Grace Lutheran

Yoked parish of faith and service: *Bethel & Zion*

Love is spoken here! Be the living Eucharist!



3rd Sunday before Advent

November 8th, 2026

10:30 AM Bethel

All who honor the Spirit of Grace are welcome!

The altars of this parish belong to God, and not to us. *All* people are welcome to participate in every aspect of our worship, including our open table for the Eucharist. We are honored by your presence this day and hope you find peace and refreshment as we celebrate the extravagant love of God, as followers of *the Way* of Jesus.

We live into the ongoing revelation of Jesus! There is a place for you, here!

We Gather

The Holy Spirit calls us in community as people of the Way.

PRELUDE

The congregation stands

GREETING

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all!
And also with you!

GATHERING HYMN *You Are Holy* ELW (red book) 525

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Let us pray; O God of justice and Love, You illumine our way through life with the words of Your Son. Give us the Light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord**.** ***Amen!***

The congregation is seated

We listen to God's Word

God speaks to us in poetry, creative writing, scripture*, preaching & song.*

A READING FROM HEBREW SCRIPTURE *(Tanakh)*: Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-16 from the *NRSVUE**

Wisdom is part of the structure of the universe and is easily accessible to those who want to find her. Wisdom actually seeks people out. People who are wise are free from care.

12 Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and she is easily discerned by those who love her and is found by those who seek her.

13 She hastens to make herself known to those who desire her.

14 One who rises early to seek her will have no difficulty, for she will be found sitting at the gate.

15 To fix one's thought on her is perfect understanding, and one who is vigilant on her account will soon be free from care,

16 because she goes about seeking those worthy of her, and she graciously appears to them in their paths and meets them in every thought.

Response Word of God, Word of life! ***Thanks be to God!***

PSALM 70 read responsively

1 Hasten, O God, to save me; come quickly, LORD, to help me.
2 May those who want to take my life be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin be turned back in disgrace.
3 May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!" turn back because of their shame.
4 But may all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;
may those who long for Your saving help always say, "The LORD is great!"
5 But as for me, I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God.
You are my help and my deliverer; LORD, do not delay.

The assembly stands to welcome our resurrected Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION ELW pg. 151

Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

Preface Hear now the gospel of our Lord! ***Glory to you, O Lord!***

A READING FROM THE GOSPELS: John 15:9-17 from the *Message**

9-10 "I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you'll remain intimately at home in my love. That's what I've done—kept my Father's commands and made myself at home in his love.

11-15 "I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father.

16 "You didn't choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won't spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you.

17 "But remember the root command: Love one another.

Response The gospel of our Lord! ***Praise to you, O Christ!***

COLLECT

Let us pray; God, our refuge and strength, bring near the day when wars shall cease and poverty and pain shall end, that earth may know the peace of heaven through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen!***

The congregation is seated

MESSAGE *Pastor Andrew*

The congregation stands

HYMN OF THE DAY *Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart* ELW 800

The congregation is seated

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us declare our faith in God.

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his Love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with Power from on high.
We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

United with the great cloud of witnesses, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

You create and sustain the earth's natural rhythms so that all life might thrive. Show us the Wisdom and wonder of nature's balance; make us careful stewards of our common home. God of Grace,

Holy One, hear our prayer.

You make justice roll down in all places and among all nations. Encourage all who protect vulnerable communities and help rebuild in the aftermath of conflict (*especially Lutheran Disaster Response*). Uphold veterans and those who care for them. God of Grace,

Holy One, hear our prayer.

You hasten to heal our wounds and make whole what is broken. Comfort individuals facing a difficult diagnosis, receiving palliative care, or facing uncertain treatment options. (*We pray especially for . . .*) God of Grace,

Holy One, hear our prayer.

You give rest to weary hearts and bodies. As the days grow shorter in the north, help us to move more slowly and intentionally through our days, honoring the need for quiet and stillness. God of Grace,

Holy One, hear our prayer.

You welcome those who have come before us in faith into the joys of heaven. Sustain us by Your Grace and guide us into the promise of everlasting life. God of Grace,

Holy One, hear our prayer.

Lord of the church:

hear our prayer, and make us one in heart and mind to serve You with joy for ever. Amen.

The congregation stands

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

The gospel calls us to turn away from our errors known as sin and instead be faithful to Christ. As we offer ourselves to him in penitence and faith, we renew our confidence and trust in his Mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Father eternal, giver of Light and Grace, we have sinned against You and against our neighbor, in what we have thought, in what we have said and done, through ignorance, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault.

We have wounded Your Love, and marred Your image in us.

We are sorry and ashamed, and repent of all our sins.

For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, forgive us all that is past; and lead us out from darkness to walk as children of Light. Amen.

May almighty God have Mercy on *us*, forgive *us our* sins, and bring *us* to everlasting life, through ☩ Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

THE PEACE The peace of the Lord be with us always! ***And also with you!***

The congregation is seated

We share in God's Holy Communion

God feeds us with the risen Christ's presence!

GATHERING OF GIFTS *choir*

The congregation stands

OFFERTORY ELW 182

As the gifts of bread, wine, and currency are brought forward, the assembly stands.

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.
Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u-nite them with the prayers we offer now.
Grace our ta-ble with Your Pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Let us pray: Eternal God, our time, talents, and treasures are gifts from You. Receive what we offer, and all that You entrust to us, until hungry no more, all the world is fed, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. ***Amen!***

The congregation is seated

PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

There is a place for you at the table of God. Come, receive the food that does not perish, a taste of life eternal.

LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

The Lord be with you! ***And also with you!*** Open up your hearts! ***We open them up to the Lord!***
Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God! ***It is right to give God thanks and praise!***

Most Merciful Lord, Your Love compels us to come in. Our hands have been unclean, our hearts are not fully prepared; we are not fit even to eat the crumbs from under Your table. But You, Lord, are the God of our salvation, and share Your bread with sinners.

So, cleanse and feed us with the precious body and blood of Your Son, that he may live in us and we in him; and that we, with the whole company of Christ, may sit and eat in Your kingdom.

☩ On his last night with the disciples…☩

We pray You, Gracious God, to send Your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the sacrament of the body of Christ and his blood of the new covenant. Unite us to Your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable in Your sight, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under Your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all Your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of Your daughters and sons; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is Yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. ***Amen.***

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION God's holy gifts for God's holy people!

Jesus Christ is holy! Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!

AGNUS DEI (*Lamb of God)* ELW pg. 154

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

THE EUCHARIST

Bread is distributed to the hand by the pastor, individual pre-filled cups of grape juice or wine may be taken from the silver trays: the inner-most ring on each tray is the grape juice.

A gluten-free alternative is available from the Assisting Minister.

Believing in the real presence of Christ, Grace practices open-table, Eucharistic hospitality.
All people, baptized or not, are welcomed to The Meal.

Those who do not wish to commune may come forward for a blessing signified by crossed arms.

COMMUNION HYMN ELW 484

POST EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Let us pray: God of peace, whose Son Jesus Christ proclaimed the kingdom and restored the broken to wholeness of life: look with compassion on the anguish of the world, and by Your healing Power make whole both people and nations; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. ***Amen.***

We go out to serve God

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The congregation stands

BLESSING

The holy Trinity,
Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless us with Wisdom to welcome the reign of God,
today and always. ***Amen.***

SENDING HYMN *Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing* ELW 545

DISMISSAL Go out in joy and be led forth in peace! ***Thanks be to God!***

POSTLUDE

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*Scripture translations are in the public domain and sourced through http://www.biblegateway.com

Ecumenical Adult Study Series

Restarting on Tuesday Evening, October 6th for 7 AM via Zoom

Interfaith Afterlives of Jesus – Jesus in Global Perspective 2

The book of the same name will be our guide and may be obtained through Westar Institute, or just join in the conversations with people from our ecumenical partners online!

Adult Courses Fall '26

Wednesdays, 2 PM Library, Bethel Campus

Beginning October 14th

Exploring the sometimes "dark" moments of life and finding God still present, moving us towards something new.

Reference book:

Gifts of the Dark Wood, Eric Elnes, 2015, Abingdon Press

IN OUR PRAYERS: Donald Tremblay, Rose Marie Faragoli, Donna Brunnell, Russ Terrien, Sandy Staples, Jim Mooney, Judy Garneau, Paul Josephson, Edla Bloom, Steve Hynes, Peter Kosciusko, Tony Genga, Henry Lewis, Glenna Brownell, Billy Rogan, Mark Glandville, Jack Fenton, Mark Stevens, Jill Ducat, Jim Mahoney, Tami Briggs, Amy Runge, Heather Gregar, Kenneth Johnson, Lois Kane, Beth Johnson, Pr. Judy L., Gary Kaufman, Betty Jane Weagle, Valerie Cotter, Anne Berberian, Carol Katagher. Julie Dawes, Elaine Peterson, David Nevard, Louise Young, 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, Karen Carlson, Christine Miller, Tiggy White, Jackie Blais, Lisa Johnson, Judy Leombruno, Jackson, Kathryn Sirven, Lisa Morrissey, Dave Sutton, Miriam Bove, Michael Muenter, Michael Ames

Music for November 8, 2026

Prelude: "Praise be Almighty God" by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Postlude: "Fugue in G major" by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Anthem: "Now Let Us All Praise God and Sing" by Gordon Young (1919-1998)

Today's Music: The prelude and postlude are compositions for organ by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). The postlude is one of eight short fugues from *Eight Little Preludes and Fugues* considered to be "teaching" compositions for Bach's many musical children. The anthem, "Now Let Us All Praise God and Sing," is by American organist and composer, Gordon Young (1919-1998). Born in Kansas, Young graduated from Southwestern College (Kansas) and later studied at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia with Alexander McCurty (1905-1983).



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22nd – 3 PM

INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Sponsored by The Greendale Ecumenical Group

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH of WORCESTER, 1070 PLEASANT STREET

Massed choir, prayers of Thanksgiving by participating religious faith leaders, hymns, participative prayer, various other musical offerings followed by fellowship and desserts.

PROPOSED **STATEMENT OF FAITH – to be ratified by vote on Sunday, November 8th**

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 [*the Way*] of Jesus, without denying the legitimacy of other paths [*faith expressions*] 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.

Grace Lutheran

Yoked parish of faith and service: Bethel & Zion

Weekly Worships: ***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

grace-lutheran-elca.org

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

Marie Sturdevant, Adam Hanks – Lay Worship Leaders: NES Lay School of Theology: Auburn 8 AM, Worcester 2nd Sundays

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 Virginia Carlson, (Z), Adam Hanks (B), Donna Hayes (Z)***

Worcester Campus - **Zion Lutheran**
41 Whitmarsh Avenue, 01606

Auburn Campus - **Bethel Lutheran**
90 Bryn Mawr Avenue, 01501

ReconcilingWorks
LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION

NST
Refugee Accompaniment

Outreach

FRIDGE OOM

Grace Lutheran Café

LWF

JOURNEY FORWARD

ELCA