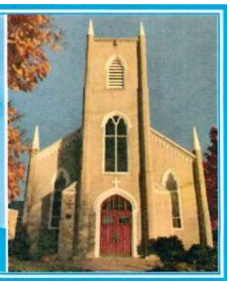
GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Mount Clemens, Michigan

Amazing Grace

WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME
Monthly newsletter of the people and ministries of Grace Episcopal Church
November 2026



Christianity & Religious Pluralism



As a pastor of an Episcopal congregation, I spend a lot of my time talking about Jesus and how we are to emulate him and follow his teachings. One prominent area that Jesus addressed was how his followers are to treat other people. Jesus highlighted this in the Gospel we heard on the last Sunday of October when he stated that the greatest commandment was to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Did you notice in that passage that he didn't say, "Love your Jewish neighbor", he just said "neighbor"?

Now you may or may not think about this, but the land that Jesus traversed was a very religiously diverse place. We do not have an accurate count, but it is estimated that there were approximately 2 million people living in and around the region that Jesus traveled. About 50 percent of those people were Jewish and the remaining half of the population was split between Samaritans and a variety of Greco-Roman pagan religions, so when Jesus said "love your neighbor," he clearly meant "love your Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors."

This would have been hard for his Jewish listeners to hear, understand, and practice because they were raised and socialized to avoid interactions and relationships with gentiles as much as possible. In opposition to this cultural practice, however, Jesus never stated that his followers should be afraid of non-Jews or their religious traditions, and he did not teach that these gentiles were bad, inferior, or out to hurt or destroy the Jewish people or homeland and he never spoke a derogatory word about them. Rather, Jesus said that his disciples should love their neighbors. In fact, he even told a famous parable (The Good Samaritan) about a member of a different faith group who did the right thing to help someone while members of the Jewish tradition did not. In this teaching, Jesus was encouraging people to be and act like this non-Jew.

Fast forward now to the United States in November 2026 and we find ourselves in a religiously pluralistic society as well. A quick online search shows our religious diversity in three major categories

Worship Opportunities

Sundays at 8:30 and 10:30 AM

TO JOIN SERVICES LIVE ONLINE VIA ZOOM, VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND FOLLOW THE LINKS

www.gracechurchmtclemens.org

TO JOIN SERVICES LIVE BY PHONE VIA ZOOM:

8:30 Service: Call 312-626-6799
Meeting ID: 881 8016 9300
Password: 246040
10:30 Service: See YouTube link on Website

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY
9:30 AM in Guild Room

Worship resources are available on our Website 24/7/365.



with approximately 212 million Christians, 99 million unaffiliated with any religion, and 24 million in non-Christian religions.

If you have been reading or listening to any news about the upcoming mid-term elections, you will have seen and heard a plethora of advertisements and speeches that are intentionally stirring up fear about non-Christians who are running for office. These ads paint these people from other faith traditions in a negative light, as terrorists who are intentionally going to somehow hurt or destroy our country or way of life. In many cases, Christians are the ones making these accusations.

Isn't it ironic that Jesus specifically teaches that his followers should love their neighbors—which includes their religiously diverse neighbors? Yet, many Christians are doing the exact opposite of what Jesus teaches.

The religious group today that seems to receive the most negative attention and blame are Muslims. Did you know that in the entire history of our United States government that there have only been six Muslims to serve in the House of Representatives since 2006, and none have served in the Senate? Currently there are four Muslims in Congress, and they are regularly harassed and demonized by other elected or appointed members in our federal government.

Our Jewish neighbors are better represented in our government with ten members currently serving in the Senate and 25 in the House of Representatives. Over the history of our nation, over 160 Jewish individuals have served our country as elected officials in Washington, DC.

Since political rhetoric reflects and shapes the attitude and behavior of the general population, it should be no surprise that in our current political climate we are witnessing a great deal of Islamophobia, the fear of Islamic religion and those who are Muslim. So, I implore my Christian sisters and brothers, if you see, hear, or participate in this type of behavior, please take a moment and reflect on the words Jesus spoke to his followers about how they are to love all their neighbors.

As followers of Christ, we are called to be peacemakers and to see the human dignity in all people rather than create fear and misrepresent the religious traditions of our Islamic citizens and neighbors.

To my Muslim brothers and sisters, I say to you that we see your compassion, we see that you are seeking peace, we see your kindness, and we will no longer be silent as our misguided Christian religious and political leaders dismiss and villainize you as political others seeking to destroy the American way of life.

We seek Interfaith solidarity with you as we all strive to make the United States a nation where everyone may experience life, liberty, religious freedom and the pursuit of happiness.



Salaam, Shalom, Peace,
Pastor Steve



Happy Season of Thankfulness, Grace! I hope you're as grateful as I am to have our incredibly dedicated and wonderful choir back singing songs of inspiration, praise, and (soon) hopefulness and joy. As we prepare for the Advent and Christmas seasons, we'd love to see (and hear) you at rehearsals on **Wednesdays** at **6:30 PM** in the church sanctuary.

If you would like to spread some Christmas joy in song, please join us on **Saturday, December 5** at **10:30 AM** to carol with the residents of Martha T. Berry Medical Care Facility located at 43533 Elizabeth St., Mount Clemens (at Groesbeck and Elizabeth). We'll gather fifteen minutes prior.

See you then!
Josh Dulin, Minister of Music



Macomb County Winter Shelter 2026–27

Save the date! The Macomb County Winter Shelter will run **January 3** through **February 21** at the former Trinity Lutheran Church and School in Warren, east of Van Dyke and just south of Stephens. We hope to extend the shelter dates as additional funding becomes available.

One again, Grace will partner with another church for one volunteer week and will provide meals **January 7-9**, with Kirsten Blackburn again managing the kitchen, planning the menu, and serving as head chef. Two to six volunteers are needed nightly from **6 to 9 PM** to cook, serve, clean, and act as line manager, registration helper, bag check-in assistant, and light-cleaning helper.

Please carpool if possible: Meet in the Grace lot and plan to leave around **5:30 PM**. Cooking volunteers should arrive at the shelter by **4:30 PM** to prepare dinner.

See the bulletin board in the hallway for more info and for sign-up sheets, and see Ann Farrell or Kirsten Blackburn with any questions. Please consider volunteering for this important ministry.

If you would like to donate to support the Macomb County Winter Shelter, please send your donations to: WAVE Project, P.O. Box 153, Sterling Heights, MI 48311. Write in the memo area "Macomb County Winter Shelter." You may also donate directly through the Website at waveproject.org (a processing fee will be added).

Thank you!
Ann Farrell

Healing Across the Divide

I've noticed my mind wandering to an unlikely place this week: the Story of Naaman. If you aren't familiar, you can find it in II Kings 5. It's worth the read.

The basic story goes like this: Naaman was an exceptional commander for one of Israel's enemies (Good for him, bad for Israel.) But all was not well—Naaman was plagued with a severe skin disease. Our story begins after Naaman kidnaps a slave from Israel. We are told that she was a young girl who was forced to serve Naaman's wife.

Picture a 10-year-old girl, kidnapped by a foreign military in an invasion. She must have been terrified, angry, sad, lonely, homesick, confused. You name it! Not only was she kidnapped. She is then forced to work for the people that stole her away.

But this little girl does something totally unexpected. She goes to her new mistress and tells her that Naaman should go see the prophet Elisha from her home country. In her words, "If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his skin disease."

Can you imagine the depth of compassion and innocence required for such a response? This man was the enemy in every sense possible. And yet she saw his need, knew that God could meet his need, and extended healing unconditionally. She didn't even bribe her way to a release.

There are a few dramatic twists in the story, but ultimately Naaman is healed. He promises to only worship the Hebrew God. He even asks for permission to continue supporting his pagan king (and receives it!).

With the election coming up, our divisions seem to get deeper and sharper and more vitriolic every day. It feels inescapable. And probably, regardless of your side, we all think it's justified.

This story challenges me, especially in the current climate. Can I say that I would be as compassionate? It seems like every day I feel further away from my "opponents"—political or otherwise. I wonder how I would respond to my opponents' needs. Would I offer healing? Would I even recognize their humanity?

In this fraught climate, what might it look like to be like the girl in this story? What does it mean for us to be servants of a God who calls us to extend healing whenever and wherever we can, regardless of wrong, or context, or cost?

How might you be called to love your enemies this week? What kind of healing can you bring across divides?

A.J. Hawks

Santa Parade

Please join us for the annual Mount Clemens Santa Parade on **Saturday, November 21**. The parade starts at **10 AM** and goes right in front of our church. We invite you to come and volunteer and/or march in the parade with other parishioners behind our Grace banner! Details to follow in the weekly Grace bulletins—stay tuned!



THE *Episcopal* CHURCH

VOTE *faithfully*

What does The Episcopal Church say about civic engagement?

Civic engagement is a key way we live out our faith. We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves, and we recognize that we exercise our faith in the context of relationships, communities, and society. As part of that, The Episcopal Church has long supported nonpartisan voter engagement, as well as advocating for protection and accessibility for all eligible voters. We view this work as an act of Christian stewardship.

Similarly, we recognize election engagement as an act of Christian stewardship. Our mandate to care for God's world and people compels us to vote—and to help ensure voting access for others. Election engagement also means we seek to stay informed; critically evaluate information before we share or act on it; and engage in respectful political dialogue even when we disagree.

For Wisdom in the Duties of Citizenship

God of our flourishing, who granted us freedom to seek the good of our neighbors, give us wisdom as people across this nation participate in the midterm elections. Help us to fulfill our civic responsibilities to register and vote, seek reliable information, resist propaganda, and listen with open hearts. Teach us to consider not only our own interests but the good of our neighbors and our common life, and to vote according to conscience, that the ballot box may be another place where we practice the love of Jesus. In baptism you have joined us to Christ and made us citizens of your kingdom. Help us to place allegiance to Christ and his teachings above any loyalty to party, nation, or earthly power. Make us faithful participants in civic life, seeking justice, truth, and the flourishing of all. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



*Remembering **Herman of Alaska**, whose feast day is **November 15:***

Herman of Alaska, known in the Russian Orthodox Church as "St. Herman: Wonderworker of All America," was the first saint to be canonized by the Orthodox Church in America.

Herman was born in Russia, near Moscow, in 1756. His baptismal and family names are unknown, and he is known only by his monastic name. Naturally pious from an early age, Herman entered the Trinity-St. Sergius Hermitage near St. Petersburg at the age of 16 and, drawn to the spiritual charism of Abbot Nasarios, eventually transferred to the Valaam Monastery. He was never ordained, although his Metropolitan suggested it several times. For many years he secured permission to live as a hermit, attending the liturgies of the monastery only on holy days.

In 1793, with a small group of colleagues, Herman set out to do missionary work in Alaska. They settled on Spruce Island, near Kodiak, and named their community "New Valaam" in honor of their home monastery. Herman lived and worked in the area for the remainder of his life.

Herman advocated for and defended the native Aleut against sometimes-oppressive authorities, particular Russian and European colonists with commercial interests. He cared lovingly and sacrificially for all who came to him, counseling and teaching them, and tirelessly nursing the sick. He especially loved children, for whom he often baked biscuits and cookies.

Even though Herman had minimal formal education outside of the monastic life, he was regarded among the native Alaskans as a great and compelling teacher. Over time he also developed a reputation as a teacher and sage among the Russian and European settlers in the area. He so captivated his listeners that many would listen to him through the long hours of the night and not leave his company until morning. The people he served often referred to Herman as their North Star.

Herman died at Spruce Island on November 15th, 1837.

November Birthdays

The Rev. Dcn Betty Brogan	11/01
Jane Carpenter	11/01
Robert Johnson	11/06
Monica Dunbar	11/07
Carolyn Siewert	11/10
Tom Murphy	11/16
Pam Schafer	11/23
Donna Chapman	11/28



Book Club at Grace

The next book club meeting will be at Grace on **Thursday, November 12** at **6 PM**, and we'll be discussing John Grisham's *The Widow.* We would love for you to attend! Just read the book, come to the meeting, and be prepared for a lively discussion in a comfortable setting. Call or see Ann Strevel with any questions or concerns.

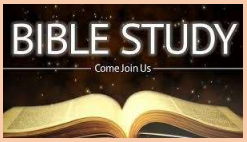
Monthly Bible Study

Our next monthly Bible study is on **Sunday, November 15** between the services at **9:30 AM** in the guild hall. We'll be reading the Maundy Thursday Gospel lessons and a Good Friday Old Testament lesson. Hope to see you there!

Convention Report

Strangers No Longer is a ministry that helps immigrant families through many different ways, such as direct legal help, getting a group together to take someone to a court hearing, and adopting a family and giving them whatever they need. Visit their official Website to see how you can get involved: https://strangersnolonger.org/

The diocese has a balanced budget again this year, and 38 congregations increased their giving to the diocese.



Join us in the Guild Room for Bible study, every **Sunday** at **9:30 AM**.



"F" Dollars for Fueling Kids' Futures
If your wallet has any dollar bills with **F** on them, please pass them along to help us fill backpacks with weekend food for hungry Mt. Clemens students.

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Currently

COMMUNITY SUPPERS
Wednesdays at 4 PM
Sundays (Nov.-Mar.) at 4 PM
GRACE FOOD PANTRY
Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 10 AM to 12 PM
Curbside distribution



Recommended Food Pantry Donations
Canned soups, canned fruits and vegetables, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter, jelly, canned tuna/chicken, SpaghettiOs, Hamburger Helper, instant mashed potatoes, spaghetti sauce, pasta, cereal, canned applesauce

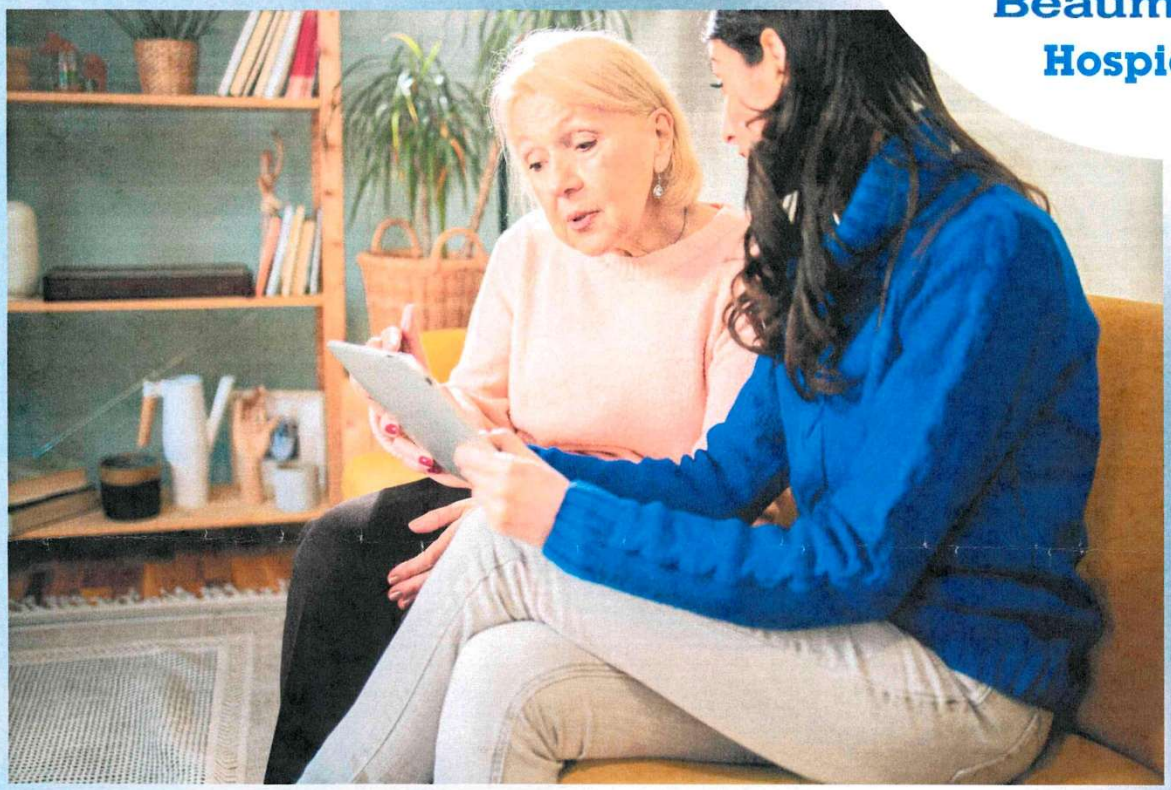
Grace Episcopal Church Staff

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Email: pastor@gracechurchmtclemens.org
Field Education Student: A.J. Hawks
Music Director: Josh Dulin
Clergy Emerita: The Rev. Deacon Betty Brogan

2026 Vestry

Mike Oakley	Lucy Smith	Mike Zubas
Ernie Simon	Sharon Potter	Don Siefkes
Margaret Morgan		Selia Tuten

Beaumont Hospice



Become a Hospice Volunteer



Brighten someone's day with your presence! Hospice volunteers play a vital role by visiting patients and providing support to caregivers through listening, conversation, and companionship. This is a long-term commitment. Join us in making a meaningful difference during one of life's most significant journeys.

Macomb, Oakland and Wayne Counties

248-743-9400 ☎ **Ask for Leandra - Volunteer Coordinator**