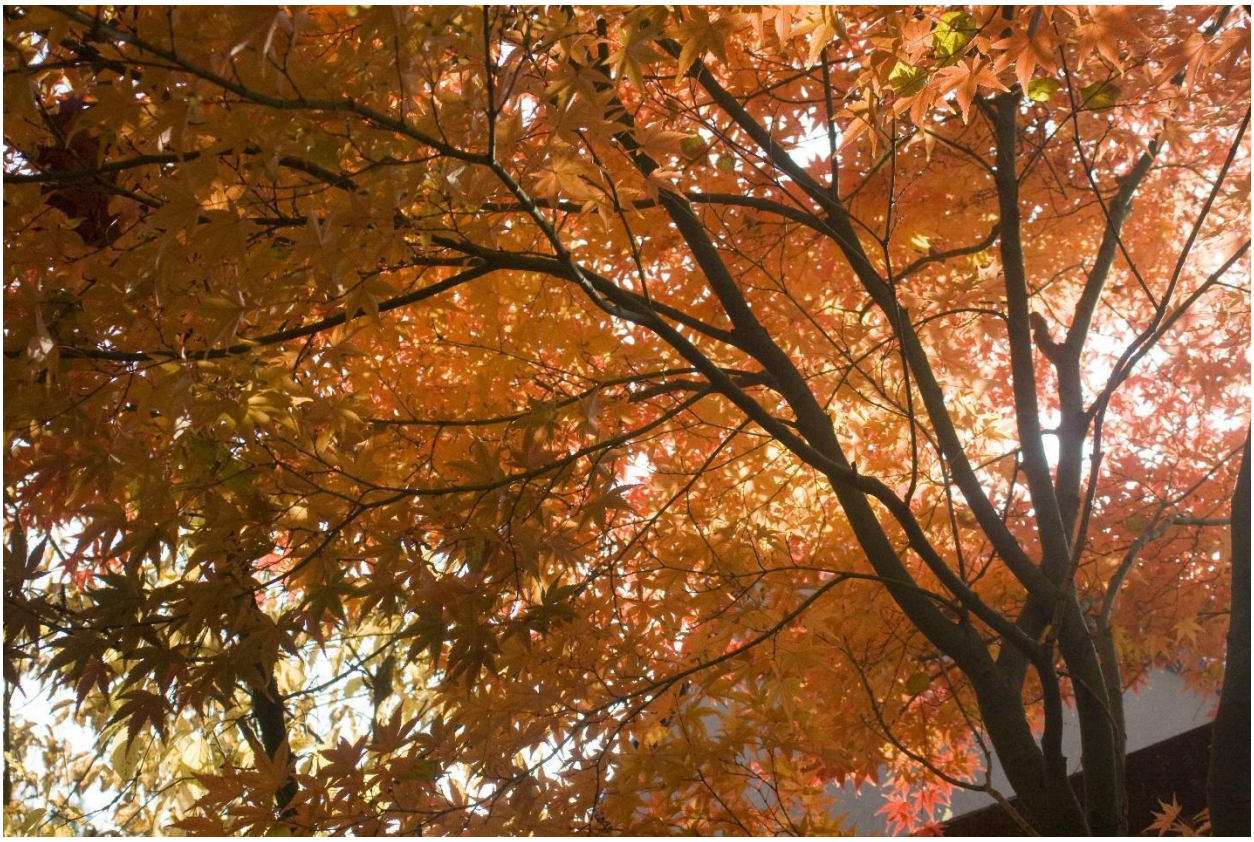


Grace Lutheran Church
October, 2026 Newsletter

Pastor's Pen

There is something sacred about the arrival of fall. The air turns cool and crisp, mornings invite us to linger a little longer, and the trees begin their beautiful surrender. Leaves that once shimmered in summer's fullness loosen their grip and drift gently to the ground. The world seems to exhale.

Fall reminds us that change is not something to fear. Sometimes it is God's invitation to release what we have been holding too tightly.

Isaiah 40:8 declares, *"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."* In just one season, green fields fade, flowers disappear, and branches become bare. Yet God's Word remains. His promises do not dry up with the grass or fall away like leaves. They stand firm through every season of life.

We often wish we could preserve the seasons we love. We want summer's warmth to last, joyful moments to remain unchanged, and familiar circumstances to stay exactly as they are. But creation teaches us that life moves in cycles. There is a time for growth, a time for blooming, a time for letting go, and a time for rest.

The trees do not resist autumn. They do not cling desperately to every leaf. Instead, they release what is no longer needed and trust the hidden work of the season ahead. Beneath the soil, roots continue to grow. In the quiet, preparation is taking place.

Perhaps God is inviting us to do the same.

What old disappointments, fears, or habits are we still carrying? What burdens can we release? What would it look like to place them into God's hands and trust Him with what comes next?

Fall's beauty is found not only in its vibrant colors but also in its stillness. The shorter days encourage us to slow down. The cooler evenings draw us indoors. A warm cup of tea, a crackling fire, or a walk beneath golden trees can become an opportunity to notice God's presence.

In a hurried world, autumn gives us permission to pause.

As we watch leaves descend, we can remember that endings are not always failures. Some endings make room for renewal. Some empty branches prepare for spring. Some quiet seasons deepen our faith in ways that busy seasons never could.

God is faithful in every transition. He is present in the bright days and the gray ones, in abundance and uncertainty, in beginnings and endings. While circumstances change, His character does not. His love remains steady. His mercy is new each morning. His Word stands forever.

This fall, welcome the season with open hearts. Let the crisp air remind us of the breath of God and the changing leaves teach us surrender. Allow the early sunsets to draw us closer to the Light that never fades. And when life feels uncertain, hold tightly to this truth: everything around us changes, but God's promises remain unshaken.

Prayer:
Faithful God, thank You for the beauty and wisdom of autumn. Help us to release what You are asking us to surrender and to trust You through every change. When life feels uncertain, remind us that Your Word stands forever. Teach us to rest in Your presence and recognize Your goodness in every season. Amen.

Yours in Christ

Pastor Roger Behrens

Grace Lutheran Church Council Highlights – September 10, 2026

Minutes from our August 13, 2026 meeting, Financial Secretary, Treasurer and Pastor's reports were read and approved.

Pastor's Report Highlights:

- Conducted a funeral for Joan Richards on August 22nd
- Visited via phone with the family of a former member (Dave Seward) who is in hospice.
- Conducted an in-home visit with a shut-in on August 24th.
- Resumed Adult Bible Study on the Book of Job.
- Met with Synod Director of Mobility on August 17th to discuss our future.
- Attended a meeting on Stewardship on August 14th
- Met with Spiritual and Support system
- Requested Vacation October 9th - 15th.

Council Actions and Announcements:

- Discussed the suggested package for streaming our services on YouTube and Facebook, etc.
- Approved the purchase of the presented package and any accessories for up to $5000 with the money coming from the Getzlaff Bequest in the Memorial Fund.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Property:

- Discussed the retention wall and the need to find out about doing something with it.
- Discussed the need to do a liability audit with our insurance carrier

InReach/OutReach:

- Discussed final details for the Brunch on September 13th
- Discussed with Worship and Music details about the October 4th Joint Service

Christian Education/Youth:

- Joint Bible Study with Trinity has resumed on Thursdays at 1 pm. The Book of Job will be studied, First session was at Grace on September 10. Locations will alternate.
- Sunday School will resume September 13th after the Children's Time.

Finance:

- Started work on the 2027 Budget

Worship and Music:

- Discussed the Joint Service at Palatine Church October 4th followed by luncheon. Grace is responsible for everything dealing with the hot dogs,
- A list will be posted in the Narthex for optional food sign up.
- Will set up an Altar Guild meeting.

Interfaith Council:

- Needs a new Secretary
- The 77th Annual Interfaith Tea will be held on October 20th
- Plans an Interfaith Bible Study on the prophets for October 27th



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

JOIN CHOIR!

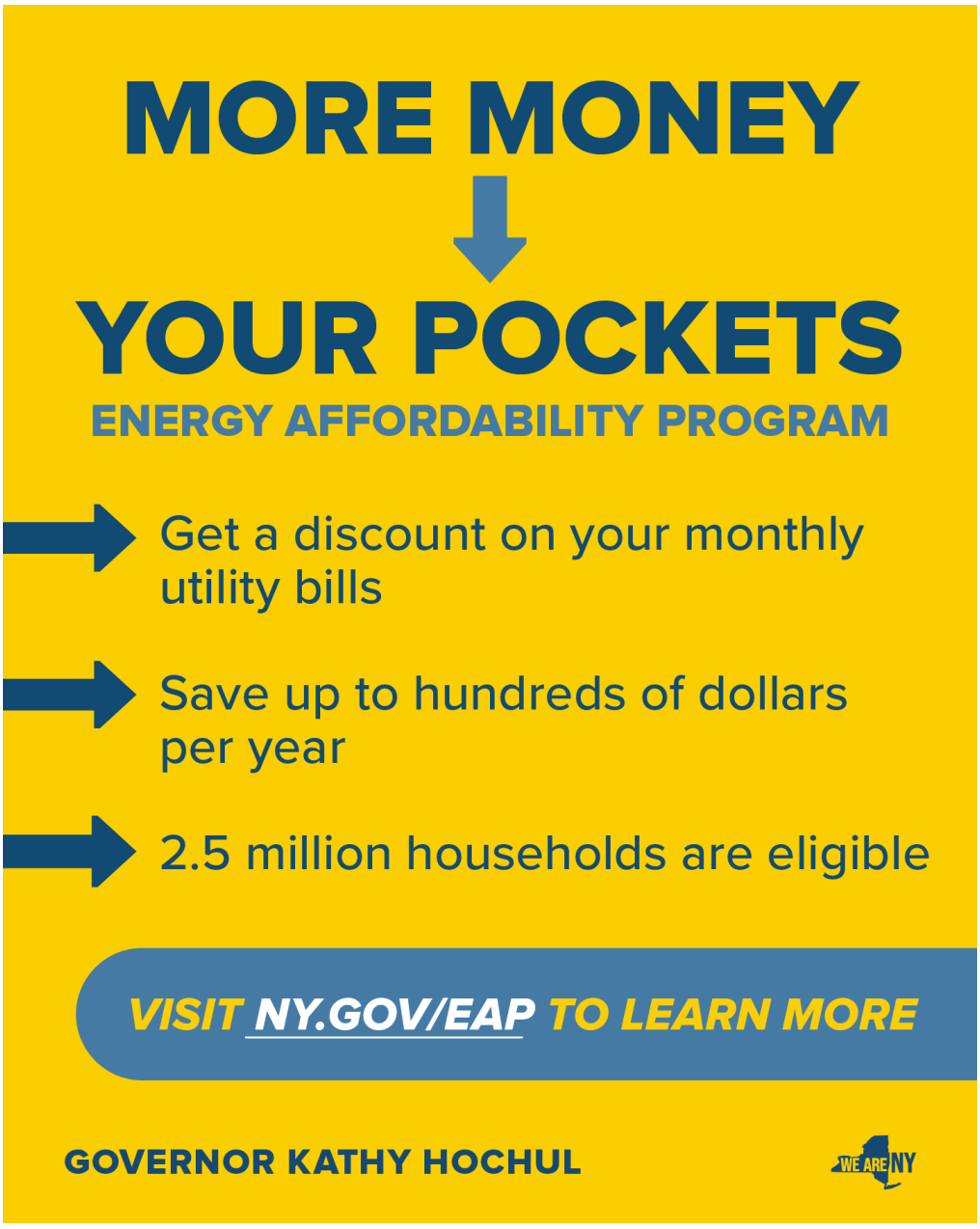
We're happy to announce that Grace Lutheran Church has a choir! We meet for an hour after worship on Sundays to rehearse. We're almost to 15 members including our musical director and Pastor! There are about 4 people singing each voice part in the choir, so no one is ever singing their part alone. We plan to have performances during our Sunday worship services for festivals, feasts and holy days throughout the year. Our first performance is during worship at Grace on Reformation Sunday, October 25th, 2026. Our choir consists of all types of singers from people who do or do not read music and people who used to sing years ago, or still love to sing today. All are welcome to join and sing with us at any time! Our next rehearsal is on October 11th, following worship at Grace Lutheran. Please reach out to our organist, Chenya D'Arcangelis-Westley with any questions about joining and singing with us! We sing and worship together each Sunday, let's continue our worship for the Lord in song!

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;
make music to the Lord with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,
with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—
shout for joy before the Lord, the king.
Psalm 98:4-6

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.



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.

Cultivating a G.R.A.C.E. Mindset: Experimentation

The Rev. Lee M. Miller II, Bishop
Upstate New York Synod, ELCA
116 W Glen Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13205
(315) 299-4955
www.upstatenysynod.org

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.

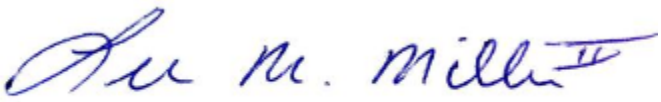
[5] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Presiding Bishop Curry Issues Pastoral Message on Gender-based Violence," Press Releases, March 24, 2026, https://www.elca.org/news/presiding-bishop-curry-issues-pastoral-message-on-gender-based-violence.

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



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



2. Nancy Blanchard
9. Noah J. Clo
12. Bonnie Olendorf
16. Michelle Bills

SERVING SCHEDULE – October 2026 (subject to change)

Date	**Assisting Ministers** - **Communion Assistants** Minis	Reader	Usher(s)	Crucifer	Altar Guild - Bread	Counters
4 **ELW** **setting 4** **9:00**	Presiding: Pastor Roger Behrens **Communion Assistant**				**Bread Baker** **(At the rail)** Mary Ann Hathaway	Nancy Demarest Bonnie Olendorf
11 **ELW** **setting 4** **9:00**	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens Kathy VanValkenburg **Communion Assistant** Kathy VanValkenburg	Samara Smith	Fred Gilbert Nancy Demarest		Nancy Demarest **Intinction**	Kathy Van Valkenburg Bonnie Olendorf
18 **ELW** **setting 4** **9:00**	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens Donna Coonradt **Communion Assistant** Donna Coonradt	Maryland Warner	Karl Blanchard Linda Bumpus		Darleen Gaugler **Intinction**	Darleen Gaugler Bonnie Olendorf
25 **ELW** **setting 4** **9:00**	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens Linda Bumpus **Communion Assistant** Linda Bumpus	Vicki Behrens	Darleen Gaugler Lee Mitchell	Derreck McQuiness	Kathy VanValkenburg **Bread Baker** **(At the rail)** Peggy Niforos	Nancy Demarest Bonnie Olendorf

October

Newsletter articles due October 19th.

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 1-5 pm Red Cross Blood Drive – Trinity 1 pm Bible Study - Trinity	2	3
5 10 am Palatine Joint Service	5 2 pm Property 3 pm Worship & Music 4 pm Finance and InReach	6	7	8 1 pm Bible Study- Grace	9 *Pastor and Vicki away thru October 15th*	10
11 9 am Worship Choir Rehearsal	12 Indigenous Peoples Day – office closed	13 9:30 am Interfaith council	14	15 5:30 Grace Council Meeting	16	17
18 9 am Worship Choir Rehearsal	19 *Newsletter Articles due!*	20 9:30 am 77th Annual Interfaith Tea	21	22 1 pm Bible Study- Trinity	23	24
25 9 am Worship Reformation Sunday	26	27	28	29 1 pm Bible Study- Grace	30 *Tina vacation; back Nov 9*	31 Reformation Day