

February 2026 In Touch with Grace



Dear family and Friends of Grace,

As I write this, the weather outside is below zero and will continue into the foreseeable future. It is at times like this we remember lessons that frigid weather teaches us. Those of us who live in northern climates know about resilience and perseverance during the cold winter months. We learn to be patient and to wait with hope. We know that this won't last forever. We learn to be flexible and adapt to changing situations. We know to be prepared for bad weather and blizzards. We learn to reflect and live more simply. We count the little blessings as they come to us such as a warm mug of hot chocolate or coffee along with soup and a grilled cheese sandwich. We curl up with a good book and a blanket. We light a candle or a fireplace and bask in the glow. We watch the sun as it moves further and further towards the solstice and provides more and more light. We find beauty in silence and in the wonder of owl calls and footprints in the snow. As this season of winter moves slowly towards spring, we find the presence of God in the quiet moments of prayer.

Lent is a time of reflection and introspection - which is perfect for winter. Through the season of Lent, we move through the weeks leading up to Holy Week and Resurrection, we follow the rhythm of this season. Nature takes this time to rest and renew. Some species actually rely on the cold to provide for the future. When spring arrives, nature awakens in glorious beauty, ready to begin again in a glorious resurrection of new life. New life is revealed from under the snow.

We shouldn't rush to avoid winter or miss its blessings by yearning for spring. There is meaning in this season that enriches our lives when we look for it. Join us in worship on Ash Wednesday, February 18, at 10:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m.

The following Wednesdays, February 25 thru March 25, we will have Lenten suppers beginning at 5:45 with Holden worship at 6:30 - 7 p.m.

Embrace the beauty and wonder of what Lent brings to us as we reflect and rest in the beauty of the Lenten season. Just as winter moves towards spring, we continue to move towards the light of Christ.

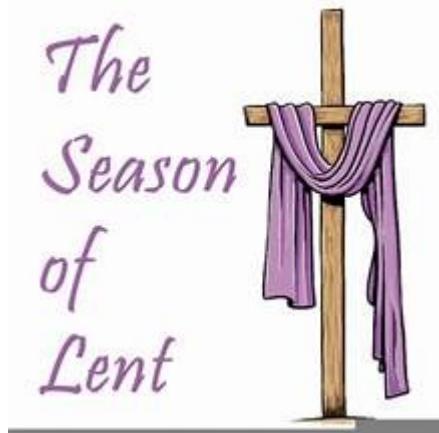
Blessings to you,

Pastor Karen



Announcements

- If you have a family member suffering from dementia, there is a Dementia Support Group that meets every third Wednesday of the month from 2-3 p.m. at Cerenity-Marian. (225 Frank Street, St. Paul. All are welcome to attend.



Lenten Schedule for 2026

Wed., February 18th

Ash Wednesday Worship at 10:30 am & 6:30 pm

Wed, February 25 - Supper 5:45 pm Worship 6:30 pm

Wed, March 4 - Supper 5:45 pm Worship 6:30 pm

Wed, March 11 - Supper 5:45 pm Worship 6:30 pm

Wed, March 18 - Supper 5:45 pm Worship 6:30 pm

Wed, March 25 - Supper 5:45 pm Worship 6:30 pm

Palm Sunday, March 29—Worship followed by Breakfast

Maundy Thursday, April 2 Worship at 10:30 am & 6:30 pm

Good Friday, April 3 - Worship at 7:00 pm at 1st Lutheran
463 Maria Ave. , St. Paul 55106

Easter, April 5 - 9:30 am Worship

- Do you like to pray? All of us appreciate prayers especially in times of need. Grace has a prayer chain that holds our beloved church family in prayer when prayer requests come in. We could use a few more members. If you are interested in praying, please contact Pastor Karen or Carolyn Hesterberg. Thank you!

American Red Cross - TOGETHER WE CAN SAVE A LIFE!

Our next Blood Drive for the Red Cross is Monday, February 2nd, from 1-7pm at Grace. There is a sign-up for anyone who can help on the table in the Good Shepherd Lounge. If you would like to donate, please go to the Red Cross website and sign up.

Donating is a simple thing to do, but can make a big difference in the lives of others. Blood from 1 donation can be separated to help up to 3 patients, AND, if you meet certain eligibility requirements (age/height/weight/hemoglobin/blood type) you might consider making twice the impact with a POWER RED donation. THANK YOU!!



Annual Reports for February Annual Meeting were due in the office by January 15th! Get them in ASAP if you haven't already!

FEBRUARY MISSION OF THE MONTH

February Mission of the Month at Grace is Operation Smile. Operation Smile has transformed lives around the world by providing care to patients for more than 40 years to those with cleft lip or palate. A cleft is a gap in the mouth that doesn't close during the early stages of pregnancy and it happens more often than you may realize. Cleft lip and palate are believed to be one of the most common craniofacial differences worldwide. Without intervention affected children battle a lifetime of difficulties with eating, breathing, speaking and mental health.

The cost of surgery and care varies by country. A cleft surgery can cost as little as \$240. This is made possible by the generosity of volunteer medical professionals and corporate donations of essential supplies and equipment.

There are 5 million people living with cleft conditions in the countries where OS works. Every 3 minutes a child is born with a cleft condition globally (that's 1 in every 700).

You can give a child the chance to grow up happy and healthy - free from stigma and isolation and full of hope for the future. Please prayerfully consider making a donation to this organization and give a gift that will last a lifetime. Please use your blue multi-purpose envelope, mark mission of the month and place in the offering or mail to the office. Checks should be made payable to "Grace.

Thank you.



February 1st is Food Shelf Sunday!!



Annual Meeting Part II is scheduled for Sunday, February 22nd after the Worship service in the South Tower room. We have some end of year reports to approve and other business to do. Please plan to attend and help us close out 2025. Refreshments will be served as always.

Music Notes -

No doubt that we are living in scary times. Every day seems to bring more distress. One thing that helps is realizing that this is not the first distressful time in history. It helps to examine how problems were resolved and to know somehow people survived through the daily upheaval. One example of a familiarly named composer who could have died without the help of an unnamed guard was Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Slightly over one hundred years ago, Russia had had enough of wars and class inequality. World War I had hit them hard, along with food rationing and high loss of life, primarily of the lower and middle class. The Russian Revolution began in March of 1917. It's usually called *The February Revolution* because Russia was using the Julian calendar instead of the one we use, the Gregorian calendar. Rachmaninoff was already a well-known pianist and composer, giving recitals to help survivors and their families from the Great War. He was also from an aristocratic family who owned an estate, *Ivanovka*. Returning to check on the estate, he found it had been ransacked, taken over by the revolutionaries. Even though he was a well-known pianist and composer, he found it more and more dangerous for him and his family. In fact, he completed his 1st Piano Concerto while riots and bombs were going off outside his apartment window.

He tried to get visas for him and his family to leave the country but was unsuccessful. As fate would have it (a.k.a. miracles) he received an invitation to perform 10 recitals all over Scandinavia. He immediately took up the offer. His family packed up whatever they could carry, taking a train to the Finnish border. That's where fate really kicked in. Sometimes angels can be found in the most unlikely places. Guards were placed on the border between Russia and Finland. The standard procedure would have included them turning people back without exceptionally good papers authorizing their crossing. As it turned out, the guard was a music lover and knew Rachmaninoff's music intimately. He allowed the family to cross, no questions asked. Since the trains had been stopped over the border, he helped arrange for an open-air sled to carry them as far as possible. Take into consideration, this was in December, weather similar to ours. They arrived in Helsinki and freedom. The next stop was Stockholm, arriving there on Christmas Eve.

The Rachmaninoff family relocated to Copenhagen without any money, having left everything in Russia. He managed to do several concerts during the first few months of 1918 and with the help of friends, his family was able to leave on November 1st from Oslo for New York City. He never returned to Russia. From the time he left Russia, he only composed 9 compositions; he felt he left his soul there. He became a naturalized citizen on February 1, 1943, twenty-four years after arriving in the U.S.

So in retrospect, if not for a kind-hearted, educated border guard (a.k.a. angel) we might never have enjoyed Rachmaninoff's gifts to us: *Variations on a Theme by Paganini*, *Vocalise*, *Piano Concertos No. 1,2 and 3*, plus so much more. Leaving everything, friends, having to decide what to take with, knowing the likelihood of never returning, decisions nobody should have to make.



FROM THE LIBRARY:

BOOKS FOR SALE:



The "Books for Sale" basket has gotten a refresh!

Due to some recent donations of brand new or like new books, we have a great selection in our basket! Feel free to browse and if you find one you just need to have, all donations are welcome!

NEW FEATURED TITLES:

A Step of Faith by Richard Paul Evans - After the death of his beloved wife, after the loss of his advertising business to his once-trusted partner, after bankruptcy forced him from his home, Alan Christoffersen is a broken man. Leaving everything he knows, he sets out on an extraordinary cross-country journey; with only the pack on his back, he is walking from Seattle to Key West - the end of the map.

Along the way, Alan begins to heal, meeting people who teach him lessons about love, sacrifice, and forgiveness. But in St. Louis, Alan faces another life-changing crisis, and now the Journey is in jeopardy.

The Boys In The Boat by Daniel James Brown - It was an unlikely quest from the start. With a team composed of the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington's eight-oar crew team was never expected to defeat the elite teams of the East Coast and Great Britain, yet they did, going on to shock the world by defeating the German team rowing for Adolf Hitler. The emotional heart of the tale lies with Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, who rows not only to regain his shattered self-regard but also to find a real place for himself in the world. Drawing on the boys' own journals and vivid memories of a once-in-a-lifetime shared dream, Brown has created an unforgettable portrait of an era.

Pillsbury Annual Recipes - With the cooler weather settling in, treat yourself to a new recipe!

Grace Book Club -

For discussion on:

February 5

My Friends

Fredrik Backman



Join us on Sunday, February 15th after Worship for a Mardi Gras celebration Pot Luck of Appetizers & Desserts! After all, this is a day to indulge before we 'give up' such things for Lent. Silverware, condiments, and plates will be provided but bring your favorite 'indulgence' to share!!

Sunday School

The Sunday School kids are continuing to follow the life of Jesus in their lessons. We have also been asking each other a few 'would you rather' questions related to the Heroes we have learned about as a little review.

What would you choose:

Would you rather care for sheep in the hills like David, or gather grain in the fields like Ruth?

Would you rather have supernatural strength like Sampson, or dance with all your might and praise God like David?

Would you rather honor God by only eating vegetables and drinking water like Daniel or eat locusts and honey like John the Baptist?

Puppets and Pancakes 2026

The youth families have decided to do Puppets and pancakes on Sunday, March 1st this year. Mark your calendars for some good food, great puppet performances and jokes and lots of fellowship after worship!

Palm Sunday Breakfast Sunday, March 29, 2026

Mark your calendars for our annual Palm Sunday Breakfast served by our Youth families! Always a good meal and lots of fellowship just before Holy Week & Easter!

XYZ's - February Movie Event

The XYZ's will be hosting a Movie day in the South Tower room at 1:30 pm on Thursday, February 12th.

The Feature film will be "A Big Hand For The Little Lady" from 1966. It's a humorous Western starring Henry Fonda, Joanne Woodward, Jason Robards and a few character actors whom you will know by sight if not by name. This feature is relatively short, so we'll also watch a 1956 episode of "The Honeymooners" starring Jackie Gleason and Art Carney.

Refreshments will, of course, be provided! **All are welcome!**



Grace Spotlight

Did you know?



Lower Level Evolution

The lower level has had many transformations. First it was wide open for events with dividers to make Sunday School rooms and a full kitchen. Once the tower room addition was made, permanent walls and rooms were created. Now the lower level is being used by Lutheran Social Service Early learning Center to support families on the east side.

What are your memories of the lower level?



Community Connections - ongoing projects!!

Internal, Local and Global

If you would consider serving treats on a Sunday morning, we would appreciate your help. Please take a look at the sign-up schedule in the South Tower room and see if there is a date that works for you to help out! If you would be willing to bring treats but would prefer to not serve, please speak with Linda Sackreiter and we can arrange that as well.

Thanks for your help!!

2026 Collections

Quilts, baby care kits (Note: soap size accepted for baby care kits is 3.5 or 4 oz gentle soap; soap in each kit has to total 8 or 9 oz)

Other on-going collections at Grace - used eye glasses and cancelled stamps. Please find the small collection baskets on the library shelf. Also, Sandy Abernathy will take any American Flags that need to be disposed of properly. These can be left in the collection area in the library. She will also take any plastic bags for a neighbor doing mats for the homeless in town. (We are not currently saving soup can labels) Thank you for all donations!

Miles of Pennies The large collection jar in the library is always accepting donations toward giving to the LSS fund for helping homeless Youth in St. Paul. Our goal was \$250.00 for 2025 and we sent \$275 to LSS this year! Let's exceed that again in 2026! Thank you to everyone who participates in this important mission. Your generous donations of coins and paper money are appreciated.

Quilt Days- We will be meeting again in February on the 2nd Saturday (14th). All are welcome to join us. No skills necessary, we will teach. Most months we meet on the 2nd Saturday in the Tower rooms. Come join us this month for some good conversation and to put those hands to use for a wonderful cause. Lutheran World Relief distributes donated quilts all over the world including in the US.

A REQUEST FROM ALICIA RUNQUIST (ECSE) and the CCCCommittee:

As an Early Childhood Special Education teacher in Saint Paul, I work with children and families weekly in their homes and early learning centers. Due to recent immigration activity, many of our neighbors are currently sheltering in place. These families are facing immense pressure to meet basic needs, especially for essentials like diapers and wipes.

We are collecting donations to ensure children stay clean, dry, and healthy during this crisis. All sizes of diapers are needed, particularly sizes 3-7. Pull ups are also requested in sizes 2T-5T.

Please consider donating:

- New or Opened packs of diapers
- New or Opened packs of Pull ups
- Diaper Wipes
- Financial contributions (payable to Grace Lutheran Church) to help us purchase supplies

Donations can be dropped off at Church. Our Early Childhood Special Education staff will deliver these items directly to Saint Paul families in crisis. Thank you for being a lifeline for our community - your support makes an immediate difference. Every diaper helps!



We lift our prayers to God in times of thanksgiving and times of need, in times of joy and times of sorrow. This month we especially pray for Norm Walby, Sandy Abernathy, Josie Meyer, Patty Young, Phyllis Armstrong, Paul Hesterberg, Butch Nelson, the family and friends of Christian Ray-Taylor, Sr., the family and friends of Jenny Alleman, the family and friends of Carol Hultgren, and all those we name in our hearts.

How to donate other than in the offering plate:

There is always snail mail. The office is open to receive the mail and our bookkeeper will count what comes in each week and deposit it in the bank. Our address: 1730 Old Hudson Road, St. Paul, 55106.

To donate electronically: You can schedule a transfer of funds with your own bank if they have bill pay available and it will come automatically on the date you choose. Otherwise, you can go to our website (www.gracelutheranstpaul.org) and click on the GIVE page.

This site is secure for financial transactions through Vanco which is the Simply Giving program. At the GIVE page you can go through the steps as directed and give whatever amount you wish to several different categories (general, other, etc.) This works best on the Firefox or Edge browsers. This does get to us electronically in a very timely manner. If you are comfortable using the QR, it will take you directly to the GIVE page on the website. **Please call the office if you have any questions.** Thank you.

Give QR



Financial Snapshot for GLC-2025

	<u>December Actual</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
General Fund Expenses	\$ 32,569.69 \$ 31,637.10	\$ 332,100.50 \$ 287,368.45	\$247,210.00 \$353,820.00
Deficit/Overage	\$ 932.00	\$ 44,732.05	-\$106,610.00



February BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Dorothy Roeske
- 3 Marlene Hockbein
- 8 Nick Williams
- 9 Gary Petersen
Ethan Taylor
- 11 Kayla Revier
- 12 Jamie Fleischhacker
- 13 Larry Denson
Karen Williams
- 14 Chris Runquist
- 17 Jeffrey Adam
- 20 Jonathan Rose
- 27 John Armstrong
- 28 Emma-Lee Engh
Sig Johnson
Solomon Marquardt
Sue Wickert



Souper Bowl of Caring 2026!

Coming on February 8th. Bring cans of soup or crackers to donate for our Food Shelf and we will vote for the winner of the Super Bowl with our donations.

Monetary donations are also welcome as always. Thanks for playing! Seahawks or Patriots?



Worship Leaders for February 2026-

<u>Date</u>	<u>Liturgist</u>	or	<u>Communion Asst.</u>	<u>Acolyte</u>	<u>Lay Reader</u>
1	-----		Jan Steingas	Cami Alleman	Lauren Alleman
8				Olivia Childs	Peg Mathison
15	Kris Mohwinkel	---		Cami Alleman	Lana Alleman
18 10:30am					
18 6:30pm					
22	Barb Holtan	---		Tony Childs	Sue Atneosen

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Greeters</u>
1	Alleman family	Larry & Sue Atneosen
8	Roger Mathison, Linda Sackreiter	Tom Studiner
15	Alleman family	
18 10:30am	Linda Sackreiter	Nancy & Peter Zitzewitz
18 6:30 pm		
22	Nita Hanson, Kim Childs	

<u>Date</u>	<u>Money Counters</u> - (we could use some additional volunteers on our counting teams)
1	Lana Alleman team
8	Amanda Christie team
15	Monique McClure-Hegge team
22	Kate Pray team



Please see sign-up sheets for Sunday jobs in the Narthex, and the Sunday Fellowship sign-up in the S. Tower Rm.

Come Be a Part of the Worship Team!

Here are descriptions for each opportunity to join the Worship Team.

Greeters - all ages, arrive by 9:10, greet people at the lower level before the service

Ushers - all ages, arrive by 9:10, hand out bulletins, gather offering, help direct Communion, tidy Sanctuary after worship

Acolyte - all ages (with adult assistance if younger than 5th grade), arrive by 9:15, robe for festival services, light candles before the service, assist with communion during service, extinguish candles at end of service,

Lay Reader - all ages, arrive by 9:15, read the scripture lesson during worship

Liturgist - Confirmed members, arrive by 9:15, robe for most services, assist with leading the service, help serve Communion

Grace Lutheran Church
1730 Old Hudson Road
Saint Paul, MN 55106

Ash Wednesday
February 18th



Phone: 651-774-9617

FAX: 651-774-0006

www.gracelutheranstpaul.org

gracelutheranstpaul@gmail.com

Pastor:

Rev. Karen Williams

Custodial Staff:

Linda Denson

Office Staff:

Linda Sackreiter

Music Staff:

Sabe Dunlap—Director of Music
Ministries

Kathleen Hollar—Organist

Jan Steingas—Triple G's

Connie Smeby—Joyous Juniors

