

Grace Lutheran



Yoked parish of faith and service: Bethel & Zion

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

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NEWSLETTER MAY 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

The liturgical season of Easter Resurrection continues this month through to our celebrations of:

ASCENSION of Our Lord – held on Sunday, May 17th

PENTECOST – Sunday, May 24th

THE HOLY TRINITY – Sunday, May 31st.

So, you can't be absent from church for most of the month!!!

Well, that's a logic of the ancient church. We would simply love to have few seats available as all of our members and friends come to celebrate the Love that sets us free every day when we pay attention to God through faith and lean *into* the Grace!

As we explore nature in the month of May, the grasses, trees, flowers, bushes, all are "taking off" in their growth and basking in the light and warmth of increasing strength of solar rays.

Metaphorically, we, too, can be "taking-off" in our growth and maturity within the embrace of the Divine as the Christ-light is continually unveiled, the seed of faith in us warmed and nurtured! We have the opportunity for festival worship in joining with the heavenly chorus in praise of the God who never rests in order to persistently meet us with what we need!

First, on **Ascension** we explore Jesus' departure from the Mount of Olives into the realm with God as he completed his ministry with us and the post-resurrection forty days of encouraging the disciples in their ongoing witness and teaching. Jesus sets us all free with his revelation of God's Power that brought he and others back to life, provided healing, this same Power available to help us deal with chaos to become whole!

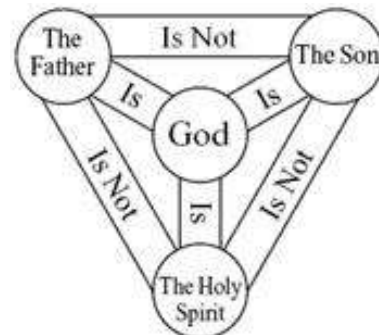


Rock with Jesus' foot imprint at time of Ascension

Second, on **Pentecost** we hear of the dispatch of the Holy Spirit following the Ascension in furthering Jesus' work of Grace and Mercy, through Love and Wisdom, with us into eternity as he has ascended to "God's right hand".



Third, on **Holy Trinity** we consider this mystery of the blessed One-in-Three and Three-in-One: the Godhead from before linear time (Chronos) began who never sleeps (Kairos time) nor walks-away from us, but is continually focused on helping us and creation (the pasture of all dimensions) be the best we can possibly be.



Worship on any day is a gift, where we encounter the Word to engage our minds and hearts and strengthen Wisdom within us, enter into conversation (prayer) and receive renewal at the Table of Life (Eucharist) preparing us to depart and greet the world again, ready for the journey and our part in the creation story to do our best with our skill and talent set! However, a festival opportunity raises the tonal bar of focus on any worship day, and so this May we are triply blessed!!!

Come, be present to God and the communities of the faithful at our four weekly worship options and vibrate with the Divine, letting your soul, and collective soul of our parish community, be lifted up!

Soli Deo Gloria!

Pastor Andrew

BEING LUTHERAN



Continuing/prospective member/current member refresher session

Second Sundays from 9 – 10 AM, at Bethel in his office, Pastor Andrew will host a participative discussion on what it means to be an ELCA Lutheran amidst the other denominational understandings amongst Jesus followers.

BETHEL CLEAN-UP DAY - Saturday, May 9th @ 10 AM. Bring your gloves, any equipment you like to use (we have some equipment, but not a lot on site). Pizza lunch and drinks provided :) See Rick Hagberg or Roy Benoit for any questions.



Easter Lilies

Have been given to the Glory of God:
By Linda Wrenn

Have been given in honor of:
Nieces, Eve & Mae by Adam Hanks
Our Family by Colleen Bouckaert & Carole Rogan

Have been given in memory of:
John Haynes by Anita Haynes
Parents by Leanne & Thom Carraher
Parents by Lori Brennan-Vandal
Husband by Lori Brennan-Vandal
Grandparents by Lori-Brennan-Vandal
Ronald Salmonson by Lori-Brennan-Vandal
Rose Burds by Lori Brennan-Vandal
Norman & Ann Vandal by Lori Brennan-Vandal
Husband, Tom Thompson by Ruth Thompson
Iver & Minnie Lind by Deb Thompson
Axel & Clara Carlson by Ginger Carlson
Parents by Vinny & Jackie Walsh
Brother, David Varg by Vinny & Jackie Walsh
Bill Lewis by Pam & Dave Sutton
Ray & Priscilla Odgren by Linda & Mark Rocheford
Loved ones by Adam Hanks
Loved ones by Karen Baril
Loved ones by Lois Chinigo
Loved ones by Bill & Pam McGovern
Have been For the Joy of Giving: by Lynn Sarkissian



Participating in this ecumenical service are
Grace Lutheran, First Congregational
Auburn, First Congregational Shrewsbury,
Unitarian Universalist of Worcester, Salem
Covenant and Greendale People's Church

TEACHING CHURCH

Grace Lutheran is a busy place, with a multiple classroom Sunday School, annual Vacation Bible School, confirmation, in-house adult education PLUS ecumenical online adult education. We have just added a BEING LUTHERAN series on 2nd Sundays at 9 AM to help refresh anyone and catch-up new members!

Your Parish Council is strongly considering broadening this further. As both of our congregations hosted pastoral interns (vicars) on multiple occasions, many years ago, the thought is to do so again for the entirety of the parish, beginning in 2027.

Vicars are student pastors, learning "on the job" under the tutelage of the pariah pastor, and in consultation with an ELCA seminary: for us, this would be United Lutheran in Philadelphia. Our parish would provide the Vicar housing and a stipend for the year that they are assigned to Grace.

Feel free to discuss with Pastor Andrew, Dave Valleli (president), or either of our VPs, Jennifer Courtney and Jessica Caminero, just what this entails. It can only enrich our communities of faith and the interns who come our way plus help prepare for the future of the universal apostolic church in Jesus' name.

PRAYER LIST

Donald Tremblay - Rose Marie Faragoli - Donna Brunnell - 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 - Joan Bejune - Billy Rogan - Judy & Don Leomburno - Mark Glandville - Jack Fenton - Mark Stevens - Jill Ducat - Jim Mahoney - Amy Rumge - Heather Gregar - Kenneth Johnson - Beth Johnson - Pr. Judy L. - Gary Kaufman - Betty Jane Weagle - Valerie Cotter - Judy Sawicki - Anne Berberian - Carol Katagher - Julie Dawes - Louise Young - Elaine Peterson - David & Madeline Nevard - Lina Dickey - Courtney Cronin - Theresa Adams - JoAnn Van Dyke - Cherry Harris - Kristen Woods - Diane Ela-Lauzon

PROVISIONAL WORSHIP READINGS

The [Consultation on Common Texts \(CCT\)](#)— a joint American and Canadian ecumenical body—oversees the [Revised Common Lectionary \(RCL\)](#), a schedule of biblical passages read on Sundays and festivals in congregations of multiple denominations in North America and other parts of the world. The ELCA is one of more than 20 member denominations.

At its April 2025 meeting, CCT approved a [provisional update](#) to the RCL. This update reexamines passages of Scripture that have historically been misused to justify discrimination and violence against the Jews. This process involved extensive study and consultation with biblical experts, church historians, and liturgical leaders, including a forum with consultation and participation of Jewish scholars. The [ELCA Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Jewish Relations](#) was among the groups that offered feedback during this process that helped shape this ecumenical effort.



This proposed update is commended by the CCT to the churches for a **three-year trial period**, beginning in Advent of 2025 (Year A).



Bruce Bergman

Lois Toepfner
Stephen & Jennifer Johnson

VOICES OF FAITH



I'M A LUTHERAN: PAM LIBERDA

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Overland Park, Kan.

Executive chef and co-founder, Buck Tui BBQ; executive chef, Muni

I connected with Holy Cross before my wedding in 2005. I was raised Buddhist in Thailand, but when my husband, Ted, and I started our life together, I chose to become Lutheran, and we were married at Holy Cross.

I help with fundraising dinners to support our youth group. It's important to me because it's a meaningful way to give back through my gifts as a chef.

My church community is my support system. It's a place where I feel loved, encouraged, and like I truly belong.

At Buck Tui BBQ, Ted and I blend Kansas City-style barbecue with the Thai flavors I grew up with. I'm also executive chef at Muni, a Thai Mexican neighborhood bar and eatery in Kansas City.

Hospitality has always been at the heart of my work, and my faith continues to guide the way I serve others, both inside and outside the kitchen.

I started cooking after moving to the U.S. from Thailand in 1998 because I missed the food from home. Over time, working in my family restaurant and in professional kitchens grew into my career as an executive chef.

When I received recognition—including being named a 2023 James Beard Award semifinalist for Best Chef: Midwest, *Feast* magazine's Chef of the Year, and *The Pitch*'s Best Chef Kansas City—I felt proud and grateful. It reminded me that patience, consistency and hard work truly pay off.

Cooking keeps me connected to my heritage and roots. It's also how I show love, care and hospitality to others.

My approach as a chef is to cook with love and compassion. I want people to feel cared for and welcomed through the food I serve.

I love that my work is centered on serving others. I was a nurse in Thailand, and now I serve people through food and hospitality.

I live out my faith through service every day. I try to give back, mentor others and lead with kindness.

I love reading and listening to audiobooks. When I have time, I also enjoy cooking for my family and friends.

I pray for strength and guidance. I ask God to help me through whatever comes next in life.

I'm a Lutheran because I believe serving others in everyday life is a calling from God. My faith guides how I live, work and care for my community.

If you'd like to nominate someone for "I'm a Lutheran," email livinglutheran@elca.org.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



JOHN POTTER

John G. Potter is content editor of *Living Lutheran*. He lives in St. Paul, Minn.

**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, May 12th. 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 going to Reunion Tap & Table, 198 Worcester St., North Grafton, for lunch at 1:00, on Tuesday, May 12. Carpooling from Bethel's parking lot at 12:30 or meet us there. Signup sheet in Bethel's narthex or call Leanne Carraher at 508-335-6421. Please indicate if you plan to carpool.

"BOOKIES" Book Club

Bookies will be meeting on Monday May 18th at 2pm in the library. Please note that we are meeting a week early since the last Monday in May falls on Memorial Day. The book for discussion is "The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry" by Rachel Joyce; a novel 384 pages. This is a story about the journey of a retired man who makes a 627 mile trek across England on foot to visit a friend in Hospice to say good-bye. A novel of charm, humor and profound insight into the thoughts and feelings we all bury inside.



Come and join us for lively discussion on all our books or even just one that sparks your interest. We have snacks!



MAY BIRTHDAYS

- Calvin Barr - 05/02
- Nancy Nims-Gentry - 05/04
- Richard Henry Jr. - 05/06
- Lee Fenby - 05/10
- Annabelle Hunt - 05/12
- Judy Leombruno - 05/12
- Brian Courteau - 05/13
- Donna Hayes - 05/13
- Jennifer Courtney - 05/15
- Bruce Blomgren - 05/15
- John Chunis - 05/16
- Mirissa Bennett - 05/20
- Anita Haynes - 05/21
- Guiliana Schur - 05/22
- Nancy Sarkisian - 05/25



MAY ANNIVERSARIES

- Linda & Mark Rocheford - 05/01
- Jane Jakusik Hurd & Arno Hurd - 05/08
- Jeremy & Julie Baril - 05/14
- Jessica & Jose Caminero - 05/26
- Lisa & Roy Ferreira - 05/30

**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.



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

Food insecurity in Massachusetts has reached a record high, which has put a strain on local non-profits. While statistics show that hunger is rising statewide it has been noted that hunger is rising rapidly in the central areas, specifically in Worcester, where hunger is increasing faster than it has in previous years. Our Social Ministry/Outreach team has been involved in several initiatives that address food insecurity, including the ongoing gathering of food for the **Auburn Youth and Family Services Food Pantry**, making lunches for the **Woo Fridges** and **Worcester Fellowship** and helping raise money for the May 3rd meal packaging event through **End Hunger NE**. As the warmer weather approaches, we will be planting and tending to our **Grace Community Garden** where the vegetables harvested are distributed locally to help feed those who are food insecure. We are also working in collaboration with First Congregational Church in Auburn in bringing back the Auburn Walk for Hunger to raise money for **Auburn Youth and Family Services** and **Kateri's Kitchen**. The walk is scheduled for September 27th. We have been gathering information from folks who were part of the planning team in the past. If anyone is interested in participating in the planning of the 2026 event, please speak with Marie or Judy.

We wish to thank those who generously gave to our Lenten "Wrapped in Love" project. We collected diapers and baby wipes which were delivered and gratefully received by **Marie's Mission Diaper Outreach Program**.

The following statistics are posted on the website of **Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance**. - *"This year 2,864 people were found to be homeless in Worcester County, an all-time high and an increase of 10% from last year and 78% over the two-year period since 2023. Vulnerable people are most affected, including 1,097 children, 77 veterans, 368 chronically disabled, 2,720 people in households with extremely low income, 54 seniors 65+ years old and 25 women and children fleeing an immediate threat of domestic violence."* To help raise awareness and money for CMHA, the 41st Annual Walk to End Homelessness will take place on Sunday May 17th, 12-4 pm at Elm Park in Worcester. Please consider joining our Grace Lutheran Church team as a walker or a sponsor. We have set this year's goal at \$500. A donation may be made on our team page on the link below:

https://pro.gofundme.com/team/820307?is_new=true

On May 31st we will be making lunches for **Worcester Fellowship** for their Sunday Worship Service. If you wish to help prepare the lunches, we will be gathering in the kitchen between 9 and 9:30 that morning. We will be applying for Thrivent seed money to fund this event.

VOLUNTEERS IN OUR MIDST

Churches are LARGELY volunteer based in order to function, save for pastors, administrators, lead musicians and many-times, church treasurers.

We try to “THANK” everyone who steps up to help out, but there is always the danger of “forgetting” or “not knowing” what everyone has done.

But some people who have been perhaps “more” in the midst of upkeep recently would be:

Garret Peters and Roy Benoit who put a second coat of finish on the work begin by Adam Hanks and Jessica Caminero at Zion in the entrance-way to the narthex!

Then if you haven’t been to the balcony at Bethel recently, “WOW!”, the Bryn Mawr side entire staircase and upper room area are all fresh with paint...THANKS, Roy!

And who doesn’t like getting calls at any hour of the day or night when an alarm for water levels goes off? Jessica has been responding to the boiler room in Auburn and working with the insurance company to get a new device and set it up so not to acquire false signals.

Our coffee hour hosts each week are volunteers who provide YEAR-ROUND for our repast as we cozy-up for chatting. Our choirs are volunteers who give back all the time in lifting up our worships. Our lay leaders, Marie Sturdevant and Adam Hanks, who preside at most 8 AM services, and once a month at the 8:45 AM, are volunteers. So, are our sacristans (our lead in Auburn is LeAnn Caraher, in Worcester, Donna Hayes) working behind the scenes with communion vessels, paraments, oil-filled candles (Karen Baril-Auburn), flower placements, etc. Our property fixes (keeping up with the maintenance checklist of items), and clean-up days, mowing the lawns, etc. are also volunteer efforts, Rick Hagberg in Auburn has much to do with this alongside of Roy who take some direction from Jessica and Adam as the current property leads, in Worcester Donna and Jennifer Courtney are on tap. Our visitation team, Marie and Jackie Walsh, are volunteers, as are our Outreach/Social Ministry people that include Judy Sampson and others. Our Sunday School staff, Kate Valleli and Jessica, are volunteers, as are our management (Council) and finance teams. Pam Sutton oversees our medical equipment, such as AED, and its functioning

THANK YOU to everybody who might have been missed in this listing, but know that you are ALL MUCH APPRECIATED!!!



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10AM to 12PM**

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**Address: 90 Bryn Mawr Ave.
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Contact us
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Grace Notes - May 2026



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 Toepfner**, 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
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