

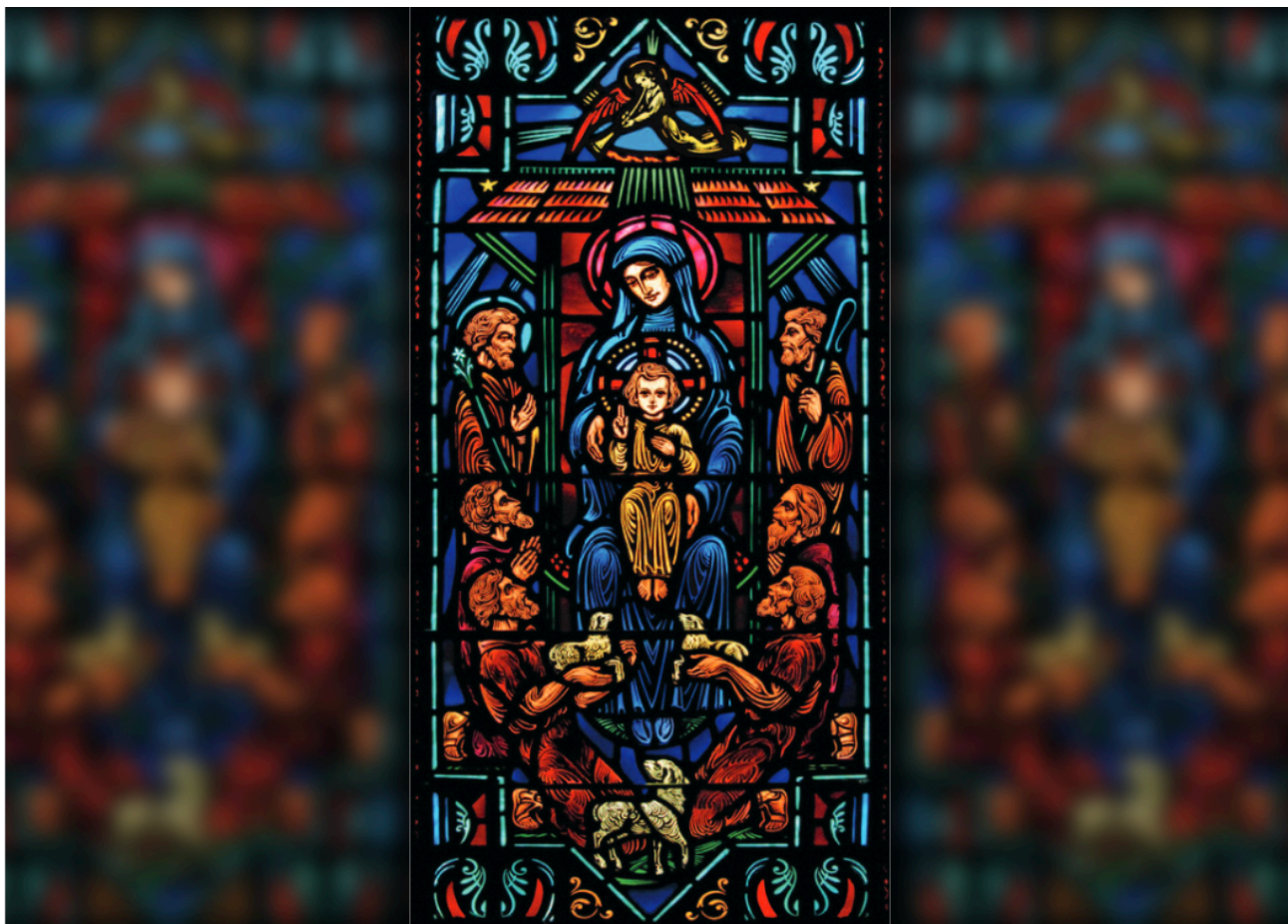
January/February 2023

# Grace Notes



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH • 7300 W DIVISION • RIVER FOREST IL 60305 • 708-366-6900 • WWW.GRACERIVERFOREST.ORG

## The light of Christ shines among us



*Photo of Nativity window in south balcony of Grace Lutheran Church, River Forest, Illinois. 1933*

### by Pastor Troy Medlin

If you are like me, you are not ready to take down your Christmas tree or put away all of your holiday lights and decorations just yet. It seems like we especially need those extra flickers of comfort and joy in January, when the winter moves in slow motion and the gray settles in. I think that is why, thanks to the wisdom of our ancestors in faith, the darkest months in the northern hemisphere are when we celebrate the feasts of light.

**“The star once over Bethlehem now rests on our gathering. The One revealed to the magi on the first Epiphany continues to be revealed to us as the salvation of the whole world.”**

Our God of Light has come to dwell in our darkest night, literally. God has come to live among us; deep in our flesh, deep in this wounded world. The Light revealed in the infant Jesus shines with and alongside you in the midst of your very real life and all its joys and sorrows. After the holiday glitz has been put away his flame still shimmers with promise.

*Continued on page 2*



This light follows you through every valley and will not be extinguished even in your death. He will lead you around every turn into the break of day, on both sides of the grave.

During this stretch of long nights and gray skies we gather on Sunday mornings around the light of Christ, as it shines in our midst. The star once over Bethlehem now rests on our gathering. The One revealed to the magi on the first Epiphany continues to be revealed to us as the salvation of the whole world. This light is always revealed in word and meal for you — as nourishment and sustenance for your journey, bread for every season. From this place he illumines our tables, our relationships, our serving and all our work for the sake of all creation.

And in the miracle of our baptism, which we celebrated on January 8, we each have become a light, as the deacon always proclaims to the newly baptized in the baptismal liturgy. You and I are signs of this epiphany. God in flesh made known in you, Grace River Forest. Signs and wonders to behold.

We need the light of our neighbors to show us the way as we live out the callings God has given us in this time and place. We shined brightly as we welcomed 2023 in community with an Epiphany brunch. We will hold a candle for each other as we continue the work of becoming a more welcoming community at a retreat for staff and lay-leaders sponsored by the justice and peace committee. We shine together as Sunday School, confirmation, and high schoolers pack lunches for hungry neighbors to kick off a new faith formation semester. And we will luminate each other's paths in ways big and small all year long.

I see your light as it spreads from Bonnie Brae and Division, beyond. I am thankful for all the ways we bear witness to the light that shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it, no matter what it feels like right now. So we follow the light until Epiphany gives way to Lent and the cross gives way to the empty garden tomb, and winter gives way to spring.

## Worship Scriptures

### Sunday, January 22

#### Third Sunday after Epiphany

Holy Communion at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Isaiah: 9:1-4, 15-18, Psalm 27:1, 4-9, 1 Corinthians 1:10-18, Matthew 4:12-23

### Sunday, January 29

#### Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Holy Communion at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Micah 6:1-8, Psalm 15, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, Matthew 5:1-12

### Sunday, February 5

#### Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Holy Communion at 8:30 and 11 a.m.

Isaiah 58:1-9a [9b-12], Psalm 112:1-9 [10], 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 [13-16], Matthew 5:13-20

### Sunday, February 12

#### Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Holy Communion at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Psalm 119:1-8, 1 Corinthians 3:1-9, Matthew 5:21-37

### Sunday, February 19

#### Transfiguration of Our Lord

Holy Communion at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Exodus 24:12-18, Psalm 2 or Psalm 99, 2 Peter 1:16-21, Matthew 17:1-9

### Wednesday, February 22

#### Ash Wednesday

Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17, Psalm 51:1-17, 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10, Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

### Sunday, February 26

#### First Sunday in Lent

Holy Communion at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Genesis 2:15-17 & 3:1-7, Psalm 32, Romans 5:12-19, Matthew 4:1-11

### Sunday, March 5

#### Second Sunday in Lent

Holy Communion at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Genesis 12:1-4a, Psalm 121, Romans 4:1-5 & 13-17, John 3:1-17

**Grace Notes** is published monthly by Grace Lutheran Church and School, 7300 Division St., River Forest, Ill. It is mailed to Grace members, parents of students at Grace School, and friends of the congregation. This issue was mailed via U.S. Postal Service Bulk Mail on Friday, January 13, with the hope that it will arrive in your mailbox no later than January 20. Copies are also available at Grace.

**Deadlines and submissions.** The March issue of Grace Notes will be mailed on February 24. The deadline for copy is February 17. Send news to [bklaus@graceriverforest.org](mailto:bklaus@graceriverforest.org). Please limit submissions to news relating to Grace Lutheran Church and School, its mission, ministries, and the benevolences the congregation supports. Articles should be no longer than 500 words. Submissions may be edited for length, clarity, and relevance.



# Grace School Updates

## New school social worker

Grace School is proud to welcome the newest member of our staff: Arteria Puckett. Ms. Puckett is our school social worker. She obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Family Community Services at Michigan State University in East Lansing. She has worked in several Catholic charities in Illinois and Mississippi. She worked at the Salvation Army until 2020, when she went back to school to obtain her education degree. She then completed an internship at UIC College Prep. In her free time, Ms. Puckett loves to travel, listen to gospel music (the likes of Shirley Caesar), and spend time with her son and family.

Welcome  
TO GRACE  
SCHOOL

Arteria Puckett

...  
School Social Worker



GRACE  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH  
& SCHOOL

## Much to do in the new year!

We are excited that the Grace School prayer group has continued this year. Our school mission is to bring in, build up, and send out disciples for Jesus Christ. To fulfill this mission, we need to rely on God because, as we know from our theme verse this year – God’s got it! We are blessed and thankful to have parents who care and make it a priority to bring our school needs and praises to the Lord. The Grace prayer group meets on the last Tuesday of every month.

This fall, we started inviting Grace moms to fellowship while walking around the River Forest neighborhood after they drop off their child. It’s been a great way for moms to connect and get to know each other. Now that the temperature has dropped significantly, moms are still gathering in the conference room to chat with snacks, coffee, and tea. Last month’s turnout was great. It is so good to see Grace moms getting together and enjoying each other’s company. It is one of the things that makes our community awesome.

In addition to community, Grace is proud of its strong academics. We are thrilled to share that Greta Lyle (8), Augie Sterritt (8), David Blackman (7), Nola Williams (8), Vera Chizzo (8), and Tara Shah (8) participated in the Fenwick Math Competition and placed 5<sup>th</sup> out of 23 schools! We had 2

students finish in the top 20 out of 192 individuals – Augie in fifth place and David in nineteenth. Congratulations to our middle schoolers!

Keep in mind some upcoming important dates at Grace School. Our annual open house for families interested in enrolling their children in our school is on Sunday, January 22 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. A Graceful Evening, an annual dinner-auction fundraiser, is on Saturday, March 11 at 5:30 p.m. Mark your calendars and spread the word!



## Adult Ed schedule

Adult Education classes meet at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings in the lower-level Seminar Room as well as on Zoom. You’ll find the Zoom link at [GraceRiverForest.org](https://www.graceriverforest.org). Look for Faith Formation > Adult Ed.

Classes are led by Grace members and guest speakers. If you have suggestions for Adult Ed programming, please contact Ted Anton of the Adult Education Committee ([tanton@depaul.edu](mailto:tanton@depaul.edu)).

### January 22

**“Why read Dante’s Inferno in our time of fire”** with Roger Ferlo, retired President of Seabury Western Seminary

### January 29

**“End of life planning”** with Parish Nurse Joanna Schubkegel and Melissa DeVries

### February 5

**“End of life planning, part II”** with Parish Nurse Joanna Schubkegel and Melissa DeVries

### February 12

**“Debunking brain myths in science, religion and politics”** with Jim Kerns

### February 19

**“My sabbatical”** with Pastor Michael Costello

### February 26

**“Grace scientists’ ideas on their faith”** with Dr. Laura Merwin, Dr. Carol Albright, Dr. John Albright, Dr. Larry Garber





# Books for Bible readers

## From the Grace library

Winter is the best time to curl up with a good book. How about a good book about *the Good Book*?

The church library is a wonderful resource for anyone wishing to spend a bit of time reading a variety of authors' thoughts about the Bible. Of course, there are quite a few different translations and versions of the Bible itself, as well as commentaries and concordances available for checkout.

On the library door, you will find a section of a bibliography sharing titles in our collection about the Bible. If you prefer, you can also stop in and scan the shelves in the 220 section, where many books about the Bible are located.

Some of works about the Bible include *The Book Jesus Read* by Philip Yancy, which shares insights into the Old Testament. The preface, itself, is an interesting read: "...the two main barriers to reading the Old Testament: It doesn't always make sense, and what sense it does make offends modern ears therefore the Old Testament, three-fourths of the Bible, often goes unread."

In author Yancy's readable style, he makes a case for the realism of Old Testament violence as a mirror for what we see around us today, although he "detects a gradual but certain movement toward grace."

*Whose Bible Is It?* by Jaroslav Pelikan shares the author's research and personal thoughts about the links between Jewish, Roman Catholic and Protestant versions of scripture. He discusses which books are included in each faith tradition and why. He breaks apart our comfortable division of Old and New Testaments.

And for something totally unique, pick up *40: The Biblical Story* by Joel School-Tanis. This signed copy is in the children's section of the library. It is filled with illustrations by the author, but it is not your average children's Bible story book. The text is invented spelling, think early-child writing style, and the observations are often not scripturally accurate. It may be a good book to read *with* your child as you discuss the author's interpretation.



For where your treasure is,  
there your heart will be also.

—Matthew 6:21

Win-Win Giving  
Tax-Advantaged Charitable Contributions

### Tax-Advantaged Charitable Contributions

If you are required to take required minimum distributions (RMDs) from your retirement account in 2023, you may wish to consider the potential tax advantages of making qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) to charitable organizations like Grace. For more information, please refer to Grace's Win-Win Giving brochure, available at the front desk and on the website at <https://bit.ly/3Iqth3K>. Consult with a financial advisor.

## Justice and Peace Committee hosts Leadership Retreat

### By Lance Wilkening

After the murder of George Floyd in 2020, the Grace congregation and school committed to addressing the sin of racism in all its forms, wherever it occurs. We embarked on the Black Voices at Grace sessions to provide a forum for Black and other Grace members of color to tell the stories of the acts of racism and discrimination they live through every day.

The next step in this journey is a leadership retreat to be held on Saturday, February 11. The retreat will include members of the clergy, staff, Church Council, boards, and committees as well as representatives from Grace School. Black Voices at Grace asked our members of color to be vulnerable and tell their stories.

This retreat will now provide the opportunity for members of the church leadership to tell their stories, trusting that the Holy Spirit will guide the conversation and open up new ways of thinking about how Grace can become a more just and inclusive community of faith – truly One Body in Christ.

The retreat will be facilitated by Rev. Sunitha Mortha, Associate to the Bishop and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging for the Metro Chicago Synod of the ELCA. Rev. Mortha is excited to be part of Grace's journey, and we welcome her guidance and wisdom.

The Grace Council Statement on Racism says it best: "We look with hope and anticipation to a season of growth and change as Grace becomes a more faithful witness to God's wide welcome in Christ." We pray that the retreat brings this season of growth and change ever closer to fruition.



52<sup>nd</sup> Year  
2022-2023



# BACH

## Cantata Vespers

### January 22

**Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe, BWV 156**

**I am standing with one foot in the grave**

**3:00 p.m.** Cantata Preview Lecture (in-person only)  
**Mark Peters**, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

**3:45 p.m.** Bach Cantata Vespers (in-person and online)

**Prelude:** Kontras Quartet

**Motet:** Dieterich Buxtehude, *Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr*, BuxWV 41

**David John Hailey**, First Baptist Church, Oak Park, Illinois, homilist

**Nathalie Colas**, soprano

**Thomas Aláan**, countertenor

**Ryan Townsend Strand**, tenor

**Douglas Anderson**, baritone

**Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra**  
**Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello**, conducting

### February 26

**Ach Wie Flüchtig, Ach wie nichtig, BWV 26**

**Ah how fleeting, ah how futile**

**3:00 p.m.** Cantata Preview Lecture (in-person only)  
**Mark P. Bangert**, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

**3:45 p.m.** Bach Cantata Vespers (in-person and online)

**Prelude:** Samuel Barber: Canzonetta for Oboe and Strings; Wayne Barlow: The Winter's Passed; Rebecca Schalk Nagel, oboist

**Motet:** Dieterich Buxtehude: *Jesu, meine Freude*, BuxWV 60

**David R. Lyle**, Grace Lutheran Church and School, River Forest, Illinois, homilist

**Maura Janton Cock**, soprano

**Amanda Koopman**, mezzo soprano

**Ace Gangoso**, tenor

**Douglas Anderson**, baritone

**Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra**  
**Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello**, conducting

#### FINANCIAL UPDATE

Grace Lutheran Church General Fund

##### Church budgeted contributions

July 1, 2022 – January 11, 2023      \$ 1,022,000  
(28 Sundays, \$36,500 per week)

##### Church actual contributions

July 1, 2022 – January 11, 2023      \$ 905,000  
(Last year at this time: \$929,000)

Church giving is \$117,000 (11%) below budget, and \$24,000 (3%) ahead of last year. The General Fund deficit on January 11 was \$3,000 (\$84,000 last year through January 31). The deficit includes the January 15 payroll.

## GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Help and encouragement after the death of a spouse, child, family member, or friend

GriefShare is a weekly seminar and support group designed to help you rebuild your life after losing a loved one. Our group is led by caring people who have experienced grief and want to help you through the difficult days ahead.

We know it hurts, and we want to help.

Fridays, Jan 20, 2023 - April 14, 2023

9:00 - 10:45 AM

Grace Lutheran Church

7300 West Division, River Forest

To register for seminar or for more information call (708) 366 - 6900 or email [gracechurch@graceriverforest.org](mailto:gracechurch@graceriverforest.org)  
All are welcome

GRIEF SHARE®

### BAPTISMS

Grace rejoices with:

**Hudson Chumley**, son of Miles and Hannah Chumley, and **Dylan Drake**, daughter of Andrew and Hallie Drake who were baptized on Sunday, December 25. Hudson and Dylan are the grandchildren of Tony and Paula Stephens.

### DEATHS

Condolences:

We pray for those who mourn the deaths of Grace members **Belen Gresens**, who passed away on December 9 and Len Berghaus, who passed away on January 10.

### ALTAR FLOWERS

Did you know that members can donate the Sunday altar flowers to honor the memory of a loved one or to celebrate a special occasion? The donation will be acknowledged in the Sunday bulletin "in thanksgiving" section of the prayer page. Please sign up at the reception desk in the atrium. \$40 per arrangement.



# A word of thanks from the Social Ministry Committee

Grace's Social Ministry Committee would like to thank Grace's school families and congregation members for your incredible generosity this holiday season!

## Stockings for the Night Ministry

Grace donated 150 stockings — almost twice as many as last year — to the Night Ministry for unhoused youth, young adults and families it serves on the north, south and west sides of Chicago. Grace's fifth, and sixth graders provided materials and stuffed 48 stockings with a small first aid kit, a hat, a pair of gloves, a pair of warm socks, hand warmers, toe warmers, deodorant, hand sanitizer, lotion and candy.

Rebecca Dahlstrom, Jo-Ellyn Dorsey, Glenn Johnson, Tom Swanson, Ellie Schnack, Lance Wilkening and Stephanie Wilkening stuffed 102 stockings on behalf of the congregation. Tom and Jo-Ellyn delivered the stockings to the Night Ministry. Special thanks to the women who made this year's stockings: Jane Marie Andrew, Margaret Burke, Susie Calhoun, Jo-Ellyn Dorsey, Carolyn Garber, Eileen Maggio and Ellie Schnack. We are also grateful to the Moms of Teens/High Schoolers who hosted a Bunco evening to raise funds for the stockings.

## SMC projects in numbers

- 30 \$25 gift cards delivered to Oak Leyden Developmental Services to be given to residents who may receive no other gifts at Christmas;
- 25 \$25 gift cards delivered to Mills Tower. Cards were shared with residents in need;
- \$1,060 in gift cards donated to Night Ministries from church members, and additional \$490 from school families;
- 150 Christmas stockings, lovingly sewn by several Grace members and filled with toiletries given to the Night Ministry to be dispersed to homeless teens;
- 30 items, including gift cards, toys and clothing, collected for New Moms;
- \$750 for Lutheran Child and Family Services to purchase Christmas gifts for LCFS sponsored foster children;

## Gift Cards for The Night Ministry

We collected a total of \$1500 in gift cards for The Night Ministry from the school and congregation. The gift cards were distributed to the unhoused population the Night Ministry serves in Chicago.

## Gift Cards for Oak-Leyden Developmental Services

We made Christmas a little jollier for more than 30 area adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. We collected more gift cards for Oak-Leyden this year than any previous year.

## Gift Cards for Seniors at Mills Park Tower

The congregation donated 25 gift cards for seniors who live at Mills Park Tower. The cards were raffled off at the complex's holiday party to make Christmas a little merrier for the seniors.

## Gifts for New Moms

Twenty infants and toddlers served by New Moms on Chicago's West Side had toys and clothes to open this year, thanks to Grace. Ten young mothers also received gifts and gift cards.

## Funds for Lutheran Child and Family Services

We collected \$750 in contributions for the LCFS Christmas drive, helping to put gifts under the tree for children in the organization's care. Thanks to Marilyn and Gary Wenzel, who delivered the funds to LCFS on Grace's behalf.

## Encounters with Christ: Lent at Grace

On Wednesday, February 22, we will gather for Ash Wednesday worship. We will confess our sins, admit our mortality, and be marked with ashen crosses. We will also be fed and nourished with the body and blood of Jesus Christ. So begins the season of Lent and our journey to the cross and the empty tomb. This year, our theme is Encounters with Christ. This focus emerges from our Sunday readings, in which Jesus encounters, in succession, the devil, Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the man born blind, and dead Lazarus. On Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion, he encounters in full the forces of sin, evil, and death. While all seems lost, he will rise to encounter us once more with the promise of forgiveness and life. This theme will give shape to our worship life throughout the season, as well as to our daily devotions. Join us on the journey, as Christ encounters us anew this year.

**The Rev. David R. Lyle**  
**Senior Pastor**  
**Grace Lutheran Church & School**



## FELLOWSHIP

### Grace Notes mailing crew

This newsletter crew will be at work again on Thursday, February 23, 9:30 a.m. in the church library. Contact Marlene Hallman (708-562-5476), or just come!

### Cornerstones

Bible study for seniors on Wednesdays. Join us in the Grace library for fellowship at 9:30 a.m. and Bible study with the pastors at 10 a.m. Contact Esther Armstrong at [earmstrong@graceriverforest.org](mailto:earmstrong@graceriverforest.org) for more information.

### Theology on Tap

Come for community and monthly conversations about faith and life. The next gathering is Friday, January 27. Email Pastor Troy ([tmedlin@graceriverforest.org](mailto:tmedlin@graceriverforest.org)) for more information.

### Moms of Littles

Mothers with children of any and all ages, infants through teens, meet at 6:30 p.m. at Grace on the first and third Thursday of the month for community and support. Contact Sabrina Maggio ([sabrina.maggio713@gmail.com](mailto:sabrina.maggio713@gmail.com)) for updates.

### Dads of Grace

Join Pastor Lyle and other dads on January 23, at 7:30 p.m. for an evening of fellowship. Email Pastor Lyle for the particulars ([dlyle@graceriverforest.org](mailto:dlyle@graceriverforest.org)).

### Men of Grace

The Men of Grace group meets at Grace on Saturday, January 28, 9 a.m. Email Pastor Troy for more information ([tmedlin@graceriverforest.org](mailto:tmedlin@graceriverforest.org)).

### Yoga

Weekly yoga classes taught by Ackli Howell meet on Thursdays, 6:30–7:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Bring your own yoga mat and a blanket or large towel. There is no fee for the class, but a good will offering will be appreciated. Questions? Please call Ackli at 708-516-2701.

### Knitting group

The knitting (and crocheting!) group meets on the third Tuesday of each month in the church library. The next meeting is January 17, 1-2:30 p.m. Beginners are welcome! Contact Karen Eckstein ([ecksteinkaren2@gmail.com](mailto:ecksteinkaren2@gmail.com)) with questions.

### Religion in Literature

The Religion in Literature group meets January 20, 7:30 p.m., in the home of Amy and James Claud, 326 Forest Avenue, River Forest. That evening four talented writers, who are usually four of our most insightful readers, will present excerpts from their own work: Gwen Gotsch, Steve Peterson, Pam Todd, and Jeff Wood. Come and hear some surprising and provocative writers of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction. (One is even a playwright.) All are welcome. For more information and to be added to the email list, please contact Jill Baumgaertner at [jill.baumgaertner@wheaton.edu](mailto:jill.baumgaertner@wheaton.edu).

### Finding Hope

This support group for people with chronic illness meets on the second Friday of the month at 10 a.m. The next meeting is on February 10. Contact Judie McDonnell ([judie.mcdonnell@att.net](mailto:judie.mcdonnell@att.net)) for more information.

### Moms of Teens and Young Adults

The new fellowship group Moms of High School Teens and Young Adults fosters community among women whose children are growing up into adulthood. Contact Jessica Bullock ([jesbullock23@gmail.com](mailto:jesbullock23@gmail.com)) to be added to the group email list.

### Retired Leaders

This group of retired Christian men and women in former leadership positions in the church or community meets Thursday, February 16, 10 a.m., in the church library and on Zoom.

## PRAYERS

The weekly **Prayer List** can be found in the worship bulletin on Sunday. Contact Esther Armstrong (708-366-6900 ext 207; [earmstrong@graceriverforest.org](mailto:earmstrong@graceriverforest.org)) to be included on the published prayer list. Contact Kathy Lucht ([kathy.lucht@gmail.com](mailto:kathy.lucht@gmail.com)) or Kathy Garness ([KMGfinearts@comcast.net](mailto:KMGfinearts@comcast.net)) with confidential prayer chain requests.


## BUILDING HOURS

Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Open evenings for scheduled meetings and activities.

Sundays, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and for scheduled activities in the afternoon and evening.

## PASTORS' EMERGENCY PHONE

Call 708-689-3032 for emergency pastoral care on weekends, or when the Grace building is closed.

<b>GRACE LUTHERAN SCHOOL</b> 7300 Division Street in River Forest 708-366-6900	<b>GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH &amp; SCHOOL</b>
	FAITH ✦ ACADEMICS ✦ CHARACTER
<b>Early Childhood, ages 3 to 5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full-day kindergarten</li><li>• Half-day and full-day options for ages 3 to 4</li></ul> <b>Elementary &amp; Junior High, Grades 1 to 8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong academic curriculum</li><li>• Individualized attention</li><li>• Music, art, and sports teams</li><li>• Before and after-school care available</li></ul>	<b>First Look Fridays</b> 2nd & 4th Fridays of each month. Call the office at 708-366-6901



GRACEFUL  
EVENING  
MARCH 11, 2023



7300 Division St.  
River Forest, IL 60305

GRACE  
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