

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Gathering in Grace, Growing in Faith, Serving in Love

FEBRUARY 2026 Newsletter

Pastor's Ponderings



What's your favorite kind of bread? If you could choose to eat any kind of bread, what would it be? I know it's basic, but I enjoy a baguette with crusty outside and chewy inside, with lots of butter. If it's a great baguette, my jaws are tired after eating it. Maybe you're a sour-dough fan, or maybe you favor multi-grain or rye. When the Atkins Diet came out years ago, I was distressed, thinking bread would become a thing of the past. And while many of us still try to minimize carbs and some have to avoid gluten, bread is still very much a part of our lives.

Bread plays so many roles in the Bible as well. From the unleavened bread of Pass-over to God providing manna in the wilderness to Jesus feeding thousands with loaves and fishes to the bread broken at the Last Supper – bread is central to God's story of salvation. Bread even gets mentioned in the most famous prayer in the world as we ask God to, "Give us today our daily bread." And as we read Luther's Small Catechism, we're reminded that daily bread isn't just bread; nor is it only talking about food. Daily bread is "everything included in the necessities and nourishment for our bodies." It also includes clothing, house, farm, fields, livestock, money, property, upright family members and leaders, good government, good weather, peace, health, and more. So when we pray the Lord's Prayer, asking God for our daily bread, we're asking for all of these things.

God blesses us with daily bread in so many ways, providing for our daily needs, bringing people in our lives to love and accompany us, hearing our prayers for justice and peace. And we learn from an early age how important it is for us to share the bread, the money, the gifts, the blessings we've been given so all people can have the "daily bread" that they need to live and thrive.

Lent begins later this month, and the theme at our Wednesday services is "Bread for the Journey." As we journey throughout this meaningful season, we'll be reminded how God provides for us all along the way of our journey of life. We'll focus on how bread has been a big part of the Christian faith journey. Each Wednesday we'll explore a different scripture passage about bread, and there's a good chance you may actually smell and taste the day's theme each week. So join us for our Lenten journey as we pray, "Blessed be God who is our bread. May all the world be clothed and fed. Amen."

In Christ,

+ *Pastor Jennifer*

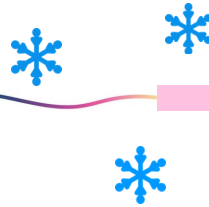
February at a Glance

Feb. 17 - Tuesday Night Supper Club at 6 pm

Feb. 18 - Ash Wednesday Worship at 7 pm

Feb. 25 - Soup Supper at 5:30 pm

February



Willing to Help Out with the Snow?

Thanks so much to those who have kept our walkways clear this winter! We could use a few more volunteers to shovel the church entrances when it snows. If you can help, please sign up on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall.

Tuesday Night Supper Club

Do you like a good potluck? Would you like to connect with some awesome people from Grace? Then the Tuesday Night Supper Club is for you! Join us on Fat Tuesday, Feb. 17 at 6:00 p.m. for our first dinner together. Simply bring a main dish, a side dish, or a dessert to share. Adults, youth, and kids are welcome. To help us prepare, please sign up at church or using this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4EADAA22A5FACE9-61780874-tuesday>



POTLUCK DINNER



Ash Wednesday

This year, Ash Wednesday is February 18. Worship at 7 pm will include the imposition of ashes and communion. Can't make it to worship that evening? Stop by Galleria 214 on Ash Wednesday morning between 7:30-9am for *Ashes on the Go*, to receive ashes and a blessing.

Love Baking Bread?

Do you feel the need to knead? Do you have a bread machine? Our Lenten theme is "Bread for the Journey" and will include different homemade breads each Wednesday night. If you'd like to help make bread or have a bread machine we could borrow, please talk with Pastor Jennifer.



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 Study

This month at our Monday Night Study, we finish our last 2 sessions of "The Difference Course." Then after Lent begins, we'll begin a 4-session class called "Why Easter Matters" by Andy Stanley.

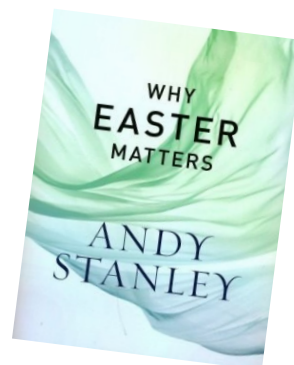
Come join us Monday nights!

Feb. 2 - Practicing Forgiveness

Feb. 9 - Risking Hope

Feb. 16 – No Class

Feb. 23 – Why Easter Matters



Emergency Weather Closing

If you question whether Grace is cancelling worship due to weather or an emergency, please check: Weather emergency closing announcements on Channel 3 (CBS), Channel 5 (NBC), Channel 27 (ABC), and Radio station WSJY (107.3 FM), as well as on Grace Lutheran's answering machine, website, and Grace's Facebook page.



Sunday School Dates to Remember

February 15th: Share the Love Day

March 22: "Risen" Easter Event

March 29 & April 5: NO Sunday School (Spring Break)

May 3: Kids Take Over Worship

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 gracelutherancambridgwi@gmail.com

FEBRUARY VOLUNTEERS



- Feb 1** - Ushers: Bob & Janet Koepf
Reader: Rory Sullivan
Communion Servers: Rich & Dianne Fronek
Acolytes: Billy Becker & William Gottschalk
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Coffee Hour Hosts: Sperle & Klingforth
- Feb 8** - Ushers: Bill Becker Family
Reader: Char Luchterhand
Communion Servers: Randy Luchterhand & Amy Simdon
Acolytes: Billy Becker & August Ciha
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Coffee Hour: Whitman & Bielefeldt
- Feb 15** - Ushers: Jim & Kari Jermain
Reader: Mary Bielefeldt
Communion Servers: Kenny Zickert & Brenda Lovick
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Acolytes: Corbin Klemp & William Gottschalk
Coffee Hour Hosts: Muth & Marcia Klemp
- Feb 18** - Ushers: Cunningham Family
ASH Reader: Josh Mabie
WED Communion Servers: Peter Mabie & Gordie Grender
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Acolytes: Avery & Blake Schutte
- Feb 22** - Ushers: Tim & Evy Jeffers
Reader: Tim Jeffers
Communion Servers: Pat Hall & Connie Kreuser
Communion Set Up: Geis Family
Acolytes: August Ciha & Bentley Bauler
Coffee Hour Hosts: Leser & Zickert

Altar Guild - Brenda, Haven, and Cally Lovick

FEBRUARY AT GRACE

Sunday	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 Choir Rehearsal 10:15 Sunday School	2 9:30 am Quilters 7 pm Adult Study	3	4 9 am Ruth Circle 11am Out-reach Committee	5	6	7
8 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 Choir Rehearsal 10:15 Sunday School	9 9:30 am Quilters	10 7 pm Council Meeting	11 9 am Lydia Circle 6:30 pm Confirmation & Pre-Confirmation	12 2 pm Staff Mtg	13	14
15 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 Choir Rehearsal 10:15 Sunday School	16 9:30 am Quilters NO Adult Study Newsletter content due	17 6 pm Tuesday Night Supper Club	18 ASH WEDNESDAY 7 pm Service	19	20	21
22 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 Choir Rehearsal 10:15 Sunday School	23 9:30 am Quilters 7 pm Adult Study	24	25 5:30 pm Soup Supper 6:30 pm Lent Service	26	27	28

GROWING FAITH-FILLED KIDS



Share the Love Day—Bring a Friend!

We're hosting a Share the Love event where students are encouraged to bring a friend (or several!) to celebrate Valentine's Day the GLC way! It's a fun opportunity to share faith, friendship, and joy — we can't wait to welcome new faces!

No pre-registration required, guests can simply accompany any current student to their class on February 15th during regular Sunday School hours (10:15-11am).



Faith Journey Milestone

Blessings to Livie, Emma, Cullen, and Colby as they received their Bibles during Worship on January 11th! Pastor Jennifer then led them and their parents on an adventure through their Bibles learning to navigate the Word of God and how we can use it in our lives (and in Sunday School!). Help us congratulate these four on this important milestone in their faith journey!



Confirmation Corner

Mentor Night is on February 4 at 6:30 p.m. and there will be Confirmation class on Feb. 11. After that, students are required to attend the Wednesday night Lent services. Ash Wednesday worship is Feb. 18 at 7:00 p.m. The remaining Wednesday services are at 6:30 p.m. with Soup Supper preceding. Pre-Confirmation will meet Feb. 4.



Outreach and Social Justice: LENTEN CHALLENGE

We have all seen pictures and read about the crisis in Gaza that began in October 2023. Although bombings may have lessened, hardships continue for the people of Palestine. Lutheran Disaster Response continues to work with partners in the Holy Land to provide not only immediate needs such as food, water, clothing, and shelter, but also health services, medical supplies for hospitals, and education support, to name just a few things.



The Outreach Committee has chosen Gaza as our Lenten Challenge for 2026. Our goal is to raise \$2000 by Easter Sunday, April 5th. Donations will be sent to the ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response, which uses 100% of donations for the designated program. More information can be found on a display near the church entrance and on the tables. Contributions may be made by check or VENMO, made out to Grace Lutheran, with Lenten Challenge in the memo line. Thank you for caring for our neighbors!



Stewardship Update

God has uniquely gifted and blessed each of us! In what ways will you use YOUR gifts to build up the body of Christ and serve your neighbors?

Thank you to so many of you who took the time to complete the Time & Talent survey last November. Grace's ministries are only possible because of wonderful people like you. The survey data

has been compiled and shared with council and committees. Look for them to reach out in the near future to include you in our ministries.

Food Pantry Donations Always Welcome!

Just a quick reminder, donations at either the Food Pantry at the Cambridge Middle School and/or the basket at the west entrance of the church are much appreciated. Items most needed: peanut butter, canned protein (tuna, beans, chicken), low sodium canned fruits and vegetables, pasta, low sugar cereals. Thanks in advance for your generosity!



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
January 13, 2026

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

Call to Order. President Kelly Witte called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Attendance. Present: Steve Bielefeldt, Pr. Jennifer Jelinek, John Jensen, Marcia Klemp, Charlene Luchterhand, April Mickelson, Kristin Rue, Richard Scott, Kelly Witte. **Absent:** Sandi Aston Hall, Connie Kreuser, Peggy Punsel, Amy Simdon.

Devotions. Richard and John shared their faith journeys, and Pr. Jennifer led us in prayer.

Approval of Minutes. John moved to approve the December meeting minutes. April seconded the motion. Unanimously approved by those who attended the December meeting.

Approval of Agenda. A suggestion was made that Council Review of Committee Roles under Old Business be tabled until the Council Retreat, and we added a hospitality topic to New Business. Richard moved to approve the amended agenda. Kristin seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Correspondence. We received a gracious thank you note from Ann Engelstad for her staff Christmas gift.

Treasurer's Report. (Amy) We had net operating gain of \$4,354.52 in December, allowing us to end the year with a net income of \$13,053.56. With some large donations in December, our General Giving through December was \$12,227 more than 2024 and \$15,717 over than the 2025 budget. The Special Giving through December was \$1,587 less than last year and \$5,828 more than budget. If the sabbatical and Youth Gathering expenses are not included, the expenses through December were \$546 more than last year and we were \$10,831 under budget. Some of the donations given in December, were designated for and paid to Lutheran World Relief and Global Refuge. We also had some larger property expenses for updating the outdoor lighting and trimming the trees. The checking balance was \$10,226 more than the beginning of 2025 with the general fund balance approximately \$1,051 more. John moved to approve this report and send it to audit. Char seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

- **Pastor's Report.** The ELCA LEAD conference will be held on February 7 at Messiah Lutheran Church in Madison. It is an annual gathering of rostered clergy and lay leaders for worship, fellowship, and learning. Let Pr. know soon if you would like to attend. Synod Assembly will be held in May and will include election or reelection of our Bishop.

A 5-week Difference Course for adults began on January 12; 24 people attended the first session. This course encourages us to “Be Curious, Be Present, and Reimagine” so we can cross divides, navigate disagreements, and pursue a just and flourishing world. The water cooler has broken. Discussed putting in a water line with a filter for iron, in place of a cooler.

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

- **Education.** (Kristin) Sunday School starts again on January 18. WiFi issues in the basement continue.
- **Outreach & Social Justice.** (April) We sent \$1,187 made from the Norwegian bake sale to the food pantry, and these funds were matched by area businesses! The Fair Trade sale went well, with the majority of the inventory sold. For this year's Lenten Challenge, we will work through the ELCA's Lutheran Disaster Response for those in need in the Gaza strip and Holy Land.

Old Business.

- **Church Property.** (John & Richard)) Nothing new.
- **Council Review of Committee Roles.** Tabled until the Council Retreat.

New Business.

- **CD.** There is \$19,456.56 in the checking account designated for property expenses. At the suggestion of Council Treasurer, Amy Simdon, and Financial Secretary, Diane Russo, Steve moved that we place \$10,000 of this into an 11-month CD at Bank First with an interest rate of 3.75%. Signers to be John, Richard, and Amy. Richard seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.
- **Compliance.** Steve shared 2 documents for guidance in the future: 1) a table of how long various church records need to be retained, and 2) information on the IRS taxability of gifts to pastors and staff. The latter is important because if we are audited and taxable gifts have not been reported, the recipient and the church can receive a tax penalty and the church can lose its tax-exempt status.
- **Visitor Brochure.** (Marcia) Our brochure is in need of updating. See Pr. Jennifer if you have content ideas for consideration.
- **Annual Meeting.** New council members will be elected at our annual meeting on January 25. Candidates are Kris Tobias for President, Janet Koepp for Secretary, Judy Heidebrecht for Outreach & Social Justice, and Julie Leser for Worship. Members leaving are April, Char, Kelly, and Sandi.
- **Hospitality--Monthly Potluck Dinner.** A member suggested we hold monthly potluck dinners for church and community members. First dinner may be held on Fat Tuesday, February 17.

Adjournment. Marcia moved to adjourn the meeting. John seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned 8:07 PM. We ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Next Meeting. Time and date for our next meeting to be determined.

Submitted by Charlene Luchterhand, Council Secretary

From the Treasurer

December 2025 Financial Snapshot

Income	Year-to-date December 2025 Actual	Year-to-date 2025 Monthly Budget	Over/(under) budget
General Giving	303,217	287,500	15,717
Special Giving	35,828	30,000	5,828
Misc Income	5,471	3,515	1,956
Total Income	344,516	321,015	23,501
Expenses			
Administrative	113,187	112,859	329
Mission	65,228	52,000	13,228
Pastoral	145,101	145,153	(52)
Program	7,947	10,620	(2,673)
Other	-	-	-
Total Expenses	331,462	320,631	10,831
Total Net Income (Loss)	13,054	384	12,670

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.

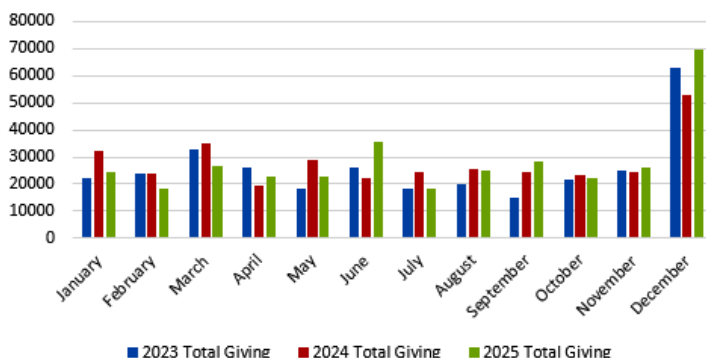
Let's continue trusting God together and giving with grateful hearts.

Thank you for being such a generous community!

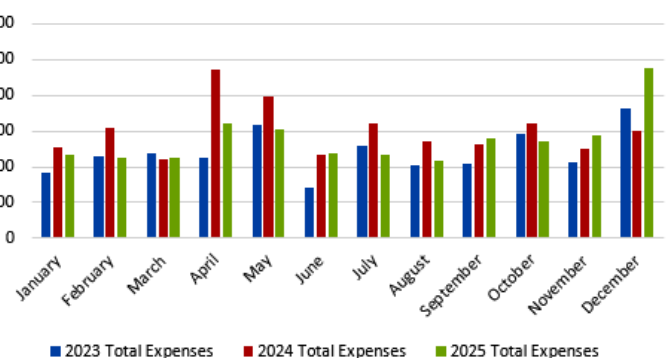


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Comparison of Total Giving - 2023/2024/2025



Comparison of Total Expenses - 2023/2024/2025





Staff and Council



STAFF

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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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