

Grace *Connections*
Lutheran Church
Champaign, Illinois

How the Transfiguration Prepares Us for Lent

The beginning of March and the beginning of Lent line up pretty closely this year, with the pre-Lenten celebration of the Transfiguration falling on March 2. You may have noticed that Lutherans take a fairly traditional approach to the church calendar, observing special days that less liturgical denominations ignore. You should know, though, that we do this not out of a conviction that the traditional way is the only right way, but because it can be helpful in fulfilling our central and defining task. That task, of course is communicating the gospel, God’s life-giving message of forgiveness, love, and hope through Jesus’ death and resurrection.

But sometimes the tradition does not serve that central task, or could serve it better, and in those cases we have felt free to modify and adapt the tradition. That was true from the very beginning of the Lutheran movement. The last seven articles of the Augsburg Confession, the foundational Lutheran document, explained changes in church practice that Lutheran churches in Germany had made, and the gospel-related reasons for doing so. Examples included allowing priests to get married, distributing both the wine and bread in holy communion (previously only the clergy received the wine!), and the nature and limits of monastic vows and the power of bishops.

The observance of the Transfiguration as the final Sunday before the Lent is a modern example of changing the tradition to better serve the gospel. But in this case, it was not a specifically Lutheran change but an ecumenical one. It was undertaken by the Protestant denominations that developed the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) in the 1980s, a revision of the Common Lectionary created by the Roman Catholic Church in 1969 as one of the reforms of Vatican II. The traditional date for the Transfiguration was August 6. Why August 6? Because that was when the Ottoman siege of Belgrade was lifted in 1546. Of course! But if that does not strike you as a particularly relevant event to tie the church calendar to in our time, you are not alone. The RCL folks noticed that in the Gospels the Transfiguration is a transitional point in Jesus’ earthly ministry, after which he begins his journey to Jerusalem where he will be crucified. And so it made much more sense to them to place the observance of this festival just before the church begins the Lenten journey to Good Friday. That way we go into Lent equipped with God’s assurance that Jesus is God’s beloved son, and that he knows what he’s doing by going to the cross. As Jesus stands talking with Moses and Elijah, the representatives of the Jewish religious tradition, we hear God speak from the cloud that envelops them: “Listen to *him!*” And when we listen to him, we know that as much as we would love to stay up on the mountain – as Peter suggested – Jesus is calling us to come down and journey with him.

+ Pastor Repp

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March Calendar

God Connections

Faith, Worship, Music, Study, Prayer

March Faith Circle

Faith Circle meets on the third Tuesday evening of each month at 7 pm in the narthex. All are welcome. We begin the evening with refreshments (coffee and snacks provided by the hostess) and fellowship. The lesson leader presents the Bible study, beginning around approximately **7:30 pm**.

This month's Faith Circle is on **Tuesday, March 18th**. It is being hosted by Helen Repp, with Kathy Bowersox serving as the lesson leader.

We collect an offering each month, which will support the ministries of WELCA (Women of the ELCA) as well as selected local and ELCA charities. We use the Bible study materials from *Gather Magazine*, a WELCA publication. **Plan to attend and bring a friend!**

Brown Bag Bible Study

Our bi-weekly lunchtime Bible study meets on **Thursdays at 12:30 p.m. in the narthex**. We are studying the book of Romans.

Upcoming dates are: March 6 & 20; April 3; May 1 & 15 (and 29 if we need it to finish the book.)
Join us!

Adult Faith Formation Class: Worship

What is worship? What is Lutheran worship? What is essential in worship? Why do we worship? Who do we worship? What goes into planning and leading a worship service? This course will focus on both the Biblical and theological backgrounds for worship, particularly the Sacraments, as well as providing opportunities for practical application. The spring Adult Faith Formation class on worship will be held March 9, April 12 and 26, and May 3 and 17 via

Zoom. The class will be taught by the Rev. S. Blake Duncan. The cost is \$25 for general learners and \$50 for Synod-Authorized Ministry students. Register at [CSIS-ELCA.org/aff25spring](https://www.csis-elca.org/aff25spring)

Adult Sunday School

From March 6 – April 6, the first five Sundays in Lent, Pastor Janet Lepp and Pastor Chris Repp will lead a 5-week study entitled "Making Sense of the Cross," written and presented by Dr. David Lose, retired seminary professor and president. Pastor Janet Lepp has 10 copies of the participant book available at a reduced price, it can also be found [at this link on Augsburg Fortress](#). It contains a series of dialogs that explore the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion and how it is good news for us. Although not absolutely necessary for participation in the class, it should help your immersion in the topic. **Join us at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings (after the service) in the Hoffmeister Room!**

First Friday Synod Prayer Group

Where and how is the Spirit moving? One way to find out is to gather together regularly for what Luther calls "The Mutual Conversation and Consolation of the Saints."

You are invited into a time of prayer on Zoom from 7:30 to 8:00 a.m. on the first Friday of every month. We will share what the Holy Spirit has laid on our hearts and then lift up those concerns and hopes to God in prayer. This spiritual practice allows us to see Christ and be Christ for one another as the Holy Spirit builds up our communities of faith across the Central Southern Illinois Synod. Come join us as we share our hopes and concerns with God and one another for the sake of our shared life together. Sign up here: <https://www.csis-elca.org/event/first-friday-prayer-group/>

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Ash Wednesday Service March 5th at 7:00pm

The forty days of Lent begin on Wednesday, March 5, 2025. Join us for our service at 7 p.m.

Lenten Soup Suppers

As has been our tradition at Grace, the Parish Life Committee will host "Lenten Soup Suppers" beginning at 6:00PM in the narthex on **March 12, 19, 26, April 2 and 9**. As in past years, we plan to offer crock pot soups and bread. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex. In recent years, two soup choices weekly have been adequate. Please consider helping by providing soup or bread, or by helping to set up or clean up on a date that works with your schedule.



Midweek Lenten Services

Lenten Evening Prayer takes place on Wednesdays during Lent at 7:00 p.m. from March 12 through April 9. We will again use "Behold, Your Light Has Come" as our setting for the service this year.



40 Days of Fasting - 40 Years of Grace Food Pantry

Lent is traditionally a time of fasting. The Grace Social Ministry Committee wishes to honor and support the Food Pantry's 40 years of giving to Champaign County residents with our Lenten Project.

We all have felt the increase in grocery bills and the Pantry is no exception. Fresh fruits and vegetables are necessary for a healthy diet, yet often are too expensive for those on limited budgets.

Social Ministry would like our Lenten Fast to supplement the Food Pantry with six weeks of healthy donations.

Please consult the chart below for food items and dates:

March 9	Apples	3 lb bag
March 16	Cabbage	2 heads
March 23	Potatoes	5 lb bag
March 30	Oranges	3 lb bag
April 6	Carrots	1 lb bag
April 13	Onions	3 lb bag

A container will be in the Narthex for your donations.

**Questions: Tina Fehrenbacher and Helen Repp
Thank you.**



Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer



Stitch and Craft

The Stitch and Craft meeting in March will be held on **Friday, March 14th at 7:00 p.m.** in the narthex. Start 2025 off right by starting a new project. We can help each other to make the best articles, mittens, scarves, hats, chemo hats, blankets, or anything you choose.

Sometimes a S&C meeting may be cancelled due to weather, conflicting dates, or a lack of members attending. In those cases an email will be sent out to those who have sent an RSVP email earlier. Also, please send an email if you are new to S&C to make sure there will be a meeting.

~Carol Larson

Wood Carving Group

Carving provides a chance for some relaxed fellowship. Join the group and carve a gift for someone special to you. Last year, carvings included Christmas ornaments, Valentine's gifts and more. What would you be interested in carving? Share your interest with Joe Meyer, Jim Anderson or Chris Repp. **The group meets on Mondays from 6:45-8:00.**

Grace Lutheran Church Book Club

Watch for upcoming information about the next Grace Lutheran Book Club, **starting in April 2025!**

Games and Fellowship Evenings at Grace

There is a new opportunity to gather with friends and enjoy an evening together! **Every 2nd & 4th Thursday of the month, from 6-8:00pm**, a group will meet for Games and Fellowship in the Narthex. The group will gather to enjoy each other's company and engage in card and board games. **The dates for this month are March 13th & March 27th.** If you are interested, please add your name to the sheet in the Narthex or let Jim Fleming know. Come and join us, and feel free to bring along your favorite game!

Music Notes

Please note, the Wednesday evening choir rehearsals will be held at 7:30p.m. instead of 7:00p.m. during the Lenten Season (March 5, 12, 19, & 26 and April 2 & 9).



March 16 -
Bell Choir Service

Join in person or
online and hear the
Grace Lutheran Church
Bell Choir perform
pieces during the
regular Sunday
morning Service
at 9:30am



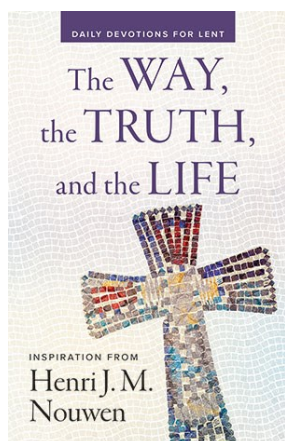
March 23rd -
Guitar Service

Join in person
or online on
Facebook,
YouTube, or at
glccu.org

Worship begins
at 9:30am

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer



Free Lenten Devotionals in the Narthex

Please choose a Devotional for Lent that suits you and/or your Family. They can be found in the narthex, and are free as a gift from Grace Lutheran. Past materials and new selections are available to choose from. ***May you have a blessed Lent.***

Parish Life Committee Meeting Reminder

The Parish Life Committee will meet on Thursday, **March 20th at 6:00 p.m.** on Zoom.

KV is Seventy!

Please drop by anytime from **5:00-8:00pm on March 29** to celebrate Kevin Vail's 70th birthday. (no gifts please. Your love and support is a gift beyond measure)



Thank-you from the Refugee Center

Dear Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your generous donation of \$500.00 on 11/1/24 to The Refugee Center, a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Our mission is to provide services essential to refugee and immigrant resettlement in East Central Illinois. With your generous support, The Refugee Center can continue to offer comprehensive case management services to the growing number of immigrants in the Champaign-Urbana community.

During the past 12 months, The Refugee Center has served thousands of immigrants in East Central Illinois. Our Refugee Resettlement Team welcomed refugees from all over the world, providing them with essential housing supplies and rental support. Our multilingual Client Services Team offers comprehensive case management services to all foreign-born clients.

Services include assistance with public benefit and basic immigration applications, interpretations, document translations and client accompaniment to essential appointments.

Since January 20th, the immigration landscape has changed drastically. The Trump Administration has paused the U.S. Refugee Admission Program. Many of our clients, of all statuses, are fearful of ICE and family separation. It will take a monumental effort to overcome these obstacles. With your continued support, we will fight the Trump Administration's war on immigrants.

We greatly appreciate your support of our organization's mission. On behalf of the clients and communities we serve, thank you for your donation.

Sincerely,
Lisa C. Wilson, Executive Director
Thank you for you continued Partnership!

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Council Corner March 2025

*The following information is from the
February 11, 2025 Council Meeting*

New Action Items for Council

A) Annual Housing Allowance for Pastor

1. **Resolved**, that the Council approve Pastor's housing allowance
– **approved unanimously.**

B) Annual Update to Pastor's Letter of Call

1. Resolved, that the Council approve the Annual Review of the Letter of Call submitted by the Mutual Ministry Committee, for Pastor Repp for the period 1 January 2025-31 December 2025
– **approved unanimously.**

C) Mutual Ministry Committee Membership

1. Resolved, that the Council approve the Executive Committee's selection of the following members to serve 2-year terms from May 2025 to May 2027 on the Mutual Ministry Committee: Erika Bilger-first term, Bruce Winter-second term, and Doug Krusa-second term
– **approved unanimously.**

D) Facilities Usage CR

1. Resolved, that the Council approve the updated Continuing Resolution (CR) on Facilities Usage which combines the CR approved on 11 November 2024 with the Rules for Facilities Usage. Included the new fee schedule
– **passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,
Leanne Wichus, Secretary

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Summary of the January 26, 2025 Congregational Meeting Actions

1) Elect Synod Delegates -- PASSED

Be it Resolved, that the following be elected as 2025 Synod Assembly Voting Members and Alternates:

Voting Members: Debbie Peterson and Kevin Vail
Alternates: Dan Lepp and Grace Schoedel

2) 2025 Budget -- PASSED

Be it Resolved, that the congregation of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church approve the budget for 2025.

3) 910 Springfield House -- PASSED

Be It Resolved, That Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church sell the 910 W. Springfield Avenue House.

4) Replace Carpet in Hallway -- PASSED

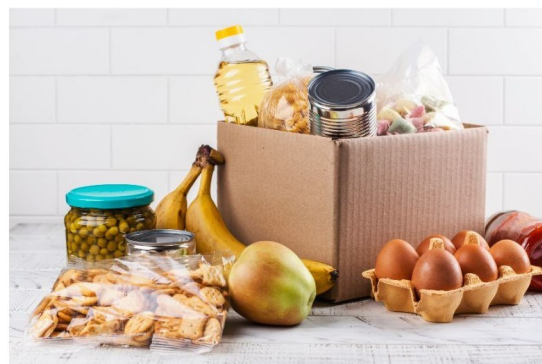
Be It Resolved, that Grace enter a contract with Carpet Master Carpet One for this work at a cost not to exceed \$14,100 to be paid from the Revolving Building Maintenance fund.

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Treasurer's Report

JAN 2025 Monthly Report	CURRENT MONTH	YEAR-TO- DATE
INCOME	\$17,357.74	\$24,666.67
EXPENSES	\$22,130.18	\$28,744.66
NET	\$(-4,772.44)	\$(-4,077.99)



Food Pantry Updates

The Grace Food Pantry has been busy!
In **February**, the pantry reached:

- **February 6:** 101 households, 383 individuals
- **February 13:** 41 households, 162 individuals
- **February 20:** 66 households, 237 individuals
- **February 27:** 53 households, 202 individuals

That's **261** total families and **984** people in our community that have been served by this ministry during the month of February. To support the work that the Food Pantry does, you can donate online at <https://glccu.org/donate/>.

JANUARY Income was lower than expected.
(Monthly budgeted \$24,666.67)

JANUARY Expenses were a little less than budgeted. (Monthly budgeted \$28,744.66)

JANUARY NET deficit **\$(-4,772.44)**

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Peterson,
Treasurer



GOD'S GIFTS; OUR HANDS Meals on Wheels Help Needed!

Volunteers are needed for the week of **Monday, March 24th through Friday, March 28th**. Two people are needed for each of the days this week from 10:30 am to 12:30 am., one can sign-up as a driver and the other as a runner. Sign-up with a friend or family member and enjoy your time connecting with others. This is a great way to reach out to others in our community. The sign-up sheet will be on the table in the narthex.

Thank you for your help and support of this ministry.

Leanne Wichus, Social Ministry

World Connections

Service, Advocacy, Ecumenism, Learning



Click the Image Above For More Information on Ongoing LWR Projects

Lutheran World Relief was founded in the United States after World War II. LWR tackles global poverty by helping people adapt to challenges that threaten their livelihood and wellbeing. LWR works with people based on need, regardless of race, religion or nationality, and they do not evangelize.

LWR provides aid in emergencies and helps families restore their lives using decades of experience and partnering with local communities. The mission of LWR is to affirm God's love for all people, working with other Lutherans and partners around the world to end poverty, injustice, and human suffering.

You may know LWR as the agency that hands out the school and health kits. LWR kits offer a tangible way to offer comfort and support when a natural disaster strikes or war drives families from their homes. These kits are designed to help people coping with poverty, disaster conflict, and more. Whether helping someone to maintain basic hygiene or keep education going during a crisis, LWR kits provide dignity and hope in the direst of situations.

Connecting to Our Community

The council has been reviewing Grace's strategic plan drawn up during COVID, and one of the specific goals on the list was to strengthen our community connection by attending the monthly meeting of the **Champaign County Community Coalition**. This was something that Caitlyn did when she was still with us, but our participation lapsed after she left. So we're looking for someone who might be interested in filling that role. Could it be you? Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month from 3:30-5:00. More information can be found at <https://champaigncommunitycoalition.org/>. If you are interested in this opportunity, please speak with Marlys Scarbrough or Pastor Repp.

Despite Changes to Humanitarian Aid, ELCA World Hunger is Steadfast

"For over 50 years, ELCA World Hunger has worked to end hunger, connecting people with food, health care, job opportunities, clean water and education. U.S. foreign aid is shifting constantly, and we're already seeing the impacts in Tanzania and South Sudan. But ELCA World Hunger stands with the individuals and communities it serves. — As a church, we respond to the call to "love not in word or speech but in deed and truth" (1 John 3:18). ELCA World Hunger has over 50 years of expertise in the work to end hunger. This ministry is uniquely positioned to reach those in need through deep relationships with local communities, churches and programs in over 65 countries across the globe."

~The Rev. John Eggen, *Senior Director, Annual Giving Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

Learn more at: <https://www.elca.org/our-work/relief-and-development/elca-world-hunger>

March 2025 Sunday Worship Support

	March 2	March 5	March 9	March 16	March 23	March 30
Assisting Minister	Eileen Herrstrom	Helen Repp	Marlys Scarbrough	Helen Repp	Claire Vail	Eileen Herrstrom
Reader	Chet Alwes	Marlys Scarbrough	Rodney Marshall	Russ Dankert	Kathy Bowersox	Marlys Scarbrough
Deacons	Tina Fehrenbacher & Nancy Marshall		Susan Monte	Dan Lepp	Van Bowersox	Nancy Marshall & Gail Hug
Greeters	Brian & Amy Nicely		Dave & Carol Larson	Erick & Meg Loven & family	Carolyn Pater & Elizabeth Mazurak	Dennis & Allison Archer
Ushers	Jeff & Tina Fehrenbacher		Bev Kieffer and Mary Jo Erickson	Joe Meyer & Erika Bilger & Family	Dave & Carol Larson	Bruce & Alicia Winter
Livestreamer	Dave Brown	Kevin Vail	Kevin Vail	Michael Miller	Jim Anderson	Kevin Vail
Coffee Hour	Claire Vail	☞	Mary Jo Erickson and Gail Hug	Grace Schoedel	Janet & Dan Lepp	The Dorsey Family
Flowers	Ruth & Jim Anderson	Ash Wednesday	Lent	Lent	Lent	Lent
Dedication	In Memory of Past Grace Members	☞	☞	☞	☞	☞

• Using GLC Facilities

Our facilities are available for use by members and by outside groups. To use the space, please fill out a facilities use request form on the website ([click the link to the form here](#)) and email it to office@glccu.org. Once the request is approved, it will be added to the calendar, and you can make arrangements to pick up a key if necessary. For more information please visit the website at <https://glccu.org/facility-use/> or call (217) 356-6232.

• Pastor's Discretionary Fund

The Pastor's Discretionary Fund allows the church to offer financial assistance to people in our community. The office receives requests for help with rent, utilities, and other needs, and your donations make this important work possible! To donate to this fund, you can give online at <https://glccu.org/donate/> or by mailing a check to the church office with "Pastor's Discretionary Fund" in the memo line.

• Online Resources

Please see your email for the list of webpages and how to access them.

Online Giving: <https://glccu.org/donate/>

• Grace Meeting Zoom Link

Please see your email for the Grace Meeting Zoom link.

March 2025 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23 <i>World Hunger Sunday</i> 9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (Bell Choir Service) 11:00am Adult Sunday School 12:00pm Women's AA 2:30pm ECIYO String Sectionals	24 10:00am Food for Seniors 6:30pm Wood Carving Group 7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	25 6:00am Food for Seniors 6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics 6:30pm Sweet Adelines	26 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal	27 10:00am Food Pantry	28 7:00pm Stitch and Craft	1 9:00am Audit Committee Meeting
2 9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream 10:45am Property Committee 11:00am Adult Sunday School 12:00pm Women's AA	3 6:30pm Wood Carving Group 7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	4 4:30pm Executive Committee 6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics 6:30pm Sweet Adelines	5 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service 6:00pm Lenten Soup Supper 7:00pm Lenten Midweek Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	6 10:00am Food Pantry 12:30pm Brown Bag Bible Study	7	8
9 <i>Grace Food Pantry Sunday</i> 9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream 11:00am Adult Sunday School 12:00pm Women's AA 2:00pm League of Women Voters School Board Candidate Meet & Greet	10 10:00am Food for Seniors 1:00pm Worship & Music Committee Meeting 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting 6:30pm Wood Carving Group 7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	11 6:00am Food for Seniors 6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics 6:30pm Sweet Adelines 7:00pm Council	12 2:30pm Piano Tuning 6:00pm Lenten Soup Supper 7:00pm Lenten Midweek Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	13 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm Fellowship & Game Night	14 10:00am Funeral of Roger Peterson (Private) 7:00pm Stitch & Craft	15
16 9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (Bell Choir Service) 11:00am Adult Sunday School 12:00pm Women's AA	17 6:30pm Wood Carving Group 7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	18 6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics 6:30pm Sweet Adelines 7:00pm Faith Circle	19 7:00am Food Pantry Truck Delivery 10:00am Comrades of Art 6:00pm Lenten Soup Supper 7:00pm Lenten Midweek Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	20 Newsletter Copy Deadline 10:00am Food Pantry 12:30pm Brown Bag Bible Study 6:00pm Parish Life Committee	21	22
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30 9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream 11:00am Adult Sunday School 12:00pm Women's AA	31 6:30pm Wood Carving Group 7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	1 4:30pm Executive Committee 6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics 6:30pm Sweet Adelines	2 6:00pm Lenten Soup Supper 7:00pm Lenten Midweek Service 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	3 10:00am Food Pantry 12:30pm Brown Bag Bible Study	4	5