



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
July & August 2026 Newsletter

Pastors Pen

Welcome to Summer!

It is my hope and prayers each of you have a joy filled summer. But let me also take a moment to encourage you all to stay connected with our loving God throughout these next couple months. Now, I hope everyone will stay connected by attending worship each week, but I realize many of you have vacations and family plans made. Enjoy these warm and sunny days while I invite you to set a goal to stay connected, or better yet, become closer with our Lord.

The apostles said to the Lord, Increase our faith.

—Luke 17:5

Regardless of where you travel this summer or who you are with, God walks with you. Consider taking the Word of God with you and spend five to ten minutes each day to read scripture and then end with prayer. Prayer is not just a spiritual habit—it's a lifeline. It's the moment we step away from the noise of the world and lean into the presence of God. In prayer, we are not trying to impress Him with eloquence; we are simply opening our hearts, trusting God hears even the quietest whisper, simply have a conversation. When we pray, we acknowledge two truths: **we are dependent, and God is faithful**. Whether it's a cry for help, a song of gratitude, thanksgiving, or a moment of silent surrender, prayer reshapes our hearts to align with God's will.

This week, and throughout summer, I encourage you to spend time in relationship with God:

- **Pause daily** for a few minutes of intentional prayer.
- **Pray Scripture**, letting God's Word guide your words.
- **Listen**—Listening for God's response is often overlooked due to our constant state of hurry. But remember, prayer is a conversation, not a monologue.

Let's be a church that prays not only for our needs but for the needs of our neighbors, our community, and the world. As we do, we will see God's hand move in ways we could never imagine.

"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." — James 5:16

Yours In Christ,

Pastor Roger Behrens

Grace Lutheran Church Council Highlights - June 11, 2026

Minutes from our May 14, 2026 meeting, Financial Secretary and Pastor's reports were read and approved.

Pastor's Report Highlights:

- Transitioning continues with the Office Administrator, Tina. Her 3 month trial period ends July 31st. Any concerns need to be made known ASAP so that adjustments can be made.
- Conducted a funeral for Dave Petersen on May 18th.
- Attended a seminar on May 21st regarding NAMI, National Alliance of Mental Illness
- Attended the Upstate New York Synod Assembly on May 26th and 27th.
- Took a vacation to Italy May 28th to June 10th to celebrate his son's retirement ceremonies from the Air Force.

Council Actions and Announcements:

- Looking into why we received a bill from the DSC Alarm for our non-working security system.

Correspondence:

- Thank You Note from Bonnie Olendorf for her Retirement Party and Generous Gifts

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Property:

- It was mentioned once again that lights have been left on in the basement - please remember to turn ALL lights off when leaving

InReach/OutReach:

- Relay for Life - June 5th - 11 participants. \$952 raised so far. Donations for our team can be made until August.
- Sponsoring a Coffee Hour on May 14th for the end of Sunday School.

Christian Education/Youth:

- Sunday School is finished for the summer - will resume in September

Finance:

- Received a letter from the IRS stating that they didn't receive our December 941 form which WAS sent to them. The committee requested hiring a company to file our quarterly IRS forms at a cost of \$5.95 per form. After discussion, Darleen volunteered to file the quarterly form.

Worship and Music:

- Will be having the Baby Grand Piano tuned

Interfaith Council: No Report

Lesson - The Lord's Prayer – Part 5

This month, I am completing the series on Luther's petitions of The Lord's Prayer. Please see the previous months newsletters for the first 4 parts if you haven't seen them.

As a reminder from last month, remember, Luther does not divide the Lord's Prayer into petitions that pertain to God vs. those that pertain to us as individuals. No, Luther separated the prayer into petitions that unite God and us together. For no separation exists between God's work and the results for us.....It is profound to think of the Lords's Prayer this way.

The Sixth Petition Save us from the time of trial.

Luther's response: What is this? Or What does this mean?

It is true that God tempts no one, but we ask in this prayer that God would preserve and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins, and that, although we may be attacked by them, we may finally prevail and gain the victory.

Some of us may not remember this petition as written above. You may know the traditional language of: "lead us not into temptation". Of course, if you are like me, that language is more difficult to grasp. My God does not trick me into wrongdoings. I certainly do not believe God tempts us. It is my God who gives the final victory over the powers of evil that exists in our world.

Luther was quite challenged by this petition, for he was quite aware of evil in the world. He worked hard to ensure everyone was aware of the evil powers and how real and active they were. Luther also shared with us of how easy it was for these evil powers to deceive us and guide us off track.

How true is this petition for each of us, and how easily we get mislead and pulled off course! Luther saw the power of evil no different than attackers wielding swords, constantly threatening, and taunting us. He encouraged us to immerse ourselves in prayer when we are cornered with doubt and despair, and to take our troubles, frustrations, and complaints directly to God. He wrote:

It is characteristic of sublime trials to occupy hearts when they are alone. For this reason, there is frequent mention in Holy Scripture of praying at night and in solitude. Affliction is the teacher of such praying. Thus, because Abraham was occupied with these sad thoughts, he was unable to sleep. Therefore, he got up and prayed; but while he is praying and feeling such great agitation within himself, God appears to him and converses with him in a friendly manner. (See Genesis 15:1-6)

Luther never once stated that life would be easy. For if we are living and trusting God and how God intends, we should expect attacks from the evil powers. Therefore, we must pray this petition, like all petitions of the Lord's Prayer for ourselves as well as others.

The Seventh Petition And deliver us from evil.

Luther's response: What is this? Or What does this mean?

We ask in this prayer, as in a summary, that our Father in heaven may deliver us from all kinds of evil-affecting body or soul, property or reputation-and at last, when our final hour comes, may grant us a blessed end and take us by grace from this valley of tears to himself in heaven.

How does this come about?

Luther realistically describes life on earth as a "valley of tears." For the most part, we live fairly easy lives, insulated from the realities of struggle. However, Luther saw struggle in every human life and believed we must pray in the midst of that suffering. What evil exists in your lives that cause suffering?

Luther felt that instead of running away from evil, we should just accept evil as God's punishment. Even writing in 1527, sarcastically that a Christian should remain in their burning house, or rush to help others, because such a fire is also a punishment from God. However, he concluded:

Ultimately such talk will lead to the point where we abbreviate the Lord's Prayer and no longer pray, "deliver us from evil, Amen," since we would have to stop praying to be saved from hell and stop seeking to escape it. It, too, is God's punishment as is every kind of evil. Where would all this end? From what has been said we derive this guidance: We must pray against every form of evil and guard against it to the best of our ability in order not to act contrary to God.

In closing, Luther didn't want us to write off evil in our midst as inevitable happenings, but rather to pray actively and guard ourselves against evil. If we remember the words of Luther's famous hymn "A Mighty Fortress" we can hear him share that God will triumph over the powers of evil.

May we continue to pray for ourselves and everyone to be delivered from the powers of evil.

The Conclusion For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Luther's response: What is this? Or What does this mean?

That I should be certain that such petitions are acceptable to and heard by our Father in heaven, for he himself commanded us to pray like this and has promised to hear us. "Amen, Amen" means "Yes, Yes, it is going to come about just like this."

How does this come about?

When Vicki and I talk, it can become a challenge to ensure each of us hears what the other is saying. How can we find assurance that we are heard? In our prayers, our Amen gives us that assurance. Luther writes that when we say "Amen!" we can be certain that our prayer has been heard and will be answered. This word, "amen" is not a marker to show the end of our prayer, but a word of encouragement in our faith. When we conclude our prayers with "Amen" we can rest assured that God has indeed heard our petitions.

In conclusion, Luther offered some friendly advice to his barber in 1535 to remind him not only that God would hear, but that his fellow Christians stood united with him.

Finally, you must always speak the "Amen" firmly. Never doubt that God in his mercy will surely hear you and say "yes" to your prayers. Never think you are kneeling or standing alone, rather think that the whole of Christendom, all devout Christians, are there beside you, and you are among them in a common, united petition which God cannot disdain. Do not leave your prayer without thinking, "Very well, God has heard my prayer; this I know as a certainty and a truth." This is what Amen means.

AMEN!

Much of this information was modified and provided from "By Heart – Conversations with Martin Luther's Small Catechism", Augsburg Fortress, 2017

Worship and Music – It has been decided that Altar prayers for the prayer list on the Altar can be prayed for only one month. Afterward, the name will be passed on to the prayer chain for long term prayers.



It is so wonderful to have youth participate in our worship services. Thanks McKenna!



Ashley, Donna and Nancy



Darleen, Sharon, Samara



Clyde and our Oldest Walker
Jack, 20 Laps at Age 92.5



Our youngest "Walker" Teddy
Proudly showing off the 45 beads he collected
for the laps on his Scooter



Grace Lutheran Team 2026



Ashley, Sharon, Clyde, Darleen, Samara,
Nancy, Jack, Donna, Peggy, Teddy, Greg

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO DONATE

Donate to **OUR** team until August



Go to Relayforlife.com and click on DONATE

Search for: *Grace Lutheran*

Or

Give cash donations to Ashley Gaugler

Congratulations to Vicar Melissa!!!



Ordination Info

August 8th 4 pm

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

7248 Highbridge Road

Fayetteville, NY 13066

Want a ride or willing to drive?

Sign-up in the Narthex or

Call Peggy at 518-332-5149

Pick-up Available

We Celebrated the End of the Sunday School



Mrs. Greene, Mason, Adam, McKenna, Sebastian, Teddy and Pastor

TIME TO ENROLL! GRACE LUTHERAN SUNDAY SCHOOL



EVERY SUNDAY

STARTING SEPTEMBER 13TH

1 West Montgomery St.
Johnstown, NY 12095

**All Children
Ages K-8th
Grade
Welcome!**



**Arrival time is 9am. Students will begin class
after our Children's Sermon. Pickup is 10:30.**

**To enroll, please contact our
teacher, Mackensie Greene,
(cell) 518-844-4062**

To The Congregation of Grace Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for letting me serve as your Church Secretary! Time sure does fly by fast, I can't believe it has been 10 years already!

I have served as your Financial Secretary since 2008 when Pastor Modio asked if I could "help" out! I'm still "helping out" and am thankful to being able to still do that!

Thank you all for your generous gift, I am grateful for it.

It has been a labor of love to serve as your Secretary and Thank each and everyone of you for your support and love - Most of all "the love"!

~ I love all of you also ~
Bonnie

2026 EVENTS
at the historic
OLD PALATINE CHURCH
Route 5 between Nelliston and St. Johnsville



"The Shrine of Lutheranism in the Mohawk Valley"
Founded 1749-Erected 1770

- June 14, 4 p.m.: Young musician Ethan Lin playing violin and our historic Rowland organ
- July 5, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.: Open House with Guest Speaker Richard Christman, Chaplain and Commander of the 3rd Battalion, Tryon County Militia (with refreshments)
- September 27, 3 p.m.: Norma Bowley's Potpourri! Concert with various guest performers

All events are free (Donations are appreciated and help maintain the church). *The Palatines* book and historical marker magnets available for purchase.

ICE CREAM Social!

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!



ICE CREAM
TREATS!



HOT DOGS
& GOOD EATS!



FACE PAINTING
& SMILES!



BASKET
RAFFLE!



BAKE SALE!
SWEET TREATS!

AUGUST 15

2PM - 5PM

BOUNCE, PLAY & HAVE A GREAT DAY!



WELCA Fall Retreat

Hosted by WELCA Foothills and Hudson Mohawk Conferences

Hearing God in Our Lives. Romans 12: 6-8

Kateri Tekakwitha National Shrine & Historic Site

www.katerishrine.org

3636 NY-5, Fonda, NY 12068

October 3, 2026

9 - 930	Registration, Coffee, Tea & Sweets
9:30 - 10 am	Ice breaker, opening prayer & song with land acknowledgment
10 - 11 am	Bible Study (Romans 12: 6-8) with Pastor Diana Foote from Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Scotia, NY
11 am - Noon	Activity is Service Project for Comfort Zone Ministry at Trinity, Amsterdam - Personal Care Kits and Period Packs
Noon - 1:30 pm	Lunch: lite soup, salad & sandwich lunch with dessert. Free time to explore the site, bookshop and grounds.
1:30 - 2:45 pm	Program - We will explore various ways to hear god's call in our lives including praying, nurturing grief, listening skills, being neighborly and journaling.
2:45 - 3:30 pm	Closing worship, prayer & song.

REGISTRATION: \$15 MAKE CHECK OUT TO "Heralders" and note "WELCA" in memo line. Registration and payment is requested by September 19th, 2026. Mail to Marge Ugalde (Board Member), 1322 State Highway 67, Johnstown, NY 12095, or email her at dependablemom@yahoo.com.

QUESTIONS - CONTACT BOARD & CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP LISTED BELOW:

Foothills Board & Conference

Lindy Rivera, Board President NYS WELCA
(518) 506-5616, email: sunkflowerlove530@gmail.com

Linda Klump, Conference Co-coordinator
mail: Linda_and_Gerry@yahoo.com

Jill Markert, Conference Co-coordinator
(518) 332-2668, email: ghy910@yahoo.com

Hudson Mohawk Board & Conference

Marilyn Dyer, Board Secretary & Conference Co-coordinator
(518) 505-6434, email: dyermom43@gmail.com

Mary Rainey, Conference Co-coordinator
(518) 416-3004, email: mazrainey55@gmail.com

Athens Batsios, Board Member
(518) 248-1825, email: athens.batsios@gmail.com



Cindy Rivera, President of the Upstate New York Synod WELCA provides and update as to what has been happening and what is planned for the future to the delegates from across our Synod at our recent Assembly.

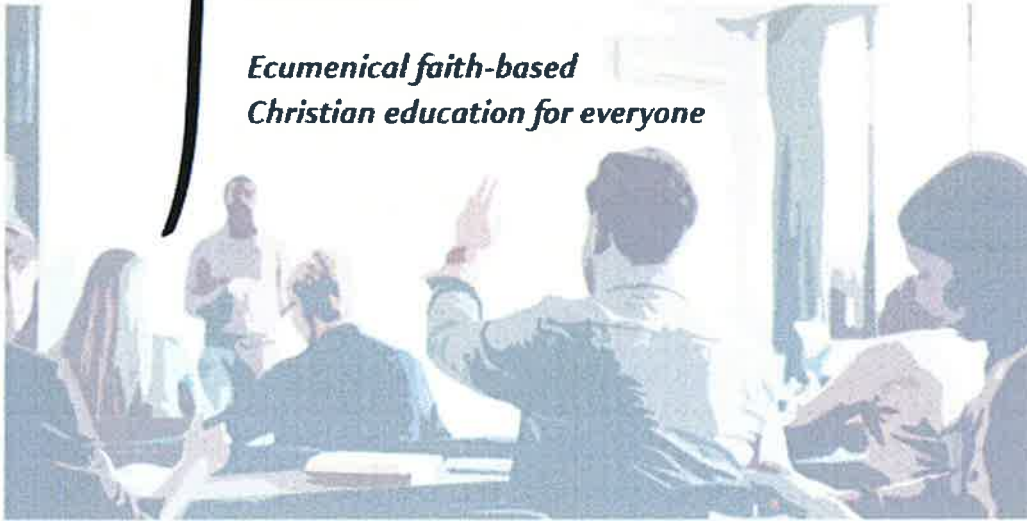
Summer Institute of Theology at Hartwick College

The 35th
SUMMER
INSTITUTE of THEOLOGY
at Hartwick College

July 12–17, 2026

in Oneonta, New York

*Ecumenical faith-based
Christian education for everyone*



*Open to all for personal enrichment and continuing education.
People of every faith (and those seeking) are welcome.*

Seminar topics include:

Art & faith
Biblical studies
Church history
Interfaith & Ecumenism
Preaching & Practical ministry
Social justice & current events
Spirituality

*2½-hour seminars offered
Mon–Fri at 9:00 and
Mon–Thurs at 2:30 & 6:30*

Registration Fees

Seminars \$25 per class, or \$20 each if you register for 3 or more
Commuter \$350/week, includes all meals and seminars you choose
Resident includes week-long housing, all meals, seminars
Single occupancy: \$650/week
Double occupancy: \$500/week (roommates are self-selected)
Overnight \$69/night (lodging only, double room, no meals included)
Overnight cost can be split between yourself and a roommate.

*Individual meals may be purchased at Dewar Hall cafeteria:
Breakfast \$11 | Lunch \$14 | Dinner \$17*

Registration and payment are due by July 1

For more information, contact

info@sithc.org

or Rev. Paul Messner, 607-287-4534
or prpaul_theoinst@hotmail.com

Online registration form
and updates at
https://sithc.org



*Open to all for personal enrichment and continuing education.
People of every faith (and those seeking) are welcome.*

Don't be fooled by the name, SITHC is about so much more than just theology.

This year's program features daily worship and 2½-hour classes in the areas of Art & Faith, Biblical Studies, Church History, Interfaith & Ecumenism, Preaching & Practical Ministry, Social Justice & Current Events, and Spirituality.

2026 faculty includes clergy and laity from the Baptist, Episcopal, Latter-day Saints, Lutheran, Orthodox Church in America, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic faith traditions.

Seminars are \$25 each or \$20 each if you register for 3 or more.
View the full schedule in our [program brochure](#).

Register online using our [Google Form](#) -- or print and mail [this form](#).

For more information about SITHC, contact Sandy, Registrar, at 518-852-6218 or info@sithc.org

Information and updates can be found at
<https://sithc.org/this-year>

WNY Summer Theological Institute 2026

The Purpose of this Institute is:

- to offer continuing education for new and prospective **SAMs** and **Congregational assisting ministers (CALMs)**
- to offer continuing education for interested laypersons, clergy, and current **SAM's**

Fall 2026 Diakonia:

Oct. 3 – we will be sharing more information as soon as planning is complete

All Saturday events begin with registration at 8:30 a.m., devotions at 9:00, classes 9:20-Noon, then 12:30-3:00 p.m. The cost is \$30 per person and includes lunch and snacks.

To register, call (716) 984-2938 or e-mail stpauls1827@juno.com

The Diakonia Committee welcomes your suggestions and requests for courses you need or would like to have offered. Please contact Pr. Dan Hoffman (gracelandan142@gmail.com) or Mary Wolf (stpauls1827@juno.com)

General Schedule:

Mornings:

8:00 - Breakfast
8:50 - Morning Devotions
9:00-11:50 - Classes
12:00-12:45 - Lunch

Afternoons:

1:00-5:50 - Classes
4:00-5:00 - Free Time
7:00 - Supper

Evenings:

7:15-8:45 - "Table Talk"
9:00 - Evening Devotions
Fellowship Time



Diakonia

enriching and enabling
the ministry of ALL
the baptized!

Western NY Conference
2026 Summer
Institute of Theology
for anyone and everyone
interested in learning and
growing in faith!
August 24-27, 2026
Notre Dame Retreat Center
Canandaigua, NY

An exciting educational opportunity
for Laypersons and Pastors alike!

August 24-27, 2026

Notre Dame Retreat Center, Canandaigua NY

An exciting educational opportunity for Laypersons and Pastors alike!

"Jesus Still Lead On"

Courses include:

From Trowel to Text: science and archaeological discoveries challenge, renew, and revive our interpretation of Scripture.
Believing is Seeing: in 10-12 great works of Christian Art we see the visual arts as vital and viable means of communicating and proclaiming Good News.

Saints Before Us: a young pastor, a small French village and their witness in the face of Nazi oppression of Jewish neighbors and strangers helps us respond with real love, respect and compassion in the face of Christian Nationalism.

AI (Artificial Intelligence) and possibilities for use in the congregation.

Journey With Jesus: How Jesus' Galilean Mission helps us reconsider ways the church evangelizes, provides hospitality and welcomes strangers, sojourners, seekers, and broken spirits to Christ. As we journey with Jesus we begin to see how the church today can serve and truly welcome those who have found the church to be a place of judgment that is not fully safe for them to be themselves.

For full brochure and registration information, please contact Mary Wolf - stpauls1827@juno.com



2 - Lylian Irene Angus
 9 - Derrick McGuinness
 10 - Carolyn Peck
 14 - Dotti Nielsen
 19 - Harold Edick
 Matthew VanValkenburgh
 20 - Drew Anthony Paxton
 21 - Frederick Stortecky Jr.
 Christina VanValkenburgh
 23 - Clyde Smith
 27 - Amelia Petersen
 31 - Matthew VanValkenburg (MJ)

1 - Randy Hollenbeck
 3 - Samara Smith
 4 - Marlene Slingerland
 10 - Peggy Niforos
 13 - Christine VanValkenburgh
 18 - Cassidy Fries
 Carolyn Schreivogl
 19 - Howard Goebel
 21 - Richard Weaver
 23 - Abigail VanValkenburgh
 26 - Thomas Petersen
 29 - Kimberly Brown
 31 - Richelle VanValkenburgh





Food Collection

Our church council would like to continue with our food pantry and have designated the **3rd Sunday** of each month to accept contributions, monetary gifts as well as food are welcomed.

Items such as cereal, boxed dinners, any pasta, condiments etc. – dry goods such as paper towels, toilet paper, diapers etc. canned goods that aren't perishable (at least for the hot summer months)

These are just suggestions!

Any items of food or paper products will be appreciate and will be brought up to the front of the church to be blessed by Pastor

**The next Sunday for our food drive here at Grace
will on July 19th**

Thank you in advance for supporting our Food Pantry

SERVING SCHEDULE JULY, 2026

DATE	Assisting Ministers Communion Asst	READER	USHER(S)	ALTER GUILD - BREAD	COUNTERS
July 5	Nancy Demarest	Mary Ann Hathaway	Darleen Gaugler Lee Mitchell	Darleen Gaugler Bread Baker (at the rail) Mary Ann Hathaway	Nancy Demarest Bonnie Olendorf
July 12	Samara Smith	Vicki Behrens	Linda Bumpus Nancy Demarest	Kathy VanValkenburgh	Darleen Gaugler Bonnie Olendorf
July 19	Bonnie Olendorf	Nancy Demarest	Fred Gilbert Kathy VanValkenburgh	Darleen Gaugler	Kathy VanValkenburgh Bonnie Olendorf
July 26	Kathy VanValkenburg	Peggy Niforos	Clyde Smith Donovan Smith	Nancy Demarest Bread Baker (at the rail) Peggy Niforos	Nancy Demarest Bonnie Olendorf

SERVING SCHEDULE AUGUST, 2026

DATE	Assisting Ministers Communion Asst	READER	USHER(S)	ALTER GUILD - BREAD	COUNTERS
August 2	Linda Bumpus	Bonnie Olendorf	Darleen Gaugler Lee Mitchell	Peggy Niforos Bread Baker (at the rail) Peggy Niforos	Darleen Gaugler Bonnie Olendorf
August 9	Donna Coonradt	Clyde Smith	Linda Bumpus Nancy Demarest	Darleen Gaugler	Kathy VanValkenburgh Bonnie Olendorf
August 16	Nany Demarest	Samara Smith	Fred Gilbert Kathy VanValkenburgh	Kathy VanValkenburgh	Nancy Demarest Bonnie Olendorf
August 23	Samara Smith	Maryland Warner	Linda Bumpus Nancy Demarest	Nancy Demarest	Darleen Gaugler Bonnie Olendorf
August 30	Peg Niforos	Nancy Demarest	Clyde Smith Donovan Smith	Peggy Niforos Bread Baker (at the rail) Nancy Demarest	Kathy VanValkenburgh Bonnie Olendorf

July 2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
			1	2 1 pm Joint Bible Study	3	4 
5 9:00 am Worship	6	7 6 pm Council Meeting	8	9 1 pm Joint Bible Study 5:30 Council Picnic	10 10:00 Don Phelps Service	11 9 am – 2 pm Trinity Rummage Sale 10: Stacey Keach Service
12 9:00 am Worship	13	14	15	16 1 pm Joint Bible Study	17	18
19 9:00 am Worship	20	21	22	23 1 pm Joint Bible Study	24	25
26 9:00 am Worship	27	28	29	30 1 pm Joint Bible Study	31	

AUGUST 2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Sat
						1
2 9:00 Worship	3	4	5	6	7	8 4 pm Ordination Melissa Bedell
9 9:00 Worship	10	11	12	13	14	15 2:00 Ice Cream Social Trinity
16 9:00 Worship	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 9:00 Worship	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 9:00 Worship	31	Newsletter articles for September are due August 24				

**Prayer Concerns
July - August 2026**



Remember our Shut-ins

At Home

**Jackie Hollenbeck
Erah Kilmer
Marilyn Warner**

Wells House

Mary Phelps

Wilkenson - Amsterdam

Marlene Slingerland



Prayer Concerns:

**Donald Wright
John Mero Jr.
Ruth Eisenhower
Samara Smith
Lilyann Smith
Patricia Fallis
Dan Costello
Sharon Smith
Richard Kowalacyk
David Seward
Todd Rulison
Anne Cinquemani
Michelle Stockwell
Gloria Gaugler
Brenda Billa**

**The family and friends of
Don Phelps.**

**The family and friends of
Greta Davis.**



**All those who have served
and for all those who are now
serving in the armed forces.**

Especially:

**Christopher Behrens
Brandon Caldwell
Victor Ralbovsky
Dylan Bumpus
Ryly Bumpus**

and for our enemies

**Please pray for NOAH, and all of
the food pantries of Johnstown
and Gloversville and for those in
need of them.**