

THE GLEANINGS

of Grace Lutheran Church

736 CAYUGA DRIVE, NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14304-3498

(716) 283-1843

OFFICE@GRACENF.ORG



February-March 2026

OUR VISION

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

The winter doldrums are here. The Christmas season is over. All the decorations are put away for next year. The beautiful lights are gone back to their storage places along with all the fancy glass bulbs and other decorations that adorn our Christmas trees, houses and church. The Christmas banners in the church are again in storage. All the joyous gatherings and parties with friends and families are over with the coming of the new year. The weather outside is frightful. Really! The wind has been howling at almost hurricane force, the rain comes down sideways in the 35-degree temperature or the snow and ice make any trek outside a dangerous and dreadful ordeal. All the leaves have been blown off the trees and the flowers are long gone to their underground winter hibernation. It's soooo sad.

So what comes next? Have you made your new year's resolution? Are you going to lose the extra ten pounds that you gained from eating all those delicious Christmas cookies? Are you going to exercise more so you are in top shape by the time spring comes? Getting your body healthier is not about sudden change. It's about consistent habits. Exercise is an important part of this process. Regular exercise of any kind can help build your strength, improve your mood, and increase your energy. Exercise doesn't need to cost anything; it can be free! Exercising does not mean you have to work out at the gym. Walking, stretching, light calisthenics or any number of other exercise routines can all be enjoyable ways to stay active even without leaving the house. The key is finding something that fits into your daily life. My mother at 97 years of age exercised at the Golden age center and at home on a regular basis. "I'm too old" is not an excuse.

Healthy eating is another very important thing to consider when making those New Year resolutions. It's not always about eating less, but eating the right things and eating things in moderation. I'm not a nutritionist so I'm not going to suggest any particular diets but I know for sure that carrying around extra pounds is not a great idea.

This time of year is the perfect time to think about your life and evaluate what you can do better or differently not only to make your life better or more enjoyable but also the lives of those around you. But not just you and those around you but what about the church. Can you think of something that needs to be done around the church? Are there opportunities that you could take advantage of for making our church a more welcoming place for visitors? Is it time to start coming to bible study so that you can have a better understanding of God's word? Ecclesiastes chapter 3 says it very succinctly "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven". Let's all use this time of the "winter doldrums" to evaluate how we can improve our daily lives both physically and spiritually.

In God's Service, Mark Andrews



SAVE THE DATE

July 6-10, 2026

6:00 PM-8:00 PM

Ages 3 (potty trained) – entering grade 6

Help needed:

- Creative people to design and implement decorations, backdrops, props, etc.
- A helper to prepare and serve snacks.
- People who can relate to children and read.

Training is provided!

Contact Lacey Bahr: 716-525-5134 (text or call), laceybahr@gmail.com

Resources wanted:

Soda can tabs. The children's Sunday School is collecting soda tabs to give to Ronald McDonald house.

Did you know? The Sunday School children have chosen to send their offerings to two organizations: Niagara Gospel Mission and Golisano (formerly Oishei) Children's Hospital.

Christian resources to check out:

Podcast: *Issues, Etc.* A publication of Lutheran Public Radio, you can find this podcast on any major podcast app. Regular topics include Bible Study, Pop-Christianity, Kids' Questions, Catechism, Media and Faith, and Sanctity of Life.

Online book: *The Book of Concord* Available online for free from CPH. Explore the foundational confessions of the Lutheran church at your own pace wherever you are.

Visit bookofconcord.cph.org

Discipleship in action:

A peaceful, purposeful time of prayer and care for unborn babies and their parents. Join our local Lutherans for Life as they launch their next 40 days of prayer during this Lenten season.

Praying at the North Tonawanda Planned Parenthood begins Ash Wednesday. To sign up for a shift, or for more information, contact Kristen Jorg at 231-286-8685.





SOCIAL MINISTRIES

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:30-31

"Love your neighbor as yourself." With these simple words, Jesus commands us to treat all people with the compassion, respect, and empathy that we have for ourselves. The parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates that one's "neighbor" encompasses all people in our community and our world. In 1 John 3:17-18, we are told "Let us not love with words or speech, but with actions and in truth".

This past year has brought with it numerous concerns and stresses, including economic hardships for many who have never before experienced financial difficulties. The needs of our neighbors are many. Our Lord has placed before us many opportunities to show our love for our neighbors with our actions. We are thankful for each and every member of Grace who has stepped up to support Social Ministries' projects. We appreciate each and every one who has helped.

Because of your compassion for your neighbors, we were able to donate a total of \$10,683.77 to various local, national, and international organizations during 2025. In addition, there were numerous donations of food, toiletries, clothing, diapers, toilet tissue, toys, school supplies, and other items gifted to and distributed by our partner agencies. You will find a more detailed listing of our various outreach efforts on a separate page in this issue. We look forward to following God's lead as we continue to serve and discover new ways to help His children, "our neighbors", that are in need.

The Board of Social Ministries meets five times each year. Each meeting is held after worship and lasts for about an hour. We share a simple lunch while the meeting is conducted. **NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.** Our next meeting is scheduled for March 8. We will be enjoying pizza for lunch, so plan to stay and check it out as we make decisions about upcoming projects and how to best use the resources God makes available to us.

UPDATES

HARVEST FOOD COLLECTION: Each year we partner with St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry for a collection of non-perishable food items. St. Vincent serves up to 100 local families each month. This year you gave 670 items of food, which enabled them to restock their shelves after they were emptied by their Thanksgiving distribution. They are always genuinely grateful that they can count on our assistance at the time of the year when they are especially busy with requests for help.

THANK YOU for your generous donations of **46 TURKEYS AND 9 HAMS** to assist our local agencies in providing holiday dinners for Thanksgiving and Christmas. They were delivered to Community Mission, Salvation Army, Lighthouse Women & Children, and the Lord's Day dinner. Each and every agency expressed their appreciation and were very thankful for the donations. We want to give special mention and thanks to our Sunday School students who helped carry the turkeys and hams up from the basement freezer, saving our volunteers a number of trips. Thanks for a job well done kids!

ADVENT GIVING TREE: Thank you for supporting this annual project. All your gifts are now in the hands of our partner agencies Heart, Love, and Soul, Niagara Gospel Mission, Potter's Field, Salvation Army, and St. Vincent food pantry for distribution to those in need through the winter months. The need in our city continues to be great. Thank you for helping our neighbors.

CARE TEAMS: Our Care Teams (consisting of an Elder and a Board of Social Ministries member) made 17 home visits during 2025. They are available to visit and give communion to members who are unable to attend worship because of temporary or permanent situations. A Care Team visit can be requested by calling the office, or speaking to Mark Andrews, Dick Crawford, or Amy Folmsbee.

UPCOMING PROJECTS & EVENTS

“SOUP-ER BOWL” SUNDAY: Let's tackle hunger on "Soup-er Bowl Sunday"! While the teams battle it out on the field, we'll be teaming up to fight for the hungry in our community. On February 1 and February 8, you are invited to bring a can (or two, or three...) of chunky style soup, stew, or ready-to-eat pasta with you to church and place it on the donation tables located in the narthex and chapel. All donations will benefit the food pantry at Heart, Love, & Soul in Niagara Falls to nourish our hungry neighbors during these cold winter months. Let's huddle together and help our neighbors in need. "For I was hungry and you gave me food..." Matthew 25:35

HOSPICE BOUQUETS: The Niagara Hospice Spring Bouquet sale has begun.

There is a sign-up sheet on the glass case to order bouquets at \$10 each.

Deadline for placing orders is February 15. Flowers will be placed on the altar on March 15 and can be taken home after worship. Please make payment by cash or check (made payable to Niagara Hospice) to Jane Schulz. Feel free to ask Jane if you have any questions.



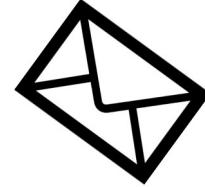
TOILET TISSUE PROJECT: During the month of March, we will have tables available in the chapel and narthex to accept donations of toilet tissue for the clients of Heart, Love, and Soul. Toilet tissue cannot be purchased with SNAP benefits (food stamps).

And let's face the facts...it's an item that is required several times every day, making it one of the most requested and appreciated commodities. Please consider taking advantage of this opportunity to show our love to our neighbors in a way that helps them maintain their dignity.

YOUNG LIFE FUNDRAISING DINNER: This year's dinner is scheduled for Thursday, March 19, at Classics Conference & Banquet Center on Niagara Falls Boulevard. There is no charge for the dinner, but donations for Young Life are appreciated. We will be reserving a table (or two) for Grace members and friends who would like attend. If you are interested, please sign up on the glass case.

PLEASE NOTE: If you sign up and your plans change, please let Dick Crawford know as soon as possible because Young Life is charged for every dinner that we reserve.

MISSION ENVELOPES



IF YOU WISH TO SUPPORT the following mission efforts, please place the envelope from your packet that is labeled "Special Mission" in the offering plate during the appropriate month, or donate online by choosing "monthly mission".

FEBRUARY MISSION ENVELOPES are designated to support **YOUNG LIFE**, an international youth organization with local chapters whose purpose is to bring teens to the knowledge of our loving Savior through meetings, activities, camps, and mentorship from caring, Christian adults. We have several members that have participated in Young Life activities over the years. Dick Crawford has been associated with this organization for many years and would be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding their mission and local work.

MARCH MISSION ENVELOPES are designated to support the **SAMARITAN COUNSELING CENTER OF WNY**, an agency that Pastor Brese worked with for many years. The challenges of today's world are causing more and more people to feel overwhelmed by feelings of depression, anxiety, anger, and other negative emotions that require the help of a professional. Samaritan's certified counselors provide low-cost faith-based counseling services at several locations in Western New York, including their main office located in North Tonawanda at St. Martin Lutheran Church. They also offer the option of virtual counseling. Because they believe that the cost of counseling should not prevent an individual from seeking care, they use donations they receive to offset fees for those with financial need. Your donations during March will be used to help members of community receive the care they need.

ATTENTION THRIVENT MEMBERS

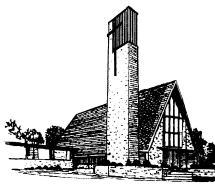
CHOICE DOLLARS: If you have a policy or investment with Thrivent Financial, you will find "Choice Dollars" in your online account. This option can be located on your home page when you log into your account and click on "Generosity" at the top of the page. By choosing "Thrivent Choice", you will be taken to a page where you can send your dollars to a charity of your choice. You can also add a charity, including Grace, if you choose to do so. Once you have directed your Choice Dollars, the money is sent directly to the organization you designated. Your Choice Dollars for 2025 will expire on March 31. If you don't direct them to an organization, they will disappear from your account.

THRIVENT CAUSE KITS: Each Thrivent member can order one Cause Kit per year (also found under the "Generosity" option). All costs, including shipping, are paid by Thrivent. Each Cause Kit contains either three solar lights or three water filter kits (your choice). Thrivent will send the kit to you to be assembled. They are easy to assemble, and all needed parts and tools are included. Once assembled, they are returned to Thrivent to be distributed to areas in need. These kits have been delivered all over the world, including in the United States during times of disasters that effect water and power supplies.

THRIVENT ACTION TEAMS: Members of Thrivent are eligible to organize two service projects each year, called Thrivent Action Teams. Approved projects receive a \$250 debit card from Thrivent to use toward the project. In 2025, we received approval for 14 Action Teams, resulting in a total of \$3500 that was used for activities that supported our partner agencies and the clients they serve. Thank you to all who applied to Thrivent, shopped for approved items, or helped with deliveries of donations.

A SUMMARY OF OUR 2025 OUTREACH WITH OUR PARTNER AGENCIES

AGENCY	MONEY DONATED	ITEMS DONATED
Community Mission	\$250	Turkeys & hams
LCMS Pacific Southwest District—wildfires	\$962.20	
Young Life	\$875	
Niagara Hospice		31 bouquets
Harry Abate School		School supplies, socks, underwear
Heart, Love, & Soul		192 Soup-er bowl cans, 600 rolls of toilet paper, toiletries, clothing, paper products, diapers, detergent
Niagara Falls Meals on Wheels	\$700	
Lighthouse Women and Children's	\$367	Turkeys & hams
Grace Benevolence Fund	\$518.60	
Pioneer on the Lake	\$550	
Orphan Grain Train	\$550	
Wings Flights of Hope	\$700	
LCMS Texas District--flash flood relief	\$900	
Lord's Day Dinner, Niagara Falls		Turkeys & hams
Oishei Children's Hospital		549 comfort bag items
Niagara Gospel Rescue Mission	\$1350	Clothing, men's toiletries
Potter's Field	\$900	Socks, t-shirts, Christmas gifts
Salvation Army		Can openers, turkeys & hams
Summit Life Resources	\$416.97	Baby clothes, toiletries, diapers
St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry		670 non-perishable foods, Can openers
Trunk or Treat		Bibles, candy & snacks, donuts, cider, gifts, crafts
Help & Hope for the Homeless, Inc.	\$1198	



Grace Lutheran Church

February 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9:00A Sunday CE 10:30A Worship (HC)	2 6:30P Survivors' Group	3	4	5	6	7
8 9:00A Sunday CE 10:30A Worship	9 6:30P Survivors' Group	10	11	12	13	14 9:00A Red Cross Blood Drive (until 1pm) ♥♥
15 9:00A Sunday CE 10:30A Worship (HC)	16 Presidents' Day 6:30P Survivors' Group	17 6:00P Grace Ladies Tea Party	18 ASH WEDNESDAY 6:30P Service (HC)	19	20	21
22 9:00A Sunday CE 10:30A Worship	23 6:30P Survivors' Group	24	25 5:30P Simple Supper 6:30P Lenten Service	26	27	28
					Head Ushers: Mark Binkley John Loss	Altar Care: Erika Tuscher Lin Matiasz

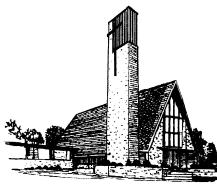
CE: Christian Education

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



Grace Lutheran Church

March 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9:00A Sunday CE 10:30A Worship (HC)	2	2	4 5:30P Simple Supper 6:30P Lenten Service	5	6	7
8 9:00A Sunday CE 10:30A Worship 11:30A Soc. Minis. Mtg.	9 6:30P Survivors' Group	10	11 5:30P Simple Supper 6:30P Lenten Service	12	13	14
15 9:00A Sunday CE 10:30A Worship (HC)	16 GLEANINGS DEADLINE 6:30P Survivors' Group	17 6:00P Grace Ladies Mtg.	18 5:30P Simple Supper 6:30P Lenten Service	19	20	21
22 9:00A Sunday CE 10:30A Worship 6:30P Survivors' Group	23	24	25 5:30P Simple Supper 6:30P Lenten Service	26	27	28
29 PALM SUNDAY 9:00A Sunday CE 10:30A Worship (HC) 6:30P Survivors' Group	30	31			Head Ushers: Neil Stenzel Randy Broeker	Altar Care: Ursula Zimmerman

CE: Christian Education

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Current News and Announcements

** There have been no **OFFICIAL ACTS** since the last Gleanings publication.

SIMPLE SUPPERS DURING LENT

Simple Suppers will be offered for five weeks during Lent beginning on February 25. Dinner will be shared at 5:30 prior to our 6:30 pm Wednesday evening services. (There will NOT be simple suppers on Ash Wednesday or during Holy Week.)

Help is needed to provide food and drinks beginning on February 25 through March 25. There will be a signup sheet located on the glass case. Please add your name if you are able to provide a main course, side dish, dessert, or drink.

From the Grace Ladies:

Come join us on Tuesday, February 17th at 6PM for our annual tea party. Hostesses are Flory Bellreng and Linda Broeker. There will be a devotional and collection of our LWML (Lutheran Women's Missionary League – now Lutheran Women in Mission) MITES. Bring your loose change for MITES and a teacup, if desired.

On Tuesday, March 17th at 6PM we will be filling about 300 plastic Easter eggs for our Sunday School Easter egg hunt. Hostesses will be Sherry Cassatt and Virginia Markel. All church members may contribute small candy, stickers, change, and small toys to put in eggs. Leave your donations on a table in the Ladies Lounge – Thank you!

GETTING TO KNOW DEMENTIA

Trinity Lutheran Church in Lockport is hosting a seminar series for caregivers and others interested in learning more about dementia. It will be held from 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. on three Saturdays from February 7 – 21. Topics will include information on changes in the brain, as well as skills to support both patients and caregivers. To register, contact Laurie Bauch at alongsidethee.com, or call 716-946-4227.

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/channel/UCG2QrtXHQGArfdr6KTOrQvg>





BOUQUETS ARE \$10 EACH

**Signup sheet is available on the
glass case in the chapel.**

Orders are due by February 15.

Bouquets will be placed on the altar on

March 15

and may be taken home after worship.

**Please see Jane Schulz to make a payment
(cash, or check to Niagara Hospice),
or if you have questions.**

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736 Cayuga Drive
Niagara Falls, NY 14304-3498

Electronic Service Requested

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WORSHIP SERVICES

Divine Service:
Sundays @ 10:30A

*Holy Communion on the
first, third and fifth Sundays

EDUCATION

Christian Education
Sundays @ 9:00A

GRACE LADIES

Next Meeting:
Tea Party
February 17th @ 6:00pm

SOCIAL MINISTRIES

Next Meeting:
March 8th
*New members are always
welcome. We meet five
times each year for about
an hour.

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Feb/Mar
2026