



# GRACE TO YOU

## March 2026

**Grace United  
Protestant Church**

**266 Somonauk St.  
Park Forest, IL 60466  
Phone: 708-748-4567**

### POTATO/SALAD/ICE CREAM LUNCHEON

#### MARCH 29TH

This fan-favorite will be after church on Sunday, March 29th (Palm Sunday).

As we have done in the past, donations of salads, potato toppings, and ice cream toppings are much appreciated. Look for the sign-up sheets that are posted in the narthex and please pick an item(s) you'd like to bring. Then...

#### **Bring your appetite!**

Join us for a wonderful time of good food, fellowship and fun!

A free-will offering will be taken to benefit Heifer International.

We have extended an invitation to the Scout families, our friends at Love of Christ Ministries and the staff and families of Kidds Palace Learning Academy.

Please take our guests into consideration when planning your donations of needed salads and toppings.

#### **Mission Statement of Our**

#### **Reconciling Ministries:**

Through God's grace and as apprentices of Christ's living example, we stand united in our commitment to welcome and embrace the diversity of all children of God, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, and wish to reach out to those underserved to provide a safe space for spiritual growth. We strive to create an inclusive fellowship welcoming of the LGBTQ+ community, their families, and support networks, and to foster fairness, justice, peace, love, and understanding among all as is reflected in our name—Grace United Protestant Church.



***A spiritual home for  
worship and service.***

**Website: [graceupc.org](http://graceupc.org)**

#### UPCOMING CALENDAR

**PLEASE CHECK OUT THE  
CALENDAR ON PAGE 12.**



### SPRING FLOWERS

Easter and springtime give us the opportunity to decorate our sanctuary with colorful flowers!

Easter is just around the corner!

There will be Easter lilies, tulips, and hyacinths available.

Cost is \$15 each.

There is an order sheet in the narthex or call

Sue Cassara at 708-785-5186 to order.

**The last date to order is March 8th.**

## THE PASTOR'S PAGE

March 2026

Outreach Through Music

We have implemented various strategies to draw people to our church through programs like Vacation Bible School, Game Nights, and Family Fun Nights. We are especially excited at this time to host The Men of A-Chord on Sunday afternoon, March 1, 2026, at 3 P.M., as part of our outreach through music. This group was formed in 1953 by a dedicated group of Christian men who shared a passion for music. Today, the ensemble includes Christian men of all ages and diverse backgrounds who continue to glorify God through music and support each other in prayer throughout their lives. **(See page 3 for more information.)**

Music is a universal language and a powerful tool in human life. Almost every culture has its own unique form of music. Music has the ability to transport us back in time, lift our spirits, bring us joy and comfort, motivate us, calm our anxious minds, and help us relax. Research shows that music supports our physical, mental, and emotional health. It can help regulate our emotions, improve our mood, boost productivity and focus, and even promote better sleep.

I cannot emphasize enough how important music is in our lives. We enjoy it, learn valuable lessons from it, and use it to create a peaceful atmosphere for meditation. Additionally, music serves as a powerful tool for outreach. Beyond personal experiences, it plays a vital role in society and influences social change. Music underscores the importance of connection. Its sound is truly unique; it's not just the acoustics of the space that create this effect, but also the music's ability to foster a sense of community and connect us to something greater than ourselves.

Consider how we use songs to mark significant milestones in our lives, such as births, deaths, and anniversaries. Music often serves as the soundtrack to our transformations and to the world around us. Its power is particularly evident in our worship practices, especially as we follow the Christian calendar. From the joyous celebrations of Christmas to the solemnity of Lent and the triumph of Easter, music uplifts us throughout this journey!

In light of the significance of music, **I invite you to join your brothers and sisters in Christ on Sunday, March 1, at 3 PM for a special performance by The Men of A-Chord.** There will be an opportunity to sing along with them as we lift our hearts to the Lord through hymn singing. Please feel free to invite your neighbors, friends, and family as well. I believe this will be a meaningful event that will uplift our spirits and draw us closer to God.

***The virtual Bible study on the Gospel of John has started. Please join us on Tuesdays at 7 P.M.***

We celebrate our birthday celebrants this month and extend our congratulations to those celebrating their wedding anniversaries. May God continue to bless you all.

Please continue to pray for all our family members on the prayer list, and reach out to check on those unable to join us at the church.

Yours by His Grace, Pastor Amos Oladipo



**GAME DAY !****Saturday, February 28th****2:00-5:00 PM**

We have such great times at our Game Days! Please join the fun! If you have a favorite game you would like to share, please bring it. Last time we had a couple of tables playing Dominos and other tables with different games. Then everyone joined in Bingo. What fun!

Feel free to bring snacks. This is a great way to get rid of the winter blues!

**A THANK YOU**

Thank you to all who help supply items for after church coffees and meetings- paper goods, cookies, coffee pods, utensils, water... Most gifts just appear in the parlor! Special thanks also to those who host coffees. They are well attended and enjoyed by all!

**\*\*\*YOU ARE INVITED\*\*\***

to a wonderful afternoon of Christian music !

**Sunday, March 1st****3:00 PM****We are excited to be hosting The Men of A-Chord !!**

The Men of A-Chord chorus was started in 1953 by a group of Christian men who shared the joy of singing. Now our extended family is composed of Christian men of various ages in all walks of life. We still share the joy of singing God's praises together and upholding each other in prayer on life's journey.

If you have ever heard them, you will know what an uplifting concert this is!

**Be sure to tell your friends and neighbors !**

A free-will offering will be taken.



## WCA NEWS

WCA Board monthly meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM in the parlor. All women are invited to attend any of the meetings.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**FEBRUARY 21ST**

**2:00 PM**

**ALL WOMEN AND MEN ARE INVITED**

A new tradition has been born! This is the third year that we share love by making "Love Bags" (goody bags) to take to senior and rehab centers. Alice Knox takes the bags with her when she visits these locations. It has been so successful that we're out of bags for Alice to take! So, we are going to make more! We're hoping to make at least 50 bags so we need **lots** of items! Please bring any item: toiletries, socks, grooming items, etc. that you feel a person at a senior center would like to have. Also enjoyed are puzzle books and pens. Use your imagination!



We will have small bags available for you to fill with the items you bring. And, of course, because we all like food and fellowship to add to the fun, there will be refreshments afterward!

### \*\*\* PANERA BREAD FUNDRAISER \*\*\*

**On Sunday, March 15th,** please plan to have dinner anytime from 4:00-8:00 PM at Panera Bread in Matteson! Please print the flyer on page 11 or pick up one (or several for your families and friends) at the church on the table in the back of the sanctuary. Or Leslie can email you a flyer that you can show digitally. Contact her at [llangmeyer@aol.com](mailto:llangmeyer@aol.com). You will need to show the flyer at the time you order. Panera will donate 25% of the total net sales to the WCA. With your help, this has been very successful in the past! Thank you for making it successful again!



United  
Women  
in Faith

Lake South District

In person registration, continental breakfast and program resources are available beginning at **9 AM**.



Saturday - February 28, 2026



Downers Grove First UMC  
1032 Maple Avenue  
Downers Grove, IL 60515



9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

**REGISTER ONLINE TODAY**

REGISTRATION FEE | \$5.00

**REGISTER BY FEBRUARY 23, 2026**

GRACE TO YOU  
INSPIRATION PAGE

Please share your devotions, readings, and inspirations that are special to you so that others can be inspired, too. Please email me with your contributions at [llangmeyer@aol.com](mailto:llangmeyer@aol.com). Thank you!

From *Walking with Jesus—Devotions for Lent & Easter*

God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. ~2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)

I couldn't wait to try the same-day home delivery benefit of my discount store membership. But I felt disappointed when my first order was dropped off. The store had made a few substitutions. The eggs were not extra-large, the pizza sauce was not our favorite brand, and the canned tomatoes were a different size from what I needed for a recipe. This feature did not turn out to be so convenient and timesaving after all.

Substitution isn't always a bad thing; it can be necessary, which is a major theme throughout the Bible. God designed the system of sacrifices and offerings laid out in the first seven chapters of Leviticus to atone for the Israelites' sins. This foreshadowed the day He would send the perfect Lamb, who would carry the sins of the world to the cross.

Jesus lived a sinless life, but He willingly offered Himself as a substitution for our punishment. Only the sacrifice of the sinless Christ was enough to bring forgiveness for our sins. Every bit of the horrific sorrow, abuse, pain, and suffering that Jesus endured paid for my sin. And for yours. I'm not sure I can ever comprehend such love.

Some days I'm tempted to substitute other activities for time I should spend with Jesus. But I find contentment and purpose only when I give Jesus first place in my heart. Nothing, and no one, can ever replace Him.

~ Dianne Neal Matthews

Faith Step: Have you been trying to substitute something in the place Jesus should have in your life? Talk to Him about that.

.....

From *The One Year Book of Personal Prayer*

Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart have multiplied; free me from my anguish. ~Psalm 25:16-17

Lord, you know better than I know myself that I am growing older, and will someday be old. Keep me from getting talkative, and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking that I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

I ask for grace enough to listen to the tales of others' pains. But seal my lips on my own aches and pains; help me to endure them with patience.

Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

~Anonymous

*We must lay before him what is in us, not what ought to be in us.* ~C.S. Lewis

**HEIFER — OUR LENTEN MISSION**

**CHICKENS**

One flock of chicks can help a family escape hunger and poverty. Here's how:

1 A family receives a flock of chicks from Heifer International.

2 The chicks grow up to lay more than 200 eggs a year — each!

3 The family eats the eggs, adding much-needed protein to their diets.

4 The family has enough eggs to sell at market or to local restaurants for additional income.

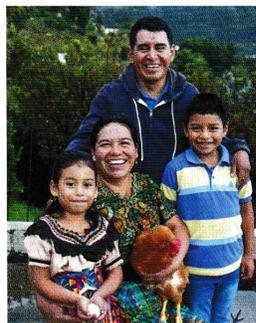


As we approach Lent, please remember the Grace Church annual mission donation to Heifer International. Heifer's mission is to break the cycle of poverty by passing on the gift. When a family receives an animal from Heifer they commit to pass on the first offspring to another family, along with training on how to care for it. This creates a cycle of giving and kindness, providing incomes to thriving communities in over 20 countries. In addition to livestock, Heifer provides crop training, financial assistance, business education, school scholarships, clean water technology, and many other programs to ensure success.

Please use either a blue mission envelope from the sanctuary or the Easter envelope from your church pledge box for your Heifer donation. We will collect through April. Thank you for your continued support!



**HOW CHICKENS CHANGED JUANA'S LIFE**



For Juana Chavez in Guatemala, the gift of chickens set her family on a path to financial freedom. As part of Heifer's *Women's Empowerment and Entrepreneurship* project, Juana received 65 chickens. She is learning how to improve the eggs' quality and how to keep track of production and sales.

Now, she has enough eggs to feed her family and sells the extra door to door for money to buy clothes and medicine. She keeps a record of what she spends and earns, then reinvests the profits into her business. With enough food to eat and a reliable income, Juana is beginning to see a more promising future for her and her family. "I can afford school supplies and keep up with the payments for school," she said. "That feels very good."

[HEIFER.ORG](http://HEIFER.ORG) | 888.5HUNGER



**BIBLE TRIVIA**

March is the month to celebrate women so the questions and answers, of course, will be about women.

1. What Old Testament woman bore a child at the age of 90 and is the most mentioned woman in the Bible (56 mentions)?
2. What woman of twins ranks fourth with 31 mentions?
3. What New Testament woman ranks 6th with 19 mentions?
4. What follower of Jesus is mentioned 14 times?
5. How many times is Eve, the first woman, mentioned?

This info was taken from *The Complete Book of Trivia* by J. Stephen Lang.

Thank you to Sue Dukes for compiling this!

Answers are on page 8.

**VOICES OF GRACE**

Rehearsals for “Voices of Grace”, our wonderful choir, are the first Sunday of the month after church and the second and fourth Sundays before church at 10:15 AM.



**RINGALINGS**

The Grace Church “Ringalings” Handbell Choir rehearse every second and fourth Sunday after church. All are welcome regardless of age or prior experience.

**GRACE CHURCH TREASURER’S REPORT FROM RICK WASNEY**

	Amount Received	Amount Needed	Surplus/ Deficit
January	\$ 10,417.00	\$ 13,246.00	\$ -2,829.00
Year to Date	\$ 10,417.00	\$ 13,246.00	\$ -2829.00

Due to recent boiler issues, we are approaching our annual budget for repairs.

**FLOWERS**

Flowers on the piano/altar help to brighten the sanctuary each Sunday. The 2026 flower chart has been posted in the narthex. Be sure to pick your special date(s) and sign up to beautify our sanctuary before your date is gone.

We are asking that you either supply your own flowers...there are vases at the church...or contact our flower chairperson, Sue Cassara at 708-785-5186, and she will purchase the flowers for you. The cost will be \$20. **We are also asking that you contact the church office at 708-748-4567 or [graceupchurch2@gmail.com](mailto:graceupchurch2@gmail.com) to tell Elaine Degenhart what you would like printed in the bulletin.** Thank you!



**CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL**

All children are invited to leave after the Children's Moment during Sunday worship for a class of Bible stories and activities. Our winter focus will be on the ministry of Jesus and his disciples. On the 1st Sunday of each month we will return to the sanctuary to participate in communion.

Parents and grandparents are always encouraged to join us anytime.

**WEEKLY PRAYER GROUP**

The prayer group meets on Wednesday mornings at 9:30 in the Banner Room (room 116). Everyone with concerns for the church, the community, the country, or themselves, is welcome and encouraged to join this informal group.

Please let Alice Wasney or the church office know of any prayer needs.

**GO TEAM TRAINING**

*"The mission of the Lake South District of the Northern Illinois Conference is to encourage, equip, connect and support our local churches in their call to Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World."*

In keeping with this, Dr. Audrea Nanabray invites you to scheduled Zoom meetings, for Go Team training for members and friends of the church.

They are scheduled on the first Saturday of each month, at 10:30 am. The next one will be held Saturday, March 7th. The Zoom link is [Zoom Link](#), Meeting ID 96417329893, Passcode 081053

**THE LINK FOR THE SUNDAY VIRTUAL SERVICE**

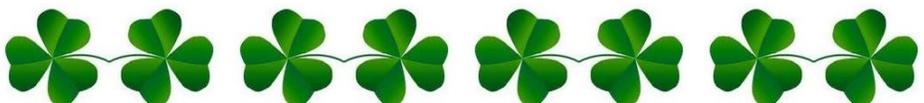
Each Sunday, the church service is available virtually on Zoom. The service is live. *The bulletin and the words to the songs are on your screen each week. If you join by phone and want the bulletin emailed to you, please let the church office know.*

Pastor Amos emails the Zoom link each Sunday morning for anyone who would like to have it. Please let the office know if you want to have him send the link to you. Email the office at [graceupchurch2@gmail.com](mailto:graceupchurch2@gmail.com).

*A gentle reminder: It's wonderful to be able to socialize before and after the service, but with the virtual system in place, we need to mute our own computers during the service. As a courtesy to others, please remember to mute during the service.*

Answers to Bible Trivia:

1. Sarah
2. Rebekah
3. Mary, Jesus's mother
4. Mary Magdalene
5. Only four



**CELEBRATIONS FOR MARCH**



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:**

Pastor Amos Oladipo—2nd  
Sheena Gilbert—3rd  
Crystal Whitson—4th  
Sally Grossi—6th  
Matthew Whitson—31st



**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:**

Rick and Alice Wasney—14th

**PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS:**

***We thank God for many answered prayers as we continue to pray for:***

The Members of our church, near and far, Our Veterans, our Troops, and our Country,  
World Peace, that the hungry can be fed, and the end of violence.



Barbara Abels  
Ray Abels  
Nan Beard  
Abby Burchill  
Jackie Ceres  
Gabe Chachakis  
Daniel Christain  
Ralph Duncan  
Niki Juarez Cummings  
Mona Earving  
Malcolm Knox  
Steven Krause  
Blake Legu  
Jim Lewis  
Helen Neel

Marge Neel  
Forrest (Lee) Nelson  
Ronan Nelson  
Stacey Peterson  
Kyla Jo Purvenas  
Doug Smith  
Jeff Steiner  
Szymanski Family  
Alma White  
Kristy Whitson  
The Migrants, Immigrants, and  
Refugees among us  
The Victims of Gun Violence  
The People of Israel and Gaza  
The People of Ukraine

# ABOUT Scouts

Congratulations to Scoutmaster Dan Chachakis who was recently recognized at the Calumet District - Pathway to Adventure Council annual awards dinner with the PTAC Community Awareness Award.

Congratulations to the Bacon Pancakes on their 2nd place finish at the Klondike. They came so close to winning. Communication is key!



Fun at the Klondike



## February 8th — Scout Sunday





*We're raising dough!*

# GRACE UNITED PROTESTANT CHURCH

**25%**

OF NET SALES  
WILL BE  
DONATED\*

**March 15, 2026  
4:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
4864 211th Street, Matteson, IL**

Use code FUND4U at [panerabread.com](http://panerabread.com), in the Panera App,  
or at the kiosk in-cafe.

Online orders placed all day at your event cafe will count toward your total sales.

Bring this flyer or show a digital copy to your cashier when ordering at the cafe to ensure your organization gets a portion of the net sales.

**Panera**  
**FUNDRAISING**

\*20% fundraiser: Up to 20% of net sales from your designated and registered fundraising event will be donated to your approved organization. Minimum sales of \$100 on the specified date, time and location required to receive 20% donation. 25% fundraiser: Up to 25% of net sales from your designated and registered fundraising event will be donated to your approved organization. Minimum sales of \$150 on the specified date, time and location required to receive 25% donation. General terms: Details on percentage of net sales to be donated and the minimum sales requirement will be provided during the event registration process. Fundraising events available only at participating US bakery-cafes. Fundraising event details and available dates and times for fundraising events will vary by bakery-cafe. Gift card purchases, catering orders, and orders placed on third party delivery sites are excluded and will not count towards the total net sales from your designated fundraising event. This offer will be void if flyer is distributed in or near the participating bakery-cafe on the night of the event. Fundraising events may be cancelled without notice due to abuse, error, fraud, computer error, electronic or technical malfunctions, or other unforeseen or unintended circumstances. Other restrictions may apply. For more information on how our fundraising events work, please visit: <https://fundraising.panerabread.com/faq>.

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# MARCH 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 Communion Sunday Worship and Sunday School <u>11:00 AM</u> Choir Rehearsal <u>12:15 PM</u> Men of A-Chord 3:00 PM</p>	2	<p>3 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout meeting <u>7:00 PM</u> Lenten Bible Study 7:00 PM</p>	<p>4 Prayer Group 9:30 AM</p>	<p>5 WCA Board meeting 10:00 AM</p>	6	<p>7 Go Team training on Zoom 10:30 AM</p>
<p>8 Choir Rehearsal <u>10:15 AM</u> Sunday Worship and Sunday School <u>11:00 AM</u> Bell Choir rehearsal <u>12:15 PM</u> Last day to order Easter flowers</p>	9	<p>10 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout meeting <u>7:00 PM</u> Lenten Bible Study 7:00 PM</p>	<p>11 Prayer Group <u>9:30 AM</u> Scout Committee meeting 7:00 PM</p>	12	13	<p>14 ART meeting in parlor 9:30 AM</p>
<p>15 Jazz Sunday Worship and Sunday School <u>11:00 AM</u> Coffee &amp; Fellowship following church Panera Night fundraiser 4:00-8:00 PM</p>	16	<p>17 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout meeting <u>7:00 PM</u> Lenten Bible Study 7:00 PM</p>	<p>18 Prayer Group <u>9:30 AM</u> Tabitha Circle in parlor <u>2:00 PM</u></p>	19	20	21
<p>22 Choir Rehearsal <u>10:15 AM</u> Sunday Worship and Sunday School <u>11:00 AM</u> Bell Choir rehearsal 12:15 PM</p>	23	<p>24 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout meeting <u>7:00 PM</u> Lenten Bible study 7:00 PM</p>	<p>25 Prayer Group 9:30 AM</p>	26	27	28
<p>29 Palm Sunday Worship and Sunday School <u>11:00 AM</u> Potato and Ice Cream Luncheon 12:00 PM</p>	30	<p>31 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout meeting <u>7:00 PM</u> Lenten Bible study 7:00 PM</p>				