pantry is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
11:00 am– 1:00 pm



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

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OUR STAFF

PASTOR

Rev. Tom Krieger

CANTOR

JB George

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Kim Gietl

PARISH NURSE

Diana Weyhenmeyer

CHURCH CUSTODIAN

Aaron VonHolten

WEBSITE ADMIN

Aaron Babel