



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Gathering in Grace, Growing in Faith, Serving in Love

May 2026 Newsletter

Pastor's Ponderings

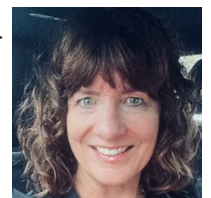


Do you ever feel like negativity and hopelessness are winning? Turn on the news for even a few minutes, and you'll be inundated with stories of war and violence, hatred and bigotry. You'll see photos and videos of natural disasters and immense destruction. You'll see countless ways in which people hurt one another. You'll hear people saying unkind and often untrue things about others. All of this conflict and negativity can make us feel profoundly sad, angry, and hopeless. Sometimes it makes us want to plug our ears, close our eyes, and hide from the world. With all the terrible things that happen around us, is there still hope?

As followers of Jesus, we know that there is still hope. We just might have to work a little harder to look for it. I've always loved Mr. Rogers' quote, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'" But we also have opportunity to be the helpers. When the troubles of the world get us down, when we feel stuck in hopelessness, we tend to curl into ourselves, focusing on ourselves. But in these times, the best thing we can do is to reach out to help and bring hope to others.

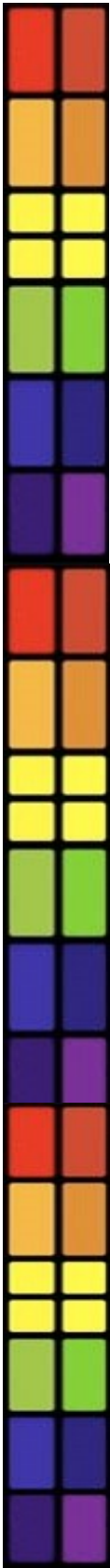
I love that our high schoolers are encouraged to do 200 community service hours before graduation. It helps them to look beyond themselves to the needs and opportunities around them. And we too can benefit from volunteering in various ways, to make a difference around us. When we look at the problems of the world, it's too much to handle. But bringing hope to the world often starts with making a difference in the life of just one person or organization. You have so many gifts to share. How can you use them to be a helper in this world? We as people of Grace have immense gifts too. This year alone, we've raised over \$4000 to help the devastated people in Gaza, and we've collected a lot of food to help feed hungry children in our own town. This is just the beginning of how we can make a difference together.

Join us in worship on Sunday, May 17 as we hear from the Rev. Cathy Daharsh about how Lutheran World Relief is making a difference in the world. Cathy is a pastor in the ELCA and currently serves as a Senior Advisor, Congregational Engagement with Lutheran World Relief. She is passionate about helping people connect their faith to the needs of the world, especially through the work of quilts, kits, and global partnerships. She now works with congregations across the country, encouraging and equipping them to live out their faith in meaningful ways.



In Christ,

+ *Pastor Jennifer*





Our Online Directory is LIVE!

Members of the congregation are now invited to log onto *Breeze* (our church management system) to access the Congregation Directory. The online directory helps members stay connected and safely access important information in one convenient place. To access the directory online, log on to <https://gracecambridge.breezechms.com/> to create an account.

Thank you to those who attended our first *Breeze* learning session! Watch the Newsletter and bulletins for information on upcoming learning sessions.



August Rummage Sale

It's that time again! As you clean out those closets, please consider donating your discarded treasures for the August Church Rummage Sale. Please note the sale will take place one week later than normal this year, on August 7-8. You may bring items to the church basement, in the room designated for sale items.

Your Thrivent Member Grant Funding



If you are a member of Thrivent, you have a voice in where Thrivent distributes millions of dollars in grant funding each year, supporting the causes and organizations you care about. In 2025, Grace Lutheran Church received \$1131 through the *Thrivent Choice*® program — and that's worth celebrating! Thank you Grace Thrivent Members for directing your *choice dollars* to Grace!

Tuesday Night Supper Club

Tuesday Night Supper Club returns this month with a potluck dinner and fellowship on Tuesday, May 26 at 6:00 p.m. Simply bring a side dish or dessert to share, maybe just some Memorial Day leftovers. Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall so we know how many to prepare for.



Sheets and Fabric Needed!

Grace Quilters are in great need of clean, stain-free, cotton sheets. Please consider donating sheets by bringing them to the church office.

Any sewers who have unused fabric around, please remember you can donate unneeded fabric to Grace. Monetary donations are also welcome. Donations can be dropped off at the church office.





Want to Worship from Home? Here's How!

Grace's Sunday services continue to be broadcast on Spectrum cable channel 987 Sundays at 9am. Sunday services are also livestreamed on Grace's Facebook page. Just looking for sermons? Check out our

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdWxSntOyuupFnyLgxSU8aw>

Monday Night Adult Education

This month, we complete our study of the book, "See Me, Believe Me: An updated Guide to Deepen Allyship with Congregational Leaders of Color." Even if you don't read this powerful book, please feel free to join us for our conversation. We meet Monday nights at 7pm.

- May 4 – Chapters 5-6
- May 11 – Chapters 7-8
- May 18 – Chapters 9-11
- May 25 – No class – Memorial Day



Graduate Recognition

Join us in worship on Sunday, May 31st as we celebrate our high school graduates and ask God's blessings for their future endeavors.

Pentecost Sunday

Mark your calendar; Pentecost Sunday is May 24. Join us as we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus' disciples after his Ascension. Don't forget to wear red!



Spring Clean Up at Grace

On Saturday, May 9th, bring your work gloves and cleaning supplies to help spruce up the inside of our building. We'll be washing windows and doing general clean up on the interior of the building. Please join us from 9am to noon!



Office Hours

The Church Office is open from 9 am – noon, Monday- Friday. Variable additional hours are available; please contact us if you'd like to make an appointment (608)423-3135 or via email at gracelutherancambridge-wi@gmail.com

MAY VOLUNTEERS



- May 3** - Ushers: Gary & Sharon Haberkorn Assisting Minister: Erik Olsen
Reader: Char Luchterhand
Communion Servers: Randy Luchterhand & Gordie Grender
Acolytes: Jackson & Josephine Rue
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Coffee Hour: Albrecht & Martin
- May 10** - Ushers: Bill Becker Family Assisting Minister: Shawn Koebke
Reader: Josh Mabie
Communion Servers: Kelly Witte & Tami Collin
Acolytes: George & Henry Albrecht
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Coffee Hour: Fronек & Koebke
- May 17** - Ushers: Williams Family Assisting Minister: Shawn Whitman
Reader: Mandi Buonincontro
Communion Servers: Mandi Buonincontro & Jean Scott
Acolytes: Easton & Elliott Bernhardt
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Coffee Hour: Armstrong-Wykowski & Tammy Northey
- May 24** - Ushers: Tim & Evy Jeffers Assisting Minister: Rich Fronек
Reader: Tim Jeffers
Communion Servers: Kerstin Mabie & Shauna Thayer
Acolytes: Easton & Elliott Bernhardt
Communion Set Up: Geis Family
Coffee Hour: Russo & Sterwald
- May 31** - Ushers: Al & Pat Northey Assisting Minister: Diane Fronек
Reader: Rory Sullivan
Communion Servers: Tom & Chris Watson
Acolytes: Paige Neuenschwander & Ashton Thayer
Communion Set Up: Pat Northey
Coffee Hour Hosts: Thurow & Wolfgram



Altar Guild - Brenda, Haven, and Cally Lovick

MAY AT GRACE

Sunday	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
26 9 am Worship SERVICE-Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 Choir Rehearsal 10:15 Sunday School 10:15 AED Training	27 9:30 am Quilters	28	29	30	1 6pm Piano Recital	2
3 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 NO Choir Rehearsal 10:15 Sunday School	4 9:30 am Quilters 7 pm Adult Study	5	6 9 am Ruth Circle 11am Outreach Committee 6pm Confirmation Potluck	7	8	9
10 MOTHER'S DAY 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 Choir Rehearsal	11 9:30 am Quilters 7 pm Adult Study	12 7 pm Council Meeting	13 9 am Lydia Circle	14 12 noon- Staff Mtg	15 Newsletter content due	16
17 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 Choir Rehearsal	18 9:30 am Quilters 7 pm Adult Study	19	20	21	22	23
24 PENTECOST SUNDAY 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 Choir Rehearsal	25 MEMORIAL DAY OFFICE CLOSED	26 6pm Tuesday Night Supper Club	27	28	29	30
31 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 Choir Rehearsal	June 1 9:30 am Quilters 7 pm Adult Study	2	3 9 am Ruth Circle 11am Outreach Committee	4	5	6

GROWING FAITH-FILLED KIDS



Our last day of Sunday School is May 3rd

A special thank you to our Sunday School teachers for all their dedication and hard work this year: Kristin Rue, Kristine Schutte, Rory Sullivan, Josie Punsel, Robin Marsden, Erin Sterwald, and Bridgette Hermanson.

*We Love Our
Teachers*

Confirmation Corner



Our Confirmation year concludes this month with our Mentorship Potluck on May 6 at 6:00 p.m. Parents are invited to join at 7:00 p.m. for a 3rd year Orientation. Students who need more time to complete their Mentorship Workbooks or sermon notes should talk with Pastor Jennifer.



From Lent, through Easter, to Holy Humor Sunday, a special thank you to EVERYONE who made our Easter season so special!



Outreach and Social Justice

A huge "Thank you" to everyone who donated to our 2026 Lenten challenge for Gaza. Our goal of \$2000 was more than doubled! Many people will be helped because of your generosity.

Each year we choose a cause, either globally or locally, that has a special need...and, there are so many! We thought you might like to see a listing of all the places you have helped during the past 14 years of Lenten challenges...a total of \$49,533!! Thanks be to God!

LENTEN CHALLENGES from 2013 - 2026

2013	ELCA Global Barnyard	\$3055
2014	ELCA Community Wells	\$5000
2015	ELCA Ambulance Bikes & Health Kits	\$3119
2016	ELCA World Hunger (2993) & Cambridge Food Pantry(700)	\$3693
2017	LSS Refugee Resettlement in Madison	\$4247
2018	LDR Puerto Rico (after hurricane)	\$3757
2019	LDR Dominica (another hurricane)	\$2373
2020	ELCA Goats	\$2276
2021	ELCA World Hunger	\$2608
2022	LDR Afghanistan	\$2770
2023	LDR Horn of Africa Drought	\$5000
2024	ELCA AMMPARO	\$3600
2025	LSS Refugee Resettlement	\$3496
2026	LDR Gaza	\$4539

ELCA = Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

LSS = Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan

LDR = Lutheran Disaster Response, part of ELCA

Blue Jay Back Packs

During the month of April, Grace was asked to help address food insecurity issues for students in grades K - 5th at Cambridge Elementary School, by filling 30 bags with healthy snacks and easily prepared meals for weekends and holidays when school is not in session. Each bag included 8 meal items, 8 breakfast items and 8 snacks. Thanks to your generosity, we met our goal and then some! Bags were delivered to the Cambridge Food Pantry for distribution by the Cambridge School District. Thank you!



**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
April 12, 2026**

(Minutes will be reviewed & approved at next Council meeting)

Call to Order. President Kris Tobias called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Attendance. Present: Kris Tobias, Steve Bielefeldt, Pr. Jennifer Jelinek, Marcia Klemp, Connie Kreuser, Julie Leser, Richard Scott, John Jensen, Kristin Rue, Judy Heidebrecht, Amy Simdon, and Janet Koepp. **Absent:** Peggy Punsel.

Devotions. Julie shared an updated version of Proverbs 31, which was read at her mother's funeral.

Approval of Minutes. Julie moved to approve the March meeting minutes. Judy seconded the motion. Unanimously approved by those who attended the March meeting.

Approval of Agenda. John moved to approve the agenda. Kristin seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Correspondence. None

Treasurer's Report. (Amy) Our financial situation continues to be steady this year. We had a net gain of \$1,426 in March, giving us a year-to-date gain of \$8,200. Our General Giving through March was \$80,009 which was \$17,816 more than 2025 and \$6,259 more than the 2026 budget. The YTD Special Giving through March of \$7,898 was \$1,329 more than last year and \$102 less than the budget. Our YTD expenses through March of \$81,118 were \$12,594 more than last year and \$1,612 under budget. The checking account balance was \$588 less than at the end of February with the general fund balance approximately \$4,433 less. Marcia moved to approve this report and send it to audit. John seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Pastor's Report. Pastor said that the Lenten services, Holy Week, and Easter services all went well. She will explore with the other two clergy the purpose and future of the community Good Friday noon gathering. She strongly encourages confirmation students to attend either the Maundy Thursday or Good Friday service at Grace. A new Monday evening study will be based on the book *See Me, Believe Me* by Yolanda Denson-Byers. Because the ELCA is the whitest denomination, there is a need to deepen members' alliances with synod and congregational leaders of color. Pastor is soliciting ideas for summer worship.

Committee Reports. (Provided in writing and/or discussed in the meeting as needed.)

- **Stewardship.** Connie reported the Sunday School kids will be collecting for the "Save the Bees" project through the last Sunday in April. The Stewardship and Outreach committees will be collaborating through the year on efforts that overlap naturally, including the rummage sale.

- **Outreach & Social Justice.** Judy reported the final total raised for the Lenten Challenge was \$4,539, which is more than double the goal. Donations for our neighbors in Gaza will be sent to the ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response. Outreach is coordinating the Blue Jay Backpack project for the Cambridge Food Pantry/Elementary School during April.
- **Property.** Richard noted that thanks are due to Diane Fronck and Wendy Lehr for a large amount of spring cleanup work around the property. The south and east entrance lights and the parking lot lights are now on an automatic timer. We discussed the lights along the north sidewalk. Two of the four fixtures have power, and should we consider any repair work on equipment that's more than sixty years old? For a start, he will get a quote on replacing two circular fluorescent bulbs. Another item of discussion was a possible indoor cleanup day on May 3, to wash windows.
- **Worship.** Easter services 2026 were uplifting and beautiful, as we celebrated the resurrection and returned to saying "Alleluia!" Thanks to talented decorators and musicians. Eighteen (18) family units purchased 37 Easter flowers that were displayed for both the 7:00 am and 9 am services. Next year the committee will work on a better process for identifying the plants for pickup.

Old Business.

- **Wi-Fi updates.** Kris is setting up an outside review of our building and systems with Geek Power. The goal is to have a review of our systems done and improved function of the Wi-Fi completed by the beginning of Sunday School next fall.
- **Security Task Force needs.** Pastor showed some of the building diagrams Shawn Whitman has been working on. AED training is scheduled for April 26, 2026, following worship.

New Business.

- **Update signers on financial accounts.** Amy requested clarification on who the signers are or should be on various church accounts, such as the Mission Investment Fund and the parsonage money. Diane Russo has access to this information. Bank First has the accounts that are used most frequently. Amy moved that the signers on those should be herself (as treasurer), Richard Scott, and Kris Tobias (as president). John seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.
- **Collection for Bees.** See Stewardship report above.
- **Event planning and calendar for the year.** This calendar would mainly be for council and committee use. One idea mentioned was to coordinate the spring cleanup with Earth Day in April, and to include the pollinator garden. Other annual events and recognition Sundays should be added.

Adjournment. Kristin moved to adjourn the meeting. Julie seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned 8:03 PM. We ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Next Meeting. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, May 12 at 7:00 PM.

Submitted by Janet Koepp, Council Secretary

From the Treasurer

March 2026 Financial Snapshot

Income	Year-to-date March 2026 Actual	Year-to-date 2026 Monthly Budget	Over/(under) budget
General Giving	80,009	73,750	6,259
Special Giving	7,898	8,000	(102)
Misc Income	1,411	979	433
Total Income	89,318	82,729	6,589
Expenses			
Administrative	33,498	28,854	4,644
Mission	6,255	13,000	(6,745)
Pastoral	39,789	38,220	1,569
Program	1,576	2,655	(1,079)
Other	-	-	-
Total Expenses	81,118	82,730	(1,612)
Total Net Income (Loss)	8,200 (1)		8,201

A gentle reminder to everyone of the importance of staying financially faithful. Your generosity fuels everything we do—from ministry to outreach—and every gift, big or small, makes a difference.

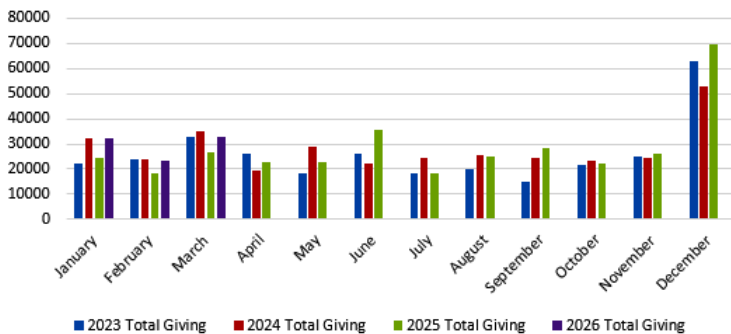
Let's continue trusting God together and giving with grateful hearts.

Thank you for being such a generous community!

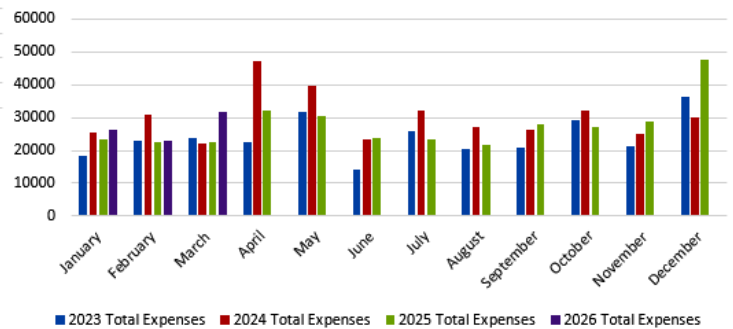


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Comparison of Total Giving - 2023-2026



Comparison of Total Expenses - 2023-2026





Staff and Council

STAFF

Pastor Jennifer Jelinek Cell: (608) 295-7120 pastorjenniferglc@gmail.com

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Christian Ed Coordinator Breah Klemp christianedu.glc@gmail.com

Volunteer Coordinator Cindy Hartman cindyh1029@msn.com

Financial Secretary Diane Russo Cell: (847) 826-0131 gracelutheranfinance@gmail.com

Organist Kenneth Hoversten kenneth.hoversten@gmail.com

Handbell Choir Director Ann Engelstad gaengelstad@charter.net

COUNCIL

President Kris Tobias

Vice President Steve Bielefeldt

Secretary Janet Koepp

Treasurer Amy Simdon

Outreach Judy Heidebrecht

Education Kristin Rue

Stewardship Connie Kreuser

Hospitality Peggy Punsel

Evangelism Marcia Klemp

Worship Julie Leser

Property John Jensen

Property Richard Scott



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