

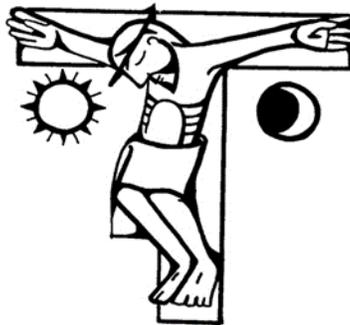
April 2026

Grace Connections

Lutheran Church
Champaign, Illinois

The Richness of Holy Week

April begins this year on the Wednesday of Holy Week. It was two years ago on the Wednesday of Holy Week that my father died. You might think that it would be terrible timing for a pastor to lose a parent right on the eve of the absolute busiest time of the whole year. But I did not experience it that way. I found instead that it only added to the deep significance of our holiest days to come face to face with death while being led through the drama and the promise of Jesus' death and resurrection, and to then hold my father's funeral service in the first week of Easter. Today, as I write this Newsletter article I have just received news that a dear friend, whom I first met in seminary, but only became friends with years later through the Crossings Community, has gone on hospice. We're the same age. She has two grown daughters. She's been dealing with lung cancer for several years now that she first discovered in her knee. She was never a smoker. This is what I get to carry into Holy Week with me this time around, and I anticipate that once again it will sharpen both the tragedy of the crucifixion and the joy of the resurrection.



Whatever you are carrying with you these days, whether in your personal life or out of concern for our national and global crises, I want to encourage you to see your present reality – our present reality together – in the light of what God has done, and continues to do in the world through our savior Jesus Christ. Immerse yourself with the Grace community in the richness of the coming Three Days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Vigil of Easter, and then come back once more for the glorious good news of Easter morning. This is



the time of the church year when everything comes together and gives meaning to everything else we do as a community of faith. This is where God is at work, in word and in sacrament, to heal our broken world and to begin to make all things new. And we get to be a part of it!

+ Pastor Repp

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April Calendar

GRACE LUTHERAN
CHURCH

313 S Prospect Ave
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 356 6232

www.glccu.org

Like us on Facebook
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Channel



God Connections

Faith, Worship, Music, Study, Prayer

Holy Week Schedule March 29 - April 5

As our Midweek and regular Lenten services finish up, please join us for our Holy Week Services listed below:



PALM SUNDAY

March 29, 9:30 a.m.

Procession with Palms and Holy Communion



MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 2, 7:00 p.m.

Service of Absolution and Holy Communion



GOOD FRIDAY

April 3, 7:00 p.m.

Tenebrae: Service of Gradual Darkness



HOLY SATURDAY

April 4, 7:00 p.m.

Easter Vigil: Service of Readings, Remembrance of Baptism, and Holy Communion



EASTER SUNDAY

April 5, 9:30 a.m.

Celebration of Jesus' Resurrection; Coffee Hour Plus Following the Service

Easter Sunday Service & Coffee Hour Plus

On Easter Day, April 5, 2026, service with Holy Communion will be held at the regular time of 9:30am in the Sanctuary at Grace and online.

Easter Sunday "Coffee Hour Plus" will be held in the Narthex immediately following worship. Everyone is invited to enjoy a time of celebration and fellowship together. Coffee, juice, fresh fruit, and pastries will be served.

Adult Sunday School

Join us at **11 a.m.** after the service in the Hoffmeister Room for our Adult Sunday School class! Meeting weekly throughout the year, unless otherwise noted. **Please note that there is no Adult Sunday School on Easter Sunday.**

April Faith Circle

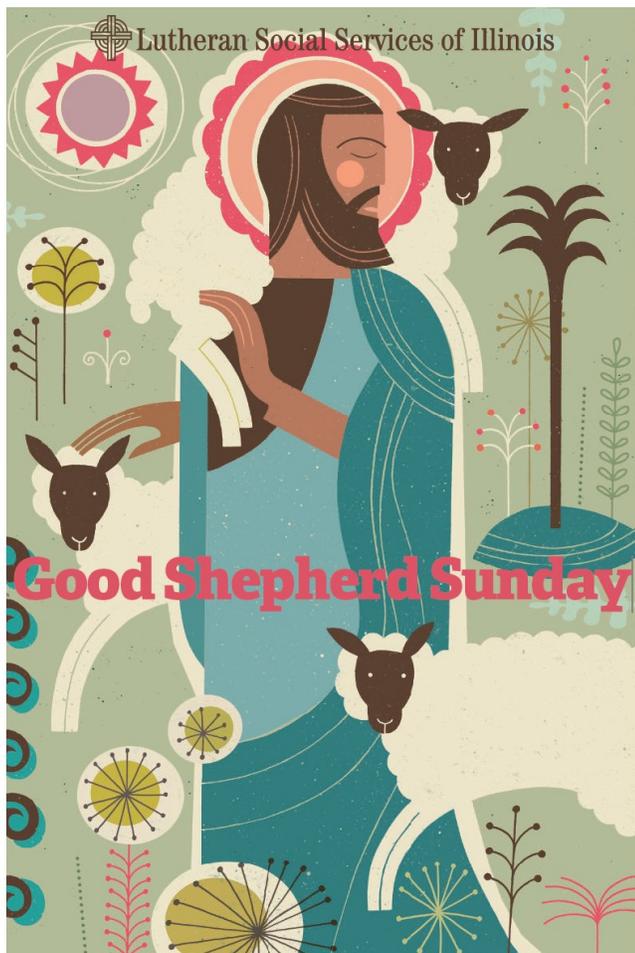
Faith Circle meets on the third Tuesday evening of each month at 7 pm in the narthex. All are welcome. We begin the evening with refreshments (coffee and snacks provided by the hostess) and fellowship. The lesson leader presents the Bible study, beginning around approximately **7:30 pm.**

This month's Faith Circle is on **Tuesday, April 21st.** It is being hosted by Tina Fehrenbacher, 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!**

God Connections

Faith, Worship, Music, Study, Prayer



Good Shepherd Sunday April 26th

Sunday, April 26th has been designated as Good Shepherd Sunday; a special day each year to recognize and support Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI).

LSSI began in 1867 as an orphanage for children who lost their parents during a cholera epidemic. LSSI has been a leader in social services for over 158 years. In 2025, LSSI served 62,425 people.

Since its beginnings over a century ago, LSSI has become one of the largest statewide social service providers in Illinois. It is the social

ministry organization of the three Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) synods in Illinois. Services and programs include: Foster Care, Family Support Services, Mental Health Services, Substance Use Treatment, Home Care services for senior adults, Affordable senior housing, Housing for adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, Programs that help incarcerated individuals remain connected to their children and Case management for returning citizens.

Please consider making a gift to LSSI by donating online at lssi.org or by sending a check to the LSSI offices at 1001 E. Touhy Ave, Suite 50, Des Plaines, IL 60018.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support of this program.

The Social Ministry Committee

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. You can sign up for the *First Friday Synod Prayer Group* here: <https://www.csis-elca.org/event/>

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Hops and Hymns



Sunday, April 19 | Riggs, Urbana | 5-7 PM

Champaign-Urbana Lutherans (ELCA)

GLC Outdoor Clean-Up Day, April 4!

The Spring Work Day at Grace Lutheran Church will take place during the morning of Saturday, April 4, 2026.

Please stop by to help anytime that Saturday morning. The Property Committee will post a list in the Narthex of suggested outdoor tasks to complete. Bring a rake, and maybe some gloves to wear. Coffee and snacks will be available.

Pastor Roger & Cathy Digges Anniversary Celebration

Pastor Roger and Cathy Digges will be hosting an open house to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on **May 2 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.** at the Urbana Park District's Health and Wellness Center, 2002 E. Washington, Urbana. We invite friends to join us.

Reminder: March Book Club at Grace 3/29 at 11:00am in the Chapel

Love Outpoured will be discussed this coming Sunday March 29 at 11:00 AM during the Adult Sunday School. We will meet in the Chapel, located across the hall from the Hoffmeister Room.

In the Letter to the Romans, Paul lays out foundational beliefs of who Jesus is and what it means to live a life of faith in Jesus' name. Although Paul's letter was written to an ancient Christian church in Rome, his words speak in profound ways to us living in our world in our day in our context.

Even if you have not been using **Love Outpoured** as your Lenten devotional or do not ordinarily attend Grace Book Club or the Adult Ed class, we invite you to join us for what promises to be an insightful discussion.

Hope to see you then,
Eileen Herrstrom and Janet Lepp

Game Night at Grace

Every **2nd & 4th Thursday of the month**, a group meets for Games in the Narthex at Grace Lutheran Church **from 6:00-8:00pm**. The group gathers to enjoy each other's company and engage in card and board games. **The dates for this month are April 9th & 23rd.**

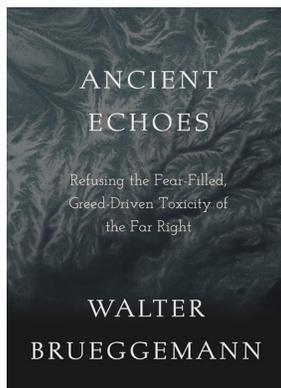
If you are interested in attending, please let Jim Fleming know. *Come and join us, and feel free to bring along your favorite game!*

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

May 2026 Book Club at Grace

**Ancient Echoes:
Refusing the Fear-Filled,
Greed-Driven Toxicity of
the Far Right
By Walter Brueggemann
(2020)**



When it comes to the toxicity noted in the subtitle of this book, there are few persons alive today who have the gravitas to speak directly to these concerns and do so responsibly by drawing upon the Bible than Walter Brueggemann. Back in the day (17th century), this book would have been known as a broadside. It's brief and to the point and calls for action.

The first chapters reflect on eight proposals made by Kurt Anderson in his book *Evil Geniuses: The Unmaking of America*. Brueggemann writes in his preface that Anderson provides a roadmap of sorts "for the history, ideology, and intent of the right-wing as a political force among us". In responding to the implications of the right-wing efforts, Brueggemann draws from Scripture, especially the Hebrew Bible, to extend the message of Anderson's book. His expectation is that Scripture can provide an alternative vision of social well-being.

The Book Club will meet on **Tuesday May 5 at 6:00 PM** in the narthex of Grace Lutheran Church. Please bring your own sack supper. Beverages and a light dessert will be provided. We hope you will join us! You may contact one of us ahead of time to reserve your free copy of the book, thanks again to the generosity of Thrivent.

Janet Lepp and Eileen Herrstrom

Council Corner February 2026

The following information is from the Council Meeting in February 2026:

New Action Items for Council February 2026:

A. Approve the "Update to the Annual Review of the Letter of Call" and "Statement of Housing Allowance" for Pastor.

B. Executive Committee

Whereas,

the text of the constitution of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church (GELC) of Champaign, adopted March 19, 2018, is not in conformity with the required provisions approved by the Church wide Assemblies of 2019, 2022, and 2025;

Resolved,

that the Congregation Council recommends that the congregation approve amendments that will bring the GELC constitution into compliance with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* without changes in the following provisions, which are not required and which uniquely describe GELC's structure and governance:

- paragraph C5.05 authorizing the mission endowment fund,
- chapter 1 on Name and Incorporation,
- chapter 10 on Congregation Meetings,
- chapter 11 on Officers,
- chapter 12 on Congregation Council,
- chapter 13 on Congregation Committees, and
- chapter 14 on Organizations Within the Congregation.

C. Grace Lutheran will host "Synod Day" for the East Central Conference of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod of the ELCA on October 2, 2026, from 2-7 PM.

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING May 17th, 2026

Please plan to attend our next semi-annual Congregational Meeting on **May 17th, 2026, at 10:45am** (following the worship service). We will vote on Officer and at-large Council openings, Nominating Committee, the 2025 Audit Report, and Amendments to the Grace Lutheran Constitution as outlined below. The May 2025-2026 Annual Report will also be available. The meeting will be conducted in-person with a Zoom option to participate.

Marlys Scarbrough
Congregational President

CONSTITUTION INFORMATION:

At its February 2026 meeting, the Congregation Council passed a resolution recommending that the congregation approve amendments that will bring Grace's constitution into conformity with the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We adopted our current constitution on March 19, 2018, and at that time it conformed with the ELCA model constitution. Since then, ELCA Churchwide Assemblies in 2019, 2022, and 2025 approved updates to the model constitution. These updates include provisions that ELCA churches must make in their church's constitutions. By amending our constitution to include these requirements, we can once again bring it into conformity with the model constitution.

You can view the draft amended constitution at [CONSTITUTION](#). This draft conforms with the ELCA model constitution.

At [CONSTITUTION](#), you can view our current (March 19, 2018) constitution in which yellow

highlighter marks the required changes. It is important to note that there are no changes in any provisions except those required by the ELCA.

Alternatively, you can access these documents on the church website by clicking on Resources and choosing Grace Lutheran Constitution.

You can address questions about the changes or the process for effecting the changes to Van Bowersox.

Here is the resolution that Council recommends for approval at the congregation meeting on May 17, 2026.

Whereas,

the text of the constitution of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Champaign, IL, adopted March 19, 2018, is not in conformity with the required provisions approved by the Churchwide Assemblies of 2019, 2022, and 2025;

Resolved,

that the congregation approve amendments that will bring our constitution into compliance with the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America without making any changes in the following provisions that are not required and that uniquely describe our church's structure and governance:

- paragraph C5.05 authorizing the mission endowment fund,
- chapter 1 on Name and Incorporation,
- chapter 10 on Congregation Meetings,
- chapter 11 on Officers,
- chapter 12 on Congregation Council,
- chapter 13 on Congregation Committees, and
- chapter 14 on Organizations Within the Congregation.

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Treasurer's Report

February 2026 Monthly Report	CURRENT MONTH	YEAR-TO-DATE
INCOME	\$33,817.79	\$42,432.67
EXPENSES	\$26,155.33	\$47,469.27
NET	\$7,662.45	\$(-5,036.60)

FEBRUARY Income was much higher than expected which helped make up for January income. (Monthly budgeted **\$20,833.33**)

FEBRUARY Expenses were about what was expected. (Monthly budgeted **\$27,200.25**)

FEBRUARY NET is **\$7662.45**.

Year-to-Date deficit is **\$(-5,036.60)**

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Peterson, Treasurer



Food Pantry Updates

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

- **March 5:** 77 households, 251 individuals
- **March 12:** 77 households, 300 individuals
- **March 19:** 71 households, 245 individuals
- **March 26:** 80 households, 353 individuals

That's **305** total families and 1,149 people in our community that have been served by this ministry during the month of March. To support the work that the Food Pantry does, you can donate online at <https://glccu.org/donate/>.

• 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.

• Online Resources

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

• Grace Meeting Zoom Link

Please see your email for the Grace Meeting Zoom link.

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Organized by the
New and Renewing
Congregations Team
of C/SIS



GO. *Together!*

2026 Synod Relation-Trip

Make plans today to join in this one-day synod-wide relation trip to the Champaign-Urbana area where we will serve neighbors in need and build relationships across our communities of disciples. Projects include work at Sola Gratia Farm, a bike rodeo with St. Matthew's Lutheran, Urbana, work at a clothing distribution center, painting and building projects at St. Andrew's Campus Center, projects with LSSI, and more! You pick your projects when you register!



9 AM - 4:30 PM
Saturday, April 18,
2026



Meet at Good Shepherd
Lutheran Church, 2101 S.
Prospect Ave. Champaign

What to Expect :



Opportunities
to Serve



Relationship
Building



God Sightings!

Cost:

**\$10 / person helps us plan
and provide snacks and water**

General Schedule:

9 AM Meet up at Good Shepherd

10-12 First project of the day

12-1:30 Lunch and travel

1:30-3:30 Second project of the day

3:45 PM Wrap-up at Good Shepherd

Register Today!



CSIS-ELCA.org/gotogether

**Please register
before March 31.**

- All projects are within a 5 mile/15 minute drive of Good Shepherd.
- Many projects are accessible and open to folks of all ages.
- Lunch is on your own. Suggestions will be offered, but the C-U area is full of options.
- Refreshments will be available both beginning and end of the day.

World Connections

Service, Advocacy, Ecumenism, Learning

2026 WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING



july 16-19, 2026 ✝ des moines, iowa

Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering

July 16-19
in Des Moines, Iowa

The Women of the ELCA will hold its 2026 Triennial Gathering in Des Moines, Iowa, July 16-19. Come and celebrate our worthiness in Christ and continue to build a bold, faithful community of women.

The theme for the 2026 Triennial Gathering is "I am Worthy" focusing on Psalm 139:14 "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Psalm 139:14

This proclamation reminds us of God's promise to always be with us, even during times of devastation and division. Repeating the phrase "I am worthy" helps us recognize the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in our lives. This practice of self-affirmation creates opportunities for healing and repair within ourselves, the church, society, and the world. When we declare, "I am worthy," we align ourselves with God's promises. There is great power in our resolve.

This inspiring event brings together 1,000-3,000 Women of the ELCA leaders and participants for four days of powerful worship experiences, inspiring speakers, engaging workshops and service projects, a 5K run/walk, and more. The vibrant exhibit hall features educational, service, and shopping opportunities for you to explore.

- Experience electrifying worship
- Connect and build relationships with women of all ages from your church and beyond
- Be inspired by messages from speakers who remind you that you are a miracle
- Learn about and live out the ministry and mission of WELCA
- Participate in service and advocacy
- Run, Walk and Roll with our 5K Fun Run to raise money for women and girls

More information and registration are available at WELCATG.org

God's work. Our hands.



Save the Date: ELCA Annual Day of Service *God's Work, Our Hands*—Sunday September 13, 2026

Mark your calendar for **Sunday, Sept. 13**, when congregations of the ELCA will join together for our annual day of service, "God's work. Our hands." Participating in service projects is one way to celebrate who we are as the ELCA — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. Be sure to save the date and check for updated resources soon.

WORSHIP SUPPORT	April 2 Maundy Thursday	April 3 Good Friday	April 4 Easter Vigil	April 5 Easter Sunday	April 12	April 19	April 26
Assisting Minister	Eileen Herrstrom	Kathy Bowersox	Helen Repp	Marlys Scarbrough	Helen Repp	Dennis Archer	Kathy Bowersox
Reader	Karen Krusa	Chet Alwes, Shirley Traugott, Paul Tessene, Kathy Bowersox, Van Bowersox	Van Bowersox, Maddie Thackeray, Leanne Wichus, Kathy Bowersox, Cindi Grigorescu	Erika Bilger	Emily Dorsey	David Brown	Meg Loven
Deacons	Kathy & Van Bowersox			Nancy Marshall	Gail Hug	Jim Anderson	Susan Monte
Greeters	Jeff & Tina Fehrenbacher			Mary Jo Erickson and Russ Dankert	Kathy & Van Bowersox	Dave & Carol Larson	Bob & Emily Dorsey & Family
Ushers				Dave & Carol Larson	Jeff & Tina Fehrenbacher	Bev Kieffer & Mary Jo Erickson	Grigorescu & Thackery families
Livestreamer				Dave Brown	Jim Anderson	Meg Loven	Michael Miller
Coffee Hour				Parish Life Committee		Marlys Scarbrough & Chet Alwes	Gail Hug & Mary Jo Erickson

Grace Office Schedule:

The Grace Lutheran Church office is open Monday—Friday from 9:00am to 2:00pm. Exceptions will be announced in our GraceNotes or in the monthly newsletter.

Grace Lutheran Staff:

Pastor— Chris Repp
Office Assistant—Karen Maher
Director of Music—Nick Pierle
Organist—Mike Keeley

Grace Council Officers:

Council President—Marlys Scarbrough
Council Vice President—Van Bowersox
Council Treasurer—Debbie Peterson
Council Secretary—Kevin Vail

Grace Council:

Liaison to Finance
Dennis Archer
Liaison to Parish Life
Dee Ehler
Liaison to Social Ministry
Tina Fehrenbacher
Financial Secretary
Gail Hug
Member-at-Large
Leanne Wichus
Alt. Liaison to Social Ministry
Alicia Winter

Grace Committee Chairs:

Worship & Music—Ruth Anderson & Carolyn Pater
Finance Committee—Debbie Peterson
Parish Life Committee—Kathy Bowersox
Property Committee—Rotating Chairpersons
Social Ministry Committee—Lois Wilken

Ministry Coordinators:

Altar Care—Ruth Anderson
Assisting Ministers—Pastor Chris Repp
Deacons & Greeters—Karen Maher
Flowers—Gloria Rainer & Shirley Traugott
Readers—Carolyn Pater
Sound Technician & Livestream—Ruth Anderson
Ushers—Dave Larson
Wedding Coordinator—Claire Vail

April 2026 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
(S) Sanctuary (CL) Choir Loft (N) Narthex (K) Kitchenette (P) Pastor's Office		(CH) Chapel (H) Hoffmeister (CR) Class Rooms (N) Nursery (FH) Fellowship Hall		1 •7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (CL)	2 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH) •7:00pm Maundy Thursday Service (S)	3 •7:00pm Good Friday Service (S)	4 •7:00pm Easter Vigil Service (S)
5 •9:30am Easter Sunday Worship Service - In Person & Live Stream (S) •10:45am Easter Coffee Hour Plus (N) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)	6 •7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal (CL)	7 •4:30pm Executive Committee Meeting (P) •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH)	8 •1:00m Worship & Music Committee Meeting (P) •7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (CL)	9 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH) •6:00pm Game Night (N)	10	11	
12 <i>Grace Food Pantry Sunday</i> •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) 10:45am Property Committee (C) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)	13 •10:00am Food for Seniors (FH) •6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting (H) •7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal (CL)	14 •6:00am Food for Seniors (FH) •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH) •7:00pm Council (H)	15 •7:00am Food Pantry Truck Delivery (FH) •10:00am Comrades of Art (N) •7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (CL)	16 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH) •6:00pm Parish Life Committee Meeting (Zoom)	17	18	
19 •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H) •1:00pm Dada Institute (FL, K, N) •5:00pm Hops 'n Hymns (Riggs in Urbana)	20 <i>Newsletter Copy Deadline</i> •5:00pm Music Ministry Potluck (N)	21 •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH) •7:00pm Faith Circle (N)	22 •7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (CL)	23 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH) •6:00pm Game Night (N)	24	25	
26 <i>World Hunger Sunday</i> •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)	27 •10:00am Food for Seniors (FH) •7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (CL)	28 •6:00am Food for Seniors (FH) •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH)	29 •7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (CL)	30 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH)			