



Grace Lutheran Church
March 2026 Newsletter

Pastor's Pen

I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5).

In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength. But you refused (Isaiah 30:15).

I share with you this month the below text, which is a modified version of words written by Constance Padmore. Words I feel are foundational in building upon our road to Jerusalem throughout this Lenten season.

As we enter into this season of Lent we are called to embrace our sinful self through repentance. We practice this process each week, but I often question if my heart is really in tune with the wrongs I have done over the past days, weeks or months.

In doing the work of repentance, we are reminded that repentance is first a gift given to us from God. We receive the gift of repentance from the One who has already received us and freed us from our wrongdoings. This gift is one that requires us to rest our souls and center ourselves on this gift from God. Godly repentance will always produce the fruit of returning our hearts to Christ.

Over the next few weeks as you enter into your personal daily reflections, I encourage you to make space to pause along the way and to position yourself at the feet of Jesus. Put yourself at the foot of the cross. In this posture your soul will become vulnerable. As you pour yourself out, it may be costly, but it will be worth it.

Throughout these next weeks of Lent as we journey with Jesus to that cross, we are invited into the conversation as we offer our hearts to him. Each day we must respond to Jesus's personal invitation to *return to the vine* through prayer and scripture.

Through our prayer and reflection each day the Holy Spirit will lead our hearts towards personal spiritual advancement. We must take time to engage Jesus, to return to him, as we journey through this Lenten season.

It will require endurance to complete our journey. It will require the work and strength of the Spirit of Christ within us to stay the course. He will be with us. He will be faithful to lead us and to walk with us. He will be faithful to suffer with us and to raise us up with renewed hope and purpose.

Come, Holy Spirit, immerse us again in the waters of repentance. We receive your invitation to return, to rest, and to be saved. Return us to Christ, our first love, and teach us to abide in the vine. Produce within us the good fruit of repentance. Renew our minds with your truth and unify your church. Amen.

Yours in Christ!

Pastor Roger

Lesson - The Lord's Prayer

Over the past few months, I have provided information on our rite of Confession. I enjoyed reviewing this important practice by those who profess faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Martin Luther was hard on himself in effort to be a righteous believer and always felt as though he fell short. But knowing God's grace and mercy frees us from our sins is all we need to become righteous. I hope you all read this information and fit it firmly into your lives.

For the next few months, I will share words with you related to the Lord's Prayer. We recite this prayer each week, more often for many of us. When we recite, we can become complacent and not really think about the words we pray to our Lord. I hope through these next months I can share some thoughts and meaningful conversations.

Martin Luther encouraged all believers to respond to our gracious God. We are encouraged to "talk back" to God. Be in a dialogue, in conversation. Luther also wrote that:

One should also know that I do not want you to recite all these words in your prayer. That would make it nothing but mere chatter and idle prattle, read word for word out of a book as were the rosaries by the laity and the prayers of the clerics and monks. Rather do I want your heart to be stirred and guided concerning the thoughts that ought to be comprehended in the Lord's Prayer. These thoughts may be expressed, if your heart is rightly warmed and inclined toward prayer, in many different ways and with more words or fewer....It may happen occasionally that I may wander among so many ideas in one petition that I forgo the other six. If such an abundance of good thoughts comes to us we ought to disregard the other petitions, make room for such thoughts, listen in silence, and under no circumstances obstruct them. The Holy Spirit himself preaches here, and one word of his sermon is far better than a thousand of our prayers. Many times I have learned more from one prayer than I might have learned from much reading and speculation.

Luther was convinced that when we Christians rightly pray the Lord's Prayer, we should feel free to use just a portion or all of it. When we use a portion of the prayer that fits what may be on our hearts, we can expand our personal prayer to God, allowing the petition of the Lord's prayer to jumpstart our personal concerns, joys, etc. The important point of our prayers is they be authentic communication with our God.

As many of you may recall, Luther divided up the Lord's Prayer into seven petitions with an introduction and a conclusion. He divided the prayer in ways that unite God with us as individuals. Notice some things about each of the petitions:

- Our prayer springs from trust in God. We can talk with our God because we know our God from the 10 Commandments and the Creed. Through this we have experienced a trustworthy God.
- Our attitude in prayer is to be BOLD. Luther says we are to "call upon God incessantly and to drum into his ears our prayer. We can ask God bluntly and clearly for what we most

desperately need.....needs that are revealed through the Commandments and the Creed.

- In each petition, we must be clear and describe exactly what we want.
- Through our prayers, we expect that something will truly happen. The first three petitions describe how we can recognize when God is responding to our requests.
- We pray concerning all of our needs; bodily, spiritual, and material.
- Our lives and our relationship with God are constantly threatened by the forces of evil. Yet we pray in confidence that God will preserve us and this relationship.

Breakdown of the Lord's Prayer:

Introduction: Our Father who are in heaven,

1st Petition: hallowed be thy name,

2nd Petition: thy kingdom come,

3rd Petition: thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

4th Petition: Give us this day our daily bread;

5th Petition: and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

6th Petition: and lead us not into temptation,

7th Petition: but deliver us from evil.

Conclusion: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.

Amen

Stay tune for next month's lesson as I begin to break down each of these petitions through the writings of Martin Luther and other theologians.

Come and worship during Lent.....



**Midweek Lenten Services Wednesdays at Trinity
beginning at 5:30 with soup supper**



Palm Sunday - March 29th - 9:00 a.m.



**Maundy Thursday - April 2nd - 5:00 p.m. -
Soup and Sandwich supper - Worship Service 6:00 p.m.**



**Good Friday - April 3rd - 6:00 p.m.
Last Words of Christ**

Easter Service



April 5th - 9:00 a.m.

Concordia Choir Performance

Recognized as one of America's finest a cappella choirs, The Concordia Choir of Moorhead, Minnesota, is set to perform in Albany, NY, at 7:00 PM Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at The Cathedral of All Saints. Tickets are available at ConcordiaTickets.com or at the door.

The concert is part of the choir's 2026 national tour, which includes 17 performances across Minnesota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Washington D.C., New York, Vermont, and Massachusetts.

The program features a wide-ranging selection of choral works spanning the baroque to contemporary eras, with music by J.S. Bach, John Rutter, Lucy Walker, Susan LaBarr, Cedric Dent, René Clausen, and others.

Since 1920, the 68-voice choir has toured nationally and internationally, performing in nearly every major U.S. concert hall, including Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. The choir toured Italy in 2022, including a performance at St. Peter's Basilica, and performed throughout Norway and Sweden in 2025.

In 2024, CollegeRank.net named The Concordia Choir one of the top 10 most impressive college choirs in the country.

The choir is led by conductor Michael Culloton, a 1998 Concordia College graduate and associate professor of music. Culloton has directed choral activities for the college since 2020, succeeding René Clausen following his 34-year tenure. Culloton also serves as artistic director of the Emmy®-winning Concordia Christmas Concerts, which draw annual audiences of more than 12,000.

Grace Lutheran Church Council Highlights - February 12, 2026

Minutes from our January 8th Council meeting, Financial Secretary, Treasurer and Pastor's reports were read and approved.

Pastor's Report Highlights:

- Visited 1 homebound parishioner on January 12th
- Planned and led Martin Luther King Jr Worship Service on January 19th
- Met with 3 members (at different times) to address concerns
- Attended February Worship and Music and Finance Committee meetings
- Attended Foothills Conference Ministerium January 15th
- Met with Interfaith Council President to plan MLK service at Grace
- Met with a retired pastor for support, met with Spiritual Advisor and met with Pastoral Support Group
- Went away January 25 - 30 (Continuing Education) and canceled February 1 - 7 (Vacation)

Council Actions and Announcements:

- Changed the February Benevolence to Catholic Charities of Montgomery and Fulton Counties
- Changed the June Benevolence to Child Advocacy Center in Gloversville

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Property: Will be purchasing Bollard Sleeves for the driveway posts

Finance

- Closing the Seelow Banking Account that was being used for Vicar Melissa's Seminary Education - returning funds to the Trust Fund

Worship and Music:

- Midweek Lenten Services Wednesdays at Trinity beginning at 5:30 with soup supper
- Future services discussed:
 - Palm Sunday - March 29th - regular time
 - Maundy Thursday - April 2nd - Soup and Sandwich Supper 5 pm; Service 6 pm
 - Good Friday - April 3rd - Last Words of Christ - 6 pm
 - Easter Vigil - April 4th - TBD
 - Easter - April 5th - regular time
- Time after Pentecost will be changing to WOV Setting 5 until fall
-

Interfaith Council:

- The Martin Luther King Day Worship Service was held at Grace Lutheran Church with donations given to Child Advocacy Center in Gloversville
- Interfaith Bible Study on 2/26/26 at Holy Trinity, Johnstown at 6:30 - Zoom available



Easter Lily Order Form
Deadline: Sunday March 22, 2026
Cost is 28.00 each

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Amount of Donation: _____ **Envelope No.** _____

In memory of: _____

In honor of: _____



I will deliver a plant to a shut-in _____

(Shut-in's name)

Please make your check out to Grace Lutheran Church and return it with this order form. Thank you.

If you plan to take your plant, you may do so after the worship service or during the week following Easter.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES - MARCH 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>1 9:00 a.m. - Worship with Communion</p> <p>9:00 a.m. - Sunday School</p>	<p>2 Committee Meetings</p> <p>3:00 p.m. - Worship & Music</p> <p>4:30 p.m. - Finance</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 Midweek Lenten Service 5:30 p.m. at Trinity beginning with soup & sandwich</p>	<p>5 5:30 p.m. - Church Council meeting</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8 Daylight Savings Time Change - Spring Forward 1 hour</p> <p>9:00 a.m. - Worship with Communion</p> <p>9:00 a.m. - Sunday School</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11 Midweek Lenten Service 5:30 p.m. at Trinity beginning with soup & sandwich</p>	<p>12 5:30 p.m. - Church Council meeting</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15 9:00 a.m. - Worship with Communion</p> <p>9:00 a.m. - Sunday School</p> <p>Pastor on Vacation thru - March 21</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 </p>	<p>18 Midweek Lenten Service 5:30 p.m. at Trinity beginning with soup & sandwich</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 </p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 9:00 a.m. - Worship with Communion</p> <p>9:00 a.m. - Sunday School</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25 Midweek Lenten Service 5:30 p.m. at Trinity beginning with soup & sandwich</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 Palm Sunday</p> <p>9:00 a.m. - Worship with Communion</p> <p>9:00 a.m. - Sunday Sc.</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>April 1</p>	<p>April 2 Maundy Thursday 5 p.m. Soup and Sandwich Supper 6:00 p.m. - Worship service</p>	<p>April 3 Good Friday 6:00 p.m. - Last Words of Jesus</p>	<p>April 4 Easter Vigil - TBD</p> <p>April 5 9:00 Easter Service</p>

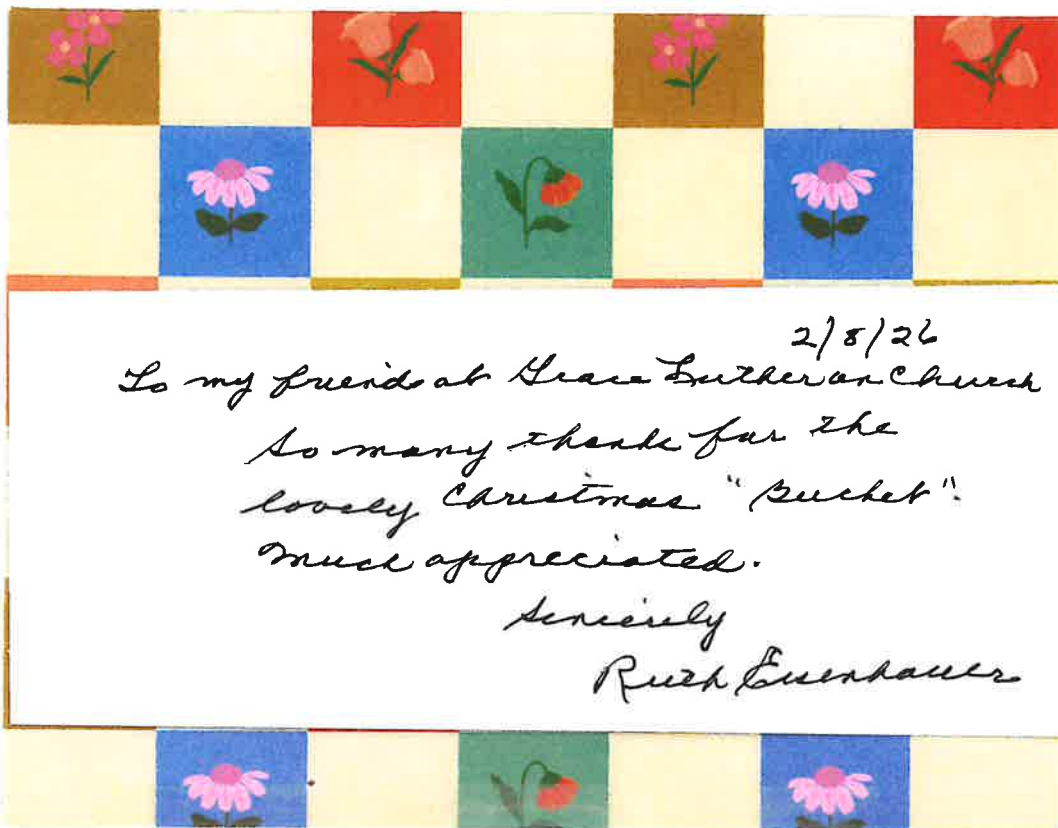


- 2 - Mackensie Greene
Gabrielle Roth
- 4 - Charles Schwab
- 5 - Terry S. Bills
Richard Kowalczyk
- 6 - Scott Bumpus
- 8 - Daylight Savings Time Begins
Melissa Bedell
Jamie McGrattan
- 13 - Cathy Wallace
- 16 - Michael VanValkenburgh
- 17 - St. Patrick's Day
Mia Elizabeth Martin
- 19 - Brian DePasquale
- 20- First Day of Spring - yay!
Zachary Ropeter
- 27 - Robert Paxton
Erah Kilmer
- 29 - Palm Sunday
- 30 - Pat VanSlyke
Maryland Warner

- 1. Robert VanSlyke
- 2. Maundy Thursday
- 3. Good Friday
- 5. Easter
- 4 - Kathleen VanValkenburgh
- 7 - Sandy Jackson
- Paster 9 - Vicki Behrens
- 11 - Chris Rohrs
Rhyleigh Bills
- 12 - Grady Shea
- 13 - Haley Claes
- 21 - Wendy Hollenbeck
- Vicki 24 - Pastor Roger Behrens
- 25 - Casey VanValkenburgh
- 26 - Rebecca Rulison Roy

SERVING SCHEDULE - March - 2026 (subject to change)

Date	Assisting Ministers	Reader	Usher(s)	Crucifer	Altar Guild - Bread	Counters
Mar. 1 ELW setting 4 9:00	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens NANCY DEMAREST <u>Communion Assistant</u> NANCY DEMAREST	LINDA BUMBUS	DARLEEN GAUGLER LEE MITCHELL		KATHY VANVALKENBURGH <u>Bread Baker</u> (At the rail) MARY ANN HATHAWAY	KATHY VANVALKENBURGH BONNIE OLENDORF
Mar. 8 ELW setting 4 9:00	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens KATHY VANVALKENBURGH <u>Communion Assistant</u> KATHY VANVALKENBURGH	PEGGY NIFOROS	FRED GILBERT NANCY DEMAREST		NANCY DEMAREST	NANCY DEMAREST BONNIE OLENDORF
Mar. 15 ELW setting 4 9:00	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens LINDA BUMBUS <u>Communion Assistant</u> LINDA BUMBUS	MARY ANN HATHAWAY	LINDA BUMBUS KATHY VANVALKENBURGH		PEGGY NIFOROS	DARLEEN GAUGLER BONNIE OLENDORF
Mar. 22 ELW setting 4 9:00	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens DONNA COONRADT <u>Communion Assistant</u> DONNA COONRADT	VICKI BEHRENS	FRED GILBERT NANCY DEMAREST		DARLEEN GAUGLER <u>(Intinction)</u>	KATHY VANVALKENBURGH BONNIE OLENDORF
Mar. 29 Palm Sunday ELW setting 3 9:00	Presiding - Pastor Roger Behrens PEG NIFOROS <u>Communion Assistant</u> PEG NIFOROS		CLYDE and DONOVAN SMITH	DARLEEN GAUGLER	KATHY VANVALKENBURGH <u>Bread Baker</u> (At the rail) NANCY DEMAREST	NANCY DEMAREST BONNIE OLENDORF



2/8/26

To my friends at Grace Lutheran Church
So many thanks for the
lovely Christmas "bucket".
Much appreciated.

Sincerely
Ruth Euenbauer



Thank you
for your kind donation to the
Fulton County Office for
Aging.
Your thoughtfulness and
generous support means so
much to us.
From the staff at Office for
Aging.



**Prayer Concerns
March 2026**



Remember our Shut-ins

At Home

**Jackie Hollenbeck
Erah Kilmer
Marilyn Warner**

Hillcrest - Amsterdam

Don Phelps

Riveridge Nursing Home

Stacey Keach

Wells House

Mary Phelps

Wilkenson - Amsterdam

Marlene Slingerland



Prayer Concerns:

**Donald Wright
Carol Beekman
John Mero Jr.
Kimmey
Ruth Eisenhower
Samara Smith
Lilyann Smith
Patricia Fallis
Dan Costello
Sharon Snell
Ron Pedrick
David Seward
Nancy Blanchard
Sandy Weaver
Lonnie Ugalde
Michelle Stockwell
Joe Giniti**



**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.**