



GRACE  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH

# GRACE NOTES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

OFFICE: (217)522-3965 [www.gracelutheran-springfield.org](http://www.gracelutheran-springfield.org)

## GRACE LUTHERAN'S MISSION STATEMENT:

*As disciples in Christ, we support our faith community, encourage spiritual growth in everyone, and serve all creation with Christ-like love.*

*We accomplish this by:*

- ◆ *spreading God's Word*
- ◆ *building relationships*
- ◆ *serving the community*
- ◆ *reaching out to those*

December  
2025



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## Pastor's pages



WHY are we here?! For some people this is a painfully difficult question to wrestle with, and for others it seems beyond obvious. Two insights that Bishop Greg Busboom saw in our Oct 11 discerning are that *WHY Grace is here* is centered in: 1) God is the One who, in Jesus, abundantly WELCOMES, FORGIVES, and FEEDS the lost, and 2) The Church is the body of Christ, God's beloved and diverse community, activated and sent to LOVE. Nov 15 we dug deeper into our faith to rediscover **WHY Grace Lutheran Church is here right now?** The answer that the Spirit has revealed through us is that **God's purpose for Grace Lutheran Church right now is...**

to feed the body and soul through a welcoming community service before self, caring for our neighbors with Christ-centered compassion and hope

to win souls for Christ by feeding the hungry, reaching out to the unchurched, and caring for our neighbors

to help feed God's people: mind, body and soul

*The Council and/or Exploratory Team will craft these four perspectives into one concise mission statement which will serve as our ministry and faith compass for the near future.*

As we considered how God might be calling Grace Lutheran Church to come alongside what God is doing in a more intentional way, we identified these four priorities, in no particular order:

Strengthening financial sustainability

Evangelism: engaging 'new' people in community

Seeing the Food Pantry as a resource for evangelism

Growing worship & music, and Christian education ministries

Some preliminary potential action steps for our priorities include:

Get someone to coordinate outreach\* (DPI, NPS, Convention & Visitors Bureau, etc. to invite use of Grace as a venue)

Facility space available to theatre community and other organizations

Advertising (Senior Ctr, IL Times, commercials, Playbills, etc.). Hire someone to guide marketing\*

Public relations\* (aka marketing, business cards, selling ourselves with pride and confidence – selling a feeling).

As well as hosting more music events, forming of new ministry groups, and supporting Taste of Grace.

The community  
needs Grace.



This gives Grace Lutheran Church reason to consider a Ministry of, or Director for, [Community Engagement](#).

Just like our own lives, this process was not the easy fix, but part of an ongoing process of self-awareness and call to community.

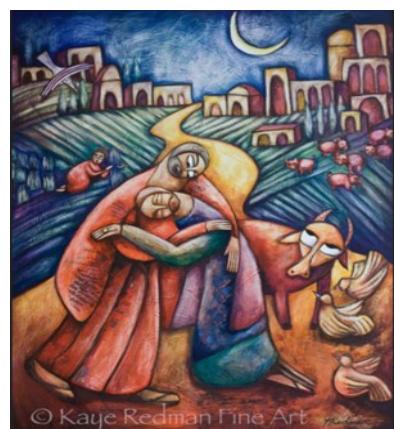
We will continue to listen for ways God may have in mind for fleshing this out, at the same time that we are assessing the ministry we do by how it is an expression of WHY Grace Lutheran Church is here right now.

with Grace, Pastor Krieger



Biblical images of God, for Grace Lutheran Church, were shared at our October Discover-**y** workshop, and the two that were mentioned most were the *feeding of the multitudes* and the *parable of the prodigal son*. You are invited to Grace's feeding of body and soul any or all of the first three Wednesdays of December, as God reminds us in these stories, as well as in this community of disciples, that what we need is here.

Enter the fellowship hall through the door on Capitol Avenue (across from the Lincoln Public Library). In our meals and worship we are reminded that God provides, God loves lavishly, and that God is here.





## **YOUR HEALTH NEWS**

### **Parish Nurse...Diana Weyhenmeyer**

I can't believe another year has come and gone. I now know what my mother meant when she said, "The older you get, the quicker the years go by." It's December and weather hasn't been too bad for our winter yet. Summer was extra warm this year.

This has been my travel year. The most I have traveled ever and thought I'd share some of my adventures with you. I started the year at our daughter's in Denver for New Year's Eve with them. We all stayed up until midnight and brought in 2025 together. I can't remember the last time I did that. Next came Isabella's high school graduation. She started Colorado University at Boulder this fall and is enjoying college life. She had an emergency appendectomy on a Sunday afternoon which I went out to be with the girls this fall. It happened to be the week of our youngest birthday, so celebrated 45 with her at a Vegan restaurant. I've never eaten Vegan before; it was pretty tasty. Lots of veggies in the Vegan diet.

I went to Washington, D.C. on a bus filled with Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) for their annual meeting the end of June. I've toured museums in the past and walked to see monuments. Washington, D.C. is filled with beautiful monuments and lots of history. This was my last year to go because I am no longer Regent of our chapter. My big outing this year was seeing the White House. If you ever get a chance to see it, I would highly advise you take the opportunity to see it. It was really something to see. I felt proud of our nation and the Capitol. One room was painted bright red, one blue, one green and one gold. The building's architecture inside is beautiful. The location of our DAR building is right across the street from the White House.

Next I went with my sister to Noah's Arc in Kentucky. It was beautiful territory with rolling hills and lots of horses. We went on a two hour train ride going about 10 miles an hour. People volunteered on weekends to man the train for visitors. We drove 2 hours one way to see the Amish which consisted of two stores. They made really good homemade sandwiches. We had several shopping trips which is always fun!

I have never traveled this much and hope 2026 is much quieter. 2026 is our country's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. Celebrations are being planned all over the country for it. Our DAR group is decorating a tree in Chatham in honor of our country's birthday with red, white and blue colors, lights and ornaments. December 6<sup>th</sup> at 6pm is the lighting of the Christmas trees in the town square. You are all invited to see the display of 60 trees in the square off Main street that night.

In Christ's Love, Diana

## Attendance records Online and In Person

| Weekly       | Date       | YouTube | Facebook  |
|--------------|------------|---------|-----------|
| Reformation  | 10/26/2025 | 10      | 84        |
| Reformation  | 10/26/2025 | 62      | In-person |
| All Saints   | 11/2/2025  | 5       | 81        |
| All Saints   | 11/2/2025  | 64      | In-person |
| Pentecost 22 | 11/9/2025  | 6       | 61        |
| Pentecost 22 | 11/9/2025  | 65      | In-person |
| Pentecost 23 | 11/16/2025 | 4       | 33        |
| Pentecost 23 | 11/16/2025 | 75      | In-person |

## COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The November Council meeting will be held November 25 at 6:30 pm

- ◆ Advent Meals/Worship December 3,10,17
- ◆ Discover-Y sessions were well attended and discussion was very good. Thanking Bishop Greg for his time and efforts
- ◆ Pew movement set for Advent
- ◆ 2026 Budget is in progress

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### October 2025

Income: \$22,197  
Expense: \$36,376  
DEFICIT (\$14,179)

### October 2024

Income: \$35,864  
Expense: \$33,220  
SURPLUS \$2,644

### YTD 2025

Income: \$323,416  
Expense: \$430,359  
DEFICIT (\$106,943)

### YTD 2024

Income: \$354,129  
Expense: \$418,743  
DEFICIT (\$64,614)

**As an ongoing invitation** to give towards two very important dedicated lines:

October Balance of Pay it Forward: \$43,246.33

October Balance of Gym Ceiling Fund: -\$39,689.66

## Serving the Assembly in December

### **December 7**

Greeter: Jean Scherer  
Ushers: Frank Beckman & Paul Derlitzki  
Reader: Pat Casper  
Communion Assistant: Pat Ekle  
Altar Guild: Deb Smith

### **December 14**

Greeter: Gari Hurst  
Ushers: Jean Scherer & Mary Schofield  
Reader: Jaymie Babel  
Communion Assistant: Aaron Babel  
Altar Guild: Toni Klit

### **December 21**

Greeter: Pat Casper  
Altar Guild: Kim Gietl

### **Christmas Eve 4:30/5:00 pm**

Greeter: Laurie Farrell  
Ushers: Chuck & Diana Weyhenmeyer  
Reader: John Rigg  
Communion Assistants: Sara Oehlert, Wanda Williams, Randy Heidorn  
Altar Guild: Kim Gietl

### **Christmas Day 9:15 am**

Greeter/Ushers: OPEN  
Reader: OPEN  
Communion Assistant: OPEN  
Altar Guild: Toni Klit

### **December 28**

Greeter/Ushers: Anderson's  
Reader: Jan Conrady  
Communion Assistant: Diana Weyhenmeyer  
Altar Guild: Deb Smith



## CHRISTMAS WORSHIP CELEBRATIONS

Grace will offer opportunities to celebrate Christmas with worship on Wednesday, December 24 Christmas Eve at 5:00 pm with half hour prelude music at 4:30 pm  
Thursday, December 25 Christmas Day we will worship at 9:15 am  
December 28 1st Sunday of Christmas we will worship at 9:15 am

## **Church Decorating Schedule**

Week of December 1: Hang evergreen wreaths and bows when they are delivered during the week.



(Extra help will be appreciated on the weekday they are delivered. We'll let everyone know when they arrive.)

The tree will be delivered December 17th and we will decorate that evening following midweek worship.

Sunday January 4 following worship take down decorations.

### **Prayers of Grace**

Our Prayer Ministry is alive and well and the email responses that many of you have offered to each prayer are uplifting and greatly appreciated by those we pray for. Keep 'em coming! You are an active part of this ministry so feel free to hit "reply all" and add others to the list. If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, have updates you want me to add to the "Still in our Prayers" list, or if you want to be taken off of the list just let me know. Thanks, Sara Oehlert. In need of prayer? - Call the church office (217) 522-3965 - Email Sara Oehlert at [soehlert@aol.com](mailto:soehlert@aol.com)

**Family and Friends...** there is a large variety of books in our library, located in the basement on the South wall. We have some fiction, non-fiction, Christian teenage series, some mysteries, one shelf of Christian/Lutheran educational books, most of a shelf of biblical stories for young children, several years of devotional books, as well as hymnals.



**Join us weekly for worship in person or online:**

**FACEBOOK and YOUTUBE**

You can go to either our website at  
[www.gracelutheran-springfield.org](http://www.gracelutheran-springfield.org)

on Facebook to *Historic Grace Lutheran Church* 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 video of the service, whether Taste of Grace or full worship service, for the weekend. If you need pastoral assistance please call the church office.

## **FOOD PANTRY REPORT**

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

It might be an understatement to say that the past several weeks at the Food Pantry have been akin to Mr. Toad's Wild Ride at Disneyland, but we're still standing and still serving. In October we served 1,284 households, a 20 percent increase over last October which included more first-time clients than we usually see, and 3,329 individuals, a 25 percent increase over the same month a year ago. This was the fifth consecutive month in which we served more than 1,000 households.

Then we hit November and the peak of uncertainty regarding client payments from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). On Monday, Nov. 3 we served 179 households and for that week we served 417 households.

Those are huge numbers for us. The week of Nov. 10 we scaled back to 221 households, but even with a return to "normal," we are well on pace to see another significant increase in clients year-over-year in 2025. Through Oct. 31 we had served 9,376 clients, a 7 percent increase over the same period a year ago. Food insecurity isn't going away any time soon, folks.

Throughout this challenging period community support has been overwhelming, to say the least, headlined by \$10,000 raised at the Benefit Concert hosted by Grace. Thank you to JB George and friends from our four other anchor churches, to the voices and instrumentalists who presented us with a beautiful show, and to all who made such generous freewill donations at the event.

Here is a roll call of other recent gifts:

\$2,000 from the United Way of Sangamon County.

800 food items from the Lutheran High School National Honor Society.

500 pounds of ground beef and chuck roasts from Bunn Gourmet.

350 food items over three trips from St. Anthony's Greek Orthodox Church.

150 food items from the Springfield chapter of Moms Demand Action/Every Town for Gun Safety.

140 food items and \$40 from the King's Daughters' Organization.

70 food items from the IVF/Fertility Department at SIU School of Medicine.

50 food items from First Church of the Nazarene.

We've also been notified that the Mission Committee of our neighbors at First Presbyterian Church will be donating \$2,000 in addition to the \$2,500 we receive each month from First Pres.

Our two biggest food drives of the year – at St. John's Lutheran Church and Our Savior's Lutheran School -- will be delivering several thousand food items just before Thanksgiving.

Country Market on Wabash will be donating several 17-pound frozen turkeys before Thanksgiving.

Two other food drives in progress are being hosted by the Beta Club at Franklin Middle School and Camping World.

On Wednesday, Nov. 19 Pantry volunteers helped Grace and Peace Lutheran churches with their annual packing and distribution of 80 Thanksgiving Food Baskets to families from McClernand Elementary, Blackhawk Elementary and

Franklin Middle schools, as well as families identified by Grace and St. John's Lutheran.

Our finances are hanging in there. Through Oct. 31 we had year-to-date income of \$201,513 and expenses of \$216,473, leaving an account balance of \$60,617. This compares favorably to a balance of \$58,207 at Oct. 31, 2024. Thanks mainly to the big boost provided by the Benefit Concert, by Nov. 15 the balance had crept up to \$73,000. That will draw down before month's end, but we should end the month comparing favorably to the \$55,268 balance we had at the end of November 2024. If – BIG IF – our donations and grants received at the end of last year hold up again this year, we look to have a path to entering 2026 with a decent foundation from which to serve.

*Doug McFarlan, Director*

## **Thanksgiving Basket Blessings**

*Thank you to those who gave both in honor of loved ones  
and those who are caring for our community.*

Joyce Abrams in memory of Bob Abrams

Mark and Cindy Anderson in memory of Carol Bauman and Betty Curry

Curt and Valerie Benanti in memory of Clara, John & Carolyn Benanti, Edna Nation, George & Betty Clough and Helen Moore

Lorraine Bivin in memory of Robert Bivin

Pat Casper in honor and beloved memory of my sister, Sally A. Farwell

Ann Evans

Laurie Farrell in memory of loved ones

Corrine Kircher in memory of Frank Kircher

Toni Klit in memory of John Klit

Verne and Carolyn Nelson in memory of loved ones

Mary Plymire in memory of loved ones

Brenda Poston in memory of Tom Poston

John and Debbie Rigg in honor of grandkids Emma, Nolan, Chelsie, Oliver and Isabel

Chris Schofield in honor of Jim Nelson

Mary Schofield in honor of Bill Giachetti

Deb and Hal Wakefield

Chuck and Diana Weyhenmeyer in memory of family and friends

Judy Wheaton in memory of loved ones.

Ed Wollet in memory of Judy Wollet



### "What We Need Is Here"

Bishop Greg taught us a simple song in our workshops this fall. We will sing it in worship again, both on Wednesday Advent Midweek services, as well as on Sunday mornings as our sung response to the Prayers of Intercession. This little song appears in the collection *Singing in Community: Paperless Music for Worship*. This resource presents music that can be learned by rote. Teaching some songs this way enables the community to include fully people with low vision and those who have not yet learned to read words or notation. We have already used a few other songs from this collection. "I Will Sing a Song of Mercy" was our theme song for Sunday School during our remote Christian education during the pandemic. We have also used "Come to the Table" and "What Does the Lord Require of You?" in worship.

**"What We Need Is Here"** is a quotation from "***The Wild Geese***," a poem by Wendell Berry, which I reprint here:



Horseback on Sunday morning,  
harvest over, we taste persimmon  
and wild grape, sharp sweet  
of summer's end. In time's maze  
over fall fields, we name names  
that went west from here, names  
that rest on graves. We open  
a persimmon seed to find the tree  
that stands in promise,  
pale, in the seed's marrow.  
Geese appear high over us,  
pass, and the sky closes. Abandon,  
as in love or sleep, holds  
them to their way, clear,  
in the ancient faith: what we need  
is here. And we pray, not  
for new earth or heaven, but to be  
quiet in heart, and in eye  
clear. What we need is here.

"Wild Geese," by Wendell Berry from *Collected Poems 1957-1982* (North Point Press, ©1998).

# Christian Education News

We have awesome teachers and creative ways to learn and pray. **Sunday School** meets on the second floor in the large Sunday School room at 10:30 am. **Mark your calendars and join in the fun.**

We will see you January 18, February 15, March 15, April 19, and finally May 17 for our end of the year celebration!

**GRACE FORUM**...please join us **Sundays at 10:30 am** in the fellowship hall.

**Brown Bag Bible Study** will continue **Thursdays at 12:10 pm in person and via ZOOM**. No bible study December 25. Please join us as we continue studying 2nd Samuel.



## **NOTICE: Annual Congregational Meeting**

Sunday, January 25, 2026 10:30 am will be our Annual Congregational meeting. Please have reports into the church office no later than January 13. This helps with getting the packets ready for the week before the meeting.

# DECEMBER

| Sun  | Mon   | Tue   | Wednesday   |
|--|---|---|---|
|  | 1<br>11:00-1:00<br><i>Food Pantry</i>   | 2<br>9:30 am Staff Meeting<br>11:00-1:00 <i>Food Pantry</i>                                   | 3<br>4:30 pm Chorale<br>6:00pm Midweek<br>Dinner<br>6:30 pm Advent                |
| 7<br>9:15 am Worship<br>10:30 am Grace Forum<br>Washington Place Outing<br>with 2:00 pm Holiday<br>Concert Land of Lincoln<br>Barbershop at Hoogland | 8<br>11:00-1:00<br><i>Food Pantry</i>   | 9<br>9:30 am Staff Meeting<br>10:30 am Property<br>11:00-1:00 <i>Food Pantry</i>              | 10<br>3:30 pm康乃馨<br>4:30 pm Chorale<br>6:00pm Midweek<br>Dinner<br>6:30 pm Advent |
| 14<br>9:15 am Worship<br>10:30 am Grace Forum<br>3:00- 5:30 pm Caroling<br>at the Carillon   | 15<br>11:00-1:00<br><i>Food Pantry</i>  | 16<br>9:30 am Staff Meeting<br>11:00-1:00 <i>Food Pantry</i><br>12:00 noon Admin &<br>Finance | 17<br>CHRISTMAS<br>4:30 pm Chorale<br>6:00pm Midweek<br>Dinner<br>6:30 pm Advent  |
| 21 Blood Pressure checks<br>9:15 am Worship<br>Poinsettia deadline   | 22<br>11:00-1:00<br><i>Food Pantry</i><br> | 23<br>9:30 am Staff Meeting<br>11:00-1:00 <i>Food Pantry</i>                                  | 24<br>4:30 pm Pre-Christmas<br>5:00 pm<br>Christmas Eve<br>Candlelight            |
| 28<br>9:15 am Worship  | 29<br>11:00-1:00<br><i>Food Pantry</i>  | 30<br><i>Food Pantry CLOSED</i>   | 31  |

# ER 2025

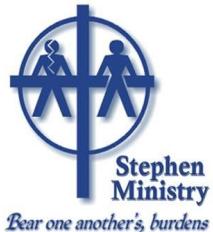
| Wed  | Thu   | Fri  | Sat   |
|--|---|--|---|
| oir Practice<br>week Advent<br>ent worship   | 4<br><i>11:00-1:00 Food Pantry</i><br>12:10 pm Brown Bag<br>Bible Study   | 5<br>7:00 pm<br>Land of<br>Lincoln<br>Barbershop<br>Concert at<br>Hoogland | 6   |
| mmunity Ministry<br>oir Practice<br>week Advent<br>ent worship                     | 11<br><i>11:00-1:00 Food Pantry</i><br>12:10 pm Brown Bag<br>Bible Study<br>1:00 pm Stewardship   | 12<br>11:30 am<br>Twisted<br>Stitchers<br>Luncheon                         | 13<br>9:00 am WELCA<br>Meeting/<br>Cookie packing<br>with breakfast<br>10:30 am Cookie<br>Exchange<br>Ruth Circle<br>Luncheon |
| Food Baskets<br>oir Practice<br>week Advent<br>ent worship                         | 18<br><i>11:00-1:00 Food Pantry</i><br>12:10 pm Brown Bag<br>Bible Study  | 19   | 20<br>12:00pm–6:00 pm<br>Bell Ringing at<br>Scheel's  |
| lude<br>ve<br>Worship  | 25<br><b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b><br>9:15 am<br>Christmas<br>Worship   | 26<br>Office &<br>Food Pantry<br>Closed                                    | 27<br>                                    |
|  | <b>The church office will be closed<br/>December 25-27. Kim will be<br/>checking messages and<br/>emergencies can be called to her<br/>as well.</b> |  |   |

## What is a Stephen Minister?

A **Stephen Minister** is a caring individual who can help others navigate their present situation. Stephen Ministers are trained to help when people encounter loss, grief, relationship challenges, and a myriad of things that can throw one's life into a tailspin. They are not counselors. They are not "know-it-alls." They are not individuals who try to fix everyone's troubles.

They simply provide love, care, and support when it is needed the most. Let us know if you are in need.

**A Grace Ministry of Caring Needs You...** Stephen Ministry is asking if you would assist their birthday card ministry by volunteering to send birthday cards to members for a month in 2026. Cards, a list of names, addresses, birthdates, and the stamps will be provided or you may wish to donate. You could pair up with a friend to share a month as well. Please contact Toni Klit.



**SALVATION ARMY...** Grace Lutheran Church is scheduled to ring the bell at Scheel's **December 20 from 12:00 noon – 6:00 pm**. Sign up in the fellowship hall on the white board.

**Hats gloves and scarves...** Some have already gone to McClernand when the food baskets were delivered and to individuals around the neighborhood. All the others will then be handed out December 17 before the holiday break to the school, so that the recipients can stay warm all winter.



As a reminder, one tree is designated for adult donations and the other tree is 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, your participation is a blessing to many.

## **GLOVES ARE MOST NEEDED and requested at the Food Pantry throughout the WINTER**

they are not only given to the schools but many who come to the food pantry ask for these essential items. Consider picking up a pair or two when out shopping.

Land of Lincoln Barbershop Chorus  
presents

# It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Age 100  
& Over  
Free



\$18  
Adults  
\$15 Seniors  
\$10 Child

**December 5th at 7:00PM**

**December 7th at 2:00PM**

**Sunday, December 7th at 2:00 pm**

**Annual Christmas Event with lunch at Grace beforehand  
with the residents of Washington Place.**

**Concert with the Barbershop at the Hoogland Center**

### **Servant Opportunities**

- Help fund Christmas baskets
- Bring gloves in the winter
- Bake or come pack cookies for our homebound members

### **MEMBERS WITH LIMITED MOBILITY/HOMEBOUND**

DIXIE ALVIES  
SANDY BENANTI  
MARY BLUMLE  
GLENDIA BOWLES

GEORGIANN  
BREDEHOFT  
RC CURRY  
JAMES LEWIS

MARCELLA MCGOWAN  
TOM & KATHY MYERS  
DEBBIE RIGG  
DON THANNEN

## **2025 Budget Update**

The Cornerstone of Grace is Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Who we are and what we do is an expression of taking up the cross and following Jesus, including the celebration and giving of our time, talents and treasure.

The end of October marks the 5/6 point through the 2025 budget year. In recent months, current and building giving (i.e., giving that is used to pay budgeted expenses) has been declining and increasingly falling behind what was budgeted.

The year-to-date 2025 deficit now stands at - **\$106,900**. We will receive roughly \$57,000 from the Grace Trust in December which will help reduce the deficit; but a significant deficit will remain. Please review your stewardship for 2025 and, if you can, help Grace fully support the ministries we do.



### **Need for Financial Secretaries**

Financial Secretaries play an important role in Grace's financial controls. Their primary responsibilities are to count the weekly member contributions each Monday morning and prepare a summary sheet which is then used by Kim to enter the contributions into the correct income account. We currently have three Financial Secretaries but could use one or two more. The time commitment is minor, typically 1½ to 2 hours every other Monday morning. No financial experience is needed. So if you find yourself with free time on Mondays, please contact Kim or Helen Appleton should you be interested or have additional questions. Thank you.



**COOKBOOKS...** Grace Cookbooks are available and make great gifts. Any proceeds go to Grace Food Pantry.

## ***Did you know... SYMBOLS OF CHRISTMAS***

**Evergreen tree** - known for its year-round color, it represents eternal life—our promise in Christ. Martin Luther, a leader of the Reformation, was said to have introduced the first Christmas tree in his home as a symbol of endless life in Christ. He adorned it with candles, a reminder that Jesus is the Light of the World ([Isaiah 60:13](#); [John 8](#)).

**Holly** - with its pointed leaves, is like the crown of thorns Jesus wore as He carried the burden of our sins ([Matthew 27:29](#)).

**The color red** - prominent in Christmas decorations, speaks of His blood and the gift of His sacrifice.

**Giving gifts** - this tradition harks back to the Magi's offerings, which reflect Jesus' kingship, the sorrow of His death, and His divine role as God's perfect gift to us ([Matthew 2](#)).

**Yule log** - carried by the family to burn for twelve days—a symbol of identifying with Christ's sacrifice and finding warmth, unity, and joy in Him, and bringing light to the 12 days of Christmas season.

**Mistletoe** - has long represented peace. Through Christ, we find true reconciliation with God ([Romans 5:1](#); [Romans 8:1](#)).

**Bells** - known for announcing news, remind us that Christ is the Good News, the ultimate message of hope and salvation!

So, as we say "**Merry Christmas**," let's remember its profound meaning—a celebration of Christ with us.

The Christmas story is recorded in [Luke 2:4-19](#).





**Holiday Food Baskets** have been a long tradition of Grace Lutheran Church. We partner with other Lutheran churches and public schools in the area to provide food to help make the holidays a bit better for families in need. Baskets are provided before Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Though funded separately from Grace Food Pantry by Grace, Peace Lutheran and St Johns Lutheran, we obtain the food through the pantry and reimburse it for the costs. Christmas baskets are the next ministry. Those baskets will go out Wednesday, December 18.

Please consider donating to the Holiday Baskets, which cost about \$65 per basket. Grace pays for 60 baskets per holiday. That is \$4,000 for each of Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Your help is appreciated.

Each family receives a tote with about \$65 worth of groceries and personal items, including a ham, milk, bread, eggs, potatoes, apples, numerous non-perishable cans and boxes of food, and a bag of toiletries. You can support this ministry by donating cash (earmarked for Holiday Food Baskets) and/or the nonperishable foods listed below:

**Non-perishable Needs for Holiday Food Baskets:**

- \* Cans of green beans, corn, peaches, pears, pork and beans, ravioli, and pasta sauce
- \* Boxes of spaghetti, macaroni and cheese, saltine crackers, cereal, cake mix and icing, stuffing, mashed potatoes.
- \* Jars of peanut butter, jars of jelly (plastic, not glass, please)

Each basket costs \$65 to fill. If you would like to sponsor a basket, or half a basket, to honor someone, or remember someone who is no longer on their earthly journey, please fill out the form below, tear or cut it out and mail it to Grace. We will print your name and the name(s) of those you honor or remember in the January Grace Notes. Thank you for helping this special ministry. Your gift will be recorded on your giving statement.

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**CHRISTMAS BASKET**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) Name(s) to honor or remember: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Amount of gift: \_\_\_\_\_

## **THANK YOU**

- \* To all those who pray and continue to give support to Little Lambs Learning Center, Uganda.
- \* To JB and the leadership of the churches and groups who gifted us a great afternoon of music to benefit Grace Food Pantry!
- \* To those who helped with coordinating the Butter braid fundraiser this year, Jean Scherer, Harold & Kim Janssen and Pat Casper.
- \* To those who helped with the Thanksgiving Food Baskets.
- \* To all those men and women who give selflessly their time on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays to feed our community.
- \* To Bishop Greg for leading us through our two workshops and helping us to better understand our Why as a congregation.
- \* To those who prayerfully engaged in those workshops.
- \* To Randy Heidorn who worked, along with Aaron, revamping one of the pews.

**SAVE that Date** and break out the recipes!

International Potluck to benefit World Hunger

**January 11, following worship.**

All are welcome to bring a dish!



**thrivent** Call Jean Scherer 217-725-0301 if you have an available Thrivent Action team Card, \$250.00 for the end of the year and heading into January—we have a use for this! We thank those who have used their cards for various ministries throughout this last year!



**TWISTED STITCHERS...** Grace Twisted Stitchers will have their Christmas gathering, at Island Bay Yacht Club for lunch on Friday, December 12th at 11:30 am.

**Faith Grace Circle...** will not meet for December but encourage our ladies to attend the midweek Advent dinner and worship.

## **Cookies for the Homebound + Plus... Saturday, December 13**



A brief meeting and breakfast will be served at 9:00 am followed by packing the cookies. Everyone in the congregation is invited to supply the cookies. Your cookies may be brought to the church from Thursday, December 11 - Saturday, December 13 at 9:00 am.

In addition to packing cookies for the homebound on December 13th, the Ruth Circle is also participating in our first ever Christmas cookie exchange. The exchange will allow us to share a variety of cookies. We will meet at the church at 10:30am on Saturday for the exchange. To participate, please contact Marilyn Dees at 217 971-6376 to be added to the list. You would need to bring your family's favorite Christmas cookies that are homemade, and we will need at least 2 dozen cookies and you should clearly label them if you have nuts. Please bring a container to pack your cookies.

**Ruth Circle...** Our annual Christmas Party will head to **Café Moxo** for lunch following cookie packing/exchange on December 13th.

**Peace Lutheran, Springfield WELCA** unit is hosting an event Saturday, Dec 13th 9:00 am—5:00 pm and Monday, Dec 15th 9:00 am—12:00 pm to provide gift wrapping services to the public in exchange for a small fee. We've partnered with Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery for this event and are sharing a portion of the proceeds with them, as well as sharing information with the public about donation needs and volunteer opportunities. The other portion of the proceeds will help supplement the cost of our WELCA members' attendance to the WELCA Triennial Gathering in Des Moines in 2026. Blessings and information, Annie Allen-Jones 217-494-8036 [annie.ajones85@gmail.com](mailto:annie.ajones85@gmail.com)



Grace's WELCA (the Women of the ELCA) is looking for a BOLD woman to nominate. Please let Kim in the office know by March 1 if there is someone you think should be the bold woman at Grace.



### POINSETTIAS

We are asking anyone who wishes to assist in the cost of decorating our church sanctuary for Christmas to please fill in the form below and return it to the church office or place it in the offering plate no later than December 21, 2025, with checks payable to Grace with flowers in the memo. Also, we ask that your money be included with your form. Those who wish to provide decorations, please do so in any amount. Gifts of \$10.00 or more are very helpful. Gifts may be given in memory or honor of a certain person(s) if desired. A list of all gifts and in whose memory or honor they are given will be included in the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day bulletins.

Please fill in and return the form below by Sunday, December 21, 2025

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Given in memory or honor (Circle one) of:

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Poinsettias will remain in sanctuary until close of worship on January 4, 2026. Do you wish to pick yours up?

**YES:** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **December Birthdays**

|             |   |             |                                  |
|-------------|---|-------------|----------------------------------|
| December 1  | Jack Wheaton  | December 19 | Chuck Rehwald                    |
| December 2  | Scott Mahnken   | December 20 | Helen Appleton<br>Claire Thannen |
| December 3  | Otto Von Holten   | December 22 | Frank Beckman                    |
| December 5  | Ann Evans   | December 23 | Claudia Cross                    |
| December 7  | John Kennedy  | December 24 | Joey Klint                       |
| December 8  | Olivia Darling  | December 25 | Kendal Hoselton                  |
| December 9  | Glenda Bowles   | December 26 | Gabriella Behl                   |
| December 10 | Julie Fugate  | December 27 | Dixie Alvies<br>Bob Ruff         |
| December 13 | Barbara Hedden<br>Joann Howe  | December 29 | Wanda Williams                   |
| December 14 | Sara Oehlert<br>Jessica Thannen<br>Sharon Turner                          | December 31 | Mackenzie<br>Crowhurst           |
| December 17 | Katie Christell<br>David Farrell<br>Dan Hoselton<br>Pastor Tom<br>Krieger |             |                                  |



HAPPY BIRTHDAY and  
GOD'S BLESSINGS TO YOU!

**If you miss seeing someone from church...**  
call them and tell them we miss them. Call or write a note to  
someone this Christmas season.

## **COUNCIL MEMBERS AND THE COMMITTEES THEY REPRESENT**

**Vice President**, Jim Schlouch

**Treasurer**, Brenda Poston

**Secretary**, Aaron Babel

**Administration & Finance**: Jim Schlouch, Ed Wollet

**Christian Education**: Kari Downey, Jean Scherer

**Community Ministry**: Brian Dees

**Evangelism**: Aaron Babel

**Fellowship**:

**Parish Life**:

**Property**: Mike Darling, Craig Schattschneider

**Stewardship**: Aaron Babel

**Strategic Planning**: Mike Darling, Ed Wollet

**Worship & Music**: August Appleton

**Youth**: Jerry Janssen, Amelie Janssen

Verne Nelson



**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.elcasfld@gmail.com](mailto:grace.elcasfld@gmail.com)

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



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

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**gracelutheran-springfield.org**

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**Merry Christmas and a blessed, safe  
New Year from the Staff of Grace!**



**Pastor Tom Krieger      JB GEORGE**

**Kim Gietl**

**Aaron VonHolten**

**Aaron Babel**

*Diana Weyhenmeyer*