

OUR VISION

WELCOMING PEOPLE TO GROW IN HOPE, LOVE, AND CERTAINTY THROUGH GOD'S WORD OF GRACE.

Spring is finally here! Yeah! The snow will be done soon – we hope and pray. The buds are appearing on the trees. The daffodils are popping up through the ground. The geese are flying north and lots of other birds are returning from their southern homes. Freshness is returning to the air. The grass will be green again and the trees will be full of leaves in no time. Spring is an obvious time of renewal. Likewise, our congregation is approaching a time of renewal as we move forward in our search for a new pastor.

As I was writing this, I became interested in what exactly a congregation is. The word itself is derived from the Latin word *greg* which means "flock". That basic word then gets transformed into *congregare* which means "to gather together". This kind of makes sense since we often think of Christ as our shepherd. A couple of very common hymns reflect this. "The Lord's My Shepherd I'll Not Want" (number 710 in the hymnal) and "Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us" (#711) can both make us feel like Jesus is looking after us as though He were our shepherd.

I also came across a definition that the IRS uses for congregation that I found kind of interesting. They describe it as a group of people who adhere to a common faith and **habitually** attend a given church or place of worship. I emphasized **habitually** because as we move forward with our search for a new pastor it is important that we reflect the real size of our "congregation". We currently have 222 households on our membership role. Our current attendance is in the neighborhood of 70 individuals. So it seems there are a fair number of "members" that do not make it a **habit** of attending.

There are certainly good reasons why some folks are not able to attend, but in order for us to get a good understanding of our **true** membership we are sending out a questionnaire to all households to hopefully ascertain what our true "congregation" is. Please fill it in and return it in the envelope provided. Don't forget to include your names and those of your family members who feel likewise.

During this spring season and going forward let us all renew the focus on our mission at Grace which is "to share with people the hope and certainty of everlasting life in Christ", our vision, "to welcome people to grow in hope, love and certainty through God's word of grace" and one of our long range objectives, "to spread hope through God's word". As "hope" is included in all the above statements, it seems that hope is quite important to the people of Grace. We now are hoping to find a new pastor to lead us though our future days at Grace. Patience will help us, self-reflection and a little soul searching will help us, but most importantly prayer will help us. Keep in touch with God through prayer, and make our hopes and plans for Grace known to Him so He can guide us through the days to come with patience.

In God's Service, Mark Andrews (Chairman of Grace's Elders)

Holy Week Schedule

Sunday, April 2 nd	10:30 AM	Palm Sunday Worship Service			
Thursday, April 6 th	6:30 PM	Maundy Thursday Service (HC)			
Friday, April 7 th	6:30 PM	Good Friday Tenebrae Service			

Sunday, April 9th - Easter Sunday

7:00 am Sunrise Service

8:00 am Easter Breakfast

This year available in the basement AND in the upstairs lounge!

9:00 am Easter education and celebration:

Adult class (Augsburg Confessions, continued) Children (see below)

10:30 am Easter Jubilee Service (HC)



HOLY WEEK SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

<u>Palm Sunday:</u> Sunday School students and staff will participate in Palm Sunday procession. They will sing "The King of Glory" during worship, also including a trumpet and soloists.

<u>Easter Sunday:</u> Along with a short Easter lesson, there will be a craft, music, and an Easter Egg Hunt. Thank you to the Grace Ladies for filling over 300 Easter eggs and all who donated candy.

^{*}HC refers to a service with Holy Communion.

DURING OUR VACANCY...

"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

OFFICE HOURS:

Our Office Administrator, Erin Anthony, is in the church office on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10 AM - 2 PM, and on the first Sunday of the month from 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM. She will be able to answer many of your questions about church activities. Erin can be reached by stopping in, calling 716-283-1843, or emailing her at office@gracenf.org. Email and voicemail messages will be returned on Erin's next scheduled work day. Articles for the bulletin should be submitted by Wednesday at 12 PM each week.

WORSHIP SERVICES:

Worship services are at 10:30 AM each Sunday. Services are being conducted by our Board of Elders with Pastor Bahr volunteering his assistance when he is available. Palm Sunday service is at 10:30 AM and will include our Sunday School students and a palm processional. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services begin at 6:30 PM. On Easter, there will be two services (7:00 AM and 10:30 AM), with a breakfast following the 7:00 AM service. Sunday School and Bible class will be at 9:00 AM.

BIBLE CLASS & SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Bible Class and Sunday School are held each Sunday at 9 AM. Bible Class is being led by Pastor and Lacey Bahr. See detailed information on page 9.

CARE TEAMS:

The Board of Elders and Board of Social Ministries have teamed up to provide visits and communion to our homebound and ill members on a regular basis. We thank Pastors Bahr, Brese, and Sallach for consecrating the wine and bread used by our Care Team Elders. If you become temporarily unable to attend church services due to an illness, injury, or any other situation, please contact the office so you can be placed on the prayer list (and receive a home visit if requested). Please keep the office informed of any needs that arise during our vacancy.

PLEASE NOTE:

Each Sunday bulletin contains an attendance sheet that allows us to care for our church family. IT IS IMPORTANT TO FILL OUT THIS FORM <u>EACH WEEK</u> WITH THE DATE AND YOUR NAME AND PLACE IT IN THE OFFERING PLATE. This will assist us in making sure that all of our members are being cared for as needed.

EMERGENCIES:

If a need for immediate or urgent pastoral care should arise, please contact our congregation's President, Dick Crawford (716-818-6992), or Chair of the Board of Elders, Mark Andrews (716-807-1758). They will arrange pastoral care for you.



<u>UPDATES</u>

THANK YOU for your generous donations to our door offering for the victims of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. We donated a total of \$520 to Food for the Poor, which is prioritizing providing food, water, and medical supplies to those who continue to be affected by this disaster.

Our annual **TOILET TISSUE** project was successful again this year. Thanks to your generosity and a Thrivent Action Team grant, we were able to gift 645 rolls of toilet tissue to Heart, Love, & Soul for distribution to the clients they serve. Thank you for supporting this much appreciated project that provides comfort and dignity to our neighbors in need. Thank you to Ross Folmsbee for organizing this project.

HOSPICE BOUQUETS: A total of 34 bouquets were placed on the altar on March 12, resulting in a \$340 donation to Niagara Hospice. Thank you Jane Schulz for organizing the orders, and to Jane and Wendy Coleman for arranging them on the altar.

FROM OUR OLDEST MEMBER: Crystal Michel celebrated her 101st birthday in November and sent this lovely thank you note: "Dear all members of Grace who have wished me a Merry Christmas and prayed for me during my 101st birthday. It was a very different birthday this year. I'd also say thanks for the letters from Lacey Bahr and Grace's Sunday School kids who sent me pictures and prayed for me. Thank you all for helping me celebrate my 101st year making me the oldest member. It's an honor. Thank you and love to all members of Grace.

MISSION ENVELOPE UPDATES:

JANUARY MISSION ENVELOPES were designated for Orphan Grain Train. We were able to send a donation of \$800 to help them provide clothing, food, shelter, and medical supplies throughout the United States and the world.

FEBRUARY MISSION ENVELOPES were designated for Young Life, an international youth organization with local chapters whose purpose is to bring teens to the knowledge of our loving Savior. We were able to contribute \$850 to support their work in our area.

UPCOMING MISSION ENVELOPES:

TO DONATE: If you would like to support our upcoming missions, please place your mission envelope in the offering plate during the designated month. You can also donate online at www.gracenf.org by clicking "give now" and choosing the "mission of the month" option.

APRIL MISSION ENVELOPES are designated to support **Pioneer on the Lake** as they continue their outdoor ministry on Lake Erie in Angola. Pioneer will be offering family camps this summer with lots of fun summer activities, such as rope courses, games, bonfires, swimming, and paintball. Your donations will aid in the upkeep of the camp and programming plans.

MAY MISSION ENVELOPES are designated to support The Lord's Day Dinner in Niagara Falls. These full holiday meals are offered free of charge to anyone in need on Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. They are organized and cooked by Matt and Yvonne Davis, their family and friends, and volunteers, and are served to over 500 people each holiday. The Davis' have been providing these meals to Niagara Falls residents for over 30 years, ever since Yvonne felt called by God to "put on a feast for the people". They started by serving from their home on Ashland Avenue, and moved to the VFW on Seneca Avenue as their numbers grew. Your donations will be used by Matt and Yvonne to purchase the supplies needed to continue their mission.

CARE TEAMS ARE AVAILABLE:

Our Care Teams have been visiting our homebound members and offering communion if desired. The teams consist of an Elder and a Social Ministries member. The wine and bread the Elders use for communion have been consecrated by Pastors Bahr, Brese, or Sallach. Please let the office know if you become temporarily unable to attend worship due to illness, injury, or other situation. If desired, you will be placed on the Sunday prayer list (and a visit will be arranged if requested).

<u>UPCOMING MISSION PROJECTS</u>

OISHEI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL COMFORT BAGS: Jim Wolf, one of our Elders, volunteers with the Family Resource Center at Oishei. Three times each week, volunteers distribute Comfort Bags to all new admits to ensure a warm welcome and reduce an oftentimes stressful scenario. The bags contain items necessary to provide a measure of comfort while families are away from home. During April, we will be accepting items that are needed to fill these bags. Please take time to read more about this project on page 8.

BABY ITEMS FOR SUMMIT LIFE OUTREACH CENTER: Our annual support of Summit will begin on Mother's Day (May 14) and continue until Father's Day (June 18). Tables will be available in the chapel and narthex to accept donations of new baby clothes, diapers, and baby toiletries. Summit is a Christian organization located on Pine Avenue near the Niagara Falls City Market that is devoted to helping young women who find themselves in unplanned pregnancy situations. Their clients receive free counseling as well as pregnancy and parenting education. Their "earn while you learn" program allows them to shop for needed baby items in the "Parenting Shoppe" with credits received for attendance at educational sessions. Your donations will help to stock their Parenting Shoppe.

BABY BOTTLE BANKS: Banks in the shape of baby bottles will also be available on our Summit donation tables from Mother's Day to Father's Day. If you would like to support Summit in this way, take a bottle or two home with you and fill it with your spare change. Bottles should be returned to the table, the church office, or to Alice Moll on or before Father's Day.

ONGOING MINISTRIES:

EYEGLASSES & HEARING AIDS: We collect these items for donation to the Lion's Club, which makes them available all over the world free of charge to individuals who otherwise could not afford to purchase them. A box is available in the coat room for your donations. Keep this in mind as you are doing your spring cleaning.

SAMPLE-SIZED TOILETRIES: If you receive sample-sized or travel-sized toiletry items in the mail, from vacations, or from doctors & dentists that you cannot use, please consider placing them in the donation box in the coat room. We take these products to Lighthouse Women and Children in Niagara Falls which serves woman and children in need in our city.

GREETING CARDS: We send birthday greetings to our "over 90 club" members, our homebound, and members or friends of the congregation that are ill, grieving, or facing other challenges in their lives. If you know of someone who would benefit from a card, please let Trish Andrews or the church office know.

NEXT MEETING—NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

The next meeting of the Board of Social Ministries will be held after worship on Sunday, May 7. We meet five times each year for about an hour. Lunch is shared during the meetings (hotdogs are on the menu for May). Please consider joining us and offering your suggestions and opinions.

GRACE will continue to offer Sunday's weekly service online through our YouTube channel. Using this link or QR code, you may view the service live on Sundays starting at 10:20 AM or participate in any previous service anytime.



https://www.youtube.com/@gracenf/streams

Current News & Announcements

- ** **UPCOMING COMMUNION SUNDAYS** for the month of April are Thursday, April 6th at 6:30pm, and Sundays, April 9th and 30th. These changes to our typical Holy Communion schedule are being made to accommodate the schedule of available pastoral attendance.
- **PLEASE WATCH for a church member attendance survey coming in the mail in the next coming weeks. You will be able to return it with a pre-stamped envelope.
- ** **COMMUNITY BOARD** Don't forget to check out the community bulletin board outside the church office for upcoming events, letters and cards.
- ** ALTAR FLOWER CHART for 2023 is hanging in the narthex. You many sign up for a any available date listed on the chart or you can call the church to request a date and/or see what is available. The cost for a single centerpiece is \$49 or you may choose two vases for \$67.
- ** **FLOWER BOUQUETS** that were placed on the altar on Sunday, March 12th were to the to the Glory of God and in appreciation and thankfulness for Niagara Hospice and the services they provide to patients and families by the following:
 - Flory Bellreng
 - Mark Binkley
 - Pastor & Jane Brese
 - Wendy Coleman
 - Dick & Marla Crawford
 - Sharon Dixon
 - Barbara Dockstader
 - Barb Elzer
 - Ross & Amy Folmsbee
 - Doug Goodnick

- Cathy Hoffman
- Donna Hoffman
- Joel & Dorothy Kew
- Kim Kifer
- Virginia Markel
- Lin Matiasz
- Geraldine Miller
- Bev Mills
- Alice & Bruce Moll
- Vicki Muoio

- Katelyn Pantano
- Kevin & Sandy Peploe
- Luann Pyska
- Jane Schulz
- Neil & Michele Stenzel
- Robin Stephenson
- Elaine Timm
- Erika Tuscher
- Jim & Aimee Wolf
- Les & Ursula Zimmerman

Official Acts

As of 3/20/2023

In Memoriam:

†Shirley Mae Geltz

02/19/2023

† Denotes GLC Member



Comfort Bags Program

Comfort bags are provided to all new admits that enter OCH. Often, families and patients that are admitted to the hospital are thinking about the situation at hand, and not what they may need during their stay. Comfort bags ensure families have a warm welcome, the necessary toiletries needed during their admission, and a few activities/ treats to reduce an oftentimes stressful scenario and to provide some measures of care and comfort while they are away from home. We have volunteers that distribute these comfort bags three time a week. These volunteers individually fill these bags with these comfort items specific to the patient's age, giving them a unique comfort bag specific to them.

Items Needed:

- Travel sized toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, hand sanitizer, toothbrushes, toothpaste, pocket tissues, hand lotion, hairbrushes)
- Playing Cards
- Coloring Books and Crayons
- Baby/Infant Rattles/ Small Baby Toys
- Childrens Books (Especially baby board books!)
- Children/ Teen Magazines
- Crossword Puzzle/ Word Find Books
- Small Lego kits/ toys/ handheld games
- Gift Cards in \$5.00 increments ie: Tim Horton's, Joe's Deli, VISA, Tops. Target, Walmart, and Gas







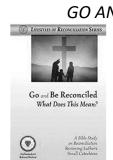




Christian Education Information & Schedule

What's happening during our vacancy? Adult Bible Class will be offering TWO studies on alternating Sundays:

truth of Scripture, and still today their words echo in our churches. Come and discover the beauty of the chief of our Lutheran creeds, the Augsburg Confession of 1530. Study led by Pastor Bahr biweekly; see bulletin for dates.



deeper understanding for what makes the church unique in the world; what draw us - God's people - closer together. "Go and Be Reconciled", produced by Ambassadors of Reconciliation, study led by Lacey Bahr, Christian Reconciler-Coach (AOR).

Sundays at 9 am

April 2nd: Go and Be Reconciled

April 9th: Here We Stand!

April 16th: Go and Be Reconciled

April 23rd: Go and Be Reconciled

April 30th: Here We Stand!

May 7th: Here We Stand!

May 14th: Go and Be Reconciled

May 21st: Here We Stand!

May 28th: Go and Be Reconciled

June 4th: Go and Be Reconciled



Ark Encounter & Creation Museum, North Kentucky May 10-12, 2023 Price Per Person: \$599

Dear Member of Grace Lutheran Church,

The Ark Encounter opened July 15, 2016 with 7,000 in attendance. In its first three months of operation, over 300,000 people had visited – taking it all in! The ark is the largest timber-frame structure in the world, and most of the wood work was constructed by Old Order Amish men.

Jerry Waldkoetter, owner of The Way to Go Tours, was there twice in its first two years of operation. The timing of the itinerary was enjoyed by his clients. With each of the four visits, the motor coach was either the first or second motor coach to arrive for the day. This gives you a head start for the day!

Add to the itinerary the Creation Museum, the BibleWalk (Mansfield, OH), and the Botanical Gardens (Columbus, OH) and you have quite an inspirational tour!

Tour Features:

Hotel: 2 nights at the Hampton Inn, Wilder, KY

Meals: 2 breakfasts at the hotel; 1 TBA dinner; 1 dinner at the Hofbrauhaus in

Newport, KY (number 1 restaurant of 61 in Newport)

Professional Tour Escort: Jerry Waldkoetter

Deluxe Motorcoach Transportation

\$599 per person is based on double-occupancy. The single supplement is \$80 dollars. Sign up on the glass case and turn in your deposit of \$125 (checks made out to "Way to Go Tours"). Registration is due by April 10th.

If financial assistance is needed, please see Lacey Bahr. The Board of Christian Education wants to make sure as many as possible can come!

Simplified Itinerary from the Way to Go Tours:

Wednesday, May 10

6:45 am	Depart from McDonald's, North Tonawanda
7:10 am	Leave from additional pick up in Williamsville. Mid-morning break
	scheduled.
12 noon	Lunch (on own) at Cracker Barrel, Mansfield, OH
1:00 pm	BibleWalk, Mansfield, OH. Mid-afternoon break scheduled.
6:00 pm	Dinner TBA (awaiting confirmation from management)
7:30 pm	Depart for hotel
8:00 pm	Arrival at Hampton Inn, Wilder, KY

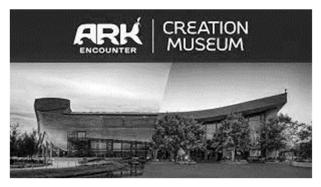
Thursday, May 11

6:00 am	Breakfast begins
8:00 am	Leave for Ark Encounter
9:00 am	Arrival at Ark Encounter, Williamsville, KY
12 noon	Lunch (on own) at Ark Encounter
12:45 pm	Leave for Creation Museum
1:30 pm	Arrival at Creation Museum, Petersburg, KY (admission to the Stargazer
	Planetarium is included)
5:30 pm	Dinner at Hofbrauhaus, Newport, KY
7:30 pm	Return to Hampton Inn, Wilder, KY

Friday, May 12

6:00 am	Breakfast begins
8:00 am	Bus departs
10:00 am	Arrival at Franklin Conservatory & Park Gardens, Columbus, OH
12 noon	Lunch (on own) at the Conservatory
1:00 pm	Leave for home (with a mid-afternoon break)
8:00 pm	Arrival in Williamsville
8:30 pm	Arrival in North Tonawanda

This itinerary is flexible, but timeliness helps the schedule run smoothly.





Be cool. Give blood.

Blood Drive Grace Lutheran Church

Social Hall 736 Cayuga Drive Niagara Falls, NY 14304

Saturday, April 22, 2023 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

For an appointment, please call 1-800-RED CROSS or visit RedCrossBlood.org, Find A Drive: NFGL

Appointments Preferred ID Required

Maximize your blood donation. Help more patients.

If you are an eligible type O, B - or A - donor, consider making a Power Red donation.

Red blood cells are the most commonly transfused blood component.





Be cool. Give blood. Come give April 1-23 for an exclusive American Red Cross and PEANUTS T-shirt featuring Snoopy as the coolest beagle in town, Joe Cool! Get yours, while supplies last – then show off your cool, kind spirit.





RedCrossBlood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | Download the Blood Donor App



April 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Head Ushers:	Altar Care:					1
Neil Stenzel	Ursula Zimmerman					
Mark Andrews						
2 Palm Sunday 9:00A CE: GBR 10:30A Worship	3	4	5	6:30P Maundy Thursday Service (HC)	7	8
	6:30P Survivors' Group			Service (nc)	6:30P Tenebrae Service	
9 Easter Sunday 7:00A Sunrise Service 8:00A Easter Breakfast 9:00A CE: HWS 10:30A Worship (HC)	10 6:30P Survivors' Group	11	12	13	14	15
16 9:00A CE: GBR 10:30A Worship	17 6:30P Survivors' Group	18 6:00P Grace Ladies Spring Flowers	19	20	21	9:00A Red Cross Blood Drive (until 1pm)
9:00A CE: GBR 10:30A Worship	24	25	26	27	28	29
	6:30P Survivors' Group					

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9:00A CE: HWS 10:30A Worship (HC) CE: Christian Education
HWS – Here We Stand!
GBR – Go & Be Reconciled
HC: Holy Communion

Office Phone: 716-283-1843

Office Administrator: Erin Anthony – office@gracenf.org

Church Office Hours: 1st Sunday 8:30 AM-12:30 PM; M/W/TH 10 AM-2 PM



May 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 6:30P Survivors' Group	2	3	4	5	6 10:00A Piano Rehearsal
7 9:00A CE: HWS 10:30A Worship (HC) 11:30A Soc. Minis. Mtg.	8 6:30P Survivors' Group	9	10	11	12	13 12:00P Piano Recital
14 Mother's Day 9:00A CE: GBR 10:30A Worship	Gleanings Deadline 6:30P Survivors' Group	16 12:00P School Elections 6:30P Grace Ladies Mtg.	17	18	19	20
21 9:00A CE: HWS 10:30A Worship (HC)	22 6:30P Survivors' Group	23	24	25	26	27
28 9:00A CE: GBR 10:30A Worship	29 MEMORIAL DAY 6:30P Survivors' Group	30	31		Head Ushers: Gary Krull John Loss	Altar Care: Erika Tuscher

CE: Christian Education HWS – Here We Stand! GBR – Go & Be Reconciled

HC: Holy Communion

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St John Lutheran **Spring Fling Auction**



Sponsored by St John Lutheran PTL with proceeds to support our soccer field

***************** April 29, 2023 Doors open at 5pm St. Johnsburg Fire Hall 7165 Ward Road North Tonawanda

Catered Dinner | Open Bar | Desserts

Tickets available at

St. John School (716)693-9677

6950 Ward Rd

N. Tonawanda

Wine Pull with Grand Prize Gift Card Grab Silent Auction Live Auction

**Adults only event. Tickets are \$50 per person or \$350 per table (8 people). Dinner and open bar included. To participate in a Grace Lutheran Church table, sign up on the glass case, and send ticket payment to Lacey Bahr.

Grace Lutheran Church 736 Cayuga Drive Niagara Falls, NY 14304-3498

Electronic Service Requested

Non-Profit U.S. Postage PAID Niagara Falls, NY Permit No. 419





WORSHIP SERVICES

Divine Service: Sundays @ 10:30A

*Holy Communion on the first, third and fifth Sundays

Office Phone: 716-283-1843

EDUCATION

CE: "Here We Stand!"

And

"Go and Be Reconciled"

Sundays @ 9:004

Sundays @ 9:00A (Alternating)

GRACE LADIES

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 18th 6:00PM Spring Flower Planting

SOCIAL MINISTRIES

Next Meeting:
Sunday, May 7th
@ 11:30AM
*New members are always
welcome. We meet five
times each year for about
an hour.

Issue 31

Apr/May 2023