



GRACE NOTES

May 2026

Ephesians 3:17

“Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong.”

I have been enjoying our sermon series, “*Tell Me a Story*,” which weaves together Bible lessons with children’s books. When I was a child, my favorite book was *Home for a Bunny*. I loved it so much that I wore the cover out. As soon as I learned to write my name, I proudly wrote it in black permanent marker on the front page.

Even at a young age, I was drawn to this story of a bunny who emerges in the spring searching for a home. He wanders from place to place, asking other animals if he belongs with them. Again and again, he wonders: “A home for a bunny, a home of his own—under a rock or under a stone or log or under the ground. Where would a bunny find his home?”

Each time, he discovers that the place is not quite right. Finally, at the end of the story, he meets another bunny who welcomes him, and at last, he finds where he belongs.

There is something deeply human about that longing to find “home”—a place where one feels safe, loved, nurtured, and accepted as one’s true self. Sometimes that place is the house where we rest at night. Other times, it is found in meaningful relationships or within the life of a church community.

In Ephesians, Paul reminds us that Christ makes a home in our hearts as we trust in God. Our roots grow deep and intertwine with God’s love, giving us strength for whatever we face.

When I was serving in Kentucky, I asked the Northern Illinois Conference—my home conference—if there might be an appointment for me in a local church. I became the first appointment the NIC Cabinet made in 2024. At first, I hoped to be closer to what I had always called “home”—Rockford, where I grew up and where my family and close friends still live. Yet it became clear very quickly that God had already prepared a home for us here—within this church and in the neighborhood where the parsonage is located—especially for this season of our lives.

In a beautiful “God wink,” yesterday dear Clarice Boswell gave me a bag of gifts for my grandson Myles’s first birthday. Tucked inside was a copy of *Home for a Bunny*. She had no idea it was my favorite childhood book or that I was writing this very article about it.

My prayer is that each of you may feel at home with Christ—and at home here at Grace UMC, a place where all are welcomed just as they are.

With a heart full of gratitude,
Pastor Laura

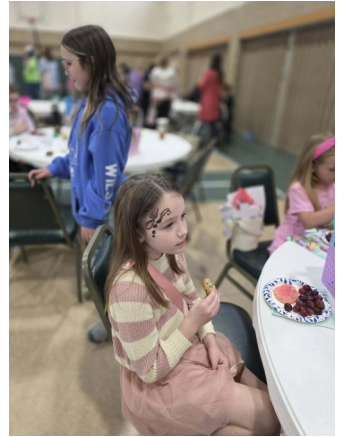


Holy Week and Easter Sunday was absolutely beautiful at Grace United Methodist





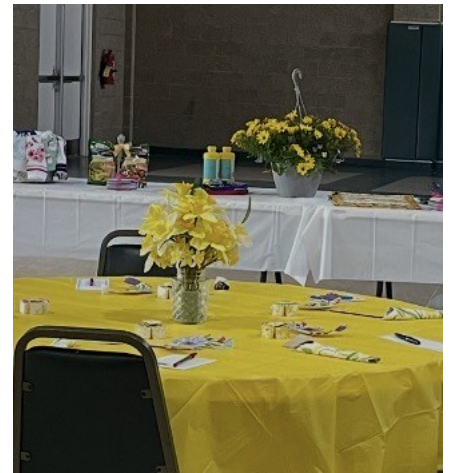
**EGG
HUNT
FUN**





On April 18 the UWF entertained 26 women at the **"Spring Is Blooming"** auction to raise funds for their missional efforts for the year. Maida and Jamie were auctioneer and Vanna.

The successful auction was followed by a sumptuous salad bar and desserts.



Thank you to all who donated Lenten Food bags. Here is our Senior High sorting food from Lenten bags. Big job but they did a great job.



FAITH AND WELLNESS

1st Sunday BP checks. Join us thirty minutes prior to the start of worship, we are in the library ready to check your blood pressure.

Come and see us.



LENT CHALLENGE

A BIG **THANK YOU** to all of you who participated in this year's Lenten Challenge. With your help we raised \$1,120.96 for the Church's General Operating Budget. Thanks for your continued support.

GRACE Finance Committee



Christian Education

Happy spring everyone! Warmer weather is finally here and so are some fun events. On May 16, we have another Feed My Starving Children event from 11:15-1:30 pm. Make sure to let me or Diane Morrow know if you are able to come by May 2nd if you have not already. May 17th, last day of Sunday School. We will have teacher and graduates recognition during 10:30 am worship. Fellowship following service.

We have VBS coming up on June 22-25 from 9 am-11:30 am. I'm so excited for the theme this year, we're doing a Veggie Tales themed VBS! There will even be a special movie night that week (date TBD). There are many exciting things coming up and I can't wait to see you all there!

Serena Tesch-Moore

LUNCH BUNCHERS SPRING FAREWELL

Join us in Grace Place at 12:30pm on May 19th.

A box lunch will be served for our last lunch gathering until the fall.

Free will offering to help with expenses.

Financial Update from the Treasurer

As we approach the end of April, I am happy to report that Grace UMC finances are in a favorable position for going into the summer months. The April numbers are not yet final, but I expect budget income through April to be about \$140,500 which is \$21,000 over what we expected. Much of that is because we were able to take more from the endowment fund than expected, but our identifiable giving is above plan. Budget expenses will be about \$116,000 which is about \$6,000 higher than expected. We had some very high utility bills early in the year, but those seem to be dropping back to the expected range.

Jay Wait

UNDIES SUNDAYS The United Women in Faith will once again sponsor an Undie Sundays collection for the Dakota Indians. We will collect in a large container in the narthex all of the May Sundays and June 7. Women, children, and men's undies in all sizes and colors will be collected for delivery by Steve Meister and team who go there on a mission trip in August. Thanks for your support of this important project.



Feed My Starving Children

555 Exchange Court

Aurora, IL

Saturday, May 16th

From 11:15 am -1:30 pm



If you would like to attend, please let Serena know.

RSVP is needed by May 3rd. Please come and help pack nutritious meals for children around the world.

This event is for anyone aged 5 and up.



Thomas & Carol Zettergren

May 8

Kristina & Mateusz Parro

May 17

Don & Cathy Kazak

May 23

Jim & Diane Morrow

May 23

Ed & Caryn Young

May 23

Eric & Nancy Leggett

May 29

Brian & Joan Landers

May 31

5/4 - John Renzi

5/7 - Carrie Butler

5/8 - Cindy Caswell

5/9 - Jim Norris

5/10 - Jim Morrow

5/11 - Diane Lutz

5/11 - Isabella Ray

5/14 - Adrienne Hartman

5/16 - Jean Lucas, Jason Meister

5/19 - Jeannine D'Orazio,

5/19 - Connie Schroeder

5/21 - Dylan Deardurff

5/25 - Deborah Larson

5/29—Leon Wirt

5/31—Thomas Zettergren

August 1-8th , a group from Grace church will be traveling to Mission, SD to work with Tree of Life Ministries on the Rosebud Indian Reservation. Each volunteer is required to pay \$300 to help cover the cost of the mission. We have a couple of young adults that this would be a hardship. I'm looking for sponsors who would like to help cover their cost. Donations can be left at the church with a note in the memo "Tree of Life".

Checks should be made out to Grace UMC.

If interested please contact Steve Meister.



Thanks to all for your support of the

Ridgewood Pantry

with the recent donation of bags of groceries collected at Easter. The groceries were distributed by Grace UMC volunteers at the pantry on April 15th



FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

LOOKING FOR GRADUATES!

Grace UMC will be honoring our graduates on Sunday, May 17th.

Please send to the church your graduate(s): Name, what grade, what school, a picture, and if graduating high school, future plans.

Please send information to Gracejolie@comcast.net.



Our 2026 ASP Mission trip leaves on June 6 and returns on June 13.

The Grace ASP Mission Team will be heading to Hazard, Kentucky. Perry County We will meet at the church at 7:30am and hope to be on the road by 8am. Please join us for a 'sending forth' prayer. We have 2 teams ready to go. Teams include the following youth :

- Bri Anderson
- Braydon Hocking
- Landon Hocking
- Paxton Hogg
- Aden Guzman
- Ben Meister
- Adriel Zepeda

They will be led by the following adults: Eric Anderson, Kara Hocking, Stephanie Meister, Steve Meister, Ubaldo Rojas and Shannen Rojas.

We are still in search of a few more 'Prayer Partners'. We would like to have one for each volunteer on the trip.

For anyone wanting to be a prayer partner, contact: Steve Meister

MISSION OF THE MONTH

May – NIC (pg. 31) United Methodist Homes and Services (#50000121)

United Methodist Home & Services is the non-profit, faith-based parent organization of Chicago Methodist Senior Services (CMSS) that supports, improves and enhances the quality of life for older adults by empowering them to live with dignity and respect.



APRIL ATTEN	WORSHIP 8AM 10:30AM	CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL	ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL
April 5th EASTER	179		
April 12	72	29	18
April 19	74	19	16
April 26	80	25	15





Hank and Clarise Boswell would like to thank everyone for keeping in touch with cards, calls and text. They are very appreciative of our Grace family.



BISHOP'S APPEAL 2026

Giving Abundantly, Generosity Overflowing

Education for Central Conferences

The 2026 bishop's appeal will benefit education for central conferences, supporting two key initiatives: Construction of a high school in Tanzania, led by NIC missionary Rev. Young Seon Kim (known as Christina), and the Endowment for Theological Education in the Central Conferences. Every year, the Northern Illinois Conference raises funds for a project of the area bishop's choosing and brings the money raised to the annual conference session in June. Together, we join our resources and bring hope to the world. This year's appeal invites us to invest not only in classrooms and curriculum, but in futures, in young people's discovering their gifts and in pastors and leaders who are equipped to guide communities with wisdom, compassion and courage. As a connectional church, we believe that every child deserves an education and every community deserves well-trained spiritual leadership. Gifts to the appeal will be divided equally between the two projects.



187th Northern Illinois Annual Conference

Sunday, June 14 -
Tuesday, June 16, 2026

Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center
1551 N. Thoreau Dr., Schaumburg Ill.

Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School 2026 is
Monday, June 22nd through
Thursday, June 25th.



9:00 am—11:30 am Veggie Town Values

Collecting large plastic containers that look
like pickle jars

(cheese puffs containers type)

--large empty appliance box

--empty refrigerator box

Contact **Serena Tesch-Moore**

if you are interested in volunteering.



Grace United Methodist Church

VEGGIE TOWN VALUES: Building Citizens for God's Community

June 22-25, 2026

3 years – 6th grade

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.



Child's Name _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail Address _____

Phone Numbers: Cell _____ Work _____

Age Information

Date of Birth _____ Age _____

Grade entering in Fall 2026 _____

Home Church _____



Allergies/Medical Information/Other

Emergency Contact

Name _____ Phone _____

CONSENT

I give permission to Grace UMC to take and use: Photographs and or digital images of my child for use in news releases, web sites or electronic publications. I agree that my child's name and identity: may be revealed in descriptive text or commentary in connection with the image(s). I authorize the use of these images without compensation to me. All negatives, prints, digital reproductions and shall be the property of Grace UMC, Joliet IL



Dismissal Information

Name(s) of person(s) who may pick up this child from VBS

Registration forms can be mailed to the church or put in the outdoor black mailbox.

If you have any questions, please call the church office at 815-725-7632



MAY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 9am SPRING CLEAN UP
3 Communion Sunday 8:30am Prayer Gathering 9 am Religious Ed 10am BP Screening 10am Fellowship 10:30 Worship	4	5	6 6:15p Bells 7:30p Choir	7 7a Men's Breakfast 	8	9
10 MOTHER'S DAY! 8:30am Prayer Gathering 9 am Religious Ed 10am Fellowship 10:30 Worship	11	12 1pm UWF mtg. 6:30p Trustees	13 7:30p Choir	14 7a Men's Breakfast	15	16 11:15 am Feed My Starving Children
17 8:30am LAST Prayer Gathering 9 am LAST Religious Ed 10am Fellowship 10:30 LAST Worship— Graduation recognition Fellowship following	18 5p Daybreak	19 7a Daybreak 12:30p Lunch Bunch of Grace Place 6:30p DayCare 6:30p Finance ZOOM	20 Food Pantry 7:30p Choir' 5:30p DayCare Graduation	21 7a Men's Breakfast 6:30p Church Council ZOOM	22	23
24 10:00 am Worship Service	25 MEMORIAL DAY OFFICE CLOSED	26	27	28 7a Men's Breakfast	29	30
31 10 am Worship ASP COMMISSIONING					20	26

Grace United Methodist Church

1718 Avalon Avenue

Joliet, Illinois 60435-5799

- May 3rd** - Communion Sunday
10am Blood Pressure Screening
- May 10th** - Mother's Day
- May 17th** - **Last day of Sunday School, Graduation Sunday and Teacher Recognition**
- May 24th** - 10:00am service starts
- May 31st** - ASP Commissioning