



GRACE TO YOU

April 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

UPCOMING CALENDAR

**PLEASE CHECK OUT THE
CALENDAR ON PAGE 14.**



MISSION NEWS

During the season of Lent we support our annual mission for Heifer International, which will continue through April.

The basic concept of Heifer is passing on the gift of sharing. Gifting animals, with the requirement that an offspring and training must be passed on, creates thriving families and communities.

Additional information about Heifer is on page 7 and on the literature tables. **Please remember to use the Easter envelope in your pledge box or the blue mission envelope in the pews.**

Be sure to save the afternoon of Palm Sunday, March 29th, for the Potato & Ice Cream Luncheon fundraiser. A free will offering will be collected for Heifer.



GRACE TO YOU
THE PASTOR'S PAGE

2026 EASTER PASTORAL LETTER

“The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice and be glad.” Psalm 118:24

Dear Beloved in Christ,

As we approach Easter, we step once again into the heart of our faith—the astonishing truth that death does not get the final word. In a world that often feels weighed down by uncertainty, loss, and unanswered questions, the resurrection of Jesus stands as God’s bold declaration that hope is stronger than despair, light is stronger than darkness, and life is stronger than death.

Easter is not just a moment on the calendar; it is a reminder that God is still at work in the places that feel sealed off, silent, or forgotten. The same God who rolled away the stone continues to roll away the burdens that keep us from living fully in His grace. Wherever you find yourself this season—joyful, weary, grateful, or searching—may you know that the risen Christ meets you there with compassion and power.

My prayer is that this Easter renews your courage, restores your joy, and rekindles your expectation that God is not finished writing your story. May the resurrection breathe fresh life into your home, your relationships, your faith, and your future. Christ is risen. And because He lives, we live with hope. May His risen life be your strength and your song.

We invite you, your family, and neighbors to join us in celebrating Jesus’ triumphant entry to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, March 29th, and His resurrection on Easter Sunday, April 5th, at 11 AM, as well as during the Holy Week celebrations leading up to Easter:

Celebration of the Lord’s Supper on Maundy Thursday, April 2nd at 7 PM

Commemoration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday, April 3rd, at 7 PM.

Please note that the worship services for Holy Thursday and Good Friday will be at 7 PM.

In grateful recognition of God's love and in support of His mission both within our community and beyond, we invite you to be generous with your Easter offering. Your contributions are truly appreciated and will help make a positive impact on those in need. **Please bring your offerings to church on Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026.** If you are unable to attend, you may mail your gift to the church. Thank you for your kindness and generosity!

The weekly Bible study on the Gospel of John continues. Please join us on Tuesdays at 7 P.M.

We celebrate our birthday and wedding anniversary celebrants this month and wish them continued blessings. We pray for God's presence and healing for those facing health challenges. Let's also continue reaching out by phone or postcard to those who are unable to join us in the sanctuary.

May the power of Christ's resurrection fill your life with hope.
He is Risen! Alleluia!

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 mark your calendars and
plan to join us on
Saturday, April 18th
at
12:00 PM

Bring your favorite dish to share.

A special program by Catherine Inserra, a Deaconess from Kids Above All, will follow lunch.

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, Amish Pretzel Co. pretzels, and Croissant Crowns will be available. Sale dates will be **April 12th, 19th, and 26th.**

Delivery will be in time for Mother's Day.

Please check out the information on page 11.

**PLEASE DON'T FORGET PANERA NIGHT ON SUNDAY, MARCH 15TH!
THE NEEDED COUPON IS ON PAGE 12 OR CONTACT LESLIE LANGMEYER
(708-481-1578 or llangmeyer@aol.com) FOR A DIGITAL COPY.**

WOW !!

With the incredible generosity of all of you, we filled **67** "Love Bags" while having fun at the same time. This allowed Alice Knox and Pastor Amos to take 50 of the bags to Countryside Nursing and Rehab in Dolton on March 10th.

Thanks to all who donated, attended, and filled bags!



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

Thank you to Maureen Cribbs for sending this:

About Ben Adkem by Leigh Hunt

About Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" — The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerily still; and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow man."
The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blest,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name lead all the rest!

Choose to live in joy.

Life goes by in the blink of an eye. It's too short to live upset, angry, resentful or ungrateful. If you look for the good, you'll find it. Choose to be happy, to be at peace. Decide that each day is going to be a great day and grab each moment and make the best of it. Refuse to let negative thoughts take root in your mind and refuse to let negative people and situations drag you down. Trust your journey and know that if you make a mistake, it's okay. See it as a lesson learned and keep moving forward. Spend less time worrying and more time being grateful for those who love you and all of life's goodness.



Unknown / Power of Words
powerofwords.com



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

Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"
~ Mark 9:7 (NIV)

I've always been fascinated by the story of Jesus taking three of his disciples up high on a mountain, where they saw Him transfigured. But the part that dumbfounds me occurs when on the way back down the mountain, Jesus tells them to tell no one about what they had seen—at least not until the Son of Man has risen from the dead (Mark 9:9)

I don't know how good you are at keeping secrets, but if I had just witnessed something that newsworthy, I'm not sure I could keep my mouth shut. I'm afraid I'd have been a total disappointment when it came to the whole "tell no one" order. I imagine that I would have justified it in my mind. *Was it really a request? He didn't mean not to tell my best friend, did He?*

I expect His disciples felt overwhelmed by having to keep quiet about what they witnessed. But they kept in mind that the voice in the cloud had told them to listen to Jesus. Holding on to this secret would have required patience and willpower that I doubt I could have maintained.

The disciples grasped the true significance of their directive. Jesus's words held meaning because of His trust in them. And they, through their faith in Jesus, did not disappoint Him.
~ Jeannie Hughes

BIBLE TRIVIA

Easter time is this month's focus

1. What woman, according to Jesus, prepared him for burial? (Matthew 26:12 2)
2. Who brought myrrh and aloe for the burial of Jesus? (John 19:39)
3. Who led some officers of the chief priests to pay a late night call on Jesus? (John 18:3)
4. Where did Jesus tell his disciples to have the traditional Passover supper? (Mark 14:12-13)
5. Who was plotting Jesus death during Passover? (Luke 22:1-2)

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 6.

SUCH A BLESSING!

The Men of A-Chord concert and sing-along on March 1st was fabulous! Comments heard after: "Wow!," "Let's do this again!," "The music was so inspiring!" All who came were so glad they did!



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, April 4th. The Zoom link is [Zoom Link](#), Meeting ID 96417329893, Passcode 081053



MUSIC OPPORTUNITIES AT GRACE!

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.

CALLING ALL MEN!

The Chat n' Chew group meets every Tuesday morning for breakfast at 8:00 AM at Big Apple in Chicago Heights.

As you can see, there's plenty of room for anyone who would like to spend the morning chatting and chewing! It's a great time of fellowship!

Answers to Bible Trivia:

1. The woman with the ointment
2. Nicodemus
3. Judas
4. Jerusalem
5. Chief Priests and other religious leaders

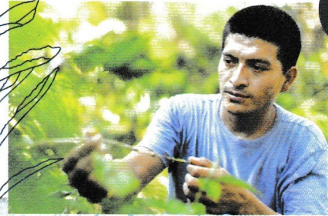


HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

52.6 MILLION
families helped since 1944 –
you fuel their success!

Today and every day, you have the heart of a champion. Your gift supports a family in a different corner of the world, just like yours, leaving a lasting presence that stays with them throughout their journey.

Here's how you're with them every step of the way:



Rudy Sagastume, Guatemala

#1 A NEW BEGINNING

As Rudy's champion, you gave him the first step toward change — new spice trees to grow his natural green thumb.



Angura Begum, Bangladesh

#2

GROWTH FROM OPPORTUNITY

You cheered on Angura as she took her next key step — receiving training and goats, which helped her grow a thriving farm!

9 MILLION

people trained since 2012, all thanks to champions like you



Magali Martin May, Mexico

#3

UNITING FOR CHANGE

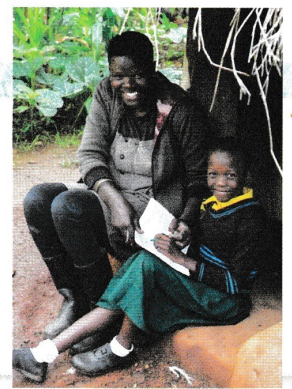
You've also been a hero to Magali and introduced her to a women's collective, where she collaborates with other entrepreneurs and sells her eggs!

Your support helps women THRIVE:
67% of program participants in the last year were women

#4

DREAMS BECOME REALITY

You filled Susan's future with hope. The extra income from selling her cow's milk now funds her daughter's education — an opportunity Susan never had.



Susan Acan, Uganda

#5

PASSING ON EMPOWERMENT

And your heroic spirit empowered Ramata to discover her own. She learned about Passing on the Gift®. Now, she shares her skills and seeds with other women farmers, spreading your impact even further.

Ramata Niass, Senegal



"As the Wolof saying goes, 'Strength is in unity, and what one can do, two can do better.' This is true for us."

— Ramata



THANK YOU FOR BEING THEIR CHAMPION!

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.

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 focus will be on the resurrection of Jesus.

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.

The Children's Sunday School class will be keeping Skylar Morgan in our prayers as she undergoes a second hip surgery and recovery. Skylar is the granddaughter of Pastor Charles Rush of Love of Christ Ministry and often joins our class while waiting for their church service to begin.

TREASURER'S SUMMARY 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
Year to Date 2026	\$23,833.66	\$26,492.00	\$ 2,658.34

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 APRIL



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

- Aiden Gilbert—9th
- Charlotte Earving—14th
- Skylar Morgan—15th
- Charles Scott—28th



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 | Marge Neel |
| Ray Abels | Forrest (Lee) Nelson |
| Nan Beard | Ronan Nelson |
| Abby Burchill | Stacey Peterson |
| Jackie Ceres | Kyla Jo Purvenas |
| Gabe Chachakis | Doug Smith |
| Daniel Christain | Jeff Steiner |
| Magda Condon | Szymanski Family |
| Ralph Duncan | Alma White |
| Niki Juarez Cummings | Kristy Whitson |
| Mona Earving | The Migrants, Immigrants, and
Refugees among us |
| Malcolm Knox | The Victims of Gun Violence |
| Steven Krause | The People of Iran |
| Jim Lewis | The People of Israel and Gaza |
| Skylar Morgan | The People of Ukraine |
| Helen Neel | |

THANK YOUs from Jennifer and Sue

Dear Grace Church family,

Thank you so much for praying for my family during my dad's surgery. I am so glad that I have a church family who is faithful in prayer and believes in prayer. Thank you for being supportive of my mom, my dad and me.

Love, Jennifer Steiner

Just wanted to say thanks to all who helped out with all the flowers during the past 3 months.

~ Sue Cassara

ABOUT Scouts

Congratulations to Mrs. Chachakis who was awarded the Special Needs Scouting Service Award at the Pathway To Adventure Council's luncheon.

Troop 185 welcomed three new members to the Troop as Arrow of Light Scouts Caleb, Blaise, and Lucas crossed over to Scouts BSA. They joined us for cabin camping at Camp Sullivan.



A great first campout for 2026. Our newly crossed over Scouts got involved right from the start, shopping and cooking. All the scouts enjoyed time together playing games and wall climbing.



LA BRAID FUNDRAISER

**Sale dates are April 12th, April 19th, and April 26th
Delivery will be in time for Mother's Day.**

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, Soft Pretzels and bites, and Croissant Crowns are all available:

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

Butter Braid Pastries — \$18.00 each:

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



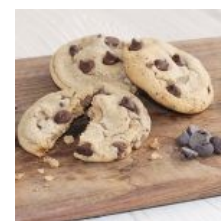
Joyful Traditions Cake Rolls—\$18.00 each:

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:

Chocolate Chip	Snickerdoodle
Chocolate Chip Toffee Crunch	Strawberry Shortcake
Lemon Burst	Triple Chocolate Chunk
Peanut Butter	White Chocolate Sweet Macadamia Nut

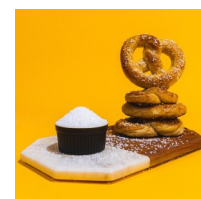


Amish Pretzel Co. Soft Pretzels and Pretzel Bites—\$20.00 each:

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.**



We're raising dough!

GRACE UNITED PROTESTANT CHURCH

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

25%
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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SECRET MESSAGE

Follow the instructions to cross off words in the table.

What do the remaining words say?

1. Cross off all words that are birds.
2. Cross off all movie titles.
3. Cross off all words that are flowers.
4. Cross off all tools you find in a kitchen.
5. Cross off all breakfast foods.
6. Cross off all words that rhyme with *cross*.



nuthatch	hyacinth	Notorious	saucepan
omelets	Jesus	tulip	Christ
mixer	gloss	is	Blue jay
risen	E.T.	serving spoon	loss
toss	He	Holiday Inn	coffee maker
potholder	woodpecker	is	Star Wars
cardinal	lily	boss	French toast
Casablanca	risen	rose	strainer
pancakes	chickadee	indeed	daffodil
spatula	bacon	Citizen Kane	floss



April 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Prayer Group 9:30 AM	2 WCA Board Meeting <u>10:00 AM</u> Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 PM	3 Good Friday Service 7:00 PM	4 Go Team training on Zoom 10:30 AM
5 Easter Sunday Choir Rehearsal <u>10:00 AM</u> Bell Choir Rehearsal <u>10:30 AM</u> Communion Sunday Worship and Sunday School 11:00 AM	6	7 Men's Chat and Chew Breakfast <u>8:00 AM</u> Boy Scout meeting 7:00 PM	8 Prayer Group <u>9:30 AM</u> Scout Committee meeting 7:00 PM	9	10	11 ART meeting in parlor 9:30 AM
12 Choir Rehearsal <u>10:15 AM</u> Sunday Worship and Sunday School <u>11:00 AM</u> Bell Choir rehearsal 12:15 PM	13 Rebekah Circle at the home of Chris Long 7:00 PM	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 2:00 PM	16	17	18 WCA Spring Potluck Luncheon 12:00 noon
19 Jazz Sunday Worship and Sunday School <u>11:00 AM.</u> Coffee & Fellowship following church	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 Choir Rehearsal <u>10:15 AM</u> Sunday Worship and Sunday School <u>11:00 AM</u> Bell Choir rehearsal 12:15 PM	27	28 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	29 Prayer Group 9:30 AM	30		

