



GRACE TO YOU

May 2026

Grace United
Protestant Church

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

EASTER AT GRACE



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



*A spiritual home for
worship and service.*

Website: graceupc.org

UPCOMING CALENDAR

PLEASE CHECK OUT THE
CALENDAR ON PAGE 12.



THE PASTOR'S PAGE**May 2026****Tribute to Mothers**

On May 10th, we will celebrate and honor our mothers during the worship service. We will recognize them for all the roles that God has blessed them with—biological, surrogate, adoptive, foster, and more. We will also pay tribute to women who may not fit the traditional definition of "mother" but have embraced the role by nurturing children with their love.

This month, we take a moment to honor the women whose love has shaped our stories in ways that words can hardly express. For many of us who no longer have our mothers, this tribute serves as a reminder of their love and the paths we walk today. Mothers possess a unique strength—subtle enough to be overlooked, yet powerful enough to hold families together. Their hands have wiped away tears, prepared meals, held tiny hands, and provided support for trembling hearts. Their voices have offered comfort in the night, wisdom in times of confusion, and courage when we felt small.

Mothers demonstrate what love looks like in action. They wake up early, stay up late, and give more of themselves than anyone realizes. They celebrate our victories, support us during our failures, and believe in us long before we have faith in ourselves. Their sacrifices often go unnoticed, but their impact is undeniable.

Some mothers give us life, while others choose us through adoption or foster care. Some serve as grandmothers, aunts, mentors, teachers, or spiritual mothers. They mother us with their prayers, presence, encouragement, and unwavering faith. All of these women remind us of the tender and faithful heart of God.

To every mother and mother figure: Thank you for the nights you stayed awake so we could rest. Thank you for the prayers you offered when we didn't even know we needed them. Thank you for the lessons you taught, the patience you displayed, and the love you poured out time and again. Your influence reaches farther than you realize. Your legacy is written in the lives you've shaped. Your love endures long after your words fade from memory.

Today, we honor you. We bless you, and we thank God for you. We celebrate the irreplaceable gift you are to this world. We invite you to bring your families and friends to join us in a special celebration of our mothers and women on the second Sunday of this month.

We extend our special congratulations to our birthday and anniversary celebrants! We rejoice with them and pray that God continues to bless them with many happy and healthy years.

We continue to pray for our brothers and sisters experiencing health and other life challenges for healing and God's presence in their situations.

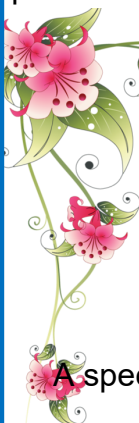
Happy Mother's Day!

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.



WCA SPRING POTLUCK LUNCHEON

Please plan to join us on

Saturday, April 18th

at

12:00 PM

A special program by Catherine Inserra, a Deaconess from Kids Above All, and a musical program by Brian Cummings and Niki Juarez Cummings will follow lunch.

Bring your favorite dish to share.

All women and men are invited for this wonderful time of fun, food, and fellowship!

SPRING FUNDRAISER

Mark your calendars for the Spring Fundraiser — ButterBraid coffee cakes, Joyful Traditions cake rolls, Otis Spunkmeyer cookies, and Amish Pretzel Co. pretzels will be available.

The last day to order is April 26th. Delivery will be May 5th, in time for Mother's Day.

Please check out the information on page 11.

THANK YOU!

Despite the really crummy weather and with your help, we were able to realize \$70.81 for Panera Night. These monies will benefit our missions. Thank you for your support!

This seems to be a popular fundraiser and we look forward to doing it every three to four months.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Saturday, June 6th

At the most recent WCA board meeting, it was decided that we will be taking a Mission Field Trip on **Saturday, June 6th** to Feed My Starving Children in Schaumburg, IL. We would like to have a good-sized group going. This is a rewarding time of filling meals to send overseas to help feed the hungry. Please let Sue Dukes know by May 30th if you are planning to go.

We will plan to have a self-paid lunch before we start our 12:00 PM scheduled time.

LOOKING AHEAD

Saturday, September 26th

This year, our Spiritual Retreat will be at the church with the movie of St. John in Exile. There will be a discussion following. This proves to be a wonderful retreat.

We will plan to go to a local restaurant following; location TBD.

Everyone is welcome!

MISSIONS NEWS

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

Church World Service (CWS) is our designated mission for May and June. Past donations from Grace Church have concentrated on blankets, but the mission of this 80-year-old faith-based organization goes way beyond distributing blankets in emergencies. Justice, Hope, Belonging, Excellence, Collaboration, and Integrity are the values that drive them to fulfill the vision of a world where all have food, voice, and a safe place to call home. Since 1946 they have transformed communities with responses to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster. Blankets, hygiene kits, school kits, and clean-up buckets and tools are distributed during and after emergencies. Response to the effects of climate change, resettlement of refugees, water and sanitation services, and long-term sustainable recovery help families rebuild with dignity. Check out the blanket display in the hallway and take a “blanket the world in love” card to dedicate your donation in honor of someone special.

Please give as you are able using the blue mission envelopes in the sanctuary or clearly indicating that your donation is for CWS.

The infographic consists of five circular photos, each with a yellow callout bubble containing a dollar amount and a blue text box describing the impact of the donation. The photos show: 1) A woman holding a blanket. 2) A group of people holding yellow blankets. 3) A family standing in front of a destroyed home. 4) A woman in a purple hoodie holding a blanket. 5) A woman in a black shirt in front of a refugee center.

- \$10**: Provides a blanket to a person in need
- \$50**: Blankets an entire family in need
- \$250**: Provides lightweight blankets for five families left homeless by a tornado
- \$500**: Provides warm blankets for a small women's shelter
- \$1200**: Provides blankets for a refugee welcome center

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, May 6th** for our first Prayer Vigil for Peace.

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 *Walking in Grace*

As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. — John 1:12 (NIV)

I read somewhere that one should take a break between workouts to allow one’s muscles to rest. I took a 3-year break, just to be sure.

I finally returned to the gym last month, and the results are astounding. In a few short weeks, I’ve lost zero pounds and taken—let me measure—0.0 inches off my waist. It’s unbelievable I could work out regularly and achieve no apparent effect. Meet the new paunch—same as the old paunch.

This frustration isn’t new to me; it mirrors my prayer life. I go long stretches without genuine, meaningful conversations with God—then, after my sudden return, I wonder why the results aren’t instantaneous, as if God were an ATM, dispensing grace at the push of a button.

I know my workouts need to be more committed and consistent; ditto with my spiritual life. I’ve decided to add two new (old) exercises to my routine:

Bend my knee. Bow my head. Repeat.

Give my strength to seek You regularly, Lord, and courage to hear.

~Mark Collins



From *Jesus Listens* by Sarah Young

Gentle Jesus,

As I look at this day that’s stretching out before me, I see a twisted, complicated path—with branches going off in all directions. I start wondering how I can possibly find my way thorough that maze. But then I remember: *You are always with me, holding me by my right hand.* I recall Your promise to *guide me with Your counsel*, and I begin to relax. When I look again at my pathway, I notice that a peaceful fog has settled over it—obscuring my view. I can see only a few steps in front of me, so I turn my attention more fully You and start to enjoy Your Presence.

You’ve been showing me that the “fog” is a protection You provide for me—calling me back into the present moment. Though You inhabit all of space and time, You communicate with me *here* and *now*. Please train me to keep my focus on You and on the path just ahead of me. Then the “fog” will no longer be necessary as I walk through each day with You.

In Your comforting Name, Amen.

BIBLE TRIVIA

May is the month that plants begin to bloom so the focus will be on plants mentioned in the Bible.

1. What king appointed an overseer to watch the fruits of the olive trees and sycamores? (Chronicles 27:28)
2. What plant sprang up miraculously to give shade to the prophet Jonah? (Jonah 4:6)
3. What, according to the New Testament, produces the smallest seed of any plant? (Matthew 13:31)
4. Which book mentions Rose of Sharon and Lily of the Valley?
5. What kind of wood is Noah's ark made of? (Genesis 6:14)
6. Bonus: what is the only book of the Bible to mention the apple tree?

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 9.

SERMON NOTES

Did you miss a Sunday service and were sorry to have missed Pastor Amos's inspiring words? You're in luck! Go to the Grace Church website and catch his past sermons!

They're also many other informative tidbits!

graceupc.org



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.

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!



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, May 2nd at 10:30 AM. The topic for the morning will be "We consume, study, meditate, believe and follow God's words. They take root and bear fruit in our lives" (*John 8:31-32, Psalm 1:1-3*)

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 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.

HEIFER THANK YOU

Thank you for your support of Heifer International during Lent and through April. Another year of our annual Palm Sunday luncheon was a success thanks to your donations of food, help and money. Continue with your prayers for the great work of Heifer providing long-term solutions to hunger and poverty around the world.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL



May 17 is the last Sunday school class before the summer break and will return on September 7.

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 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
Year to Date 2026	\$34,400.22	\$39,738.00	\$ 5,337.78

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.

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 MAY



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

Ray Van Dyke—1st
Daniel Christain—15th
Gloria Whitson—18th
Jane Stover—24th
Sue Dukes—27th



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

Carl and Jane Stover—14th
Amos and Becky Oladipo—19th
Brian and Jennifer Forbes—19th



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

Forrest (Lee) Nelson

Ray Abels

Ronan Nelson

Nan Beard

Stacey Peterson

Abby Burchill

Kyla Jo Purvenas

Jackie Ceres

Jeff Steiner

Gabe Chachakis

Szymanski Family

Daniel Christain

Alma White

Magda Condon

Kristy Whitson

Ralph Duncan

The Migrants, Immigrants, and
Refugees among us

Niki Juarez Cummings

The Victims of Gun Violence

Mona Earving

The People of Iran

Malcolm Knox

The People of Israel and Gaza

Jim Lewis

The People of Ukraine

Helen Neel

Marge Neel

Declare today that you won't stress over things that are out of your control. People will be people, jobs will be jobs but one thing is for sure, God will be God. Let Him handle it! Psalm 46:10

Answers to Bible Trivia:

1. David
2. A gourd
3. Mustard
4. Song of Solomon
5. Gopherwood
6. Song of Solomon

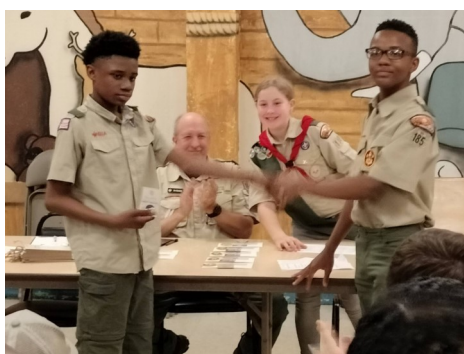
ABOUT Scouts

What a great Court of Honor! So many patches, merit badges and ranks awarded! Great job Scouts!



Scouts received their Time Trek camporee patch

Scouts received their popcorn patch. This was their best sales year, to date.



Zamir received his Citz Nation merit badge



Malaki received his 2nd class rank



James received his Star rank



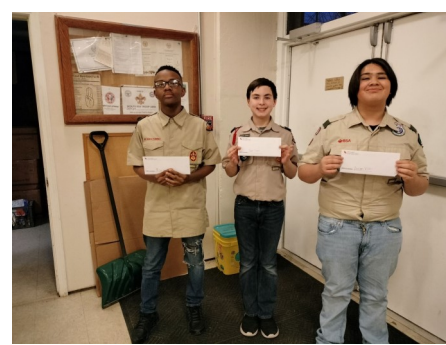
Laec received his Star rank



Charlotte received her Tenderfoot rank



Our newest Scouts received their troop neckerchiefs and troop numbers for their uniforms



Congratulations to Alijah, James and Enrique, who were nominated to the Order of the Arrow, Scouting America's honor society.

LA BRAID FUNDRAISER

**Sale dates are April 12th, April 19th, and April 26th
Delivery is scheduled for May 5th.**

If you are unable to pick up your orders, arrangements can be made to deliver them.

Butter Braid Pastries, Cake rolls, Otis Spunkmeyer cookie doughs, and Soft Pretzels and bites are all available:

Mother's Day is coming — Be sure to stock up now!

Butter Braid Pastries — \$18.00 each:

Apple	Four Cheese & Herb
Bavarian Crème	Strawberry Cream Cheese
Blueberry Cream Cheese	Raspberry
Cherry	Carmel Rolls
Cinnamon	Cinnamon Rolls



Joyful Traditions Cake Rolls—\$18.00 each:

Carrot Cake roll	Pumpkin cake roll
Chocolate cake roll	Red Velvet cake roll
Lemon Crème cake roll	Strawberry Cheesecake cake roll



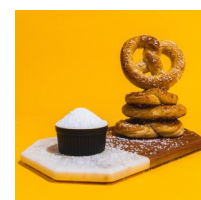
Otis Spunkmeyer Cookie Dough—\$20.00 each:

Classic Chocolate Chip Pecan	Snickerdoodle
Chocolate Chip Toffee Crunch	Strawberry Shortcake
Chocolate Chip	Triple Chocolate Chunk
Peanut Butter	White Chocolate Sweet Macadamia Nut



Amish Pretzel Co. Soft Pretzels and Pretzel Bites—\$20.00 each:

6 Pretzels per box	Approx. 30 Pretzel Bites per box
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Croissant Crowns—\$20.00 each

Breakfast: The Ultimate morning pastry! Scrambled eggs, Swiss cheese, Ham & Sausage or Ham & Cheese: Savory mix of Swiss cheese and ham, perfect for a mid-day snack. 6 Crowns per box.

Please order at church or call/email Sue Dukes (815-931-5145; email sdukes555@hotmail.com) or Chris Long (708-606-9143; email longabc51@gmail.com) or Leslie Langmeyer (708-481-1578; email llangmeyer@aol.com) to place your order.

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ALL ORDERS NEED TO BE PRE-PAID.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT TO THE WCA MISSIONS.**



MAY 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Spring Cleaning and Scouts' "Trash the Trash" <u>9:00 AM</u> Go Team training on Zoom <u>10:30 AM</u>
3 Communion Sunday Worship and Sunday School <u>11:00 AM</u> Choir Rehearsal <u>12:15 PM</u>	4	5 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> WCA fundraiser <u>delivery 9:00 AM</u> Boy Scout <u>meeting 7:00 PM</u> Bible Study 7PM	6 Prayer Group <u>9:30 AM</u> Community Prayer Vigil <u>6:00 PM</u>	7 WCA Board meeting <u>10:00 AM</u> in parlor	8	9 ART meeting <u>9:30 AM</u>
10 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> Happy Mother's Day	11	12 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout <u>meeting 7:00 PM</u> Virtual Bible Study 7:00 PM	13 Prayer Group <u>9:30 AM</u> Scout Committee meeting 7:00 PM	14	15	16
17 Jazz Sunday Worship and Sunday School <u>11:00 AM</u> . Coffee & Fellowship following church	18	19 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout <u>meeting 7:00 PM</u> Virtual Bible Study 7:00 PM	20 Prayer Group <u>9:30 AM</u> Tabitha Circle in parlor <u>2:00 PM</u>	21	22	23
24 Choir Rehearsal <u>10:15 AM</u> Sunday Worship <u>11:00 AM</u> Bell Choir rehearsal <u>12:15 PM</u>	25 	26 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout <u>meeting 7:00 PM</u> Virtual Bible Study 7:00 PM	27 Prayer Group <u>9:30 AM</u>	28	29	30 Trivia Night <u>7:00 PM</u>
31 Sunday Worship <u>11:00 AM</u>						