



# GRACE TO YOU

## June 2026

**Grace United  
Protestant Church**

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

### THE PEOPLE OF GRACE WELCOME YOU



#### **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 14.**



# GRACE TO YOU

## THE PASTOR'S PAGE

June 2026

Tribute to Fathers

June 21, 2026, is a special day dedicated to celebrating all fathers—biological, adoptive, foster, stepfathers, grandfathers, mentors, and spiritual fathers. I appreciate those who have worked hard to ensure that Father's Day is recognized alongside Mother's Day. When God created humans, God made them male and female, highlighting the complementary nature of both genders. Just as we celebrated our mothers, I am excited to celebrate our fathers for their vital role in the family and the growth and stability of our communities.

We all recognize the important role that fathers play in our society and the reasons we should celebrate them. Fathers have a crucial, yet often overlooked, influence on their families' lives. Their qualities are not defined by perfection but by their daily character. A father's strength goes beyond physical attributes; it includes the inner resolve that provides stability during uncertain times. This strength is evident in traits such as hard work, responsibility, and courage, which together create a safe haven for the family.

A father's love is often shown through his actions rather than words, evident in the sacrifices he makes for his family. His steady, protective presence serves as an anchor, and children remember his laughter, support, and encouragement more than any imperfections. Whether cheering from the sidelines or helping with homework, a father's presence conveys value and belonging. Ultimately, a father's true legacy lies in the impact he has on others, not in material possessions..

**Join us for a special celebration on Father's Day, Sunday, June 21st**, as we honor the unwavering love and perseverance of our fathers. We cherish the memories of those who built a strong foundation for us, while also celebrating those who continue to guide future generations.

Our first gathering for the Community Prayer Vigil for Peace was well attended, with Christians from various churches joining us for a special prayer on Wednesday, May 6th. **We will continue this peace vigil on the first Wednesday of every month. Please plan to attend on June 3rd** at Somonauk Park Pavilion, as we come together at 6 PM to lift our prayers for peace in the world.

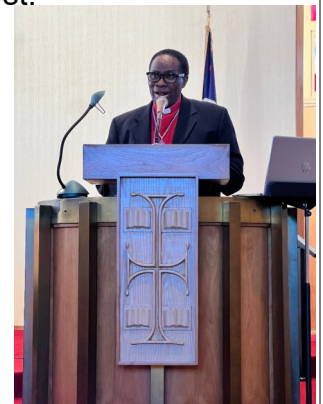
We congratulate the Class of 2026 graduates and their families. We are proud of you and pray that God will continue to be with you and grant you success in your next endeavors!

Congratulations to Ray Van Dyke on his 100th birthday celebration on May 1st.  
**Please see pages 4 & 5 for his tribute.**

We rejoice with birthdays and anniversary celebrants this month. We wish you many more years of good health and meaningful experiences. We pray for our brothers and sisters who are experiencing health and other life challenges, for healing, and God's presence in their situations.

My prayers are with everyone embarking on summer travels. As you set out this summer, may you find comfort in the assurance of God's presence, for His name is Immanuel—God with us!

Yours By His Grace, Pastor Amos Oladipo



## 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.

### MISSION FIELD TRIP TO FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

**Saturday, June 6th**

Members and friends of the WCA will be taking a Mission Field Trip on **Saturday, June 6th** to Feed My Starving Children in Schaumburg, IL. We will be leaving from Sue Duker's home at 9:30 AM and plan to have a self-paid lunch at Portillo's in Schaumburg before starting our 12:00 noon volunteer time. We would like to have a good-sized group going and will plan to carpool (let's hope for several cars!). This is a rewarding time of filling meals to send overseas that help feed the hungry. Please let Sue Duker know by **May 31st** if you are planning to go.

### LOOKING AHEAD

**Saturday, September 26th**

This year, our Spiritual Retreat will be at the church with the movie St. John in Exile. There will be a discussion following; this proves to be a wonderful retreat. We will plan to go to Peachtree Restaurant in Matteson following the retreat. Everyone is welcome!



We were very fortunate to have a two-part program for the Spring Luncheon! Deaconess, Catherine Inserra, presented a program on the history, mission, and vision of Kids Above All. Pictured with Catherine is a cutout of Lucy Rider Meyer, founder of the Chicago Training School, which became Kids Above All. Then we were treated to a musical program by Brian Cummings, Niki Juarez-Cummings, and Val Nicholson. What a great afternoon!



## **Celebrating a Century of Faith, Service, and Community: Honoring a 100 Year Legacy of Ray Van Dyke**

On May 1, 2026, Ray Van Dyke marked his 100th birthday! It was a significant milestone worth celebrating, as he stayed alert, strong, and capable of handling daily activities. The main celebration was held on Sunday, May 3, 2026. On that day, prayers of thanksgiving were offered at the church, and congregation members, along with family and friends, gathered at his home to celebrate with him, enjoying plenty of food, fellowship, and shared memories!

Reaching one hundred years of life is a rare and remarkable milestone. Yet what makes this celebration truly extraordinary is not simply the number of years lived, but the depth of character, faith, and service that have marked each one. We honor and celebrate a man whose life has been woven into the very fabric of Park Forest, Grace United Protestant Church, and the wider community—a life defined by quiet strength, steady devotion, and a heart for others.

Ray was fortunate to be part of one of the original families in Park Forest. He and his family were among the pioneers who helped establish the community. His story is intertwined with the village's history, and his presence has remained a consistent thread throughout decades of change.

His commitment to faith has been just as enduring. As a living Chartered Member of Grace United Protestant Church, he did more than join a congregation—he helped build one. From the earliest days of Grace Church, he stood among those who believed in creating a spiritual home where people could worship, grow, and serve together. His fingerprints are on the history of the church, and his influence continues to echo through its ministries.

Ray was a gifted educator who dedicated many years to teaching Sunday School at Grace United Protestant Church, shaping young minds with patience, wisdom, and a genuine love of learning. His classroom was a space where curiosity was encouraged, character was formed, and every student felt seen and valued. For him, teaching was a calling that he embraced with excellence.

In addition to working with children, he also served as an adult Sunday School teacher. Week after week, he opened Scripture, facilitated thoughtful discussions, and helped adults deepen their understanding of faith. His lessons went beyond mere information; they served as invitations to grow, reflect, and embody the gospel with integrity. I was fortunate to know him and to see his “teaching” Bible, with verses marked with different colors and annotations.

Ray was a pioneer of the church's Men's Chat and Chew breakfast group, which meets on Tuesday mornings at a designated restaurant. His conversations were always insightful, encouraging, and educational!

His service reached beyond the church walls as well. For many years, he volunteered as a candy striper at St. James Hospital in Chicago Heights, continuing well into his 80s. With a warm smile and a gentle presence, he brought comfort to patients and encouragement to staff. He also volunteered at Respond Now, a Chicago Heights-based organization that provides essential services, such as food and housing assistance, to residents in south suburban Cook County. His hours of service were quiet and compassionate, embodying the very best of community care.

**Across a century of life, Ray's legacy is clear: Faith that endures. Service that inspires. A life that blesses others.** As we celebrate his 100th birthday, we honor not only the years he has lived, but the countless lives he has touched. His story is a gift to his family, our church, and his community. His example reminds us that a meaningful life is built not on grand gestures, but on steady faithfulness, humble service, and a heart turned toward others.

We give thanks for a century of life well lived—and for the privilege of celebrating a man whose legacy will continue to shine for generations to come.

**Happy 100th Birthday, Ray Van Dyke!** Your life is a blessing, and your legacy is a treasure.

Pastor Amos Oladipo



**COMMUNITY  
PRAYER VIGIL FOR  
PEACE**

Gather by the  
Somonauk Park  
pavilion in Park Forest on  
the first Wednesday  
of every month at 6:00 PM  
for a short time of prayer  
for peace in the world.

## MISSION NEWS

The Church World Service vision is “a world where everyone has food, voice and a safe place to call home.” The attached report highlights the Blankets & Kits program that Grace has supported for many years. In addition to emergency aid, CWS helps to rebuild lives with housing to stand against natural disasters, sustainable farming practices, safe water, nutritional food, and refugee assistance. Donations can be made in June and July. Checks should be payable to Grace Church, with a note to use for CWS, or use a blue mission envelope. Give us the courage to act, to be generous, and to be part of God’s work.



**27,275**  
blankets

Thanks to the generosity of donors who support CWS Blankets and CWS Kits, Church World Service was able to respond swiftly to the devastation caused by Hurricanes Helene and Milton. CWS was on the ground quickly, providing essential relief supplies, including **26,536** CWS Kits and Blankets. These critical items are helping families begin the long journey of recovery.

*Thank you for making this response possible.*



**10,084**  
emergency  
cleanup  
buckets



### YOUR COMPASSION IN ACTION

2024 CWS Kits & Blankets  
Shipping Report




**278**  
welcome  
backpacks



Scan the QR code to see the complete shipping report.



**11,179**  
period  
packs




**10,110**  
school kits

“For many people living on the edge of poverty, they often have to choose between buying food for their family and basic hygiene items. The donations from Church World Service are an essential part of keeping our family healthy.”

— KAYLA DAVIS, A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION



**30,580**  
hygiene kits



BP 25 43

**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!  
~ Leslie

During my devotional reading, I use my mother's Bible to look up particular suggested verses. I'd like to share passages/verses that were important to my mom, Ruth Smith, that she underlined or starred. There were many; here are just a few (from the Revised Standard Version):

He who brings thanksgiving as his sacrifice honors me. ~Psalms 50:23

At that time Jesus declared, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will."  
~Matthew 11:25-26

"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." ~Matthew 19:26

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." ~Matthew 22:36-40

All things are possible to him who believes. Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"  
~Mark 9:23-24

"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."  
~Mark 9:37

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you receive it, and you will. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."  
~Mark 11:24-26

"God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ~John 4:24

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son if you ask anything in my name, I will do it. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you."  
~John 14:12-17

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.  
~1 Corinthians 4:1

Be kind to one another.  
~Ephesians 4:32

Valerie Nicholson has been such an incredible influence in the life of Grace Church. She is our Musical Director, Chairperson of the Administrative Roundtable and leads with great aplomb.

Val began teaching at Prairie State College the fall of 1986 and she will be retiring in June. The pictures below are from the Jazz Concert on May 2nd. Val also started the Jazz Festival at Prairie State 37 years ago.

Although Val is retiring from teaching, we are so fortunate to be able to keep her at Grace! May God bless Val in all her future endeavors!



## BIBLE TRIVIA

June is the month of celebrations: Graduations, Weddings, Birthdays, Father's Day, and Val's retirement, etc....so music, music, music is this month's focus.

1. What stringed instruments did John hear in his vision of the heavenly throne? (Revelations 14: 2-3)
2. Who is mentioned as the father of those who play the harp and organ? (Genesis 4:21)
3. What prophetess played a timbrel and led the women of Israel in a victory song after the Red Sea incident? (Exodus 15:20-21)
4. Who wrote over a thousand songs? (1 Kings 4:32)
5. What king of Israel had 4000 musicians who praised the Lord with instruments the king made? (1 Chronicles 23:5)

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 12.

## GRADUATE RECOGNITION AND CELEBRATION

On **Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>**, members and friends of Grace Church will recognize graduates with a celebration and luncheon downstairs in Fellowship Hall following the worship service. We hope you will plan to stay and celebrate with us!

## PRAY FOR PEACE

Grace Church will be hosting a **monthly community-wide Prayer Vigil** on the first Wednesday of each month at **6:00 PM**. It will last approximately 20 minutes. Please plan to join us in Somonauk Park on **Wednesday, June 3rd** to support the Prayer Vigil for Peace.

## 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!



## 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, June 6th at 10:30 AM. The topic for the morning will be "We live and grow by God's words." (Joshua 1:8, Matthew 4:4)

The Zoom link is [Zoom Link](#), Meeting ID 964 1732 9893, Passcode 081053



## **CALLING ALL TRIVIA BUFFS!**

**Saturday, May 30th**

**7:00 PM**

Do you have what it takes? Grace Church will hold its second Trivia Night on Saturday, May 30, 2026 at 7:00 PM at the church.

Grab your friends and bring your team of 6. Don't have 6? Come anyway. We'll do our best to get everybody on a team.

Come early and bring a snack for some fun fellowship time. We ask that you do not bring drinks as our Boy Scout Troop will have drinks and small snacks for sale.

For questions or to enter your team, please call Alice Wasney at (708) 334-2961 or email her at [awwasney@gmail.com](mailto:awwasney@gmail.com).

## AFTER-CHURCH COFFEES

Everyone enjoys fellowship time at the coffees on Jazz Sunday. But, it seems as though the same people donate food and time each month. There is a sign-up sheet on the small table in the narthex and we are asking that everyone takes a turn. Men, too! You don't have to bake or cook! Store-bought items are fine!

Please pick a month. There will be a WCA board member to help you find plates, napkins, etc. and will help set-up and clean-up. But, it's not just up to the board to provide goodies! Thank you!

### CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL



The Sunday School class is on summer break and will return on September 7th.

Look for new materials and books in the library to use during worship. Room 103 is always open, but please keep it clean and put away materials and toys.

### 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.

### GRACE CHURCH TREASURER'S REPORT FROM RICK WASNEY

|                          | Amount<br>Received | Amount<br>Needed   | Surplus/<br>Deficit |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| January 2026             | \$ 10,416.87       | \$ 13,246.00       | \$ 2,829.13         |
| February 2026            | \$13,416.79        | \$13,246.00        | \$ 170.79           |
| March 2026               | \$10,566.56        | \$13,246.00        | \$ 2,679.44         |
| April 2026               | \$12,805.23        | \$13,246.00        | \$ 440.77           |
| <b>Year to Date 2026</b> | <b>\$47,205.45</b> | <b>\$52,984.00</b> | <b>\$ 5,778.55</b>  |

### 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 new 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.

**CELEBRATIONS FOR JUNE**



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:**

Allan Smith—9th  
 Dave Rogers—14th  
 Niki Juarez-Cummings—18th  
 Krystasia Banks—25th  
 Semaj Banks—30th



**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:**

Allan and Kitty Smith—7th



**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.



Ray Abels  
 Nan Beard  
 Abby Burchill  
 Jackie Ceres  
 Gabe Chachakis  
 Magda Condon  
 Charlotte Earving  
 Linda Hageman  
 Melissa Harms  
 Niki Juarez-Cummings  
 Malcolm Knox

Marge Neel  
 Forrest (Lee) Nelson  
 Ronan Nelson  
 Alma White  
 Kristy Whitson  
 The Migrants, Immigrants, and  
 Refugees among us  
 The Victims of Gun Violence  
 The People of Iran  
 The People of Israel and Gaza  
 The People of Ukraine



Answers to Bible Trivia:

1. Harps
2. Jubal
3. Miriam
4. Solomon
5. David

# ABOUT Scouts

Well done, all! Another 10-miler is in the books



## District Camporee





# JUNE 2026



| Sun  | Mon                                   | Tue   | Wed   | Thu   | Fri       | Sat  |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|-----------|--|
|  | <b>1</b>                              | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b><br>Prayer Group<br><u>9:30 AM</u><br>Community<br>Prayer Vigil<br>6:00 PM  | <b>4</b><br>WCA Board<br>meeting<br>10:00 AM<br>in parlor | <b>5</b>  | <b>6</b><br>WCA Mission Field<br>Trip to Feed My<br>Starving Children<br><u>9:30 AM</u><br>Go Team<br>training on Zoom<br>10:30 AM |
| <b>7</b><br>Communion<br>Sunday Worship<br><u>11:00 AM</u><br>Choir Rehearsal<br>12:15 PM                                | <b>8</b><br>Rebekah Circle<br>7:00 PM | <b>9</b> Men's Chat and<br>Chew Breakfast<br><u>8:00 AM</u><br>Boy Scout<br>meeting <u>7:00 PM</u><br>Virtual Bible Study<br>7PM      | <b>10</b><br>Prayer Group<br>9:30 AM  | <b>11</b>   | <b>12</b> | <b>13</b><br>ART meeting<br>9:30 AM  |
| <b>14</b><br>Choir Rehearsal<br><u>10:15 AM</u><br>Sunday Worship<br><u>11:00 AM</u><br>Bell Choir rehearsal<br>12:15 PM | <b>15</b>                             | <b>16</b> Men's Chat and<br>Chew Breakfast<br><u>8:00 AM</u><br>Boy Scout<br>meeting <u>7:00 PM</u><br>Virtual Bible Study<br>7:00 PM | <b>17</b> Prayer Group<br><u>9:30 AM</u><br>Tabitha Circle<br>in parlor<br><u>2:00 PM</u><br>Scout Committee<br>meeting 7:00 PM | <b>18</b>   | <b>19</b> | <b>20</b>  |
| <b>21</b> Jazz Sunday<br>Worship<br><u>11:00 AM</u><br>Graduation Lunch<br>following church<br>Happy Father's<br>Day     | <b>22</b>                             | <b>23</b> Men's Chat and<br>Chew Breakfast<br><u>8:00 AM</u><br>Boy Scout<br>meeting <u>7:00 PM</u><br>Virtual Bible Study<br>7:00 PM | <b>24</b><br>Prayer Group<br>9:30 AM  | <b>25</b>   | <b>26</b> | <b>27</b>  |
| <b>28</b><br>Choir Rehearsal<br><u>10:15 AM</u><br>Sunday Worship<br><u>11:00 AM</u><br>Bell Choir rehearsal<br>12:15 PM | <b>29</b>                             | <b>30</b> Men's Chat and<br>Chew Breakfast<br><u>8:00 AM</u><br>Boy Scout<br>meeting <u>7:00 PM</u><br>Virtual Bible Study<br>7:00 PM |   |   |           |  |
|  |                                       |   |   |   |           |  |