

*January 4, 2026 • Last Sunday's Attendance: 171*

## Today at Grace: January 4

### Grace's Library is Open

Did you know that the church library is open on Sundays? Stop by after worship to see what books are available. And if your child needs a break during worship, there are books just for them.

If you are looking for books on Christmas, you can find them in the library too! The book list for December can be found on Grace Links. To check out any book, please write your name on the card in the back of the book and leave it in the card holder on the table. Books are available for a four-week checkout.

### Faith Promise Cards

If you haven't brought in your card yet, you can still bring it in during any upcoming service, drop it off at the front desk, or mail it to Grace.

## Other Information

### Finance Report

Grace Lutheran Church General Fund – July 1, 2025 through December 30, 2025 (26 Sundays)

- Church Budgeted Contributions \$1,004,900 (\$38,650 per week)
- Church Actual Contributions \$954,000 (last year was \$911,000 through December 30)
- Church giving is \$50,900 (5.1%) behind budget, and \$43,000 (4.7%) ahead of last year.
- Today's December 30 deficit is \$133,000 (\$225,000 deficit last year through December 31).

### Epiphany Brunch

**Sunday, January 11, at 11:15 a.m.**

### Fellowship Hall

This annual tradition is a wonderful way to enter the new year together as a family of faith. Come start the new year, with worship and fellowship centered in our Lord, Jesus Christ. RSVP using Grace Links, and if you want to help, you can sign up at the same link. We hope to see you there as we celebrate the new year together.



# What's Happening: January 5 - 11

Ready to build deeper friendships and connections at Grace? Now is the perfect time to jump in! We have several groups meeting this week, and you're invited to stop by even if you've never attended before. All are welcome and no RSVP required. Come connect with your church family!



## **Building Hours**

January 5 - 7: 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

January 8: Normal building hours resumes

## **Grace Links**

### **Cornerstones: Wednesday at 10 a.m. (Church Library)**

Join us for fellowship followed by a discussion about the upcoming Scripture readings. All are welcome!

### **Parish Choir Rehearsal: Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. (Music Room)**

### **Yoga Class: Thursday at 6:30 p.m. (Fellowship Hall)**

Bring a yoga mat, a yoga block if you have one, and a large towel or a blanket. Fee for the class is a free will offering which goes to the church. If you have questions about class or yoga in general, please call Ackli at 708-516-2701.

### **Finding Hope: Friday at 10 a.m. (Church Library)**

You are invited to an informal monthly gathering of support and encouragement for those who experience a chronic health concern.

### **Quilting for Lutheran World Relief: Saturday at 9 a.m. (Fellowship Hall)**

Join us to help assemble our first quilts for Lutheran World Relief. The finished quilts will support people in need, whether due to health diagnosis, natural disasters, or war. Help us assemble quilts and sort donations. All levels of experience are welcome. Stay for the full time or drop in for an hour or two. Light lunch will be served to volunteers. Please consider donating supplies like fabric and batting, equipment (for sewing cutting or ironing) or funds to support this effort. A "Master List of Welcome Supplies" can be found at the Grace Links Tab on Grace's website. Donated Supplies can be placed in the Quilt Project Bin in the Coat Closet off the Atrium. Contact Christa Krout, 708.557.9574, [christakrout@comcast.net](mailto:christakrout@comcast.net)

### **Slovak Mission Team Information Meeting: Sunday at 9 a.m. (Conference Room)**

If you love travel, learning about other cultures and – most important of all – sharing your faith, consider this opportunity. Come with us to Slovakia to help lead Vacation Bible School (VBS) at the Center for Christian Education (CCE). Just one more volunteer means that 10 more kids can come to learn about Jesus and His love for them. There are different roles to fill, using different gifts. What is needed most are your love, smile, and desire to share with the children. **The next mission trip will be July 2 - 14.** If you are interested in joining, please come to this meeting. For questions, please contact Julie Modrich ([jmodrich@graceriverforest.org](mailto:jmodrich@graceriverforest.org)).

# Join us in January

## **Faith Forum: Tues., Jan. 13, at 10 a.m. (Church Library and Zoom)**

How the Supreme Court Has Expanded Religious Freedom

The Supreme Court has recently reshaped several areas of law, including the scope of religious freedom. Jeff Wood, a retired lawyer who has taught courses on the Supreme Court at the Chautauqua Institution, will describe these decisions and the legal philosophies shaping the court.

If you would like to join virtually, the Zoom meeting ID is 825-6775-6438 and the passcode is 407970.

## **Moms of Littles: Thurs., Jan. 15, at 6:30 p.m. (Youth Center)**

We are group for moms of children ages infant - 8th grade. Our intention is to build and maintain a faith-based community that supports each other as we navigate the journey of parenthood. All moms are welcome in this group regardless of church or school affiliation. If you are in need of child care, please let Elyssa know by the Monday before each meeting ([elyssa.salinas@gmail.com](mailto:elyssa.salinas@gmail.com)).

## **Religion in Literature: Fri., Jan. 16, at 7:30 p.m. (Off-site)**

Location: Martin and Jill Baumgaertner's home (841 W. Monroe St., #5PH, Chicago, IL 60607)

Free parking is available at Mariano's across the street. Metered parking is available on the street.

We will meet to discuss Andrew Krivak's book, *The Signal Flame*. Jeff Wood will lead the discussion of the novel that begins after Easter and ends on Christmas Eve 1972 as a family awaits the return of their youngest son from the Vietnam war.

## **Operation Deluge: Sun., Jan. 18, from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. (Atrium)**

## **Confirmation and Sunday School Resumes: Sun., Jan. 18, at 9 a.m.**

## **Adult Education: Sun., Jan. 18, at 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. (Seminar Room)**

How to read like C.S. Lewis: Lessons from the Lewis Library

Dr. Jim Beitler, Professor of English at Wheaton College, will showcase several remarkable items from C.S. Lewis's personal library and discuss what they can teach us about how to read well.

## **Health Committee Presentation: Sun., Jan. 18, at 11:15 a.m. (Fellowship Hall)**

Living Faithfully, Dying Faithfully: Estate Planning as a Part of End-of-Life Planning

Speaker: Melissa De Vries

Do you wonder what estate planning entails and whether it applies to you? (It applies to everyone!) Do you have a plan but are wondering what may have changed since you last did your plan? Come learn what estate planning is about, what you should do if you don't already have a plan, and what happens if you don't. Advanced directives, including Power of Attorney, will also be discussed.

## **Bach Cantata Vespers: Sun., Jan. 18, at 3:45 p.m. (Sanctuary)**

Alles nur nach Gottes Willen, BWV 72 (Everything according to God's will alone)

This cantata for the Third Sunday after Epiphany was first performed on January 27, 1726. Drawing its themes from the biblical account of Jesus healing a leper, the cantata describes how the believer finds comfort in trusting that all things ultimately come to fulfillment in God's gracious will. The cantata concludes with the chorale Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit (What my God wills, that always occurs), a hymn of faith and contentment well known to Bach's Leipzig congregation. The prelude to the service at 3:45 p.m. will be performed by Grace's string quartet-in-residence, the Kontras Quartet.

## **Knitting Group: Tues., Jan. 20, at 1 p.m. (Church Library)**

Looking for a cozy community to share your love of yarn? Whether you're a beginner or an experienced knitter, you'll find a warm welcome here! Bring your current project and enjoy some relaxed crafting time and good conversation. We will also show you how to contribute to our prayer shawl ministry.

## **GriefShare Seminar Series: Starts Thursday, January 22, at 10 a.m.**

Your bereavement experience may be recent or not so recent. Whether you are grieving the loss of a spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandchild, other family member, or a friend, and no matter what the cause of your loved one's death, you will find encouragement, comfort, and help by being with others who understand what you are feeling. The cost for the course is \$20 and includes video sessions, online materials, and a workbook. To register: go to [GriefShare.org](http://GriefShare.org), click on Find a Group, and use the River Forest zip code (60305) to locate our group; call 708-366-6900; or email [gracechurch@graceriverforest.org](mailto:gracechurch@graceriverforest.org). For further information, contact facilitator Linda Bernard at 773-259-4720 or at [lmbernard5@gmail.com](mailto:lmbernard5@gmail.com).

## **Schedule**

January 22: Is This Normal?	March 5: Regrets
January 29: Your Grief Journey <i>Conference Room</i>	March 12: Grief, Your Household, & Your Friendships
February 5: Loneliness & Sadness	March 19: Questions for God
February 12: Self-Care	March 26: Stuck in Grief (Conference Room)
February 19: Fearful & Overwhelmed	April 2: Hope & Resilience
February 26: Anger (Conference Room)	April 9: What Do I Live For Now?

## **Theology on Tap: Fri., Jan. 23, at 7 p.m. (One Lake Brewing Company, Oak Park)**

We are a gathering designed for young adults and is open to anybody who identifies as a young adult in body or in spirit. The more the merrier. Pastor Troy brings a topic and some questions, and we wrestle with a topic together. Curiosity, questions, and different perspectives are always welcome.

## **Men of Grace: Sat., Jan. 24, at 9 a.m. (Youth Center)**

Join the men of Grace for coffee and donuts, great conversation, and time for connection with each other. All are welcome!

## **Congregation Meeting: Sun., Jan. 25, at 11:15 a.m. (Fellowship Hall)**

## **Dads of Grace: Mon., Jan. 26, at 7:30 p.m. (Off-site)**

You're invited to join in to connect with other dads in the church for encouragement, practical advice, and supportive friendship as we navigate the challenges and joys of fatherhood together. For more information, including the location, contact Pastor Dave Lyle ([dlyle@graceriverforest.org](mailto:dlyle@graceriverforest.org)).

## **Grace Notes Mailing Crew: Thurs., Jan. 29, at 9:30 a.m. (Church Library)**

## **Bible Exploration Part II: Fri., Jan. 30, at 6 p.m. (Fellowship Hall)**

We continue our exploration in the New Testament this year. Join Pastor Troy and Julie Modrich for a night of games, trivia, and Bible exploration. Together, we will discover fun facts about the Bible and what its message has to do with our lives. Enjoy chicken tenders, mac & cheese, salad and dessert for supper. RSVP using Grace Links.