

Grace Lutheran



Yoked parish of faith and service: Bethel & Zion

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

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NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 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 OCTOBER MIND

What does October bring to mind for you?

Banter can turn to pumpkin spice lattes, thoughts focus on Oktoberfest happenings, building excitement over the football season, intentionality stocking up for wood and pellet stove uses and in filling up oil and propane tanks against the cooler weather.

...and Halloween!

Lutheran pastors, though, generally think of Reformation when the topic of October is brought up; the time when the church recalls the Spirit inspiring The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther (the original) in discovering through the work of Saint Paul the line, *For **by Grace** you have been saved **through faith**, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast.* (Ephesians 2:8-9). This brought home to Lutheran the fact abuse in holding sin and death over people's heads in getting them to give their monies and commitment to the Roman Church of the day, threatening "hellfire and damnation" if they did not participate on the church's terms! Luther correctly found the focus of Jesus' work in revealing God's Essence of Grace and Mercy, pervasive forgiveness and distributive justice and equity!

Each of us as people of faith are called to accountability with Jesus' teaching that saves us from being overrun by the secular world and it's chaos. The question to consider each day is, "Am I treating each person with respect, offering support in times of need, never taking advantage of a person or a situation, never thinking of myself as better than anyone else (no matter how irked I might be...), am I always inclined towards distributive justice and equity?"

In every generation one finds abuses against people's rights and well-being, just as Martin Luther found in his day. But he was 'on fire' and couldn't help but work to change things.

Are we on "fire" and what does that look like?

Everybody's make-up is different, one of the great blessings from God is that we aren't all the same! For example, some people feel obliged to show up to a demonstration because they feel strongly about some issue. Others don't find that works for them, but may "protest" another way; such as if the angst is against a company taking advantage of a group or just people in general, they might refuse to purchase any product the company makes, or advise their financial consultant not to invest with them.

And, if any of us are 'on fire' over some situation it is important to discuss (*not* debate) it with people we trust in order to air-out our feelings; it helps us to de-stress, while in the process those listening to us may likely share their thoughts and it could give us a new perspective and help us to grow our selves.

When the Reformation took place, the handling of the challenge to the abuses by the church wasn't done well and led to the Peasant's War before a calming took place, and eventually the church in Luther's name began to form. When we remember the Reformation, this is something we need take to heart so not to cause great harm to any person and group if we feel obliged to stand up for a perceived wrong.

As we celebrate the Reformation, let us be thankful that amidst the contentiousness which Luther's call-out of the church stirred up, how the Spirit brought about a calming of hearts and moved a good thing to come out of it all; the climate for change with the Spirit leading reformed concepts more in-line with Jesus' original teaching and doing away with abuses against believers.

And, yes, we will hold an Oktoberfest on Reformation Day in the hall in Auburn as we also recognize our two young people being confirmed at the 10:30 AM service! Perhaps there might also be pumpkin lattes... ☺

Solo Dei Gloria,

Pastor Andrew



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Amelia McKinney - 10/01
Ken Johnson - 10/03
Don Leombruno - 10/06
Lisa Gagne - 10/07
Ann Hanks - 10/18
Larry Stidsen - 10/18
Cathy Bergman - 10/25
Dave Spinner - 10/26
Marlene Ekstrand - 10/27
Jill Ducat - 10/29
Julie Bowen - 10/29
Mark Rocheford - 10/31
Miranda Courteau - 10/31

PRAYER LIST

Donald Tremblay - Rose Marie Faragoli - Donna Brunnell - Russ Terrien - Sandy Staples - Jim Mooney - Karen Carlson - Judy Garneau - Paul Josephson - Edla Bloom - Steve Hynes - Peter Kosciusko - Tony Genga - Henry Lewis - Glenna Brownell - Lois Kane - Billy Rogan - 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 - Anne Berberian - Carol Katagher - Julie Dawes - Louise Young - Elaine Peterson - David Nevard - Paul Velleli - Lina Dickey - Courtney Cronin - Theresa Adams - Cherry Harris - Kristen Woods - Diane Ela-Lauzon - Alan Wiinikka - Mark - Misty Johnson - Peter Karl - Nancy & Paul Cater - Shirley Connor - Sheela Fisher - Bill - Judy Maritz - Stormy - Christine Miller - Tiggy White - Jackie Blais - Lisa Johnson - Jackson - Kathryn Sirven - Lisa Morrissey - Judy Call

**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, October 13th. 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 on Tuesday, October 13, at 1:00, at Scruffy Murphy's, 638 Chandler Street., Worcester. Carpooling from Bethel's parking lot at 12:30 or meet us there. Signup sheet in Bethel's narthex or call Leanne Carragher at 508-335-6421. Please indicate if you plan to carpool.

"BOOKIES" Book Club

Bookies next meeting will be Monday October 26th @ 2pm in the library. We will be discussing "Klara and the Sun" by Kazuo Ishiguro; a dystopian, science fiction story set in the U.S. at an unspecified future follows Klara, "Artificial Friend"(AF) with high observational skills. The story explores what it means to love and be human and the wonderful mysterious nature of the heart. 303 pages





OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

Kevin & Lisa Ratcliffe - 10/04
Gus & Timberly Frick - 10/06
Don & Ann Hanks - 10/08
Leanne & Thom Carraher - 10/09
Bethann & Rudy Valentine - 10/11
Michelle & Thomas Chunis - 10/19
Richard & Tina Henry Jr. - 10/30

BISHOP'S CONVOCATION

Each fall, Synod's hold a convocation where rostered leaders can gather. Ours is October 5th-7th.

Time is set forth for group presentation and discussion around ministry in both parish settings and the world.

A keynote speaker typically attends, this year we are blessed to have The Rev. Dr. Imad Haddah, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Holy Land with us!

Please pray for safe travels and blessed conversation and time together for our New England Synod leadership!

I will be a commuting attendee as time permits during those days.

GREENDALE ECUMENICAL – ADULT STUDIES

Our online series upon Zoom will restart on Tuesday, October 6th for 7 PM.

First, we will be looking at the INTERFAITH AFTERLIVES OF JESUS. The book of the same name, from Westar Institute, will help guide our understanding for the impact of Jesus' ministry still resonating in the world today.

Look for the Zoom link in our weekly Grace Lutheran E-NOTES.

Dismas House

Dinner meal will not be served at Dismas for the months of November/December. Regularly scheduled last Friday of the month meals are not served these 2 months since they fall the day after Thanksgiving & Christmas. Most of the folks at Dismas return home to their families for the holiday weekends.

However, there are still week nights open during these 2 busy months if anyone would like to serve. Dismas family always welcome simple meals but more importantly people from the community to share a meal with them. For more information contact Vinny & Jackie Walsh



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.

OCTOBERFEST/REFORMATION CELEBRATION! SAVE THE DATE!!

On Reformation Sunday, October 25, the Grace Lutheran Sunday School will host a Reformation & Oktoberfest celebration. This year's Reformation Celebration will also recognize the Confirmation of Chase Hunt and Mira Valleli! Join us in Voosen Hall after our 10:30AM worship service for pretzels and beer cheese, brats, sauerkraut, and desserts! All are welcome!

Good Will Offering proceeds will support the Sunday School's annual gifting event benefiting area children in need of holiday cheer. We thank you in advance for your support of this community wide gift drive organized by Auburn Youth and Family Services.

See the sign-up sheet in the narthex locations to let us know if you will be attending so that we have enough "fare" for everyone to enjoy!



ELCA — Charbel Zgheib, pastor of Our Lady of Salam in Staten Island, N.Y., leads worship at the new Arabic-speaking worshipping community's launch on Aug. 15.

By: Joan Pinnell|

September 16, 2026

LIVING LUTHERAN - LIVING FAITHFULLY

A CHURCH THAT SOUNDS LIKE HOME

Arabic-language ELCA community launches in Staten Island, N.Y.

When families crossed a bridge and paid tolls every Sunday to worship in Arabic, Charbel Zgheib noticed.

As pastor of Salam Arabic Church in Brooklyn, N.Y., Zgheib met families who had relocated to Staten Island, N.Y., but continued returning for Sunday worship. Three or four families regularly made the trip, he said, while Arab businesses and grocery stores were opening on Staten Island and more families were finding the borough an affordable alternative to Brooklyn.

Zgheib was hearing from another group too: listeners to Salam Radio Station, the Arabic-language Christian radio ministry he launched earlier this year from Christ Lutheran Church on Staten Island.

“Why don’t you hold worship services on Staten Island?” he recalled listeners asking. “It’s closer to us.”

Khader Khalilia, program director for ELCA Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries, had been seeing the need too.

“For several years, I have prayed that there would be an Arabic-speaking worshipping community on Staten Island,” said Khalilia, a member of the ELCA Ministries of Diverse Cultures and Communities team. “As Arab families moved from Brooklyn, Queens and other parts of New York City, and as new immigrants made Staten Island their home, the need became increasingly clear.”

Zgheib’s response was launching Our Lady of Salam, an Arabic-language worshipping community sharing space with Christ Lutheran. That relationship is intended to be more than shared space: the two communities are exploring what it means to share ministry, prayer and Christian witness while maintaining their distinct cultural identities.

After two preliminary services drew about 60 to 70 people, the community officially celebrated its beginning Aug. 15, on the feast of Mary, Mother of God. More than 100 people attended, Zgheib said, bringing traditional dishes from their countries of origin to share.

Worship was primarily in Arabic, with a bilingual Arabic-English program allowing non-Arabic speakers to follow along and helping younger people who may speak the language but not read it fluently.

Khalilia called Our Lady of Salam “a beautiful expression of the church meeting people where they are,” offering a place to worship, belong and pass on faith to the next generation.

“IT FEELS LIKE A NEW PENTECOST”

Those attending Our Lady of Salam come from Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and other Christian traditions. “The thing that gathers them here is the Arabic language, because they want to worship in Arabic,” Zgheib said.

That ecumenical character extends into the surrounding community. Wolfgang Laudert, pastor of Christ Lutheran, said neighboring Roman Catholic and Coptic Orthodox Christians have welcomed the launch of Our Lady of Salam.

“In so many ways, we are embodying and witnessing to the whole church what it means and looks like to be church together,” he said. “It feels like a new Pentecost!”

Christ Lutheran, he added, receives the worshiping community and Zgheib “as a gift, as Christ in our midst.”

Though Our Lady of Salam is an ELCA community, its worship incorporates practices familiar across Middle Eastern Christian traditions, while maintaining its Lutheran theology and liturgy.

There are icons and incense. Zgheib bakes bread for communion rather than using wafers. Hymns honoring Mary draw from Catholic and Orthodox traditions and helped inspire Our Lady of Salam’s name.

He describes liturgy as something people can “feel, can touch, can smell, can see,” connecting worshipers with cultural and spiritual memories while exposing others to traditions they may not know.

“This is how we evolve with people,” Zgheib said, adding that worship should be “culturally sensitive to people” while preserving essential theological and liturgical elements.

For many immigrants, belonging to a church can extend beyond Sunday worship to rebuilding community after leaving behind family, familiar churches and social networks. Our Lady of Salam seeks to provide a spiritual home where cultural identity and faith can coexist.

“In so many ways, we are embodying and witnessing to the whole church what it means and looks like to be church together.”

Zgheib is developing a Sunday school, youth group and women’s group. Five committees provide opportunities to participate in spiritual life, outreach and digital ministry, stewardship, operations, and coordination with Christ Lutheran.

The structure is intentional. Zgheib doesn’t want the community to depend entirely on its pastor. “I’m creating a system that if I leave, it’s not for me,” he said. “I’m creating leaders.”

For Zgheib, that process begins with a question: Do you belong?

He isn’t referring to denomination. He wants those who call Our Lady of Salam home to see themselves not simply as attendees but as participants in sustaining the community.

“We belong to this community,” he said. “We pray together and worship together as one Christian family, rooted in the Lutheran tradition and enriched by the diverse traditions our people bring with them with a deeply ecumenical spirit.”

That sense of belonging is particularly important as the new community faces one of its most complicated challenges: sustainability.

“WHAT IS THE CHURCH ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR ITS PEOPLE?”

Zgheib has come to recognize a cultural difference that can be mistaken for an unwillingness to support the church.

Many American Christian congregations operate on a familiar model: members pledge, tithe and donate, and those contributions sustain the congregation’s staff, worship, buildings and ministries. Giving can create a sense of shared ownership.

“[Members feel that] ‘This is my church—I’m putting part of my money’” into it, Zgheib said, describing the model.

But many Middle Eastern immigrants grew up with a different relationship to the institutional church. “Back home in the Middle East, churches have power, and they have money, and people were poor,” Zgheib said.

Churches may operate large institutions and social ministries that assist people who need food, housing or other support. The flow of resources is often understood as moving from the church to the people. That understanding doesn’t necessarily disappear after immigration.

Our Lady of Salam is building a congregation while introducing some members to an unfamiliar model of congregational stewardship.

For some worshippers, Zgheib said, the question isn’t “What should I give my church?” but “What is the church able to provide for its people?”

Visible signs of the wider church’s resources—buildings, institutions, synods and other structures—can further complicate efforts to explain why a small local ministry needs support from its members. Our Lady of Salam is therefore building a congregation while introducing some members to an unfamiliar model of congregational stewardship.

Zgheib is careful not to make that relationship transactional. He doesn’t charge parishioners for marriages or funerals. Instead, he strives to connect stewardship with transparency, trust and belonging.

Giving doesn’t always mean money. Members can teach Sunday school, volunteer or help develop ministries. “I want them to take ownership of this ministry,” Zgheib said, “so that they feel that, ‘Oh, this is our ministry. We decide what we need.’”

MORE THAN ONE WAY

Our Lady of Salam joins Salam Arabic Church in Brooklyn and Salam Radio Station as interconnected parts of Zgheib’s ministry. The three ministries, which make up Salam Ministries, represent different expressions of the same mission: a historic congregation in Brooklyn, an emerging worshipping community on Staten Island and a digital ministry capable of reaching Arabic-speaking Christians far beyond either location.

Together, they offer several points of entry into a community centered on Arabic language and worship.

But this model requires resources. Our Lady of Salam is simultaneously providing worship, developing leaders, establishing programs, building trust and cultivating a model of stewardship among people who may have arrived with a different understanding of how churches are sustained.

For the wider church, understanding ministries such as Our Lady of Salam may require looking beyond familiar measures of participation and giving. An immigrant congregation can be doing the work of evangelism, cultural preservation, leadership development and community building while still developing the financial practices established congregations may take for granted.

Zgheib knows the question of sustainability can’t be avoided. “We need to speak the truth as well,” he said. “Church is not always about money, yet we have a huge challenge for sustainability.”

For now, he seeks to build that sustainability through belonging—one volunteer, leader, family and act of stewardship at a time.

And the invitation remains simple: “Ahlan wa sahlan (أهلاً وسهلاً).”

Welcome.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - JOAN PINNELL

Joan Pinnell is a communications consultant for the ELCA Ministries of Diverse Cultures and Communities team.

GENERAL WEEKLY CALENDAR

Grace Lutheran Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9 AM – 3 PM

Gateways Academy: Monday – Friday, 6 AM – 5:30 PM

MONDAYS

10 AM - Knit Wits (Knitting Group) @ *Bethel campus*

Last week of the month **2 PM** - "Bookies" BOOK CLUB @ Library, Bethel

6:30 PM – Auburn Festival Choir @ Bethel Nave

TUESDAYS

Second Weeks **1 PM** – Dine-Out-Ladies

2:30 – 4 PM – Pastoral Office Hours @ McDonalds, Auburn

Second Weeks **6 PM** - Men's Group Dinner @ Voosen Hall, Bethel

Beginning 10/6 **7 PM** – Ecumenical Adult Studies @ Zoom

Watch for series info and login in upcoming weekly E-NOTES

WEDNESDAYS

NOON – Grace Café Meal @ Palmer Room, Zion

Refer to series info **2 PM** – Adult Study Series @ Bethel Library

5:15 PM – Worship @ Bethel Nave, Pr. Andrew

2nd & 4th Weeks **6:30 PM** – Confirmation @ Bethel Library

THURSDAYS

2:30 – 4 PM – Pastoral Office Hours @ Park Avenue Panera, Worcester

5:15 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal @ Bethel Voosen Hall

6:45 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal @ Bethel Choir Room

7:30 PM - Recovery Group, Voosen Hall, Bethel

FRIDAYS

Last week of month **5:30 PM** – Serving Evening Meal @ Dismas House, Worcester

See Jackie Walsh for details

SATURDAYS

9 AM - Recovery Group @ Voosen Hall, Bethel

SUNDAYS

8 AM – Worship @ Bethel Nave, Adam Hanks

8:45 AM – @ Zion Nave, Pr. Andrew

9:30 AM – Sunday School: pre-K thru Grade 6 @ Bethel campus

10:30 AM – Worship @ Bethel Nave, Pr. Andrew

11:45 AM - Coffee Hour @ Voosen Hall, Bethel

Grace Lutheran Church, NES, ELCA

Proposed STATEMENT OF FAITH before Parish Council at this time.

Welcome to our yoked parish of faith! Our two congregations are an intentionally Grace-oriented collection of people from all walks of life who seek discernment of God's intention for our lives that help mend, and weave together, the fabric of God's Kingdom on this earth.

We worship and give praise to God, from which came forth the Cosmos and all of Creation, Who deemed all that was made "good", including humanity made in *Their* (God's) own image. Jesus, as the *Logos* of God, present from before Creation in this current epoch of time, the Spirit as intercessor and God as Chief Architect and Engineer, represent Grace and Mercy through Love and distributive justice as the Essence of the Divine.

Our parish focus is upon continuing enlightenment, lived-out witness by Grace, led by the Wisdom of God, manifest in the person of Jesus, by the Power of the Spirit, understanding Jesus' saving act was in accepting time in human form to love us (humanity) from the "inside out" into our best selves; his resurrection after crucifixion proving the Power of God available to save each of us from ourselves and chaos!

We represent a heterodoxy of tradition; grounded in (as the ELCA lifts up in her Constitutional structure) the inspired Word present within the biblical canon and discovered through the *lens* of Christ (Grace and Mercy), while *also* fully respecting science as helpful in confirming and revealing truths regarding God's Presence and guiding "hand" in and through all things.

Therefore, we accept the Phoenix Affirmations as a covenant of practice in the current age, expanding upon the Ten Commandments from Sinai, and emphasizing inclusion of all peoples into the family of God who practice faith in the One from whom all things have their being.

Affirmation 1: Walking fully in the path of Jesus, without denying the legitimacy of other paths God may provide for humanity.

Affirmation 2: Listening for God's Word which comes through daily prayer and meditation, through studying the ancient testimonies which we call Scripture, and through attending to God's present activity in the world.

Affirmation 3: Celebrating the God whose Spirit pervades and whose glory is reflected in all of God's Creation, including the earth and its ecosystems, the sacred and secular, the Christian and non-Christian, the human and non-human.

Affirmation 4: Expressing our love in worship that is as sincere, vibrant, and artful as it is scriptural.

Affirmation 5: Engaging people authentically, as Jesus did, treating all as creations made in God's very image, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, nationality, or economic class.

Affirmation 6: Standing, as Jesus does, with the outcast and oppressed, the denigrated and afflicted, seeking peace and justice with or without the support of others.

Affirmation 7: Preserving religious freedom and the Church's ability to speak prophetically to government by resisting the commingling of Church and State.

Affirmation 8: Walking humbly with God, acknowledging our own shortcomings while honestly seeking to understand and call forth the best in others, including those who consider us their enemies.

Affirmation 9: Basing our lives on the faith that, in Christ, all things are made new, and that we, and all people, are loved beyond our wildest imagination — for eternity.

Affirmation 10: Claiming the sacredness of both our minds and our hearts, recognizing that faith and science, doubt and belief serve the pursuit of truth.

Affirmation 11: Caring for our bodies, and insisting on taking time to enjoy the benefits of prayer, reflection, worship and recreation in addition to work.

Affirmation 12: Acting on the faith that we are born with a meaning and purpose; a vocation and ministry that serves to strengthen and extend God's realm of love.



Weekly Worship: *Wednesdays 5:30 PM (B), Sundays 8 AM (B), 8:45 AM (Z), 10:30 AM (B)*

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
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Randy Bloom – Minister of Music

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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