

May 2026

Grace Connections

Lutheran Church
Champaign, Illinois

“Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled”

These are the opening words of our Gospel reading for the first Sunday of May. But since our Spring Cantata is preempting the sermon, I don't get to preach on them. But they are good words to bear in mind in these troubled days, and particularly their context is worth noting because it is relevant to our times. Context is everything, you have heard me say, especially in the Bible. The context for these words is what is known as the “farewell discourse” in John's Gospel, which covers half of chapter 13 and all of chapters 14-17. And although liturgically we end up reading from these chapters in the Easter season, within John's narrative structure they actually take place on the night before Jesus' crucifixion. But zooming in on the context of these words within this section itself reveals even more. These words come right after Jesus sends Judas out of the gathering to “go quickly and do what you are going to do” (that is, to betray him) and then he foretells Peter's betrayal. If you think our times are troubled (and they are) I cannot think of a much more turbulent time for the disciples than this – except, of course, for what comes next: Jesus' arrest and execution.

What I want us to see is that Jesus' words of encouragement are for exactly the most troubled times of our lives, times when things seem at their worst, times when our faithfulness fails, times when we lose all hope for the future. “Do not let your hearts be troubled,” Jesus says, knowing full well what is coming, both for him and for his disciples. He will go on to tell them that they will be opposed and hated by some because of their identification with Jesus and the way of life he advocates. But still he tells them to not be troubled. He is taking on the powers of sin, death, and evil by his death and resurrection, and those powers' days are numbered. And just as his death at their hands will not be the last word for him, so the troubles we face following in his footsteps will not be the last word for us. And that's because he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

+ Pastor Repp

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GRACE LUTHERAN
CHURCH

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www.glccu.org

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God Connections

Faith, Worship, Music, Study, Prayer

Easter 2026

Thank-you to everyone who attended and helped with the Lenten soup suppers and Mid-week services. We appreciate everyone's part in making the Lenten season, Holy Week and Easter services, and the Easter Coffee hour plus a special time for prayer and fellowship!



God Connections

Faith, Worship, Music, Study, Prayer



God Connections

Faith, Worship, Music, Study, Prayer

May 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, May 19th**. It is being hosted by Susan Monte, 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!**

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/first-friday-prayer-group/>

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.



Blanket Sunday 2026 April 29 - May 10

It has long been a tradition at Grace to recognize, honor, and remember the special women in our lives by purchasing a blanket in their name. The Social Ministry Committee is continuing this tradition on Sunday, April 29th through Sunday, May 10th (Mother's Day).

The blankets purchased are distributed around the world by Church World Service. CWS, founded in 1946, is a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster. Blankets provide warmth, shade, a way to carry belongings, and a defined space for women, children, and families who have been displaced due to natural or political disasters.

Blankets can be purchased for \$10 in the narthex before or after services on April 29th, May 3rd, and May 10th. Cards will be available to share with your honoree and a display of the names of the women honored will be in the narthex. Checks should be made out to Church World Services and memoed "Blankets".

Thank you for your support!

God Connections

Faith, Worship, Music, Study, Prayer

THE GRACE LUTHERAN CHOIR
ALONG WITH SPECIAL GUEST
MUSICIANS WILL PERFORM:

Dieterich Buxtehude's

ALLES WAS IHR TUT

MIT WORTEN ODER MIT WERKEN

(EVERYTHING YOU DO, WHETHER IN WORD OR IN DEED)

MAY 3, 2026

**DURING THE SUNDAY
MORNING SERVICE AT
9:30AM**

at Grace Lutheran Church
313 South Prospect Avenue,
Champaign, IL

New Member Reception

At the Easter Vigil on April 4, 2026 we received 5 new members of Grace Lutheran Church, by Affirmation of Baptism (pictured from left to right):

- **Mike and Gloria Keeley**
- **Andy and Lacey Grichnik**
- **Liv McPherson**

We celebrated with them at a Coffee hour this past Sunday (April 26) —

Welcome!



Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Please join us for a

Farewell Reception

for Nick Pierle,
Music Director of Grace Lutheran Church

Sunday, May 10, 2026
after the 9:30am service

Nick has been our Music Director for 3 years and has now completed his doctoral studies at the University. We have been most fortunate to have had his expertise and his enthusiasm. He has gone above and beyond in working with other musicians and churches in the C-U community.

We wish him the very best!

The 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.

Game Night at Grace

Gather with friends and enjoy an evening together! **The next dates for Game Night are Thursday, May 14th and Thursday, May 28th, at 6:00pm in the Narthex.** Come and join us, and feel free to bring along your favorite game!

5th Feast Fellowship at SangEat Restaurant Sunday May 31, 6:00pm

Join fellow members of Grace Lutheran Church for an evening of fun at the 5th Feast Fellowship dinner this month. We'll try the new Indian restaurant, SangEat, and enjoy a meal together.

SangEat Indian Restaurant & Bar
1905 S Neil St, Champaign, IL
www.sangeat.com to view their menu!

Please sign up by May 20th.

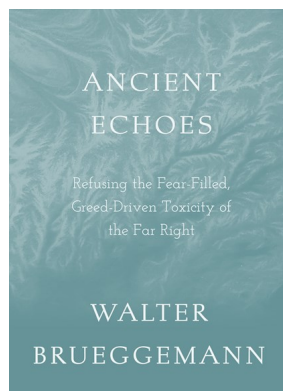
Questions? Please contact: Mary Jo Erickson

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 March & April 2026

The following information is from the March 2026 Council Meeting:

New Action Items for Council March 2026:

A) Motion to approve the Worship & Music Committee proposal to accept the estimate from Malmark Bell Craftsmen to refurbish the entire Grace handbell set at a cost not to exceed \$3,600, to be paid, following the recommendation of the Memorial Committee, from Undesignated Memorial funds (account *Memorial6004*). - Gail Hugg seconded the motion

-the motion was approved

B) Chris Repp made the following motion, "The following people wish to become full members of Grace Lutheran Church by Affirmation of Baptism at the Easter Vigil on April 4, 2026. Andy and Lacie Grichnik, Mike and Gloria Keely. Liv McPherson may only wish to become an associate member." Gail Hugg seconded the motion.

-the motion was approved

The following information is from the April 2026 Council Meeting:

New Action Items for Council April 2026:

A) Approve Audit Report - ***The Audit report was discussed, and a resolution was passed to make a revision in a Carryover Item***

B) Approve Council Annual Report -***approved***

C) Approve Strategic Plan updates -***approved***

D) Approve Congregational Meeting Agenda for May 17, 2026 -***approved***

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 at soxxos@sbcglobal.net.

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

March 2026 Monthly Report	CURRENT MONTH	YEAR-TO-DATE
INCOME	\$13,408.04	\$55,840.74
EXPENSES	\$28,651.28	\$76,120.55
NET	(\$-15,243.21)	(\$-20,279.81)

MARCH Income was much less than expected. (Monthly budgeted **\$20,833.33**)

MARCH Expenses were a little over what was expected. (Monthly budgeted **\$27,200.25**)

MARCH NET income was **(\$-15,243.21)**

Year-to-Date deficit is **(\$-20,279.81)**

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Peterson, Treasurer



Food Pantry Updates

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

- **April 2:** 108 households, 410 individuals
- **April 9:** 62 households, 235 individuals
- **April 16:** 62 households, 261 individuals
- **April 23:** 67 households, 263 individuals
- **April 30:** 57 households, 201 individuals

That's **356** total families and **1370** people in our community that have been served by this ministry during the month of April. 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

Committee Minutes Online Bulletin Board: <https://glccu.org/committee-minutes/> Password: Luther1517
Online Giving: <https://glccu.org/donate/>

• Grace Meeting Zoom Link

This is a general link for most Grace Zoom meetings: [Grace Meeting Link](#)
Meeting ID: 833 3841 4027 Passcode: 927999 **Phone only:** +1 312 626 6799

World Connections

Service, Advocacy, Ecumenism, Learning



“This past January, I had the privilege of being part of an ELCA Delegation of Bishops and Church Leaders to visit our Palestinian siblings in Christ who are part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). On our first night there, we were invited by our Palestinian siblings to “come and see” so that we might then “go and tell.” Over and over throughout our time there, these sisters and brothers in Christ pleaded with us to tell their story once we returned home.

In an attempt to tell at least a small part of their story as it was shared with me, I have written a Holy Land Travelogue of my experiences. To access and read my Travelogue, go to [CSIS-ELCA.org/gbtravelogue](https://www.csis-elca.org/gbtravelogue). As you read, please keep in mind that my purpose in writing was not to share a commentary on the very complex social, theological, and political issues that comprise the Middle East. Nor was my purpose to share my personal opinions on such issues. Instead, my purpose was simply to share what I saw, what I heard, and, at times, what I felt, as they shared their story with us. As you read, I

share the same invitation with you that was so graciously shared with us, “Come and see.”

READ THE TRAVELOGUE

Also, please know that I welcome opportunities to share my experiences in person across the synod if there are [communities] who would be interested in learning more. To schedule a presentation, please contact our Executive Administrative Assistant Kim Zemaitis at [217-753-7915](tel:217-753-7915) or kim.zemaitis@csis-elca.org.”

Called in baptism +Bishop Busboom



Worship Support for May 2026

	May 3	May 10	May 17	May 24	May 31
Assisting Minister	Eileen Herrstrom	Marlys Scarbrough	Dennis Archer	Helen Repp	Eileen Herrstrom
Reader	Leanne Wichus	Karen Krusa	Russ Dankert	Art Traugott	Nancy Marshall
Deacons	Art Traugott and Tina Fehrenbacher	Lois Wilken	Kathy Bowersox	Dan Lepp	Jim Anderson and Gail Hug
Greeters	Brian & Amy Nicely	Dennis & Allison Archer	Bev Kieffer & Jim Fleming	Joe Meyer & Erika Bilger & Family	Mary Jo Erickson & Russ Dankert
Ushers	Joe Meyer & Erika Bilger & Family	The Grigorescu & Thackery families	Brian & Amy Nicely	Dave & Carol Larson	Dave & Carol Larson
Livestreamer	Dave Brown	Kevin Vail	Michael Miller	Dave Brown	Jim Anderson
Coffee Hour	Karen & Doug Krusa	Worship & Music Committee	Kathy & Van Bowersox		
Flowers	Grace Schoedel	Bev Kieffer	Juanita & Ken Loschen	Shirley & Art Traugott	Marlys Scarbrough & Chet Alwes
Dedication	<i>In memory of my son, Paul</i>	<i>In honor of my sons Mark, Keith and Lynn Kieffer</i>	<i>In celebration of our wedding anniversary</i>	<i>To the Glory of God</i>	<i>In memory of loved ones</i>

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

May 2026 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 <i>Evening Food Pantry Re-stock</i>	2 <i>no events scheduled</i>
3 •9:30am Sunday Worship Service - & <i>Cantata</i> In Person & Live Stream (S) •10:45am Property Committee (CH) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)	4 •1:00pm Worship & Music Committee Meeting (P) •3:00pm Executive Committee Meeting (P)	5 •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:00pm Grace Lutheran Book Club (N)	6 •7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (CL)	7 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH)	8 <i>no events scheduled</i>	9 1:00pm Dada Bhagwan Vignan Institute (FH, K & N)
10 <i>Grace Food Pantry Sunday</i> •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) •10:45am Farewell Reception for Nick Pierle (N) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)	11 •10:00am Food for Seniors (FH) •6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting (H)	12 •6:00am Food for Seniors (FH) •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH) •7:00pm Council (H)	13 <i>no events scheduled</i>	14 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH) •6:00pm Game Night (N)	15 <i>no events scheduled</i>	16 <i>Private Event— Narthex & Kitchenette Reserved All Day</i>
17 •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) •10:45am Congregational Meeting (S) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)	18 <i>no events scheduled</i>	19 •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH) •7:00pm Faith Circle (N)	20 <i>Newsletter Copy Deadline</i> •7:00am Food Pantry Truck Delivery (FH) •10:00am Comrades of Art (N)	21 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH)	22 <i>no events scheduled</i>	23 <i>no events scheduled</i>
24 <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)	25 Memorial Day •10:00am Food for Seniors (FH)	26 •6:00am Food for Seniors (FH) •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH)	27 <i>no events scheduled</i>	28 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH) •6:00pm Game Night (N)	29 <i>no events scheduled</i>	30 <i>no events scheduled</i>
31 •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)	<p>(S) Sanctuary (CL) Choir Loft (N) Narthex (K) Kitchenette (P) Pastor's Office</p> <p>(CH) Chapel (H) Hoffmeister (CR) Class Rooms (N) Nursery (FH) Fellowship Hall</p>					