



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

June 2026 Newsletter

Pastors Pen

When we look at what Jesus taught us, He was never sitting on his hands waiting for some way to serve. And notice He never seemed to look past the outcast or the oppressed to do the work of His Father in Heaven. He demonstrated his love for everyone. I feel this example He shared in the gospels can help us answer the question of, “who is our neighbor”?

Over the past couple days, several members of our congregations and I had the privilege of attending the Upstate New York Synod Assembly for 2026. We had a great time interacting with over 200 other members of our Synod, and though I can’t speak for everyone, I always enjoy myself. I love catching up with old friends and building new relationships.

As most of you may know, when Bishop Lee Miller II was elected to his role five years ago, he created and implemented a direction for our Synod using the G.R.A.C.E. mindset. This year, we are implementing the final letter, “E”. As a reminder, the letters of a GRACE mindset represent the following words:

Generous Love

Restorative Justice

Adaptive Leadership

Collaboration & Connections

Experimentation

So, this year, our focus is EXPERIMENTATION!!! And I have to say, I am excited about it! I am guessing that for many of you, this could generate some real concern, as true experimentation can be a bit scary. It could mean talking about (gasp!) “CHANGE”! And in the life of our faith communities, experimentation can feel like taking a risk. Yet scripture repeatedly invites God’s people to explore, test, and learn—often in ways that stretch comfort and understanding. But our experiments are not neutral: they are shaped by values, relationships, and the desire to honor God in new and exciting ways. How, then, can we believers practice experimentation in ways to deepen faith rather than discount it? Well, try this:

1. Remember the purpose. Experiments—whether in ministry methods, community practices, or personal spiritual disciplines—are tools, not the end all solution. The goal is to try new things and stretch our love for God and neighbor, through collaboration, using our gifts, and talents to create a deeper spiritual understanding of self. Along the way we must ask ourselves the question: “Will this help us to live out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission?” If it doesn’t, then maybe it is just curiosity without a gospel end. And that’s okay.
2. We must ground experiments in prayer and Scripture. Discernment begins with listening. Listening to one another, but very importantly, to God. Before launching a new program or testing a fresh idea, we must center ourselves in prayer together and search the Scriptures for wisdom. The Bible does not give a checklist for every

innovation of our 21st century, but it provides guidance in humility, repentance, justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

3. We should start small and measure what matters to us. We must experiment in ways that honor our resources and relationships. Think of something we can do on a manageable scale, set clear goals and expectations, and identify simple ways to assess spiritual growth (not just attendance or financial measures). Are people growing in discipleship, generosity, and compassion? Are the vulnerable served? These outcomes are more gospel-shaped indicators than popular categories of today's society.
4. Embrace learning, not just success. Failure is often the best teacher. When experiments fall short, don't mark it as a shortcoming. Celebrate what was learned and then let us adapt with humility. The apostle Paul models this posture: he tried many approaches in ministry, learned from each context, and redirected efforts for the advancement of the gospel.
5. Keep community central. Experimentation done in the absence of the body of Christ risks individualism. I hope we can include diverse voices—young and old, marginalized and mainstream—in both planning and assessment.
6. Celebrate the Spirit's creativity. God is the ultimate Creator, and the Spirit continues to move in new and surprising ways through us all. When experimentation is coupled with humble prayer and openness in search of true gospel-like outcomes, we can experience a beautiful expression of God's renewing work, bringing fresh life to tired structures and new paths for mission.

Conclusion:

Experimentation, with the right approach, aligns with God's continued creative work. It is a huge expression of our faith where God is active in our midst to bring excitement, endurance, and courage, informed by love. As we try, fail, learn, and try again, may our experiments be guided by prayer, shaped by Scripture, and always aimed at the flourishing of people and the glory of God.

Yours In Christ,

Pastor Roger Behrens

Lesson - The Lord's Prayer – Part 4

This month, we continue looking at Luther's petitions in The Lord's Prayer. I'll cover the next two petitions as Luther established 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 prayer this way.

The Third Petition Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

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

In fact, God's good and gracious will comes about without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may also come about in and among us.

How does this come about?

Whenever God breaks and hinders every evil scheme and will, as are present in the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh, that would not allow us to hallow God's name and would prevent the coming of his kingdom, and instead whenever God strengthens us and keeps us steadfast in his word and in faith until the end of our lives. This is God's gracious and good will.

Thoughts on this petition: Luther explains to us that God's will happens regardless of what we ask, as God's power is absolute. However, when we pray this petition, we are acknowledging a spiritual war. The war is with those who actively try to stop God's will from being pressing in our lives are:

- **The Devil:** one who misleads and deceives us
- **The World:** where we so often are conflicted with ungodly values and receive pressures to conform in less than Godly ways
- **Our Sinful Nature:** Being human places us at odds with God's will. Our internal flesh and blood continue to resist obeying and complying with God's will for us.

The Fourth Petition Give us today our daily bread.

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

In fact, God gives daily bread without our prayer, even to all evil people, but we ask in this prayer that God cause us to recognize what our daily bread is and to receive it with thanksgiving.

How does this come about?

Everything included in the necessities and nourishment for our bodies, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, farm, fields, livestock, money, property, and upright spouse, upright children, upright members of the household, upright and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, decency, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

Thoughts on this petition: Luther outlines this petition in his Small Catechism by emphasizing three core aspects of God's provision:

- **Everything We Need:** Luther defined "daily bread" in a highly comprehensive way. It includes not just food, but *everything* necessary for the support and nourishment of our bodies. This encompasses clothing, shelter, health, good weather, peace, civil government, and even faithful friends and neighbors.
- **For Everyone:** In his profound observation, Luther noted that God gives daily bread to all people, even the wicked, without anyone even having to ask. Because it is given universally out of God's sheer goodness, it leaves no room for human boasting.
- **Receiving with Thanksgiving:** If God already provides these things, why pray for them? Luther explains that we pray this so that we might realize God is the source of these gifts and learn to receive them with gratitude and trust. It cures anxiety by shifting our focus from trusting our own earnings to trusting in God's provision.

In Luther's *Large Catechism*, he expanded on this, calling the petition an indictment against greed, oppressive economies, and those who "wantonly oppress the poor and deprive them of their daily bread". Ultimately, the petition is about relying entirely on God as our loving Father, recognizing His hidden hand in both the spiritual and earthly blessings of life.

The Fifth Petition Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

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

We ask in this prayer that our heavenly Father would not regard our sins nor deny these petitions on their account, for we are worthy of nothing for which we ask, nor have we earned it. Instead, we ask that God would give us all things by grace, for we sin daily and indeed deserve only punishment. So, on the other hand, we too, truly want to forgive heartily and to do good gladly to those who sin against us.

How does this come about?

Everything included in the necessities and nourishment for our bodies, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, farm, fields, livestock, money, property, and upright spouse, upright children, upright members of the household, upright and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, decency, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

Thoughts on this petition: This petition is our plea for divine mercy alongside a commitment to extend that same grace and forgiveness to others.

In his Luther's Small Catechism, Martin Luther elaborates that this petition asks God not to look at our sins or deny our prayers because of them. Instead, we pray that God will grant us everything by grace and, in turn, free our hearts to sincerely forgive and do good to those who sin against us.

The core meaning of this petition includes two main points:

- **Seeking Grace:** By acknowledging that we "daily sin much" and fall short, we humbly ask God to wipe our spiritual slate clean. We appeal to His grace, recognizing that we do not deserve forgiveness but receive it through His mercy.
- **Extending Grace:** The petition links God's forgiveness of our sins directly to our willingness to forgive those who have wronged us. It challenges us to reflect the same mercy and compassion we have received onto others, no matter how difficult that may be.

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

Grace Lutheran Church Council Highlights - May 14, 2026

Minutes from our April 9, 2026 meeting, Financial Secretary, Treasurer and Pastor's reports were read and approved.

Pastor's Report Highlights:

- Transitioning the Office Administrator position from Bonnie to Tina
- Supported a family in the conflict management process
- Conducted a telephone visit with a community member regarding emotional stresses
- Conducted two visitations of members
- Attended the Foothills Conference Spring Assembly on April 18th
- Provided the Pastoral Message for the local paper
- Had some R&R in Myrtle Beach April 12th to 17th
- Will be going to Italy May 28th to June 10th for son's retirement from the military

Council Actions and Announcements:

- Voted unanimously to use Brotherhood Mutual for any needed background checks at a cost of \$9.95 each.
- Voted unanimously to use the Reserve Fund 10% Wider Church line item to bring the total of the donation to the USNY Hunger Justice Appeal to \$500.
- Voted unanimously NOT to put the "Church Parking Only" sign on the building,

Correspondence:

- American Cancer Society requesting donation - no action taken
- Lutheran World Relief requesting donation - no action taken
- Palatine Church - schedule of events
- Palatine Church - use of building information and rules
- Johnstown High School - request for donation to Post Prom Party
Voted to give \$100 each to the Johnstown HS and Gloversville HS Post Prom Parties
money to come from the 5% Community Reserve Fund line item

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Property:

- The Bollard Collars have been installed

InReach/OutReach:

- Relay for Life of Fulton and Montgomery Counties is 5 pm on Friday, June 5th at GHS
- Sign up is open online - go to Relayforlife.com and then enter your ZIP code
- To make a donation use the same information as above or see Ashley Gaugler

Finance:

- Audit completed and everything is in order

Interfaith Council:

- Food Pantries are still being hard hit
- There were 6 scholarship applications



It is so wonderful to allow all of our community to take part in our worship service. Especially those who are a bit vertically challenged.





Love having our younger members in service. They are such fun and keep the pastor on his toes.



Happy Retirement Bonnie! And thank you for your support of the people of Grace Lutheran Church for the past 20 years.

Great to have so many wonderful people come to help us celebrate together.



Many wonderful gifts for Bonnie to show her how special she has been and will continue to be to us all at Grace.





And soooo much wonderful food! Thanks to the In-Reach Team.



Our Fellowship Hall, filled with all of the free items donated for the Community Garage Sale. I didn't get a picture of Clyde cooking hot dogs outside. Was a great event that connected with many people from our community.





Thank you

There are not enough words
to fully express our heartfelt gratitude
for the sympathy, love and support
you have extended to our family
during this time of loss.

Thank you.

May 18, 2026

Grace Lutheran Church,

Although not always present, GLC
has always been the church of
the Petersens. Dave & I were baptized
together @ St. Paul's. His kids grew up in
this church. We appreciate all
your love and care for our family.
God bless, Barb. Petersen

IT'S NOT TOO LATE



Grace Lutheran Team

Relay for Life
Fulton and Montgomery
Counties
Friday, June 5th at 5 p.m.
Gloversville High School

Sign-up is OPEN Online
Go to RelayforLife.com
Enter your local zip code

To make a donation go online or
contact Ashley Gaugler

SERVING SCHEDULE – June, 2026 (subject to change)

Date	Assisting Ministers - Communion Assistants Minis	Reader	Usher(s)	Crucifer	Altar Guild - Bread	Counters
7 <u>WOV</u> setting 5 9:00	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens Bonnie Olendorf <u>Communion Assistant</u> Bonnie Olendorf	Greg Niforos	Darlene Gaugler Lee Mitchell		Peggy Niforos <u>Bread Baker</u> (At the rail) Peggy Niforos	Kathy VanValkenburgh Bonnie Olendorf
14 <u>WOV</u> setting 5 9:00	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens Kathy Van Valkenburgh <u>Communion Assistant</u> Kathy Van Valkenburgh	Clyde Smith	Linda Bumpus Nancy Demarest		Darlene Gaugler <u>Intinction</u>	Nancy Demarest Bonnie Olendorf
21 <u>WOV</u> setting 5 9:00	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens Linda Bumpus <u>Communion Assistant</u> Linda Bumpus	Nancy Demarest	Fred Gilbert Kathy VanValkenburgh		Kathy VanValkenburgh <u>Intinction</u>	Darlene Gaugler Bonnie Olendorf
28 <u>WOV</u> setting 5 9:00	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens Donna Coonradt <u>Communion Assistant</u> Donna Coonradt	Samara Smith	Clyde Smith Donovan Smith		Nancy Demarest <u>Bread Baker</u> (At the rail) Mary Ann Hathaway	Kathy VanValkenburgh Bonnie Olendorf

CHURCH ACTIVITIES - JUNE 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 3 p.m. Worship & Music 4 p.m. InReach Comm Mtg	3	4 1 – 5 p.m Blood Drive - Trinity	5	6
7 9:00 a.m. Worship with Communion 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School	8	9	10	11	12	13 Shredding Event - Trinity
14 9:00 a.m. Worship with Communion 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School	15	16 Interfaith Council meeting 9:30 a.m.	17	18 Joint Bible Study 1 p.m. at Grace	19	20
21 9:00 a.m. Worship with Communion 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School	22	23 6 am – 9 pm Poll's Open Primary Election	24	25 Joint Bible Study 1 pm at Trinity	26	27
28 9:00 a.m. Worship with Communion 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School	29	30				



- 2 - Hannah Catherine Fountain
- 3 - Dennis Hubley
- 4 - Carol Travis-Hennessey
- 5 - Beth Claes
- 9 - Douglas Darling
Barto Brown II
- 13 - William Goebel
- 14 - **Flag Day**
- 16 - Seth Dorsey
- 17 - James Mitchell
Breanna VanValkenburgh
- 19 - **Juneteenth**
- 20 - **First Day of Summer**
Patricia Calhoun
Jarred Brown
- 21 - **Happy Father's Day**
- 23 - Evelyn Grace Clo
Deanna Frasier
- 28 - Dorian Angus



- 3 - Oscar Clouthier
Easton Robert Paxton
- 5 - Jordan Snell
- 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 - Carol Ann Lincoln
Clyde Smith
- 27 - Amelia Petersen
- 29 - Kimberly Brown
- 31 - Henry Fountain
Matthew VanValkenburgh, Jr.



**Prayer Concerns
June 2026**



Remember our Shut-ins



At Home

**Jackie Hollenbeck
Erah Kilmer
Marilyn Warner**

Hillcrest - Amsterdam

Don Phelps

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
Ron Pedrick
Sharon Smith
Richard Kowalacyk
David Seward
Todd Rulison
Greta Davis
Anne Cinquemani
Michelle Stockwell
Gloria Gaugler**

**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.**