

In the Loop with Pastor Clay –

Happy and Blessed New Year!

Ephesians 3:14-19 *I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

Happy and Blessed New Year to you and yours! As you launch into 2026, remember where you come from and who you are. We are all a family, and I don't just mean people with whom we share common physical DNA. Rather, I'm talking about our spiritual family; our family of faith. We all take our "name," that is our identity, from the One from whom we come, God the Father, the Ancestor of us all! As good human parents love their children and do everything they can to raise, educate, care for, and benefit their children, so does our heavenly Father for you, in spades!

As we look into 2026, we know that we'll all experience both good times and challenges. To navigate well the path you're traveling, you'll need direction, strength, wisdom, perspective, and travel companions. God, as your loving and caring Father, offers all of that (and more!) to you through his Holy Spirit. When you have the faith (even as small as a mustard seed!) to open your hearths, minds, and spirits to trust God, you'll receive multi-faceted power from and with God which surpasses all human knowledge. Who wouldn't desire that kind of inner power, which leads to peace?

When you take the time and make the sincere effort to engage with God through regular Bible reading, participating with Christ's holy church, having conversation with your priest/pastor, praying, attending Bible study/devotion groups, and sharing acts of charity, you are inviting and allowing Christ to dwell in your hearts. The positive consequence of that is you'll be rooted and grounded in love and you'll comprehend a holy way, a holy path, a holy perspective that provides a compass for a life full of purpose, meaning, passion, and peace. The devil tempts us with a false sense of well-being based on dominance, vengeance, vindictiveness, subjugation of others, hyper-competitiveness, and a false sense of superiority over others. When we fall for these temptations, we are putting a barrier between ourselves and the better, holy, lifegiving way that God offers to all of us. But when you reject the devil's temptations, which seem so alluring and right at first blush, then you will be filled with all the fullness of God.

"All the fullness of God." Isn't that what we, especially as people of faith, want for our lives and for our families? My prayer for you and yours is that in 2026 you will receive all the fullness of God.

There is nothing this side of heaven that is so sweet, so powerful, so meaningful, and so full of joy.

Shalom (Wholeness) to you in 2026!

Pastor Clay

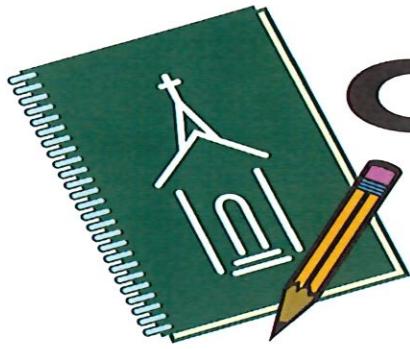
Church Council 2026



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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Council Notes

December 2025 Council Meeting at a Glance

- Reviewed the proposed budget for 2026 a second time
- Established a written process for monthly coffee hour on the last Sunday of the month celebrating birthdays and anniversaries of congregation members
- Continued exploring possible Constitution and Bylaw changes to be presented at the Annual Meeting; Congregational suggestions are invited
- Finalized the activities scheduled for Dec 21 including Song Fest at 9:00 am, Cookie Walk at 10:00 am, Cantata at 2:00 pm, Reception to follow
- Generated a draft spreadsheet of Committee Chairpersons and Members for ease of communication
- Initiated discussion of a succession plan to prepare for Pastor Clay's retirement in 5+ years; Pastors are in short supply and Grace needs to ensure the sustainability of our faithful congregation
- Blessed the sending of a floral arrangement for Pastor Sue's funeral on behalf of Grace Lutheran Church - Ripon; celebrating Pastor's Sue's faithful service to our congregation.



CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING

SAVE THE DATE:

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25th
Congregational Meeting
immediately following worship

Christian Education - Info and Updates

*No article was submitted

Find the words listed. Words may appear倒置, horizontal, up, down, or diagonal. Words may overlap and cross each other. When you have found a word, be sure to circle it and cross it off the list.

CHURCH

Word Search

ANointing	B	O	P	S	P	R	I	A	C	H	L	R	E	X	I	O	V	N
APostle	D	M	F	D	I	S	C	T	P	E	G	P	C	E	D	I	O	K
Baptism	K	I	K	F	R	R	I	O	M	I	E	R	V	O	M	G	N	
BiShop	M	E	I	F	I	N	B	T	S	V	R	A	R	R	P	R		
Born Again	F	T	K	P	V	R	I	Z	T	Z	I	X	G	E	N	M	G	
Brother	F	M	F	F	I	E	W	E	R	Q	S	H	A	B	C	R		
Communion	I	X	D	I	S	R	E	N	H	I	O	T	P	D	O	M	O	
Convert	I	O	G	O	V	S	P	R	O	X	T	E	V	N	A	N	R	
Deacon	B	C	P	F	T	H	E	V	Q	D	S	K	E	I	E	D		
Devil	F	A	D	D	M	N	I	D	N	X	A	S	E	T	N	I	A	
Disciple	F	E	H	P	O	R	P	S	O	O	P	C	P	S	D	N	I	
Doctrine	S	D	M	R	P	I	N	K	H	C	K	E	S	I	E	N		
Elder	S	O	I	S	I	M	M	O	O	I	E	R	V	W	O	R	E	
Evangel	I	O	N	E	I	S	A	P	G	R	P	E	E	I	N	Q	D	
Evangel	K	T	N	O	I	E	S	V	I	A	S	E	T	P	N	A	H	W
Fathers	M	P	S	S	I	A	H	E	C	X	I	E	C	N	S	A	L	
Fasting	P	R	A	P	T	E	S	M	E	Q	I	T	F	T	O	R	E	
	Y	T	I	N	T	R	I	Y	H	O	K	B	G	N	C	R	O	

GOSPEL **ORDAINED** **REQUEST**
HEAVEN **PASTOR** **SALVATION**
HILL **PRAYER** **SERMON**
MESSIAH **PREACHER** **TRINITY**
OTTAWA **PROPHET** **WITNESS**

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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.

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

2026 Upcoming Events:

Stay tuned for upcoming Spring Event Dates



****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 will be a bus available from this area heading that way. Stayed tuned for more information.

Let's plan for MORE fellowship at Grace!!

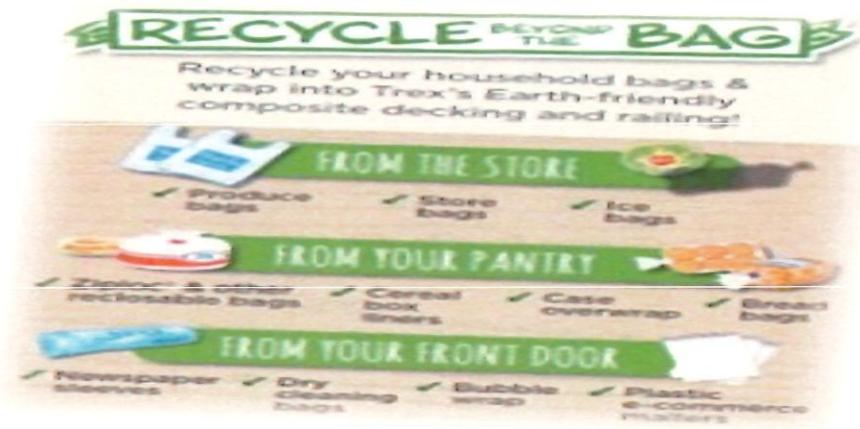
The Church Council has put a plan into place to have a coffee hour on the last Sunday of every month to celebrate Birthdays and Anniversaries for the month. It will be ordered from Mr & Mrs. P's and a cake from Hy-Vee.

HOWEVER....if you or someone in your family has a birthday that month and you would like to sponsor...sign up on the Board to do so. YOUR choice of what you want to serve!

We'd also like to get back to the days before Covid when we had a coffee hour almost every week....so please sign up and bring whatever you wish to serve.

**The most important part is for us to be together, network,
enjoy each other's company,
AND appreciate the fellowship!**





“OLD BAGS” for GRACE

Keep the plastic coming!!

Thank you!!! Thank you to everyone who has been bringing in plastic for us to recycle!! Please be sure you are following the guidelines of SOFT plastic. If you need a list – stop at the table on Sunday. And if you question a certain plastic – bring it in and we'll show you how to test it!!

Our total of plastic recycled in the last three plus years is over 11,000 pounds. Yes – that's over 5 tons of plastic kept out of the waterways and landfills. Over 5 tons used for decking and benches and other products made by the Trex company. Our goal 1,000 pounds in a 12 month time frame to receive a bench... we will continue because we know this is a good program for our environment. Please encourage others to join our cause.

Saving the World... One “Old Bag” at a Time



RaiseRight™

by ShopWithScrip

January 2026

WOW!! Just WOW!! Our purchases from Nov 16 through December 21 totaled \$8,475!! Some of our purchasers were doing Christmas gift shopping and others were buying their normal food and gas purchases. The rebate for this amount of \$328. This brings our annual total to \$38,570 with rebate of \$1,232.

Annual purchase statements for each individual will be ready by the end of January and put in your mailboxes. If you would rather have an email sent to you, please let Sue know.

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.

We are asking everyone to update their registration form and indicate a preference for donating the rebates. The options are **General Operational Fund, Improvement Fund, Youth Fund**. Please see the table on Sunday to check your registration and complete a new form.

G Dollars 2026

We will continue with our fundraising effort to find and donate G dollars.

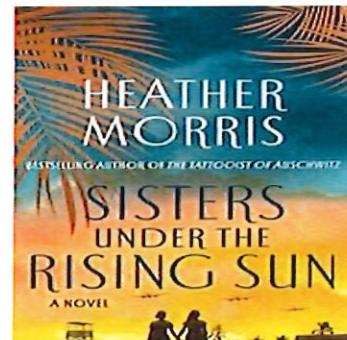
Keep looking for those G dollars!! G for Grace!!



Congregation members will have the choice of:

- putting the G Dollars in the offering plate on Sunday
- putting them in the container in the narthex
- putting them in an envelope. If members put their name on the donation, it will be recorded for their annual giving and you choose the ministry!!

And someone asked me last week if they had some money they wanted to donate and it wasn't G dollars, could they still donate to the Audio Video system...and the answer was "OF COURSE"! Put your donation in one of the envelopes and it will get credited to your giving account and help us reach our goal!! If you have another ministry of Grace that you would like to contribute to...just write that on the envelope!!



All are invited to begin your New Year by joining Grace Readers for our January meeting on Tuesday, Jan 27th at 6:30 pm in the Church lounge .

We will be discussing "Sisters Under the Rising Sun", by Heather Morris, a novel of sisterhood, bravery, and friendship among women internees in the Japanese prisoner of war camp in Indonesia.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Megan	Bradshaw	01/01
Conrad	Langenhorst	01/01
Paul	Wittwer	01/01
Jolene	Nelson	01/02
Trina	Hernandez	01/03
Karen	Werth	01/07
Taylor	Kelm	01/09
Peter	Wallace	01/15
Nathaniel	Langeberg	01/16
Rosalynn	Brown	01/17
Greg	Becker	01/19
Rhys	Hanson	01/20
Sawyer	Webb	01/20
Paul	Walheim	01/21
Phyllis	Lindeman	01/23
Ethan	Slate	01/24
Dawson	Albright	01/27
Debbie	Davis	01/28
Patricia	Heatley	01/28
Joanne	Wickstrom	01/28
Kenneth	Worthing	01/30



1/1/1995 McCarthy, Timothy & Lyn

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

January

2026

Social Concerns Committee

January 2026



Winter is here and comes to our city in a flurry of snow and chilling temperatures and winds. The earth wears its white robe that gets deeper with each storm. The wind sings over the rooftops and sweeps down the hills. The ice on the ponds and lakes are gradually growing thicker.

IF you lived in a land of warmth and green where it never gets cold, what would you give for a day of winter scenery? We are lucky to live in a land of four distinct seasons. We can see God's work that gradual changes from week to week, expecting new times, yet never knowing what lies ahead. And we have no control or advice to give to these circumstances.

This in itself is another marvel of nature which is of course, God's work. In such troubled times when men disagree and each wants his own way, there are things like weather and events in life that are not in human control. This puts us all at the same level, this frailty of humanity. This is why we all need friends and to be a friend, to lean upon, and help each other on toward a goal.

Through the month of November, members gave graciously to the ELCA Good Gifts project of the committee. The Matching Gifts Day was Dec 12th. As announced at the conclusion of the donation drive that \$1995 was collected. With that fund amount we, The Committee, purchased: 1-Abundant Community, 6-water filters, 4-irrigation systems, 2-latrines, 1 set of 10 chicks, 2-piglets. And ELCA Good Gifts then matched this order. There was a small balance remaining ,which was forwarded to the food pantry, along with the donations from the Cookie Walk .

The Committee hopes that the Christmas Cantata filled you with the Christmas spirit fully.

To help you plan ahead, **The Souper Bowl Of Giving (non- perishable unexpired food items or monetary donations) starts on Jan. 25th and will conclude on February. 8th** . This will go to also support the food pantry as in the past. How many food items can we fill up that grocery cart with this year? Let's over flow it!! We can do it, just let the spirit move you. **Think not of yourselves, but what you can do to help others.**



Grace Lutheran Church

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