

Grace Lutheran



Yoked parish of faith and service: Bethel & Zion

c/o Zion Lutheran Church
41 Whitmarsh Avenue
Worcester, MA 01606-3296

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #205
WORCESTER, MA



NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2026

TIME SENSITIVE

PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

*Our lives are formed by Word and
Sacrament, and we gather as the beloved
children of God around the means of grace
where our lives are in Christ.*

PASTOR'S COLUMN ENCOUNTER

I love February, selfishly because it moves us closer to Spring ☺

Okay, maybe NOT the best reason, but it's out there now...

February is also a bridge month between Epiphany and Lent, the time the historic church taps-down on ALLELUIAS and traditionally becomes a bit more somber as we turn our attention to the last “days”, the closing period of Jesus’ earthly ministry, ending with his crucifixion.

I like Lent!

While the Alleluias are “buried” for the Lenten season, our services do not move to a pace of drudgery, even though there may be more of a contemplative focus.

The First Sunday in Lent will introduce us to psalm singing in a different way for that day. That first Lenten Sunday we will share in the Genevan Psalter tradition (part of the Reformed Church tradition). It will be like singing an elongated hymn whose lyrics tie in directly to scripture for the day. It is a more contemplative way to engage the Word as we step into this period of the church year.

Making time to encounter what God is working hard to share with us, to help our lives and us better witness outwardly, is key to helping our world become the best that it can be (helping bring about the Kingdom of God in the present).

The hearing of scripture, participating in singing/listening to song that is connected to

the texts, and praying with the body of believers in worship can feed the participants. With partaking of the Eucharist, we can feel renewed, refreshed and READY to get back out “there” in the world to represent Grace and Mercy and *grow* in our personal lives!

It's important for us to take stock of our feelings and impressions from walking the world in our sphere each day. And to process everything in a healthy manner means working through it all WITH God; praying, meditating, trusting in our being held *and* our listening/finding what God is working to communicate to help us.

Lent amplifies this a bit, which is a GOOD thing! So, come and “plug-on” with us in the Lenten journey as we travel *towards* the cross: us being readied to appreciate just what God in Jesus has done for us through the Incarnation!

In Christ ✙,

Pastor Andrew

Grace Lutheran Café

Each Wednesday noon we serve a meal through Elder Services of Worcester at Zion!

Call the main office each week by 11 AM Mondays to register for a tasty/nutritious meal and some great social time!

Meals are FREE to anyone 50+, with a suggested donation of \$3.50/person.

ASH WEDNESDAY

2 PM Service at the Zion campus

6 PM Service at the Bethel Campus

2026 LENTEN MID-WEEK NEWS

Each year we follow a preaching series for added focus during Lent on Wednesdays.

This year is no different that way: 5 PM Potluck Meal with some discussion on the topic, 6 PM Worship following the theme.

However, we will SHARE the first two Wednesday services with First Congregational Church of Auburn!

The first week, we will join together at Bethel for the potluck and the service. The second week we will go to First for a 5 PM potluck to be followed by the service.

The last three weeks we will be at Bethel while First will be at their place. This is Pr. Julie's and my way of introducing First to the shared worship experience that we enjoy more broadly with the Greendale Ecumenical Group.

ADULT STUDIES IN-PERSON @ BETHEL LIBRARY

On a lot of Wednesdays at 2 PM, we have FUN, learn and share in our faith journey with each other during each series of material under consideration...and snacks usually show-up, too!

Moving into a new series, it seems fitting to think about the challenges our "humanness" can be in light of God's orientation, embodying Grace and Mercy; we have been created in the image of the plurality of God (the "our own image" of Genesis) so have some of the characteristics,

but don't really share the caustic side we can hold. This is a by-product of our "free-will".

Beginning February 28th, we will look at various Old Testament texts from the Egyptian sojourn of the Hebrew people through the reign of King Solomon. It's a swath of about 1,000 years that will reveal the challenges of our humanness even as God intervenes to Love us into better versions of ourselves. It will also shed light into the societal tendencies our times.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Kristel Hunt - 02/02
Karen Baril - 02/03
Rob McKenzie - 02/04
Hunter White - 02/08
Joshua Chunis - 02/10
Linda Rocheford - 02/11
Annalise Peters - 02/13
Scot Wiinikka - 02/15
Deborah Thompson - 02/16
Sean Townsend - 02/16
Robert Townsend - 02/16
Meghan Costello - 02/16
Liz Blash - 02/17
Diane Ela-Lauzon - 02/19
Matthew Van Dyke - 02/20
Ruth Ames - 02/22
Melvin Erickson - 02/23
Jason Hight - 02/24
Chase Hunt - 02/25
Nancy Hallstrom - 02/25
Lucy Hight - 02/26
Cheyenne Courtney - 02/27
Bill Wright - 02/28
Linda Wiinikka - 02/28

**LOOKING FOR A GROUP OF
LUTHERANS TO MEET WITH AND
SHARE SOME EXPERIENCES AND
HAVE FUN?**

**AS A SHARED MINISTRY WITH BETHEL/ZION,
WHY NOT GIVE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING A
TRY?**

MEN'S GROUP

Tuesday, February 10th. These dinners are open to anyone who would like to get together and socialize for an hour or 2. We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6 pm in Voosen hall. Dinners are \$15.00, and all the profits go into the Calumet scholarship fund. A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex so we have a general head count.

**WOMEN'S: DOLs
(Dine Out Ladies)**

The DineOut Ladies are having lunch at 1:00 on Tuesday, February 10th, at Tiny Tim's Cafe at the Tuttle Post, 88 Bancroft St., Auburn. Signup sheet in Bethel's narthex or call Leanne Carraher at 508-335-6421. We'll meet at the restaurant. No carpooling this month as it's in Auburn.

"BOOKIES" Book Club

Bookies will be meeting Monday February 23rd @ 2pm in the library. Selected book for discussion is "The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hill" by Robert Dugoni. Sam Hill always saw the world through different eyes. Born with red pupils, he was called "Devil Boy" or Sam Hill by his classmates. A beautiful & thought provoking read that will leave you reflecting on the power of embracing our differences. a novel 449 pages. All are welcome for interesting and friendly discussions!



Bobby Vandal

Lori Brennan

Linda Brennan

Lori Brennan

A Gift was given in honor of Anthony Mullaly's baptism by Michelle Chunis.



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Richard & JoAnn Van Dyke - 02/03
Nancy & Jack Fenton - 02/17
Bill & Pam McGovern - 02/27

PRAYER LIST

Donald Tremblay - Rose Marie Faragoli - Donna Brunnell - Mike & Cindy Dube - Russ Terrien - Tom Toepfner - Sandy Staples - Jim Mooney - Karen Carlson - Judy Garneau - Paul Josephson - Edla Bloom - Steve Hynes - Denise, Peter & George Kosciusko - Tony Genga - Henry Lewis - Glenna Brownell - Lois Kane - Roberta Briggs - Joan Bejune - Billy Rogan - Judy & Don Leomburno - Samantha Hanks - Mark Glandville - Jack Fenton - Mark Stevens - Jill Ducat - Jim Mahoney - Amy Rumge - Heather Gregar - Kenneth Johnson - Beth Johnson - Bill Withers - Pr. Judy L. - Gary Kaufman - Betty Jane Weagle - Valerie Cotter - Jim Henrickson - Kelly O'Brien Hartnett - Judy Sawicki - Anne Berberian - Carol Katagher - Julie Dawes - Louise Young - Elaine Peterson



Social Ministry / Outreach

*“For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do.” ~ Ephesians 2:10*

Our Social Ministry/Outreach team has begun to plan activities for the 2026 season. Together with Emanuel Lutheran Church in Worcester and First Congregational Church in Auburn, Grace will be running meal lines with **End Hunger NE** on Sunday May 3rd. Our goal this year is to make 20,000 meals to be distributed to food banks locally and through Pastor Matthew Martin's outreach connections. There will be fundraising events to help raise the money needed for making the meals. Our team will be hosting a musical event, “Make a Joyful Noise” on Friday March 20th. This free-will offering event will include light refreshments and musical entertainment. All monies raised at this event will help fund the meal lines. Mark your calendars and plan on joining us for this event. More information to follow.

We have secured two dates with **Worcester Fellowship** for the 2026 season. We will be making lunches for their Sunday Worship Service which is held at All Saints Church in Worcester. We will be making lunches before our 10:30 Worship Service on May 31st and September 20th.

The need for non-perishable food items is ongoing, and we will continue our food gathering which will be delivered to the **Auburn Youth and Family Services Food Bank**. There is also a need for gently used winter clothing. With the cold weather, please be mindful of those who are homeless and food insecure. There are homeless care kits in the

Narthex for you to distribute to those in need. You may also wish to drop off food at any of the four **Woo Fridges in Worcester**. We will be planning a lunch making event in the near future.

The knitted hats, gloves and mittens which adorned our Christmas tree in the Narthex were donated and gratefully received by **Auburn Youth and Family Services**. Thank you to our talented **Knitwits** and home knitters for sharing your handy work.

Looking ahead to 2026, we will be working with First Congregational Church to bring back the **Auburn Walk for Hunger** in the fall of this year. A preliminary planning meeting is planned for early February at AYFS. More information to follow.

For our Lenten project we will once again be doing a collection of diapers and baby wipes which will be brought to **Marie's Mission Diaper Outreach Program**.

A special thank you goes out to an anonymous donor for their generous donation to our Social Ministry/Outreach Fund. Our team prayerfully discerns how our funds are used in reaching out to our neighbor in need. Thank you to all who help support our work.





MISSION STATEMENT

"To boldly share God's Love and Grace universally in and through our communities."

VISION STATEMENT

Modeling the welcoming nature of God, we are humbly called and driven by the Spirit to witness, engage and walk with each other authentically, as Jesus' hands and feet, providing spiritual, emotional and physical nourishment.

Through evolving partnerships with ecumenical and other social service organizations we affirm justice and wholeness under the "agency of Grace" that feed the needs and hope of all.

The Rev. Andrew H. Borden, Pastor
pastor_andrew.b@verizon.net

Ann Spinner, Parish Administrator
bethelauburn@verizon.net
Main Office: 508-832-3427
grace-lutheran-elca.org

Randy Bloom – Minister of Music **Lois Toeppner**, Deacon – Minister of Music Emeritus
Shannon Papandrea - Sexton **Garret Peters** - Treasurer
Kate Valleli – Christian Education Coordinator **Adam Hanks** – Bell Director
Ann Spinner, Kate Valleli – Financial Secretaries
Louisa Klaven, AIM – Licensed Lay Minister

Parish Council

President – **Dave Valleli (B)** Co-Vice-Presidents – **Jennifer Courtney (Z)**, **Jessica Caminero (B)**
Council – **Dave Spinner (Z)**, **Ruth Thompson (B)**, **Joan Parker (B)**, **Leanne Carraher (B)**
Virginia Carlson (Z), **Adam Hanks (B)**, **Patrick Jones (B)**

Worcester Campus - Zion Lutheran **Auburn Campus - Bethel Lutheran**
41 Whitmarsh Avenue, 01606 90 Bryn Mawr Avenue, 01501

