

In the Loop with Pastor Clay –

- Here We Go Again!

On Saturday, 28 February, the USA and Israel began large-scale military operations against Iran and those operations are ongoing as of the time of this writing. Over the years, I've been asked several times to share my opinions about war from a Christian perspective.... maybe because of my affiliation with the Army and because I'm a Lutheran priest. What bases (plural of basis) are we called to use as we think about war and form our opinions and conclusions?

First, to me it seems that all wars are the result of sin. Somebody has sinned, that is, turned away from the holy ways of God as revealed by Jesus Christ and his Apostles. But if we aren't the sinning party, can we go to war with a clear conscience? We keep in mind that Jesus says, & " **Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.**" (Matt. 5:9) and " **You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven;**" (Matt. 5:43-45) From these sayings of Jesus are we to conclude that military forces are inherently sinful; that joining and serving in the military are inherently sinful acts; that going to war is inherently sinful? No. We read that at the Last Supper Jesus commanded his disciples to arm themselves: " **And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one.**" (Luke 22:36)

Dr. Martin Luther also wrote on the topic of war. For example, in discussing Micah 4:3 (Yes, you need to look it up. Go get your Bible!), he wrote, "Without armaments peace cannot be kept; wars are waged not only to repel injustice but also to establish a firm peace." Also, when discussing Matthew 5:33-37 (a section of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount), Luther wrote, "Now Christ is neither prohibiting nor prescribing anything for the government here, but He is letting this realm take its own course as it should and must. What He is forbidding is unauthorized, capricious, or habitual swearing. Similarly, when He forbids you to draw your sword, He does not mean that you should disobey the government if your territorial prince [that is, a high government leader] needs you or summons you to go to war. Then you are obliged to slash away with your sword. For your hand and sword are no longer on their own but have been subordinated to the government; and you are not doing this yourself, but your prince, whom God has authorized, is doing it." This last point is very important. When a country goes to war, the responsibility does not lie with the members of the military; the responsibility lies with those who order the war. In our case, that's the President and the members of Congress who support the war. This being said, Luther made it clear that only defensive wars are morally justifiable and if a person is certain that a war is based on immoral grounds, he or she may refuse to fight. "If you know positively that he (the government leader) is wrong, you should fear God rather than men (Acts 4) and not fight or serve; for then you cannot have a good conscience before God."

So, what about this current war? Is the USA guilty of being the aggressor and starting an unjust war? Or did we go to war for valid strategic reasons and after decades of Iranian provocations, terrorist activities, oppression, and other dangerous and immoral activities? I'll leave that answer/conclusion up to you. If I were still in the military and received orders to deploy to the Middle East in support of this war, would I go? Yes. Why? Because I (and we) don't have sufficient information to come to an informed conclusion whether this is an unjust war or a just war. Only those at the highest levels have access to that information. Therefore, I believe that our duty is to answer the call of those leaders whom "we the people" have elected to office. We also have the right to ask questions, to expect sufficient and honest answers, to assign blame if things go badly, to offer praise if things go well, to peaceably demonstrate (either for or against), to vote, and to pray that God will accomplish his holy will as he has done so many times throughout history. (Romans 8:28)

There is much more to discuss, but I'm out of space! Perhaps this would be a good topic for our Sunday Morning Wired Word!

May God bless you with a pleasant and peaceful April!

Pastor Clay

Church Council 2026



The Council of Grace Church wants to be sure the congregation understands and is updated on the work and decisions of the Council. We will continue to publish the minutes of each Council Meeting after they are approved at the next Council Meeting. However, the Council wants to make sure you are up to date on decisions we make. Each month - after the Council Meeting - we will publish Council at a Glance - a quick summary of actions taken by the Church Council at its regular meeting. Council at a Glance will be published in a bulletin insert and Grace Notes.

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8:15 Club

The 8:15 Club is open to all adults at Grace. We plan a variety of events to encourage fellowship and interaction. We would also like our group to grow – so please invite someone from church to join us!! We've also had some questions about is this a group for "seniors" and that answer is a definite NO...we welcome ALL Grace adults to join us.

Please watch Facebook and your email for updates... Sometimes plans materialize on short notice and we'll let everyone know... Sometimes we are able to plan far enough ahead to make sure it's in Grace Notes... either way, YOU are always welcome!!

ALL adult members of Grace are invited to join us for fellowship and fun!! We chose this name because of the message in Ecclesiastes 8:15: "*And I commend joy, for man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful, for this will go with him in his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.*"





LIVING LAST SUPPER – 2026

Please join us on **Maudy Thursday April 2nd** for the deeply moving “live” presentation of Leonardo da Vinci’s painting of the Last Supper. This year’s drama will be an exciting collaboration with Our Saviour’s United Church of Christ featuring actors and crew members from both churches.

The drama will be presented in the Fellowship Hall at Grace Lutheran Church, 480 West Griswold Street beginning at 6:30 pm. There will be an opportunity for a free will offering. The donations from this offering will be divided between Kidsave Ukraine (sponsored by Grace Church) and Fondy Food Pantry’s Food for Thought program (sponsored by Our Saviour’s Church).

WOMEN OF GRACE

CIRCLES: Interested in joining others for fellowship and bible study? The Eve circle currently meets on the first Monday of the month at 1pm. The Bethany circle meets the first Monday of the month at 6:30pm in the church lounge to play different games members bring. Please visit either group during meeting times to find out more.

“Bakeless” Bake Sale: You can still contribute to this fundraiser. Proceeds from the sale will raise money for the high-school senior scholarship fund. If you are interested in donating, please pick up a donation envelope from the information table in the Sanctuary or stop in the office during office hours. You may place your envelope in the offering plate or gray mailbox outside the church office. Please make checks payable to: Women of Grace Thank you for generosity!

Women of Grace Scholarship Applications: are now available in the church office. Applications are due back to the church office by April 27th, 2026.

Appleton/Oshkosh Conference Spring Event; Will be held April 25, 2026 at All Saints Lutheran Church in Oshkosh. Learn more about the enchanting Labyrinth, by Deb Martin. See WOG board for more details. Call/text Sheri B to register. WOG will cover the registration fee.

The Women of Grace are encouraged to stay informed by visiting the womenoftheelca.org website.

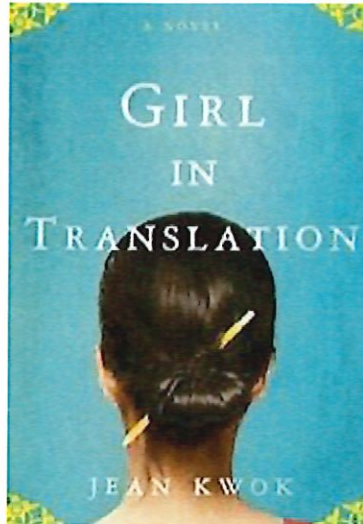
Monies are available to Women of Grace wishing to attend events. Please contact Lisa Beuthin, Peggy Beuthin, or Sheri Bradshaw.

2026 Upcoming Events:



****Plan ahead for the 2026 Gathering in Des Moines, Iowa! Event registration is now open. Go to welcatg.org for more information. For anyone interested in attending the Gathering in Iowa, there is a bus available from this area heading that way.

GRACE READERS



Please join us as we discuss **“Girl In Translation”** by Jean Kwok, a deeply moving story of a young immigrant girl as she learns to translate, not just her language, but herself between an exceptional student and sweatshop worker.

This book both heartbreaking and inspiring.

We hope to see you Tuesday, April 28th @ 6:30 pm in the Church Lounge.

G Dollars for Grace

G is for Grace. How many G Dollars have you found??

Are you having fun looking for them?



As you know we are collecting **G dollars** in a jar in the narthex. For 2026, the **G dollars** will go toward Grace’s various ministries.. If you would prefer your G dollar support go to a specific ministry, submit them in an envelope and write your preference on the envelope.

G dollars are printed at the Federal Office in Chicago – so they are plentiful in the Midwest.



OLD BAGS FOR GRACE

April 2026

We continue with our program to recycle SOFT plastics. Thank you to all who have been so diligent to bring in plastic on a regular basis. And here's an invitation to all of you who have not yet caught on to the excitement. Start saving your **soft** plastic and you'll be surprised at how quickly you have a considerable amount to provide.

Remember, this is only **SOFT** plastic ... **NO** pop bottles, milk jugs, or stiff plastic containers for this project... **only soft plastic**. Also no plastic bags that have aluminum threads or fiberglass threads woven in them. But think about all the places there is plastic in your life... including produce bags, store bags, and ice bags as well as Ziploc bags, cereal box liners, and bread bags. Bubble wrap, newspaper covers, and plastic e-commercial covers as well as water softener salt bags and dry cleaning bags. Keep watch...you'll find more than you think!! Recently, we have encountered **garbage and dirty diapers** in the donations... PLEASE pay close attention and make sure that ONLY SOFT plastic make it into our containers.

Thank you in advance for all your donations!! You can bring in your donations on Sundays or whenever the building is open...OR there is a container outside of the Youth/Sunday School entrance that can be used to donate plastic when the building is not open. You may encourage friends and neighbors to use that container as well.



RaiseRight™

by ShopWithScrip

April 2026

Monthly update on progress toward goal...

Three weeks into March, sales to date are \$7,295 with rebates totaling \$209. We've set the goal for 2026 at \$45,000 sales with \$1350 rebates to Grace. Each week, our progress will be posted in the announcements.

Please use your cards within a reasonable amount of time!! We have had some instances recently where cards- especially Kwik Trip GAS cards - start to charge a fee and go down in value. So please check the back of your card for any usage details!! And on my end, I will start documenting the date of purchase and making sure I give you a valid card.

We also have some cards that have been in inventory for quite some time... and although they are NOT cards that lessen in value, but still cards that I would prefer to have them in your hands being used!! Please pick up the list of available cards...and let's talk about what works for you! Thank you for your participation!!

PLEASE JOIN US!! This is the fundraiser where you only buy what you need and will use. For every gift card sold, a rebate comes back to Grace - those rebates range from 2% to 12% - with some companies offering special rates up to 15%. It's a win-win because you only purchase the cards you will use. A number of local business options are available for you to have immediately. Cards are available Sunday mornings and in the office Monday through Thursday. There are also over 700 other retailers who participate in the program..so if you're looking for something special, please ask!! We can order it!! However, each order shipping costs are \$11 so we don't order every week - so please plan ahead as much as possible with special orders.

If you wish a copy of the list of cards that can be purchased - just stop at the table on Sundays and pick one up.

We have three options for you to designate your preferred ministry of Grace Church. Your rebates will help the Youth Fund, General Operational Fund, or the Improvement Fund.





YOU ARE INVITED...

Monday, April 20, 2026 at 4 pm – 8pm

Cause of the Mondays at Vines & Rushes Winery

Mary and Phil Karsnia started Gabriel's Wings Foundation in 2020 after the loss of their Gabriel to suicide. Gabe, a Ripon high school student, loved sports and had an infectious smile. He made everyone feel included and was truly everyone's friend. The foundation was created to honor Gabriel's memory, raise awareness about mental health, provide resources for those struggling or grieving a loss from suicide, and to help end the stigma. The Foundation is committed to keeping Gabriel's spirit alive by offering hope and support to those affected by suicide. Gabriel's Wings currently supports organizations as they set up or enhance Mental Wellness Programs. Also, in 2022, Gabriel's Wings Scholarships were formed and has been awarding High School graduates throughout WI who represent caring, giving spirit that Gabe shared with all - Shine on for Gabe! We continue to seek avenues and partnerships to further focus on the importance of mental wellness, resiliency programs and suicide awareness.

More information on Gabriel's Wings Foundation:

<https://www.gabrielswingsfoundation.org/>

25% of food sales and all cash donations will go directly to the cause between 4pm - 8pm!

Come support this amazing cause and the wonderful community we live in!



Sherry	Liptow	04/01
William	Stolfuss	04/02
Marjorie	Langeberg	04/05
Wayne	Happel	04/06
Aaron	Forslund	04/07
August	Walheim	04/07
Susan	Friedli	04/08
Carrie	Martinez	04/10
Jolene	Meyer	04/10
Seth	Otto	04/11
Caroline	Hanson	04/12
Timothy	Sann	04/12
Terry	Rivers	04/13
Jeannine	Tomaszewski	04/13
Kevin	Rosenau	04/21
Matthew	Metoxen	04/23
Penny	Tebo	04/23
Alan	Jorgenson	04/28
Addison	Pick	04/28
Madelyn	Pinnow	04/28

4/2/1966	Zills, Janis & Virgil
4/22/1989	Jess, Lee & Cathy
4/28/1973	Hinz, Nelson & Shirley
4/29/2006	Pick, Jason & Mary

VISIT THE HOMEBOUND

Maplecrest-

Inez Bryden & Faye Zacharias

Prairie Place-

Arlene Thiem & LeRoy Holl

Russell Manor-

Jackie Steifner & Jean Zeto

Valley VNA-

Mary Jane Schanke

Wolverton Glen-

Jeannine Tomaszewski

Social Concerns Committee

April 2026

Spring has sprung, with a Spring snow storm the likes of which we have not had for a few years.

With Spring the evening sun lingers longer now, seeming reluctant to take its parting. We've already gained a couple of extra hours to our day since Christmas. God Bless.

The lights of the heavens give us signs of the seasons, days and years according to His Lord. Many things in life are hard to predict or impossible to predict impossible to foretell. But we have enough assurance to know that we can rely on on God's leading hand.

The redwing blackbirds bring us notes of Spring now and the muds dries up some. The frost went deep this year and is still not all gone. A soaking rain will surely come along soon and coax in more of Spring. That mud under our feet can be to us a good sign of changing seasons and better time ahead.

It is well known that time once past, never returns, and moments can be lost forever. Let us make of good use, the time in our hands today and always.

There is a destiny that makes us brothers...none goes his/her way alone. All that we send into the lives of others, comes back into our own.

Make it good.



April 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>Easter Sunday 5</p> <p>Sunrise Service 6:30 am Continental Breakfast 7:30 am Mid-Morning Service 9 am Easter Egg Hunt</p>	<p>OFFICE CLOSED</p>		<p>1</p> <p>Handbells 4:15 pm Choir 5 pm Confirmation 6:30 pm</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Living Last Supper 6:30 pm</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 7:30 am</p>
<p>12</p> <p>Worship 9 am Sunday School 10:15 am Wired Word 10:15 am</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Eve Circle 1 pm Bethany Circle 6:30 pm</p>	<p>14</p> <p>SHARING TABLE 5 PM</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Handbells 4:15 pm Choir 5 pm Confirmation 6:30 pm</p>	<p>16</p> <p>MAGIC 6:30 PM</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19</p> <p>Worship 9 am Sunday School 10:15 am Wired Word 10:15 am</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Church Council Meeting 6 pm</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Handbells 4:15 pm Choir 5 pm Confirmation 6:30 pm</p>	<p>23</p> <p>MAGIC 6:30 PM</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 7:30 am</p>
<p>26</p> <p>Worship 9 am Sunday School 10:15 am Wired Word 10:15 am</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>BLOOD DRIVE 12:30-5:30 pm</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Handbells 4:15 pm Choir 5 pm Confirmation 6:30 pm</p>	<p>30</p> <p>MAGIC 6:30 PM</p>		



Grace Lutheran Church

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