



GRACE TO YOU

July 2026

**Grace United
Protestant Church**

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

GRADUATE RECOGNITION AND CELEBRATION

On **Sunday, June 21st**, 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!

FUN AT TRIVIA NIGHT



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

UPCOMING CALENDAR

**PLEASE CHECK OUT THE
CALENDAR ON PAGE 13.**



GRACE TO YOU

THE PASTOR'S PAGE

Page 2

July 2026 Celebrating a Historical Milestone: 250 Years of American Independence

On Saturday, July 4th, we will celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation's independence! We thank God for the wonderful opportunity to witness a historic milestone. Two hundred fifty years ago, our founding fathers envisioned a nation to be founded on liberty, justice, and self-governance. They made the bold decision that ordinary people could govern themselves, that liberty belonged not to monarchs but to communities, and that all people are endowed by their Creator with unalienable rights. On that memorable day, July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence articulated a vision that would shape not only a nation but also inspire the world.

The founders of this nation were not perfect people, nor did they create a perfect union. But they dared to articulate a dream larger than themselves. They risked their lives, their livelihoods, and their futures to declare that freedom was worth fighting for. Their courage reminds us that liberty is never an accident. It is always the result of conviction, sacrifice, and a willingness to pursue what is right even when the path is costly.

Two hundred and fifty years later, America remains a work in progress. The ideals written in 1776 have been tested and expanded by generations striving for a better nation. For over two centuries, Americans from diverse backgrounds have worked to expand freedom, pursue equality, and strengthen our country through service. While our journey has not been perfect, it has been driven by those who believe in our ability to improve together.

As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of our Independence, we reflect on our past with gratitude, acknowledge our present realities, and look to the future with hope. This milestone encourages us to appreciate the freedoms that we enjoy, honor our diversity, and recognize the resilience that has carried us through challenges. It calls us to practice civility, seek justice, serve our neighbors, and strive for unity. The choices we make today will shape our future. Let us recommit to building a nation that values freedom, dignity, and hope for all people.

As fireworks light the sky and communities gather in celebration, may this milestone remind us that the American story is still being written. And each of us—through our words, our actions, our faith, and our love for neighbor—has a part to play. May God bless this nation with wisdom, unity, and courage. And may we, in turn, be a blessing to one another. Happy anniversary!

We extend our congratulations to everyone celebrating birthdays and wedding anniversaries this historic month. May you continue to enjoy God's blessings.

I will be on vacation from July 6 to 24. Rev. Dennis Condon will be our guest preacher on July 12 and 19. Rev. Dennis Langdon of Olympia Fields UMC will cover the pastoral needs. Please call the church office for any pastoral concerns.

Bible studies will be on break during July and August. We will resume on September 8th. Please take this time to read your Bible for spiritual growth.

Enjoy the 250th anniversary celebration of independence and have a wonderful vacation!.

Yours by His Grace, Pastor Amos Oladipo



WCA NEWS

WCA Board monthly meetings are on hiatus for the months of July and August. The next meeting will be on Thursday, September 3rd at 10:00 AM.

LOOKING AHEAD

Saturday, September 26th — 10:30 AM

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!

NOTHING BUNDT CAKES FUNDRAISER



Again this year, the WCA will be taking orders for **Nothing Bundt Cakes** Individual Bundtlets!

Cost: \$7 each

Sales dates are July 12th, July 19th, and July 26th before and after church

Flavors available: Red Velvet, Chocolate Chocolate Chip, White Chocolate Raspberry, Lemon, OREO® Cookies & Cream, Strawberries & Cream, Confetti, Carrot, Gluten-Free Chocolate Chip Cookie, Gluten-Free Lemon Raspberry, and Classic Vanilla.

To order or if you have questions, contact Leslie Langmeyer (708-481-1578).

Delivery will be Sunday, August 9th at church.

Orders will need to be pre-paid, please.

*** PANERA BREAD NIGHT ***

On Sunday, July 26th, please plan to have dinner (or pick up dinner and take home) anytime from 4:00-8:00 PM at Panera Bread in Matteson! Please print the flyer on page 12 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. You will need to show the flyer at the time you order. Panera will donate up to 30% of the total net sales to the WCA. Thank you for your support! It's really appreciated and all proceeds are given to missions!

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! If two people sign up for a month, there will be less to do!

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!

GRACE CHURCH
FAMILY FUN NIGHTS



LET'S FLY
A KITE!

JULY 7-9
6:30-8:30

MUSIC, CRAFTS, FELLOWSHIP, GAMES
THURSDAY IS MOVIE NIGHT
ALL AGES – FREE AND FAMILY FRIENDLY!

708-748-4567 OR GRACEUPC.ORG

GRACE UNITED PROTESTANT CHURCH
266 SOMONAUK, PARK FOREST, IL

MISSION NEWS

UMCOR

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), a unit of Global Ministries, is a humanitarian organization that helps alleviate human suffering, one of the two main goals of Global Ministries. UMCOR's work is carried out by providing relief and assistance in response to natural and human-made disasters and supporting programs in the areas of migration, health, food security and environmental sustainability.



As The United Methodist Church's global partner in all phases of disaster response, UMCOR supports goals and amplifies the connection's reach through multidimensional support that includes the mobilization of personnel, material resources and funding.

When a community is impacted by a natural or civil disaster, The United Methodist Church is there to alleviate suffering and offer critical support through UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief. This vital work extends beyond immediate relief, helping communities rebuild their lives and recover over the long term. Through annual conferences, episcopal areas, Disaster Management Offices (DMOs) and ecumenical organizations, we partner with people around the world to help communities carry out their own disaster response, recovery and mitigation efforts.

When disaster strikes, UMCOR is there to provide hope, help and healing. We come alongside communities to strengthen their response — equipping them with resources for immediate relief and long term recovery, while helping rebuild for a more resilient future.

Please support UMCOR as you are able. If you write a check, make it out to Grace Church and put UMCOR on the memo line and/or put your offering into one of the blue mission envelopes. Thank you!

MISSION FIELD TRIP

On Saturday, June 6th, members and friends went to Feed My Starving Children in Schaumburg to pack food to ship overseas for needy families. What a wonderful and fun experience! It's an opportunity we would like to do again!



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. Thank you!

~ Leslie

From *Jesus Listens* by Sarah Young

Jesus, my Rock,

I rejoice in my dependence on You! I've discovered that this is a place of wonderful security. I found out the hard way that depending on myself, others, or circumstances was like building my life on a foundation of sand. When storms came, I realized how flimsy my foundations was; it was totally inadequate to support me. Now I'm seeking to build my life *on the rock*—a foundation that is more than sufficient to support me during life's storms.

Lord, help me to depend on You not only in stormy circumstance but also when the sky is clear and my life is calm. This is a daily discipline—preparing me for *whatever* lies ahead. I've found that it's also a source of great Joy! Relying on You involves staying in communication with You—an extraordinary privilege! This rich blessing provides me with strength, encouragement, and guidance. When I stay in touch with You, I can cope with difficulties because I *know* I'm not alone. As I *walk in the Light of Your Presence*, You empower me to *rejoice in Your Name all day long*. Depending on You is a joyful, blessed way to live.

In Your joyous Name, Amen

.

From *The Upper Room*

IN GOD'S PERFECT TIMING

Jesus said, "*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit — fruit that will last — and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.*"
—John 15:16 (NIV)

I struggle with asking others for help, even though my sister believes people want to help if you let them know what you need. Last year, while hosting a garage sale alone, circumstance caused me to test her theory.

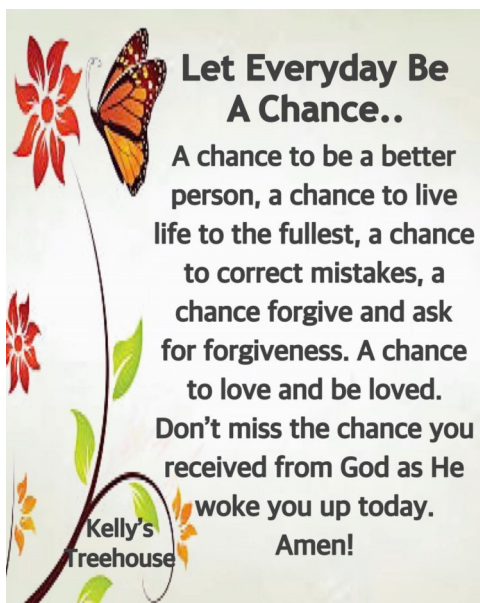
An elderly woman purchased a wooden end table and required assistance putting it in her car. I was frustrated that I couldn't help her because arthritic joints have kept me on crutches in recent years. In desperation, I asked a stranger who had just bought a vintage coffee pot, "Could you please help this woman?"

The man thrust his shoulders back and swooped into action, single-handedly lifting the heavy table. When the task was complete, I thanked him profusely. He walked away clutching the coffee pot and looking rather proud of himself.

Quite frequently, we forget to pray and to ask our benevolent heavenly Father for help when we need it. We carry around our daunting problems, fearful that our needs will go unmet. Yet when we pray, we can trust with gratitude that God will answer. God loves us more than we can imagine. God will give us what we truly need, often in mysterious ways, if only we ask.

Prayer: Dear God, when times are good, may we remember to thank you. When times are bad and we need help, may we remember to reach out to you, trusting that you will answer. Amen.

~ Christina Ryan Claypool (Ohio, USA)



BIBLE TRIVIA

July is a month of picnics so this month's theme is food and drinks of the Bible.

1. Who traded his bread and lentil stew for his brother's birthright? (Genesis 25:29-34)
2. According to the Law, what was the Passover meal to be composed of? (Exodus 12:3-10)
3. What city had a wedding feast where Jesus's first miracle was done? (John 2:1-12)
4. What army man was given a feast when he joined the side of David? (2 Samuel 3:20)
5. What did Paul recommend as a substitute for wine? (Ephesians 5:18)

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 10.

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 to tell Elaine Degenhart what you would like printed in the bulletin.** Thank you!



GRACE CHURCH TREASURER'S REPORT FROM RICK WASNEY

	Amount Received	Amount Needed	Surplus/ 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
May 2026	\$ 9,941.40	\$13,246.00	\$ 3,304.60
Year to Date 2026	\$57,146.85	\$66,230.00	\$ 9,083.15

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.

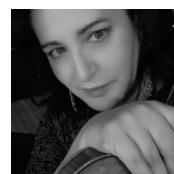
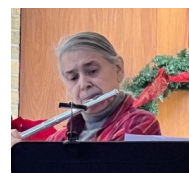
The next one will be held Saturday, July 11th at 10:30 AM. The topic for the morning will be "We make Christ known everywhere we go." (Mark 16:15)

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

GRACE CHURCH JAZZ BAND

Grace has had such a wonderful jazz band for many years! And now, we are blessed to have three new and not-so-new faces that have joined the group!

- Niki Juarez-Cummings is so talented; she plays several instruments and "graces" us with the flute in the jazz band. As an added treat, sometimes she and her husband, Brian Cummings, add vocals.
- Avery Degenhart plays bass ukulele. After many years living in New York and Philadelphia, she has moved back to the area and is joining the jazz band.
- We welcome Daniela Bisenius; she is a professional violinist with over 25 years of experience teaching and performing. She offers violin lessons to all ages and levels, and beginner piano in her Park Forest home. If interested, please contact her at (630) 504-9221 or www.diarteentertainment.com



They all add their beautiful music to our incredible Jazz Band: Steve Jacobson, Valerie Nicholson, Dave Rogers, and Matt Whitson. Thank you to each and every member for enriching our spiritual and musical experiences!

Please plan to join our Jazz Sunday worship service every third Sunday of the month to hear the wonderful, inspiring music!

SPECIAL "MUSIC" FOR THE SUMMER

Choir and bell practice has finished for the summer. But we all love special "music" time. There are many different ways to contribute your talents throughout the summer. Pick a Sunday and let Valerie Nicholson know what you'll be sharing! There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex.



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.

A NOTE FROM THE STEINERS

Grace Family,

Please accept our donation for the church in appreciation for all you do for and with Jennifer. She is always blessed by the services at the church and loves all the activities that she attends. :)

Thanks so much for loving and caring for her!

PRAY FOR PEACE

Grace Church hosts 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, July 1st** to support the Prayer Vigil for Peace.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT...

Grace Church has a Pastor's Discretionary Fund, which as the name states, is used at the Pastor's discretion.

There are a few immediate needs that Pastor Amos hopes can be met.

Please feel free to donate to this fund making sure that you designate your donation for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

Thank you for your generosity and the willingness to help others.

CELEBRATIONS FOR JULY



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

Charlotte Singer—2nd
 Carl Stover—4th
 Glennace Rocker—12th
 Janet Whitson Markus—15th
 Brian Forbes—29th
 Marge Neel—31st



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

Glenn and Sheena Gilbert—1st



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	Marge Neel
Nan Beard	Forrest (Lee) Nelson
Abby Burchill	Ronan Nelson
Jackie Ceres	Allan Smith
Gabe Chachakis	Alma White
Magda Condon	Kristy Whitson
Charlotte Earving	The Migrants, Immigrants, and Refugees among us
Melissa Harms	The Victims of Gun Violence
Niki Juarez-Cummings	The People of Iran
Alice Knox	The People of Israel and Gaza
Malcolm Knox	The People of Ukraine



Charlotte Earving loves to have visitors at Aliya Nursing Home where she is in rehab. She also loves cards and phone calls:

Aliya Nursing Home
 940 Maple Ave. Room 113
 Homewood, IL 60430
 Phone: 708-206-6335

Charlotte says she can't wait to leave and have regular food. And, guess what?! We can take food in to her. Her favorite is tacos, but be careful, she has a low-salt diet.

Please remember Charlotte in your prayers as she's working hard in rehab.

Answers to Bible Trivia:

1. Jacob
2. A cooked lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs
3. Cana
4. Abner
5. The Holy Spirit

Congratulations to Blaise on earning his Scout rank .



ABOUT Scouts

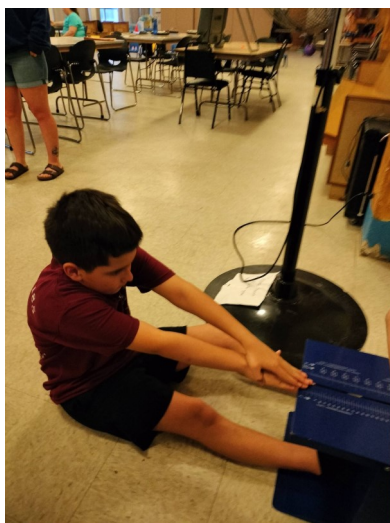
The Scouts collected over 450 items for Scouting for Food!! Nice job Scouts!



Another successful ten mile hike completed. It started out wet and cool from the rain (56°), but the clouds quickly cleared and the sun became toasty (84°).



A great meeting working on fitness as well as some scouts knocking out merit badge requirements.





We're raising dough!

GRACE UNITED PROTESTANT CHURCH

**July 26, 2026
4:00 pm to 8:00 pm
4864 211th Street, Matteson, IL**

30%

OF NET SALES
WILL BE
DONATED*

Use code FUND4U at 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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JULY 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Prayer Group <u>9:30 AM</u> Community Prayer Vigil 6:00 PM	2	3	4  PF Parade 6:00 PM
5 Communion Sunday Worship 11:00 AM	6	7 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout meeting 7:00 PM Family Fun Night 6:30-8:30 PM	8 Prayer Group <u>9:30 AM</u> Family Fun Night 6:30-8:30 PM	9 Family Fun Night 6:30-8:30 PM	10	11 ART meeting <u>9:30 AM</u> Go Team training on Zoom 10:30 AM
12 Sunday Worship <u>11:00 AM</u> WCA Fundraiser	13	14 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout meeting 7:00 PM	15 Prayer Group <u>9:30 AM</u> Tabitha Circle in parlor <u>2:00 PM</u> Scout Committee meeting 7:00 PM	16	17	18
19 Jazz Sunday Worship <u>11:00 AM</u> Coffee & Fellowship <u>following church</u> WCA Fundraiser	20	21 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout meeting 7:00 PM	22 Prayer Group 9:30 AM	23	24	25
26 Outdoor Sunday Worship <u>11:00 AM</u> <u>WCA Fundraiser</u> PANERA NIGHT	27	28 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout meeting 7:00 PM	29 Prayer Group 9:30 AM	30	31	