



Vol. 57 June/July 2026

VOICE OF GRACE

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

Our VBS theme this summer is RainForest Falls: Exploring the Nature of God. The rainforest is a spectacular setting for discovery. These forests are among the most vital ecosystems on Earth, hosting a diverse and unique tapestry of plants and wildlife. From the vast Amazon, the Congo Basin and the islands of Southeast Asia, these forests are a refuge for life—rich, restorative, and sustaining.

Yet, they are also mysterious. They hold secrets of flora and fauna yet to be discovered. They are vast, growing, and deep. Did you know, for instance, that a significant portion of the Amazon rainforest remains unexplored? It is estimated that less than 5% of the Amazon’s plant species have been studied in depth. There is so much about our rainforests that we simply don’t know!

We know God, because He reveals Himself to us. Yet God can also be mysterious—someone we hear about but cannot see with our eyes. So we might ask: who is God and how do I get to know Him better?

The rainforest is a perfect place for kids to explore the nature of God. Faith takes root as kids discover that God is a loving Father who knows everything about them. Together, we’ll discover

what it means to be rooted in relationship with God, the creator and refuge in life’s storms.

One of our core values at Grace is Divine Connection. We understand that our Heavenly Father has uniquely crafted each person in His image for a personal relationship with Him. He actively seeks that relationship with us. This means that though God can, at times, seem mysterious, He also makes Himself known to us in Jesus. We come to understand His nature because Jesus came to dwell among us.

This summer’s VBS program is an opportunity to help connect kids to Jesus. Whether serving through crafts, snacks, games, or praising God during opening and closing worship, we will help children explore the nature of God by connecting them to Jesus. The same is true of every ministry at Grace Lutheran Church and School. Through worship, fellowship, education, and outreach, we are here to connect people to Jesus and help all people explore the nature of God through Him.

Each Sunday in June, our worship services will follow the VBS stories as all of us discover the character of our great God.

Please keep our children, volunteers, and families in your prayers this summer as we share the love of Jesus through VBS. We also invite you to join us on the journey through Rainforest Falls!

- Pastor Steve Braun

Dear Grace Family,

With June upon us, I'm faced with the prospect of leaving here and going back to seminary. It's hard to believe that a full year has just about gone by since I came to you! Now, as I look back over the past year, I am filled with immense gratitude. I truly could not have asked for a better vicarage congregation. I hit the vicarage jackpot! Despite coming to you as a stranger, I feel I am leaving as family. I will forever remember and cherish my time with all of you, looking fondly upon all the memories I've made over the past year. I have been so blessed!

I pray you have enjoyed your time with me as much as I have enjoyed my time with you. You loved me for who I am, celebrating the highs and the growth that has occurred. Of all that I've experienced, I will miss the relationships I have formed with you the most. You are caring and loving, and I have enjoyed getting to know you and learning from you.

Thank you for your faithful ministry to Christ's Kingdom and for all you have meant to me this past year! This is a special place, and I know that God is moving here at Grace and working through every one of you. May you stay rooted in Christ and continue to be a blessing to future vicars!

God's Richest Blessings,
Vicar Stephen Moore



Farewell Reception for Vicar Stephen Moore

Sunday, June 14

Trinity Hall

between worship services

Please join us as we bid farewell to Vicar Stephen

Voice of Grace is published monthly by Grace Lutheran Church 327 Avenue C SE Winter Haven, FL 33880 www.glwh.org

CHURCH PHONE:
863-293-8447

SENIOR PASTOR
Charles Reich

ASSOCIATE PASTOR
Steven Braun

VICAR
Harrison Hulse

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR
Sharon Wilson

MEDIA ADMINISTRATOR
Peggy Jo Griffin

FINANCE ADMINISTRATOR
Carrie Beckwith

DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP ARTS
Thomas Schulteis

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
Casey Billman

MEMBERSHIP/ OUTREACH
Michelle Reddick

FACILITIES MANAGER
Alan Baker

OFFICE ASSISTANT
Linda Aceto

SCHOOL PHONE:
863-293-9744

PRE-SCHOOL PHONE:
863-299-9186

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL MINISTRY
Michael Rottmann

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
Jon Peterson

MIDDLE SCHOOL DEAN
Jacob McGee

PS-5 PRINCIPAL
Aleah Hearn

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Susie Woods

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE
Gillian McIntee

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Christie Thompson

Stephen Ministry

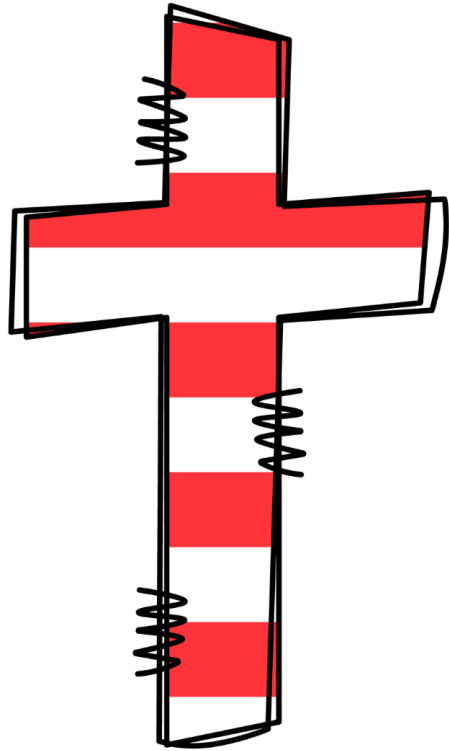


Stephen Ministry at Grace is an extension of the pastoral offices which brings one-on-one ministry by trained, caring members who extend Christ's healing love to those who are lonely, grieving, ill or experiencing other crises or stresses in life.

Stephen Ministers are there:

- **after** the phone call you hoped you'd never get.
- **after** the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you've held at bay come crashing in on you.
- **after** the relationship falls apart and the bottom falls out of your life.
- **after** the doctors says, "I'm sorry, but there's nothing more we can do."
- **after** the nursing home director shakes your hand and says, "Welcome to your new home."
- **after** the last child honks the horn, waves, and drives away - and the house suddenly seems empty.
- **after** the gavel comes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.
- **after** the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.
- **after** you find a pink slip with your final paycheck.
- **after** your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Since 1979, Grace Lutheran Church has trained over 200 Stephen Ministers and they, in turn, have helped over 800 hurting souls. Please contact Sharon Wilson at 863-293-8447.



Love our Nation Sunday Celebration

Sunday, July 5th, 2026

8:30am - Grace Neighborhood Prayer Walk

9:00am - Food, Fellowship & Activities

10:00am - Worship Begins Outside

(Dedication of the New Walkway/Canopy)

10:20am - Worship Continues Inside

Note that there is no Saturday worship & please wear comfortable, casual wear appropriate for the day.



Personal Mission Statements

Join a **Personal Mission Statement Group** and spend six weeks prayerfully discovering how your gifts, passions, experiences, and faith come together in God's mission for your life.



SCRIPTURE

Root your mission in God's truth.



REFLECTION

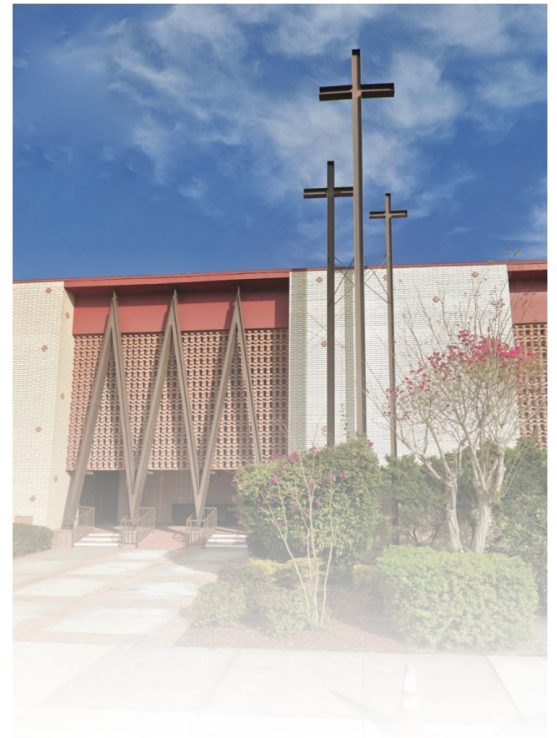
Discover your gifts, passions, and story.



COMMUNITY

Share, listen, and grow together in faith.

Whether you are new to the process or revisiting your mission statement with fresh perspective, this journey is designed to help you live with greater **purpose, clarity and intentionality**.



Signup or reach out for more information by contacting **Pastor Steve** or **Michelle Reddick** in the church office.

Our Stock,
Your **Mission**



Come pray with us at the...

SCHOOL CAMPUS PRAYER VIGIL

Bless every classroom.

Encourage every teacher.

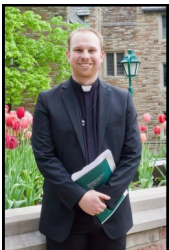
Pray for every student.

August 4th at 5:30pm

(Meet in the Sanctuary)



Grace Lutheran Church Sunshine Club News



Thursday, June 4 - Vicar Stephen Moore Appreciation Luncheon

FAREWELL LUNCH 11:00 AM Trinity Hall-Gathering; Lunch at 11:30 AM, Potluck – Bring a side dish to share. Fried chicken and dessert provided. Cards and well wishes are always welcome.



Thursday, July 2nd 11-11:30 AM gathering time...lunch and program to follow. Deborah Mims will provide patriotic musical entertainment. Hot dogs, buns, condiments and a special dessert are provided. Plan to bring a side dish to share. Red, white and blue clothing would be awesome too!

Would you like to be part of the SSC leadership team? We are looking to fill and expand our planning board. Contact Tammi Straughn to learn more about this ministry opportunity, 863-660-2617

One of the most active groups (1961-present) in our church community, Sunshine club focuses on individuals and couples, providing social interaction, support and spiritual growth. Join us the first Thursday of the month for food and fellowship. Everyone is welcome.



Women’s Ministry will again observe our summer break from regular Martha Circle, and Board meetings for the months of June, July, and August. We will resume these meetings as usual in September, so please mark your calendars accordingly.

Our quilting ladies will continue meeting every Thursday morning throughout the summer months. The group would welcome any ladies to join them during this time.

Even though we have summer break from regular meetings, please remember the collection of mites continues throughout. We so appreciate all of you who support this allowing us to participate in larger mission projects. We have plenty of “mite” boxes in the Narthex so please feel free to take one and return it when filled. We have boxes for adults and some geared more to children, so please take one or more. These funds combined with those of other women's ministry groups help to support our larger mission projects.

Please mark your calendars for resuming regular meetings of our Martha Circle on the second Thursday of the month at 1:00 PM in the Mary Martha Room; Board meetings to be held as usual on the first Wednesday of each month.

Grace Lutheran Women’s Ministry Disbursements for 2025 – 2026

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

School Scholarship	\$500.00
Church Discretionary Fund	\$500.00
Church Paper Items	\$250.00

COMMUNITY

Life Choice	\$500.00
American Heritage Girls	\$250.00
Trail Life Boys	\$250.00
Haley Center	\$500.00
One More Child	\$500.00

SEMINARY STUDENTS

Joshua Armstrong	\$1000.00
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GLOBAL MISSIONS

Papua New Guinea	\$500.00
POBLO	\$500.00

Totaling \$5250.00

MUSIC NOTES

LSB 797 Praise the Almighty

1 Praise the Almighty, my soul, adore Him!
Yes, I will laud Him until death;
With songs and anthems I come before Him
As long as He allows me breath.
From Him my life and all things came;
Bless, O my soul, His holy name.
Alleluia, alleluia!

5 Praise, all you people, the name so holy
Of Him who does such wondrous things!
All that has being, to praise Him solely,
With happy heart its amen sings.
Children of God, with angel host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!
Alleluia, alleluia!

4 Penitent sinners, for mercy crying,
Pardon and peace from Him obtain;
Ever the wants of the poor supplying,
Their faithful God He will remain.
He helps His children in distress,
The widows and the fatherless.
Alleluia, alleluia!

Text: Johann Daniel Herrnschmidt, 1675–1723;
translated by Alfred E. R. Brauer, 1866–1949, alt.

Praise the Lord! Psalm 146 begins this way, as do the following 4 Psalms to wrap up the end of the Psalter, the book of Psalms to illustrate our praise and thanks to God for what He has done for us. The hymnwriter here takes the whole of Psalm 146, encouraging all to lift their songs of praise before the Lord for all of His wondrous works. Here we see Christ and His atoning work: “Pardon and peace from Him obtain.” The hymnwriter picks up the theme that Luther saw throughout the Scriptures: always pointing to Christ and his death for our salvation. So, let us Make a Joyful Noise!

Thomas Schulteis
Dir. of Worship Arts (Organist)

**Welcome Reception
for
Vicar Harrison, Sarah & new baby Hulse
Sunday, July 12 Trinity Hall - 9:45 AM**

Coming Sunday, August 16

**SHEPHERD'S PIE CONTEST
(Traditional, creative and dessert categories)**

More info coming soon!

Treasurer's Report for the Ten Months Ending April 30, 2026

	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance
Church				
Income	\$ 125,177.29	\$ 1,243,993.27	\$ 1,247,166.60	\$ (3,173.33)
Expenses	\$ 146,815.91	\$ 1,185,055.20	\$ 1,228,113.76	\$ (43,058.56)
Total Net Income (Loss) Church	\$ (21,638.62)	\$ 58,938.07	\$ 19,052.84	\$ 39,885.23

School				
Income	\$ 844,463.23	\$ 4,240,905.36	\$ 4,432,300.70	\$ (191,395.34)
Expenses	\$ 513,799.09	\$ 4,125,026.98	\$ 3,828,634.12	\$ 296,392.86
Designated (In/Out Accounts)	\$ (17,627.83)	\$ (25,552.94)		
Total Net Income (Loss) School	\$ 348,291.97	\$ 141,431.32	\$ 603,666.58	\$ (487,788.20)

Investment Assets	
School Endowment Fund	\$ 404,406.89
Bernthal Endowment Scholarship Fund	\$ 146,762.73
All Other Scholarships/Investments	\$ 23,842.39



Parish Statistics

Baptisms

Bethany Alexander 3/27/26
Katherine Alexander 3/27/26
Jase Alexander 3/27/26
Emerson Alexander 3/27/26
Madelyn Alexander 3/27/26
Chloe Dority 5/22/26
Aliana Rodriguez 5/31/26

Deaths

Alan Ulch 5/2/26

Congratulations to the Grace Lutheran School 2026 - 2027 Graduating 8th Grade Class

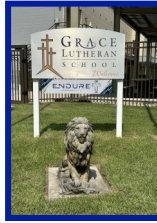


**Alaric
Amelia
Avery
Audrey
Azariah
Brantley B.
Brantley J.
Carsyn
Chloe
Christian
Connor
Gabriel
George
Harris**

**Holden
Hudson
Hunter
Isaiah
Jason
Jayden
Jean
Jeffrey
Katherine
Kamryn
Khloe
Kyrsten
Maebry
Mark**

**Maxton
Neveah
Olivia
Peyton
Pierce
Reese
Roger
Slayter
Sunnie
Sydney
Tytan
Wiley**





Music

4th grade students had the opportunity to learn their first six notes on recorder in music class. Students took home their recorders after our recorder Karate Unit where they earned different belts based on the difficulty level of the music from white belt to black belt. We wish them happy practicing on their recorders over summer and are looking forward to a great school year in 2026-2027- rooted in Him!

Athletics

It's been a thrilling season for our Lions! From the track to the greens and the turf, our student-athletes have shown incredible heart and skill. Here's a look at our recent highlights:

Track season ends on a high note

On April 10, 38 members of the Grace Track Team headed to the 43rd annual Lutheran State Track Meet at St. John Ocala. Our teams showed up in a big way, with both the 5th/6th grade boys and girls securing **2nd place** overall. Our 7th/8th grade boys took **3rd**, while the girls followed closely in **4th**.

A special shout-out to our five **Individual State Champions**:

- **Kamryn**: 7th/8th Girls 400m
- **Maxton**: 7th/8th Boys Long Jump
- **Fischer S**: 5th/6th Boys Shot Put
- **Brielyn**: 5th/6th Girls High Jump
- **Addilee**: 5th/6th Girls 100m

Success on the Links

We hosted the Lutheran State Golf Tournament at Cypresswood CC on April 22. Competing against 13 teams from across the state, our **Grace A Team** shot an impressive -3 to take **2nd place**. In the individual tournament, 6th grader **Wills** stayed cool under pressure, shooting a 39 to be crowned **Individual State Champion!**

Championships on the Field

On May 1, our Flag Football and Soccer teams traveled to St. Petersburg for the Lutheran Tournament. The **6th-8th grade Boys' Flag Football** team went undefeated against Faith Eustis and Our Savior to bring home the **Championship title!** The **Girls' Soccer** team fought hard, narrowly losing their opener 4-3 before bouncing back to defeat St. Paul Lakeland 3-1 and secure the **Consolation Championship**.

Congratulations to all our athletes on a fantastic season. We are so proud of your hard work and sportsmanship. **Go Lions!**

Middle School

April was a strong and eventful month in the middle school, marked by meaningful academic and extracurricular experiences. Students competed well at the CFLAA Track & Field Meet, earning several top finishes, and engaged in hands-on STEM learning during the Orlando Science Center's on-campus

visit. Eighth graders also brought their civics studies to life through the Bartow Courthouse field trip. May was rounded out with community-building events like the Glow Dance and recognition of student achievement in the arts at the Ridge Art Show.

Preschool / Elementary

The end of the school year has been wonderful at Grace Lutheran School! Our preschool families enjoyed a special visit to campus, where they had the opportunity to meet our kindergarten teachers and learn more about the exciting year ahead.



Our preschool students also had a fantastic experience visiting the Book Bridge Bus six times!

Through these visits, each child received six brand-new books to take home and enjoy—helping to build their love of reading and learning.

We are so thankful for the many blessings this school year and look forward to all that God has in store for the year ahead!

Artists of the Month

- Adley – Kindergarten (Pinch Pot)
- Cooper - 2nd grade (Penguin)
- Nash - 4th grade (Turtle)



SCHOOL CALENDAR

June

- 1 - 5: Summer Camp
- Theatre Camp 9:00 - 3:00PM
- 8 - 12: VBS
- Summer Camp
- 15 - 19: Summer Camp
- 22 - 28: Summer Camp
- 29 - 30: Summer Camp

July

- 1: Summer Camp
- 2 - 3: Summer Camp Closed (In observance of 4th of July)
- 4: 4th of July
- 6 - 10: Summer Camp
- 13 - 17: Summer Camp
- 17: Last Day of Summer Camp
- 23: Teacher's Report
- 23 - 24: Back to School Meetings
- 27 - 31: Meet the Teacher Visits

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF GLS: The mission of Grace Lutheran School is to provide its students and their families with a strong spiritual and academic foundation so that they know and understand God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ and are also able to live lives appropriate to their positions in their families, churches, community, and country.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	JUNE 1	2 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	3	4 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 11 AM Sunshine Club	5 10 AM Bible Study - MM	6 5:00 PM Worship Svc
7 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship	VBS 8	VBS 9 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	VBS 10	VBS 11 9:30 AM LWR Quilters	VBS 12 10 AM Bible Study - MM	13 5 PM Worship Svc
14 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship	15 6 PM School Bd. Mtg.	16 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	17 6 PM Stephen Ministry	18 9:30 AM LWR Quilters	19 10 AM Bible Study - MM	20 5 PM Worship Svc
21 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship	22 5:30 PM Bus Mgmt. 6:30 PM BOD	23 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	24	25 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 1 PM Adult Game Day	26 10 AM Bible Study - MM	27 5 PM Worship Svc
28 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Confirmation 10:45 AM Worship	29	30 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	JULY 1	2 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 11 AM Sunshine Club	3 10 AM Bible Study - MM	4  GOD BLESS AMERICA
5 8:30 AM Neighborhood Prayer Walk 9 AM Food, Fellowship & Activities 10 AM Love Our Nation Worship	6	7 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	8	9 9:30 AM LWR Quilters	10 10 AM Bible Study - MM	11 5 PM Worship Svc
12 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship	13 6 PM School Bd. Mtg.	14 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	15	16 9:30 AM LWR Quilters	17 10 AM Bible Study - MM	18 5 PM Worship Svc
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26 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship	27 5:30 PM Bus Mgmt. 6:30 PM BOD	28 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 6 PM Exec. Elders 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	29	30 9:30 AM LWR Quilters	31 10 AM Bible Study - MM	



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CONNECTING PEOPLE TO JESUS