

Grace Lutheran Church
November, 2026 Newsletter

Pastor's Pen

Blessed Are Those Who Came Before Us

In Matthew 5:1–12, Jesus climbs a mountainside, sits down, and teaches the people gathered around him. His words—given the title of the Beatitudes—is a Sermon that turned the world's usual measures of success upside down. He calls the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the merciful, and the peacemakers blessed. He promises those who hunger for righteousness will be filled, and those who face hardship for doing what is right belong to God's kingdom.

Saints are not only the well-known figures whose names appear in books or on church calendars. They are also the faithful people whose love shaped our families and communities: ancestors who prayed, worked, cared for others, endured difficult times, and passed on their faith and courage.

Their lives may not have been celebrated publicly. Yet many embodied the Beatitudes in quiet, lasting ways. We remember those who mourned and still made room to comfort others; those who were meek because they chose patience over power and those who showed mercy when resentment might have been easier. We remember people who hungered for justice and worked, often without recognition, to make life more humane for those around them.

Our ancestors helped make us who we are today. They gave us more than names, stories, or keepsakes. Through their choices and sacrifices, they helped shape the values we carry, the traditions we cherish, and the ways we care for one another. Some passed down faith directly; others left questions, lessons, or examples we have come to understand over time. Their influence lives on in the courage we draw upon, the kindness we offer, and the hope we choose to keep.

Remembering those who came before us does not mean pretending that every part of the past was easy or perfect. Families and communities carry complicated stories. We can be grateful for what was life-giving, honest about what caused harm, and committed to carrying forward what leads toward healing. Honoring our ancestors means receiving their gifts with care—and, where needed, choosing a better path for those who will follow us.

And Jesus's Beatitudes do not promise faithful lives will be free from sorrow or struggle. Instead, they offer a vision of God's presence within them. "Blessed are those who mourn," Jesus says, and "blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake." The Saints who went before us were not beyond pain. They faced losses, disappointments, and uncertainty. Yet their faithfulness became part of the foundation on which we stand.

This remembrance is not only about looking back, but invites us to live forward. We can carry the Saints' stories into our daily choices: to be merciful, seek peace, stand for what is right, and to comfort those who grieve. We can tell the stories of those who shaped us, especially to younger generations, so that courage and compassion are not forgotten.

As we remember and reflect back on all the Saints who have gone before us, let us give thanks for them all—the celebrated and the ordinary, the remembered by name and the known only to God. May these blessings help us remember their lives with gratitude, let their witness strengthen us, their love continue through us, and their hope help us become a blessing to those who will come after us.

Yours in Christ

Pastor Roger Behrens



Grace Lutheran Church Council Highlights – October 15, 2026

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

Pastor's Report Highlights;

- Live streaming equipment is set-up and operational. Final cost $3782.88.
- Planned and conducted the joint service at the Old Palatine Church on October 4th. The loose offering totaling $200 was donated to that church. A donation of $50 was made by each church to Auriesville Shrine for use of their picnic area.
- Visited a member of Grace to discuss concerns
- Had a phone conversation with a former member whose spouse died recently.
- Attended Foothills Conference Ministerium and Fall Assembly
- Attended the Upstate NY Synod Advocacy Team meeting and Round Table

Council Actions and Announcements;

- Accepted the resignation of Tina Lane with regret
- Started discussing what step is next regarding hiring a new Office Assistant. Voted to amend the 2027 budget to what the 2026 budget had for the Secretary.
- Discussed having a Congregational Brainstorming Get-together on November 21st at 1 pm.
- GLC Constitution needs to be updated - ELCA has a model to follow. Pastor needs help

Correspondence;

- Request from the Fulton County Office of the Aging to use Fellowship Hall Nov. 14th - approved
- Letter from the Upstate NY Synod regarding the process for nominating and voting for a new bishop at the Spring 2027 Convention. We need to have 2 delegates.
- CCLI Music to buy an additional music license - no action taken
- Capital City Mission requesting donation for Thanksgiving Dinner - no action taken
- Letter of resignation from Tina Lane as our Office Assistant effective 12/31/26

COMMITTEE REPORTS;

Property:

- The parking lot wall needs to be fixed,there's large crack. There's also a hole in the macadam and when it rains the water runs out of the crack.
- Mike VanValkenburgh has contacted several companies for estimates. Some haven't responded. More estimates will be attempted
- Pastor mentioned that we can't wait until spring to fix the parking lot hole - needs to be done ASAP

InReach/OutReach:

- Harvest Dinner is November 7th

Finance;

- Contacted Brett Preston to find out what needs to be done when Love City finishes paying off the mortgage and how much it will cost.us for his services

Worship and Music:

- Proposed paying Chenya $60 per choir rehearsal. Approved
- Prayer Vigil October 31st at 1 pm. Pastor led, open to community
- Healing Service November 15th at the regular service
- Hope to have Christmas Caroling again
- Tree needs to be set-up by November 29th

Interfaith Council:

- Interfaith Tea is October 20th



The Church Council currently has **FOUR** Vacancies. There will most likely be more vacancies at the end of the year due to term limits. **PLEASE** consider becoming a member of the Council whether it be for the first time or a return to the Council. Elections will be held on November 8th.



Congregational Meeting
Sunday, November 8th
Following the Service

The WELCA women of the Foothills and Hudson Mohawk conferences held a retreat at the Kateri Tekakwitha National Shrine and Historic Site on October 3, 2026. **We received a Thrivent Action Grant for our project**. The theme for the retreat was "Hearing God in Our Lives" Romans 12:6-8. Thinking about that theme we made Period Packs (1 in 4 teens in the US struggle to afford period products), Personal Care Kits, and bought paper goods for the Comfort Zone Ministry at Trinity. The picture shows the WELCA women, Cindy Slate, Cindy Rivera, Gail Markert, Dorothy Clark, Rosemary Forrest. And Marge Ugalde with the paper goods and kits made. ***The paper goods were given to Comfort Zone on Sunday, October 18th, which was paper good Sunday and all of the kits were needed by Catholic Charities for the domestic violence program and the warming center for the homeless.***





What Does the Future of
Grace Lutheran Church Look like?

Who are We Now
And
Where do We Want to Be?

We need to have a Frank Discussion

Join Us on Saturday, November 21st at 1 pm

We WANT to hear Everyone's Thoughts
(even if you don't attend weekly)

PLEASE plan on Coming
Pizza and beverages will be served

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

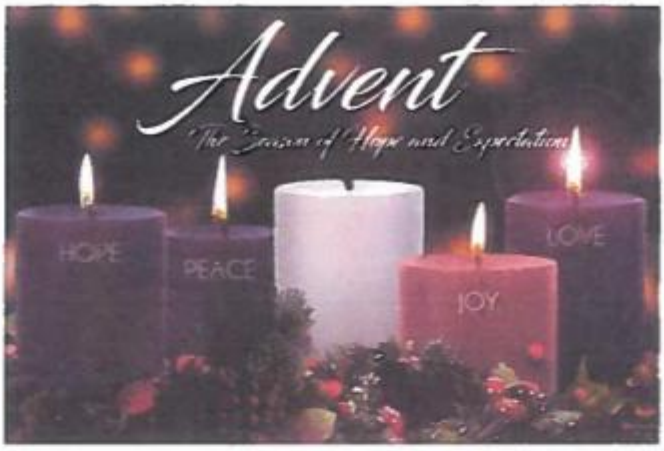
MISSION SUPPORT:
WHAT DOES MY OFFERING DO?

ELCA members give about $1.6 billion annually in regular offerings to ELCA congregations and worshiping communities. Because we are a connected church, a portion — about 5% on average — becomes Mission Support, shared by your congregation with your synod. Through Mission Support, we share in ministry around the country and across the globe, doing more together than any one person or congregation could do alone. Connected in this way, we experience Christ, seeking community, justice and love.

Your Mission Support funds a variety of churchwide ministries:
36% Establish and Grow Christian Communities
25% Accompanies Lutherans Around the World
39% Strengthens and Sustains the Ministry of the whole church.

Find Out More

Thank you for your ongoing support and faithful partnership! For stories of your impact, visit LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA. To find additional Mission Support resources, visit ELCA.org/SOFIA.



Midweek Advent Opportunities
at Grace Lutheran Church

Wednesdays, December 2, 9, 16 and 23

5:30 - 6:00 pm Soup Supper/Fellowship

6:00 - 6:30 pm Education Time

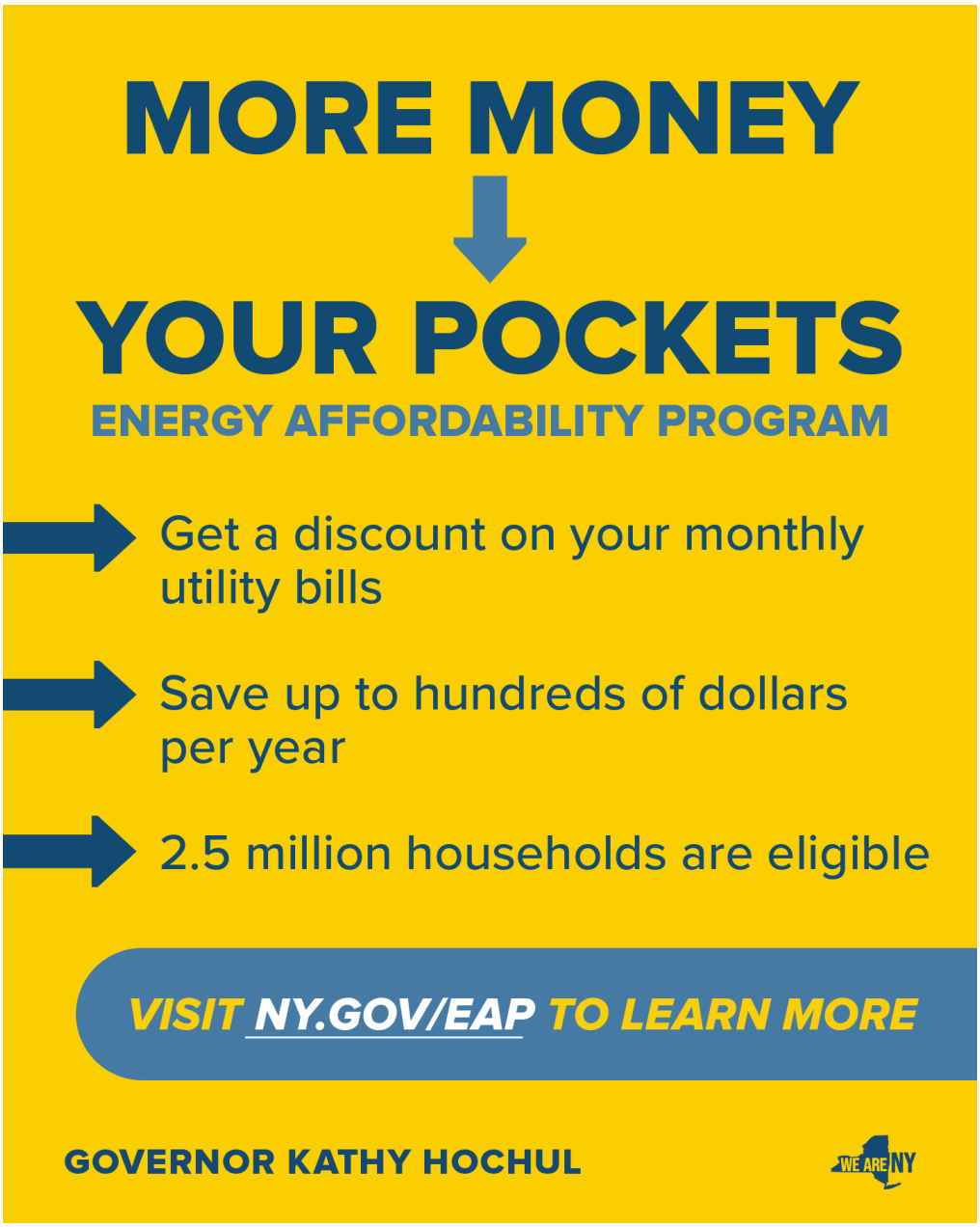
6:30 - 7:00 pm Worship Service

Come for any or all of the segments

New York State's Energy Affordability Program (EAP)

Eligible residents can grab discounts up to $500 to help with electric and utility bills that are applied directly to your monthly bills. The size of your EAP discount is based on your household income — but some families save up to hundreds of dollars per year on their utility costs.

This may not be something that will help you directly, but if you have family or friends it may help, please share this information with them.



Book Study Opportunity

If anyone would like to join in this education opportunity, please let Pastor Roger know and he will help you get registered.





Mark your Calendars

You are Cordially Invited to

Grace Lutheran Church's

Annual Roast Beef

Harvest Dinner

Saturday, November 7th

at 5 pm in Fellowship Hall

Bring a friend to enjoy the fellowship

Please sign up in the Narthex or call the Office if you are planning on attending no later than Sunday, Nov. 1st

Any Questions?

Call the Church's Office

518-762-7924



A Free Will donation will be taken



Healing Service, November 15th during our 9:00am worship service

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

1	John Clo
9	Amber Marie Caldwell
16	Brett Preston
16	India Carolyn Snell
23	Helen Schreivogl
26	David Alexander Almleaf

UPSTATE NEW YORK SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Content warning: This letter discusses allegations of sexual violence, including rape. Please care for yourself as you read.

A pastoral letter concerning the allegations at Cornell University

Dear siblings in Christ,

I write with a heavy heart for the students and wider community of Cornell University. A former student has filed a civil lawsuit alleging that she was drugged and raped by multiple students at a fraternity house in October 2024. Her account describes an assault lasting for hours. The allegations are grave, and the attention surrounding them may bring pain and memories to people throughout our synod.

These allegations deserve a thorough and fair examination. Cornell has said that its own investigation concluded and that the fraternity chapter remains barred from campus.[1] The Tompkins County district attorney has now reopened the criminal investigation.[2] While it is not the church's role to determine or pronounce legal guilt, it is our responsibility to speak clearly about sexual violence, to attend to those who are hurting, and to insist that every person's dignity and safety matter.

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1 The Editorial Board, "Cornell Won't, We Will," The Cornell Daily Sun, September 28, 2026,

https://www.cornellsun.com/article/2026/09/editorial-cornell-won-t-we-will.

2 Cereese Qusba, "Tompkins County DA Reopens Criminal Investigation Into Alleged Chi Phi Gang Rape," The Cornell Daily Sun, September 28, 2026, https://www.cornellsun.com/article/2026/09/tompkins-county-da-reopens-criminal-investigation-into-alleged-chi-phi-gang-rape.

The Rev. Lee M. Miller II, Bishop
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Cornell's student newspaper has voiced deep concern about whether students can feel safe and whether the university has been sufficiently transparent.[3] Cornell, for its part, says it takes sexual violence seriously and has pointed to its work on prevention and access to support. Those concerns call for sustained listening and meaningful action, especially from institutions entrusted with the care of young people.

Our church's 2015 social message on **Gender-based Violence** [4] reminds us of Tamar, whose pleas were ignored and whose family failed to care for her after she was raped. It asks the church to recognize the harm done when people with the power to intervene remain silent. We are called to hear that challenge ourselves. Earlier this year, Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry issued a Pastoral Message on Gender-based Violence. In it, he wrote:

"This church stands with you to say that all forms of sexual and gender-based violence are wrong.[5]"

He named such violence a dehumanizing misuse of power and affirmed that no one deserves it. *I join Bishop Curry in that witness*. Sexual violence is a grievous sin against a person made in God's image. Its harm can isolate survivors and make the liberation promised in Christ feel impossibly far away. We are called to make room for survivors to speak on their own terms, seek healing without pressure, and find communities that will stand beside them. That call does not conclude with caring for those who have been harmed. Christian love directs us to confront the cultures, practices, and uses of power that allow such harm to occur and persist. On Sunday, Pastor Jason Churchill (and Lutheran Chaplain for Cornell) spoke from St. Luke Lutheran Church and Lutheran Campus Ministry, a congregation woven into the life of Cornell and Ithaca:

"Sexual violence is never acceptable. Consent matters. The dignity and

sacredness of every body matters." To survivors, he added: "You are believed,

you are loved, and you do not have to carry your story alone."

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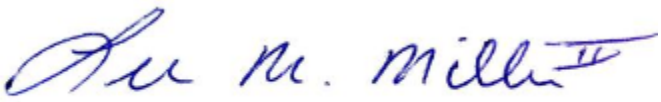
[3] https://www.cornellsun.com/staff/cereese-qusba.
[4] https://resources.elca.org/faith-and-society/gender-based-violence-social-message/?_ga=2.197097707.653225446.1790606875-1087466010.1727191480.
[5] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Presiding Bishop Curry Issues Pastoral Message on Gender-based Violence," Press Releases, March 24, 2026, https://www.elca.org/news/presiding-bishop-curry-issues-pastoral-message-on-gender-based-violence.

I want every student, every survivor, and every congregation in this synod to hear that invitation to care.

I ask our congregations and campus ministries to be attentive to those for whom this news is painful. Listen without pressing for details. Respect each person's choices about whether and how to seek help. Continue the patient work of teaching consent, preventing abuse, and making our communities safer. Pray for the former student who brought these allegations, for all whose experiences are stirred by this news, and for a process marked by truth, care, and accountability.

Christ meets people in places of suffering. May we be present there too, with humility, courage, and love.

Yours in Christ,



Bishop Lee M. Miller II

SERVING SCHEDULE – NOVEMBER 2026 (subject to change)

Date	**Assisting Ministers** - **Communion Assistants** Minis	Reader	Usher(s)	Crucifer	Altar Guild - Bread	Counters
1 **ELW** **setting 4** **9:00**	Presiding: Pastor Roger Behrens Nancy Demarest **Communion Assistant** Nancy Demarest	Linda Bumpus	Clyde Smith Donovan Smith	Darleen Gaugler	Peggy Niforos **Bread Baker** **(At the rail)** Peggy Niforos	Kathy Vanvalkenburgh Bonnie Olendorf
8 **ELW** **setting 4** **9:00**	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens Peggy Niforos **Communion Assistant** Peggy Niforos	MaryAnn Hathaway	Fred Gilbert Kathy VanValkenburgh		Kathy VanValkenburgh **Intinction**	Darleen Gaugler Bonnie Olendorf
15 **ELW** **setting 4** **9:00**	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens Donna Coonradt **Communion Assistant** Donna Coonradt	Peggy Niforos	Karl Blanchard Linda Bumpus		Nancy Demarest **Intinction**	Nancy Demarest Bonnie Olendorf
22 **ELW** **setting 4** **9:00**	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens Kathy VanValkenburgh **Communion Assistant** Kathy VanValkenburgh	Clyde Smith	Darleen Gaugler Lee Mitchell	Donna Coonradt	Darleen Gaugler **Bread Baker** **(At the rail)** Peggy Niforos	Bonnie Olendorf
29 **ELW** **setting 4** **9:00**	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens Linda Bumpus **Communion Assistant** Linda Bumpus	Nancy Demarest	Clyde Smith Donovan Smith		Peggy Niforos **Bread Baker** **(At the rail)** Peggy Niforos	Darleen Gaugler Bonnie Olendorf

November

November 16th Newsletter Articles Due

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9 Worship/Sunday School *ALL SAINTS DAY* Daylight savings time ends	2 3:30 InReach Committee	3 Election Day	4	5 1 Joint Bible Study-Trinity	6	7 5 Harvest Dinner
8 9 Worship/Sunday School Congr. Meeting	9 3 Worship & Music Committee	10 9:30 Interfaith Council	11 Veteran's Day	12 1Joint Bible Study Grace 6 Council Meeting	13	14 9-3 Fulton Cty Office of the Aging Workshop
5 9 Worship/Healing Service Sunday School	16 Newsletter Articles Due	17	18	19 1 Joint Bible Study Trinity	20	21 1 Brainstorming session
22 9 Worship/Sunday School *CHRIST THE KING*	23	24 7 Interfaith Attitude for Gratitude Thanksgiving service First Presbyterian Johnstown	25	26 Thanksgiving Office closed	27	28
29 9 Worship/Sunday School *ADVENT – HANGING OF THE GREENS*	**30**					