



August 2026

Grace Connections

Lutheran Church
Champaign, Illinois

Summer Listening

It's August already, but I'm definitely still in full summer mode as Helen and I prepare for our trip to England to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary. One of the things I'm doing is downloading podcasts to my phone to listen to during our air and train travel. For me, podcasts largely replaced summer reading. Some of my selections cater to specific personal interests like flight simulation, woodworking, and linguistics. But some are more relevant to my vocation as pastor and, more broadly, to daily life in light of our common baptismal calling. And it is some of those that I want to commend to your attention.

At the very top of my list at the moment is a new podcast started in late 2025 called "[The Rest is Science](#)." This is a collaboration between English mathematics professor and broadcaster, Hannah Fry, and American educator and public speaker, Michael Stevens, best known for his very successful early YouTube channel VSauce, focused on science education. It is also the winner of a Webby Award this year for "Best New Podcast." But why would I, as your pastor, recommend a science podcast? Because if Christian faith is about connecting our lived reality with the God proclaimed in the gospel, then it helps to have a good understanding of both sides of that connection. And one important way of understanding our side of the connection – our lived reality – is through the discipline of science. What I particularly love about this podcast, using its own publicity blurb, is that it "sits in the fascinating space between what we think we know and what we actually know."

In a similar vein, I also recommend a couple of history podcasts, both with extensive catalogs. My favorite of these at the moment is [The Rest is History](#), hosted by British historians Dominic Sandbrook and Tom Holland. The other is the BBC's [In Our Time](#), which covers not only history but also culture, religion, philosophy, and science. Each episode has the host interviewing a panel of experts on the given topic. Long-time host Melvyn Bragg, who just stepped down from hosting last year, was superb in his ability to make the discussion accessible to a general audience. NPR's Misha Glenny is the new host.

Finally, a few religion podcasts. You already know of my fondness for the Bible Project's videos. They also have an [audio-only podcast](#) in which founders Timothy Mackie and Jonathan Collins have in-depth background discussions on each video. Another recent favorite is [Religion for Breakfast](#), a video-podcast by religion scholar Andrew Mark Henry. I particularly like his videos on the Bible and early Christianity, but he also covers a wide range of other religions. Check out his Religion 101 series of short videos. My last recommendation is [The Spiritual Life with Fr. James Martin, S.J.](#), which focuses on how people experience God in their prayer and daily lives. I hope this brief survey piques your interest. Happy listening!

+ 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

Synod Days: East Central Conference *Being hosted at Grace Lutheran Church*

Sunday, October 4, 2026
2:00pm - 7:00pm

Registration:

The cost is \$10 per adult (18 and over), \$5 for youth (3-17), and free for children under 3, capped at a total of \$25 per family. Registration is open now at [CSIS-ELCA.org/synoddays26](https://www.csis-elca.org/synoddays26) and closes September 21, 2026.

For the work of ministry:

Living out our baptismal calling to...

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

A day of worship, learning, fellowship, and relationship-building for all generations in each of the six conferences of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod.

Each synod day includes:

- Cross-generational worship
- Activities for children and families
- Shared meal
- State of the Synod video
- Q&A with synod staff
- Mission moments from each conference
- Four "Spirit Labs" workshop options (each person may choose two)

- The Foolishness of Trying to Save Your Church: Letting Go So We Can Go! -- led by Bishop Greg Busboom
- Jesus Journeys and Faithful Field Trips, -- led by Deacon Jason Fisher, Director for Evangelical Mission
- Body Building with Love: Tools for Adaptability, -- led by Pastor Kristen Schmid, Assistant to the Bishop for Transformational Communities
- Here I Am, Send Me! A Vocational Workshop, -- led by Pastor Amy Zietlow, Assistant to the Bishop for Transformational Leadership

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!

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Grace Lutheran Church Committees 2026-27:

Executive Committee:

Marlys Scarbrough, president (2028, 2nd term)
Dale Herrstrom, vice-president (2028, 1st term)
Kevin Vail, secretary (2027, 1st term)
Debbie Peterson, treasurer (2027, 2nd term)
Pastor Chris Repp

Congregational Council, members-at-large:

Dennis Archer (2027, 2nd)
Dee Ehler (2027, 1st)
Tina Fehrenbacher (2028, 2nd)
Gail Hug (2027, 2nd) & Financial Sec.
Leanne Wichus (2027, 1st)
Alicia Winter (2028, 2nd)

Finance committee:

Debbie Peterson
Gail Hug, financial secretary
Van Bowersox
Jim Anderson
Randy Laugges

Council liaison: Dennis Archer

Mutual Ministry Committee:

Bruce Winter, chair
Claire Vail
Doug Krusa
Erika Bilger
Kathy Eckstein
Pastor Chris Repp

Council liaison: Dale Herrstrom

Parish Life Committee:

Kathy Bowersox, chair
Mary Jo Erickson
Alice Hadley
Julie Johnson
Linda Laugges
Amy Nicely
Claire Vail

Council liaison: Dee Ehler

Property committee:

Van Bowersox, chair
Susan Monte
Jim Anderson
Joe Meyer
Bruce Winter
Debbie Peterson
Mary Jo Erickson

Council liaison: none currently

Social Ministry Committee:

Lois Wilkin, chair
Tina Fehrenbacher
Linda Laugges
Janet Lepp
Gloria Rainer
Helen Repp
Leanne Wichus
Nancy Marshall

Council liaison: Tina Fehrenbacher
Alternate: Leanne Wichus

Stewardship Committee:

Executive Committee advises

Worship & Music Committee:

Ruth Anderson, co-chair & altar care coord.
Carolyn Pater, co-chair & lay reader coord.
Michael Keeley, organist
Kyle Schrage, director of music
Karen Maher, deacon & greeter coordinator
Gloria Rainer, flower coordinator
Shirley Traugott, flower coordinator
David Larson, usher coordinator
Pastor Chris Repp

Council liaison: Pastor Repp

Council Standing Committees:

Memorials – Beverly Kieffer & Ruth Anderson

Nominating Committee:

Van Bowersox
Susan Monte
Beverly Kieffer

Thank-you!

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer



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



Upcoming at
Grace

5th Feast Fellowship Dinner—August 30th

On **Sunday night, August 30th at 5:00pm**, we'll be gathering at Napoli's Italian Restaurant in Champaign for our next Fifth Feast Fellowship ethnic dinner. If interested in joining us, please sign up in the narthex. Deadline for signup is August 23rd . ***Hope to see you there!***

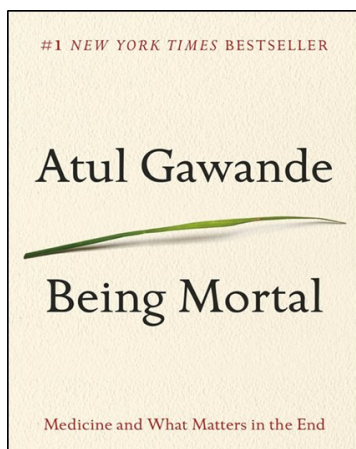
For questions please contact Linda Laugges or the Grace office to be put in touch with her.

Community Connections

Fellowship, Fun, Congregation News, Intercessory Prayer

Grace Lutheran September Book Club

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End



By: Atul Gawande (2014)

Author of three other best-selling books, Atul Gawande is a surgeon in Boston, a professor at Harvard Medical School, and a writer for The New Yorker. He also works actively in the public health field.

“Through vivid storytelling and thoughtful observation, Gawande explores the gaps between the compromised, isolated lives we’ve resigned ourselves to in old age and a few more-hopeful alternatives.”

– Bookforum

“For anyone who has struggled to navigate... end-of-life care with a loved one, [this] book is a reminder... of the positive change that comes from the power of purpose.”

– Hospitals and Health Networks

Please note these changes in schedule and location! The Grace Book Club will meet on **two Sundays, September 20 and 27, at 11 AM (during the Adult Sunday School hour) in the Hoffmeister Room.** The sessions are open to everyone, and we hope you will join us!

Eileen Herrstrom and Janet Lepp



God's Gifts; Our Hands

Meals on Wheels Help Needed for the weeks of August 3rd - August 7th and August 31st - September 4th!

For the week of August 3rd there are two days still available: Monday, August 3rd and Friday, August 7th. There are also two days available for the week of August 31st: Monday, August 31st and Friday September 4th. Two people are needed for each of the days from 10:30am to 12:30pm, 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*

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 August 13th & 27th. If you are interested, 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

Treasurer's Report

JUNE 2026 Monthly Report	CURRENT MONTH	YEAR-TO-DATE
INCOME	\$ 18,347.65	\$ 115,643.89
EXPENSES	\$ 21,604.04	\$ 150,817.63
NET	(\$ -3,256.39)	(\$ -35,173.74)

JUNE Income was better than May but still less than expected. (Monthly budgeted \$23,375.00)

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

JUNE NET income was (\$ -3,256.39)

Year-to-Date Actual Deficit is (\$ -35,173.74)

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Peterson, Treasurer



Food Pantry Updates

The Grace Food Pantry has been busy!

In **July**, the pantry reached:

- **July 2:** 96 households, 340 individuals
- **July 9:** 100 households, 376 individuals
- **July 16:** 97 households, 373 individuals
- **July 23:** 72 households, 246 individuals
- **July 30:** 69 households, 265 individuals

That's **434** total families and **1600** people in our community that have been served by this ministry during the month of July. 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 August 2026

	August 2	August 9	August 16	August 23	August 30
Assisting Minister	Dennis Archer	Eileen Herrstrom	Marlys Scarbrough	Helen Repp	Dennis Archer
Reader	Russ Dankert	Dan Lepp	Rodney Marshall	<i>TBA</i>	<i>TBA</i>
Deacons	Tina Fehrenbacher	Jim Anderson and Nancy Marshall	Susan Monte	Art Traugott	Lois Wilken
Greeters	Mary Jo Erickson & Russ Dankert	Bob & Emily Dorsey & Family	Joe Meyer & Erika Bilger & Family	Dave & Carol Larson	Erick & Meg Loven
Ushers	Jim & Kathy Eckstein	Brian & Amy Nicely	Dave & Carol Larson	Doug & Karen Krusa	Bev Kieffer & Mary Jo Erickson
Livestreamer	Dave Brown	Jim Anderson	Michael Miller	Kevin Vail	Meg Loven
Coffee Hour	Gloria & Mike Keeley	Mary Jo Erickson and Lois Wilken	Janet & Dan Lepp	Worship & Music - Welcome for Kyle	Marlys Scarbrough & Chet Alwes
Flowers	Amy & Brian Nicely	Bev Kieffer	Jo Ellen DeVilbiss	J. R. Stillwell	Carol & David Larson
Dedication	In celebration of our anniversary	To the Glory of God	In memory of my husband, Reid Alexander	In memory of Clyde & Clara Stillwell	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

August 2026 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
(S) Sanctuary (CL) Choir Loft (N) Narthex						1 <i>no events scheduled</i>
2 •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)	3 <i>no events scheduled</i>	4 •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH)	5 <i>no events scheduled</i>	6 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH)	7 <i>no events scheduled</i>	8 <i>no events scheduled</i>
9 <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)	10 •10:00am Food for Seniors (FH)	11 •6:00am Food for Seniors (FH) •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH)	12 <i>no events scheduled</i>	13 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH) •6:00pm Game Night (N)	14 <i>no events scheduled</i>	15 <i>no events scheduled</i>
16 •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)	17 <i>no events scheduled</i>	18 •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH)	19 •7:00am Food Pantry Truck Delivery (FH) •10:00am Comrades of Art (N) •7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (CR)	20 <i>Newsletter Copy Deadline</i> •10:00am Food Pantry (FH)	21 <i>no events scheduled</i>	22 <i>no events scheduled</i>
23 <i>World Hunger Sunday</i> •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) •10:45am Welcome Reception for Kyle Schrage (N) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H)	24 •10:00am Food for Seniors (FH) •7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal (CL)	25 •6:00am Food for Seniors (FH) •6:00pm Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (CH) •6:30pm Sweet Adelines (FH)	26 •7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (CR)	27 •10:00am Food Pantry (FH) •6:00pm Game Night (N)	28 <i>no events scheduled</i>	29 •1:00pm Dada Bhagwan Vignan Institute (FL, K & N)
30 •9:30am Worship - In Person & Live Stream (S) •11:00am Adult Sunday School (H) •12:00pm Women's AA (H) •5:00pm 5th Feast Fellowship (Napolis Restaurant)	31 •1:00pm Tentative Worship & Music Committee Meeting (P) •7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal (CL)					