



July 2026

Grace Connections

Lutheran Church
Champaign, Illinois

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CHURCH

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Evangelical
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The Blessings of Liberty

I was 13 years old when the United States of America celebrated its Bicentennial. And it was a big deal. Or at least I remember it seeming like a big deal to me at the time. For an entire year leading up to the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence there were daily segments on CBS sponsored by the Shell Oil company, that began, “Two Hundred Years Ago Today...” They would then talk about a historically significant thing that happened that day that was moving the country towards independence. I remember being proud of this history. I remember learning why we became independent, and how our new country was different from other countries. We pioneered the idea that government should be “of the people, by the people.” We cared about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

But I also learned that not everything we did was something to be proud of. Those words of Lincoln I just quoted were famously written four score and seven years after the Declaration, and at a perilous time for the United States. They were penned during the Civil War, fought in large part because we were not living up to the aspirational ideals of our founding documents that “*all [people] are created equal*” and endowed with inalienable rights. And there were other failings: Watergate and the Viet Nam war were still fresh in the nation’s memory, as was the civil rights movement, still unfinished business left over from the Civil War. And yet we were able to celebrate what was good about our country, and to resolve to continue pursuing our ideals.

I’m half a century older now, and just a tad less naïve than I was then. I am not sensing the same celebratory mood for this 250-year mark. And while we are no doubt in a better place than we were during the Civil War, we Americans seem more divided now along ideological lines than ever in my lifetime. But I don’t want to give up on us either. I plan to celebrate quietly this Independence Day, giving thanks for the many ways our country has been blessed by God over the years, but also for how we have historically passed those blessings on to other countries and peoples. And I will do that cognizant of our failures: our refusal to share our national blessing with all our people, and our pursuit of national interests often at the expense of other nations, and to their detriment. True love of country does not excuse its sins. That, I think, is actually a betrayal of who we say we want to be. True love of country acknowledges our failures, repents of them, and seeks to make us a better country in the future by trusting that God’s blessings are never about God playing favorites, and never only for the sake of the ones directly receiving the blessing. God’s blessings are always meant to be shared.

+ Pastor Repp

God Connections

Faith, Worship, Music, Study, Prayer

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/>

Faith Circle is on Break

Mark your calendars for when we resume on September 15, 2026 at 7:00pm—have a great summer, we can’t wait to gather in the Fall!

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**.

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.

Adult Sunday School Summer 2026

Ordinary time is when we typically get reading that include Jesus’ parables. So, now is a good time to have a closer look at them in their original context in order to appreciate what they might be saying to us today.

Through July 5th we will be using a study series connected to Amy Jill Levine’s provocative (in a good way) book, *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi*. Join us in the Hoffmeister Room at 11:00am after Coffee Hour.



Check your summer schedule and save the date! Pub Theology 2026 will be at Triptych in Savoy. Join GLC friends for a cold beverage and a lively discussion on pertinent topics.

Watson’s Chicken Food Truck will be available (other outside food is also welcome). We will be outdoors if the weather is good, indoors if not. We hope to see you there! Please contact the Grace Lutheran Church Office at (217) 256-6232 with any questions!

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Synod Assembly Recap

The Central/Southern Illinois Synod met on June 6 via Zoom, where God dwelled with us as we conducted business and listened to what God is doing across the synod.

Our assembly theme comes from Ephesians 4:11-12, “He himself granted that some are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” and reflects the living out of our baptismal calling:

- to live among God’s faithful people
- to hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s supper
- to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed
- to serve all people, following the example of Jesus
- to strive for justice and peace in all the earth

Guests: Dr. Ryan Cumming, ELCA Director of Theological Ethics, brought us the report of the ELCA and shared a message from Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry about how we are connected to each other and our communities through Christ. This and other video reports shared with the assembly are available in a playlist on our YouTube channel.

We also welcomed Mr. Mark Stutrud, president and CEO of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. In addition to his report to the assembly, Mark shared that he is retiring at the end of February 2027. We thank Mark for his leadership and faithfulness and wish him well in retirement.

Business: There were only two elections this year. The assembly re-elected the Rev. Christine McNeal as the synod secretary and elected the Rev. Darla Ann Kratzer, the Rev. Youngshim Mason, and Ms. Kay Wolken to six-year terms on the Consultation Committee.

The assembly also adopted the proposed budget for 2027 and approved three resolutions: 1) establish an endowment fund in support of campus ministry; 2) amend our Constitution and By-Laws based on recommendations adopted by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly; and 3) recognize Marion Medical Mission as a ministry of our synod. The budget and resolutions are available at CSIS-ELCA.org/assembly.

Synod Days: While we gathered online for the business session, in-person activities are still important to our life together as a synod. Worship, fellowship, celebration of anniversaries, and “Spirit Lab” breakout sessions will be held in each conference later this summer and fall as part of Synod Days, which are open to **all** disciples in our synod and are not tied to Synod Assembly participation.

Synod Days will be held on:

- August 23: Northwest Conference
- August 29: West Central Conference
- September 12: Northeast Conference
- September 20: Northern Conference
- October 4: East Central Conference
- October 17: Southern Conference

Registration, locations, and additional details will be available soon.

THANK YOU! A heartfelt thank you goes to St. John’s, Springfield, for serving as the host and “broadcast” location for the assembly; to Conrad Mayer, technology coordinator at St. John’s, for his time and expertise; and to Kim Geitl, Leslie Gumm, Lois Moorman, and Alex Ruth for volunteering their time to assist the staff.

Next year: The 2027 Synod Assembly returns to an in-person event and will be held June 3-5 at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Springfield.

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Game Night at Grace

Gather with friends and enjoy an evening together! **Every 2nd & 4th Thursday of the month, from 6:00-8:00pm**, a group will meet for Games 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 July 9th & 23rd. If you are interested, please let Jim Fleming know. *Come and join us, and feel free to bring along your favorite game!*



July Guitar Service

Join us for our next Guitar Service, on July 26th at 9:30am. In person and online on Facebook, YouTube, and glccu.org



The Grace Choir and Handbell Choir

will resume rehearsals in August!

The **Choir** resumes on August 19th and rehearses on Wednesdays from 7:00-8:00pm

The **Handbell Choir** resumes on August 24th and rehearses on Mondays from 7:00-8:00pm

Both Choirs will be under the direction of our new Choir Director, Kyle Schrage



Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Treasurer's Report

MAY 2026 Monthly Report	CURRENT MONTH	YEAR-TO-DATE
INCOME	\$ 9,254.80	\$ 97,296.24
EXPENSES	\$ 25,894.02	\$ 129,213.59
NET	(\$-16,639.22)	(\$ - 31,917.35)

MAY Income was much less than expected.
(Monthly budgeted **\$23,375.00**)

MAY Expenses were a little less than budgeted. (Monthly budgeted **\$27,200.25**)

MAY NET income was **(\$-16,639.22)**

Year-to-Date Actual Deficit is **(\$ - 31,917.35)**

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Peterson, Treasurer



Food Pantry Updates

The Grace Food Pantry has been busy!

In **June**, the pantry reached:

- **June 4:** 101 households, 390 individuals
- **June 11:** 105 households, 410 individuals
- **June 18:** 73 households, 282 individuals
- **June 25:** 84 households, 304 individuals

That's **363** total families and **1386** people in our community that have been served by this ministry during the month of June. 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.

World Connections

Service, Advocacy, Ecumenism, Learning



God's Work; Our Hands – 2026

Lutheran World Relief Kits:

The Social Ministry Committee will once again be assembling School Kits and Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief. Last year the LWR School Kits we created and shipped helped children throughout the world, including Tanzania where education is one of the strongest tools for breaking the cycle of poverty. The Personal Care Kits we sent to LWR brought comfort to displaced people because of the earthquake in Turkey and tragedies in many countries, including our U.S. neighbors suffering from wildfires in California, flooding in Texas, and severe weather across the South and Midwest.

Once again, we have set an ambitious goal of 50 School Kits and 75 Personal Care Kits because the needs are great.

The Social Ministry Committee asks for financial donations to help us purchase the supplies for these kits. We will be accepting donations during July and August. **Make your check out to Grace Lutheran Church with a memo: LWR Kits.**

If you would prefer to purchase an item for these kits yourself, we would be happy to accept donations of 1) bath-size bars of soap 4 or 5 oz in original wrapping or 2) adult-size toothbrushes in original wrapping. These donations can be placed in the plastic tub by the main church entrance, marked "LWR Kit Supplies." Please make your donations by Labor Day.

God's Work; Our Hands Sunday, on September 13

Mark this day on your calendar because this is when the Social Ministry Committee will be asking for your help in putting the LWR kits together.

Thank you for your continued participation and generosity,
Members of the Social Ministry Committee



Worship Support for June 2026

	July 5	July 12	July 19	July 26
Assisting Minister	Eileen Herrstrom	Marlys Scarbrough	Kathy Bowersox	Helen Repp
Reader	Emily Dorsey	Tina Fehrenbacher	Marlys Scarbrough	Eileen Herrstrom
Deacons	Lois Wilken and Kathy Bowersox	Dan Lepp	Van Bowersox	Gail Hug
Greeters	Kathy & Van Bowersox	Brian & Amy Nicely	Bev Kieffer & Jim Fleming	Dennis & Allison Archer
Ushers	Van & Kathy Bowersox	Jim & Kathy Eckstein	Bruce & Alicia Winter	Dave & Carol Larson
Livestreamer	Kevin Vail	Michael Miller	Meg Loven	Jim Anderson
Coffee Hour	Gloria & Mike Keeley	Karen & Doug Krusa	Van & Kathy Bowersox	
Flowers	Bev Kieffer	Mary Jo Erickson	Eileen & Dale Herrstrom	Nancy Johnson
Dedication	In memory of George	In loving memory of my sister, Susan	In gratitude for family	In memory of loved ones

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—Kyle Schrage
Organist—Mike Keeley

Grace Council Officers:

Council President—Marlys Scarbrough
Council Vice President—Dale Herrstrom
Council Treasurer—Debbie Peterson
Council Secretary—Kevin Vail

Grace Council:

Liaison to Finance
Dennis Archer

Liaison to Property
Van Bowersox

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

July 2026 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<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>			<p>1 <i>no events scheduled</i></p>	<p>2 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH)</p>	<p>3 <i>Grace Office Closed</i> <i>no events scheduled</i></p>	<p>4 <i>Independence Day</i> <i>no events scheduled</i></p>
<p>5 •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) •10:45am Property Committee (CH) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)</p>	<p>6 <i>no events scheduled</i></p>	<p>7 •4:30pm Executive Committee (P) •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH)</p>	<p>8 •1:00pm Worship & Music Committee Meeting (P)</p>	<p>9 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH) •6:00pm Game Night (N)</p>	<p>10 <i>no events scheduled</i></p>	<p>11 <i>no events scheduled</i></p>
<p>12 <i>Grace Food Pantry Sunday</i> •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)</p>	<p>13 •10:00am Food for Seniors (FH) •6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting (H)</p>	<p>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)</p>	<p>15 •7:00am Food Pantry Truck Delivery (FH) •10:00am Comrades of Art (N)</p>	<p>16 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH) •6:00pm Parish Life Committee (Zoom)</p>	<p>17 <i>no events scheduled</i></p>	<p>18 <i>no events scheduled</i></p>
<p>19 •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)</p>	<p>20 <i>Newsletter Copy Deadline</i> <i>no events scheduled</i></p>	<p>21 •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH)</p>	<p>22 •6:00pm Pub Theology (Triptych, Savoy)</p>	<p>23 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH) •6:00pm Game Night (N)</p>	<p>24 <i>no events scheduled</i></p>	<p>25 <i>no events scheduled</i></p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>27 •10:00am Food for Seniors (FH)</p>	<p>28 •6:00am Food for Seniors (FH) •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH) •7:00pm Social Ministry Meeting (N)</p>	<p>29 <i>no events scheduled</i></p>	<p>30 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH) •4:00pm Mutual Ministry (H)</p>	<p>31 <i>no events scheduled</i></p>	