



Vol. 57 August 2026

VOICE OF GRACE

Walking, Rooted & Built up in Christ

That's the theme of my sabbatical, and that's what I will be doing from August 17 to November 12. Thank you for the opportunity of this sabbatical and for your contributions.

I want my next 10 years of ministry to be as effective as my last 30. It was 30 years ago this summer that I was ordained into the ministry and 20 years ago this August that I came to Grace Lutheran, Winter Haven. I have some key goals to accomplish in this Sabbatical: Rest, Renew, and Recreate (1st month); then Read and Re-enforce old lessons and new (2nd month); and, finally, Re-envision and Re-enter (3rd month).

Walking with the Lord is most important, and I wish to spend the majority of my time focusing on my own walk with Him, resting my spirit, renewing my soul, and recreating my body (as in recreation - **walking**) I plan to walk as many nature trails in peninsular Florida as I am able to, enjoying our state's beautiful natural fauna and identifying

(continued on next page)

New Ministry Endeavor: Grace Nights

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together... but encouraging one another." Hebrews 10:24-25

Beginning this fall, we're excited to launch Grace Nights, a new Wednesday evening ministry designed for every generation. Whether you're a young adult, parent, grandparent, student, or child, Grace Nights is a place to build meaningful relationships, grow deeper in your faith, and discover how to follow Jesus in everyday life. Starting with a time for fellowship and fun, each evening will include a brief time of worship before everyone gathers in age-specific groups for engaging discipleship, practical conversations, and plenty of fun along the way.

Grace Nights is built around three simple ideas: Connect with People. Grow in Christ. Live with Purpose. We believe God created us for community, calls us to continually grow in His Word, and sends us into our homes, workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods to live out our faith. Throughout the year, adults will be able to choose from Bible studies, parenting and life-topic classes, Personal Mission Statement Groups, and New Member Classes, while children and students enjoy age-appropriate Bible lessons, activities, and friendships that help them know and follow Jesus.

Whether you've been part of Grace for years or you're simply looking for a place to belong, we hope you'll join us this fall. Come share a meal, meet new people, ask honest questions, and experience the joy of growing together as one church family. Keep an eye out for registration information and class offerings. For more information see the graphic (below/above)—we can't wait to see what God will do through Grace Nights!

(more info on page 5)

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

www.glwh.org

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SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
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birds on my long-forgotten bird-watching checklists. I want to reread and review the books and practices that have influenced me the most (**Rooted**), firmly establishing myself in those principles and thinking of ways I can build upon them in the next decade (**Built up**). I will also be reading several books on expected trends and ministry methods for the years ahead. I will visit a few retreat centers and stay with members of my family when out of town. When walking the trails of Central Florida, I will get to enjoy evenings at home with Karri.

The congregation also has some goals for this time: **Advance the Ministry; Increase Independence; Establish Associate Pastor; Involve People**. The greatest goal is for each of us to focus on our own walk with the Lord, being rooted and built up in Christ who loves us. (see Colossians 2:6-7) I am very excited about our Grace Nights endeavor on Wednesday nights this Fall. Pastor Steve Braun and Vicar Harrison Hulse, along with Chaplain Lang Yang and our part-time sabbatical interim Pastor Tom Block, retired LCMS pastor from Lakeland, will be shepherding the flock. If you see something that needs to be done, do it. Meet the need and tell a leader what you did. That's advancing the ministry. – Pastor Charles Reich

Desired Outcomes of this Sabbatical, Fall 2026

A rested and renewed Sr. Pastor who:

- practices regular spiritual exercises
- has his best practices rooted and re-enforced for the future
- is informed with trends and challenges for the future
- is built up for advancing the ministry beyond himself
- is prepared for 10 years of effective ministry

A Congregation continuing to advance in ministry that:

- has members focusing more on their own walk with the Lord
- has staff members and teams strengthened with independence
- has more appreciation of the leadership and ministry of our new Associate Pastor has greater numbers of people involved in the life and ministries of the congregation, especially through our Grace Nights Wednesday night program as well as personal mission statement endeavor
- is empowered with God's Word of Colossians to walk, be rooted and built up in Christ has a vicar that is mentored by even more brothers and sisters of the congregation

Theme Passage – Colossians 2:6-7

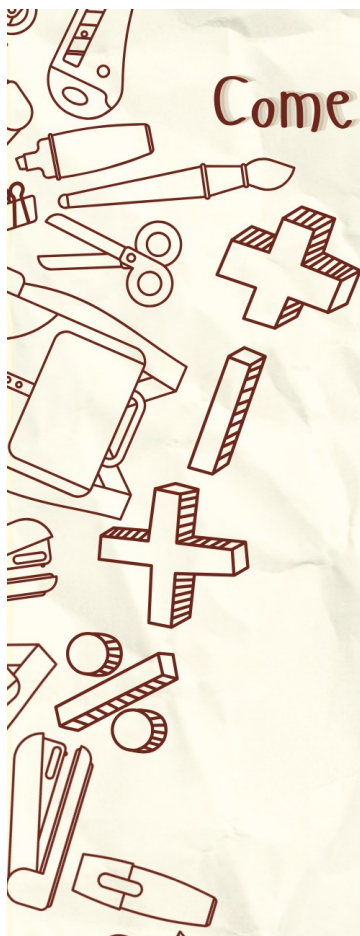
Theme for the Pastor Reich's Sabbatical and our Academic Year 2026-2027

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Deep Roots.
Strong Faith.

Rooted and built up in him and
established in the faith, just as you were taught...

Colossians 2:7, ESV



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)



30th ANNIVERSARY

OF PASTOR CHARLES REICH'S ORDINATION

Join in the FUN and THANKSGIVING as we celebrate Pastor Reich's 30 years in ministry and send him off to begin his 90-day Sabbatical.

Sunday, August 16 at 12:00 noon in Trinity Hall

We will lunch on one of pastor's favorite dishes, Shepherd's Pie and we will enjoy Texas sheet cake for dessert. You will hear some little-known stories about Pastor Charles and there will be an opportunity to write him a personal note.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP to the Church Office at 863-293-8447 by Monday, August 10.

Our nursery will be open.

August 2, 2026
8:30 AM-12:30 PM

Be sure to eat a good meal and drink plenty of water before giving blood. ID is required.

Make a Difference: HELP SAVE A LIFE!



Grace Lutheran Church **Sunshine Club News**

August 6 - 11:00 AM arrival. We begin at 11:30, lunch at noon, and wellness program at 12:30 POT LUCK BUFFET – chicken provided.

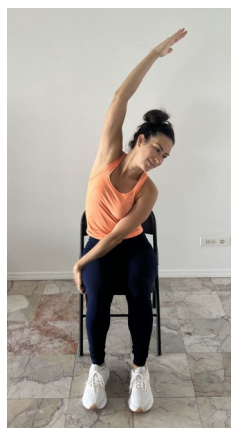
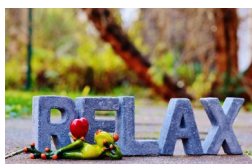
Christ-Centered Chair Wellness Session

Take a moment to pause and refresh with a gentle, Christ-focused wellness experience. This seated session includes **easy breathing exercises**, **simple chair-based stretches**, and **Scripture readings** that encourage peace, rest, and renewed strength in the Lord. Soft worship music will accompany our time together, creating a calm space to breathe deeply, move comfortably, and reflect on God's Word. All are welcome. Come as you are and leave feeling uplifted and restored.

MEET MERRY KENDALL

Since retiring as an ordained elder in the Free Methodist Church in June 2023, Merry has found a new calling as a certified yoga instructor. Through spiritual stretching, she encourages people of faith to honor what God tells us in the Bible about caring for our bodies and caring for one another. She is enjoying this new chapter in ministry. Personally, Merry loves to read, cook healthy foods, and enjoy life in the Sunshine State. She has one daughter who lives in Raleigh, NC and works for an employment law firm. Merry looks forward to sharing her love for God with you through spiritual stretching.

September 3 - 11:30 AM Meet at Olive Garden on Cypress Gardens Blvd. for a great conversation and delicious dining. Plan to bring a friend. Everyone is on their own for lunch. See you there!



One of the most active groups 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.



Begins Wednesday August 26th
Everyone has a place at Grace Nights!

Scan here to RSVP & preview
our adult activity offerings!



Wednesdays 6:00 to 7:30pm

at Grace Lutheran Church & School
Address: 321 Avenue C SE, Winter Haven

6:00pm - Bring Your Own Dinner

Hang out under the outdoor canopy! Kids can play while adults chat.

6:30pm - Opening & Check-In

Short devotion, song & opening prayer.

6:40pm - Age-Based Activities

Groups for all ages: Nursery, Preschool, Elementary, Middle & High School, and Adults.

7:30pm - Closing & Check-Out

Closing prayer & announcements.



Come join us for Families in the Park
Sunday, August 9, 2026 at the
"Rowdy" Gaines Olympic Pool
210 Cypress Gardens, Blvd, Winter Haven
Recreational/Open Swim
1 PM - 5 PM

Contact Joni Corcoran, 863-224-0087

MUSIC NOTES

LSB 691 Fruitful Trees, the Spirit's Sowing

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fruitful trees, the Spirit's sowing,
May we ripen and increase,
Fruit to life eternal growing,
Rich in love and joy and peace. | 3 | Rooted deep in Christ our Master,
Christ our pattern and our goal,
Teach us, as the years fly faster,
Goodness, faith, and self-control. |
| 2 | Laden branches freely bearing
Gifts the Giver loves to bless;
Here is fruit that grows by sharing,
Patience, kindness, gentleness. | 4 | Fruitful trees, the Spirit's tending,
May we grow till harvests cease;
Till we taste, in life unending,
Heaven's love and joy and peace. |

Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith, 1926–2024. © 1984 Hope Publishing Co. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110000942

Although this hymn was not exactly written on the theme “Walking, Rooted, Built Up in Christ” (Colossians 2:6-7), but rather on the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23), it also describes well how we can be rooted in Christ. In order for a plant to grow well and continue to produce fruit, it must be pruned, watered, and taken care of every day. We as Christ's followers need to do the same. We pray that we can remain rooted deep in Christ, so that as He leads we follow. Dear Lord, help us to follow You by serving others and remain rooted in You all of our days. Amen.

Thomas Schulteis
Dir. of Worship Arts (Organist)

Sound & Projection Needs!

“Looking for an easy way to serve here at Grace? We need you! The weekend worship ministries are seeking individuals who are interested in serving in our sound and projection seats. Young or old, technology savvy or not, we have a place for you! As long as you can push some buttons (we all do that at times!), you can help out! Please contact Laura Louiceus or Thomas Schulteis if you have questions or are ready to serve!

Altar Guild Volunteers Needed!



We are in need of Altar Guild volunteers! Volunteering involves, setting up communion on Saturday, resetting between the services, and cleaning up after the late service. You will receive detailed instructions, have a partner and a flexible serving schedule.

If you would like to join in this special service to the Lord and His church, please call Rachel Price at 812-391-5636.

Open to
school & church
families
3rd-8th grade

Audition Notice

Grace Lutheran Players
presents

“Not Your Average Joe”

The classic Old Testament story of Joseph is retold in the exuberant times and music of the 50's. It's surfer beats, leather jackets, and surfboards, but the gospel truth remains the same ... trust the Lord with all your heart.



Auditions August 10th & 11th

3:30pm-5:30pm

Must attend both days

Contact Rachel Price with questions
rprice@glwh.org

SAVE THE DATE

Performance

November 6 & 7, 2026

Tickets on Sale September 15th

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 400 Stephen Ministers and they, in turn, have helped over 800 hurting souls. Please contact Sharon Wilson at 863-293-8447.



family BIBLE DAY

SECOND GRADE BIBLE DAY

GRACE LUTHERAN

TRINITY HALL

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15TH

10:00-11:00

Event Highlights

**BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!
YOUR SECOND GRADER WILL BE GIFTED
THEIR BIBLE AT THIS SPECIAL EVENT.**



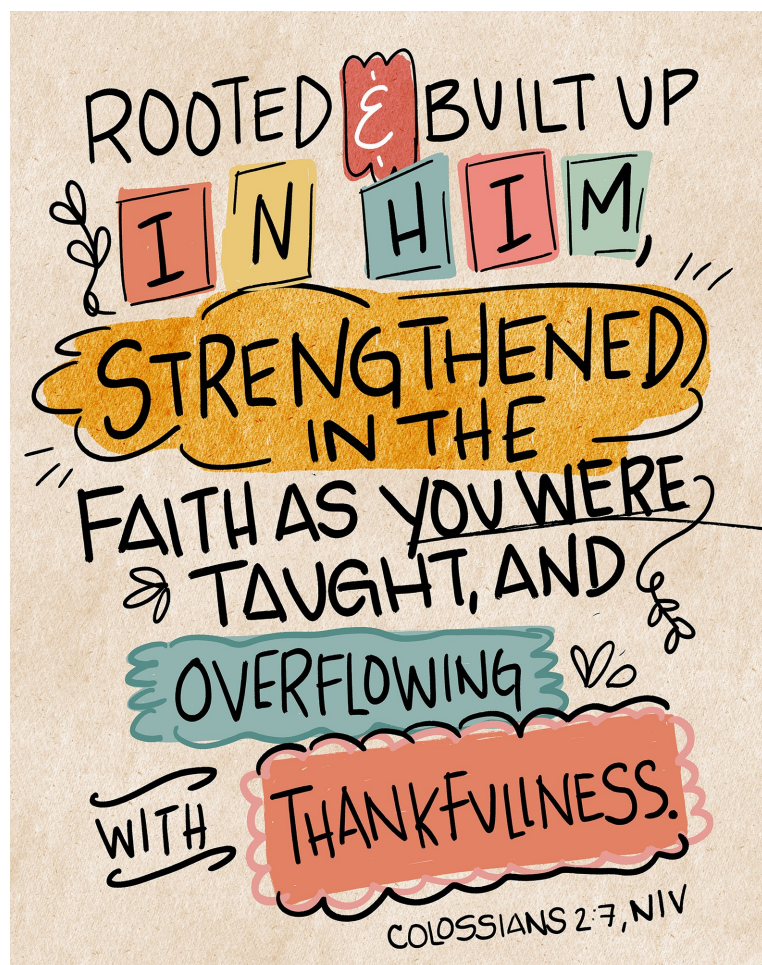
PLEASE RSVP TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER BY AUGUST 7TH

Treasurer's Report for the Twelve Months Ending June 30, 2026

	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance
<u>Church</u>				
Income	\$ 83,853.01	\$ 1,445,959.80	\$ 1,496,600.00	\$ (50,640.20)
Expenses	\$ 112,018.08	\$ 1,424,962.18	\$ 1,457,361.00	\$ (32,398.82)
Total Net Income (Loss) Church	\$ (28,165.07)	\$ 20,997.62	\$ 39,239.00	\$ (18,241.38)

<u>School</u>				
Income	\$ 59,271.30	\$ 4,392,782.82	\$ 4,498,184.00	\$ (105,401.18)
Expenses	\$ 303,187.77	\$ 4,762,786.71	\$ 4,497,853.00	\$ 264,933.71
Designated (In/Out Accounts)	\$ 9,599.55	\$ 1,624.92		
Total Net Income (Loss) School	\$ (253,516.02)	\$ (371,628.81)	\$ 331.00	\$ (370,334.89)

<u>Investment Assets</u>	
School Endowment Fund	\$ 413,320.80
Bernthal Endowment Scholarship Fund	\$ 150,454.02
All Other Scholarships/Investments	\$ 23,865.93



Parish Statistics

Baptisms

Chloe Lynn Dority - 5/22/26
 Aliana Isabella Rodriguez - 5/31/26
 Warren Suintuna - 6/7/26

Deaths

Ann Fuller - 6/5/26
 Patti Meier - 7/3/26
 Mickey Trueheart - 7/23/26
 Gary Stone - 7/29/26

Grace Lutheran School Pre-School 2's-8th Grade News

Phone: 863-293-9744

SCHOOL WEBSITE: school.glwh.org



school year and look forward to sharing this journey of faith with the members of Grace Lutheran Church. Thank you for your continued dedication to keeping our school built firmly on His unbreakable foundation.

God's richest blessings to you all as this school year unfolds.

In Christ,

Michael Rottmann
Executive Director of School Ministry

"Welcome back to school!" It is always a joy to watch the children stream back onto campus after the summer months. As a congregation, we say it to each other as well as we celebrate this fresh season and welcome the 2026-2027 school year.

The newness of the year is upon us. New friendships are forming and exciting new routines are taking shape. As our students step into this new year, our spiritual focus is centered on a powerful theme: Walking, Rooted and Built Up in Christ.

This theme comes from Colossians 2:6-7 (ESV):

"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

Through every change, Christ remains our unchanging foundation. While 1 Corinthians 3:11 reminds us that no one can lay any foundation other than Jesus Christ, Colossians challenges us to actively grow upon it. We want our students not just to stand on this foundation, but to sink their roots deep into His truth so they can be firmly built up in faith.

As this busy school year begins, your prayers, presence, and partnership are more vital than ever to help our students walk this path. We encourage you to wrap our students, families, and staff in prayer. The teachers and administrators spend countless hours shaping these young minds, working tirelessly to provide a quality, Christ-based education where children are truly taught to walk in Him. They take this ministry seriously, and we need the backing of the church community that supports us.

We invite you to stay active in this shared ministry. Attend school chapel services when you can, welcome these families into our pews on Sunday mornings, and continue supporting our school with your resources and encouragement. It truly takes a faithful community to raise a child who is established in the faith and abounding in thanksgiving.

What a wonderful year we have ahead as we work together to support an education that is both academically excellent and deeply Christ-centered. I am excited as we welcome the students back for another

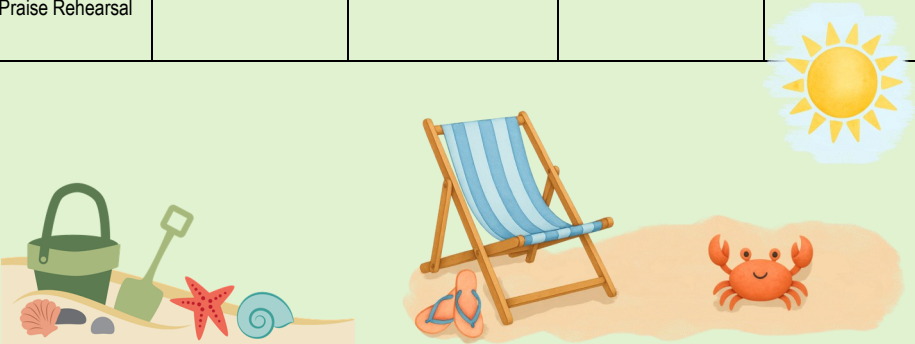


SCHOOL CALENDAR

August

- 1: Uniform Sales 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- 2: Uniform Sales 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
- 3: Uniform Sales 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- 4: Uniform Sales 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM
- 4th and 5th Grade Parent Meeting: 10:30 AM & 4:00 PM
- Open House 3:00 - 6:00 PM
- New Parent Meeting 5:00 PM
- Middle School Parent Meeting 6:00 PM
- Middle School Algebra Parent Meeting 7:00 PM
- 6: First Day of School
- 9: Grace Faculty Installation 10:45 AM Service
- 12: Middle School Youth Group 6:30 - 8:00 PM
- 14: P.A.C.E. Board Meeting 1:00 - 3:00 PM
- 15: 2nd Grade Family Bible Day 9:30 - 11:00 AM
- 16: Pastor Reich's 30th Anniversary Celebration - 12:00 PM
- 19: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 3:30 PM
- 20: Fall Picture Day
- 26: Grace Nights for All 6:00 - 8:00 PM
- Middle School Youth Group 6:30 - 8:00 PM
- 28: Parent Happy Hour with P.A.C.E at Grove Roots 5:30 - 8:30 PM
- 28 - 31: P.A.C.E. Mission Project

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
						1 5:00 PM Worship Svc
2 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship	3 6:30 PM Elder Meeting	4 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 12 PM God's Guys 5:30 PM School Campus Prayer Vigil 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	5	First Day of School 6 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 11 AM Sunshine Club 6:30 PM Summer Choir	7 1:30 PM PACE Bd. Mtg.	8 5 PM Worship Svc
9 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Teacher Reception 10:45 AM Worship Installation of Teachers	10 7:30 AM Staff Devos 9 AM Circuit Pastors 6 PM School Bd. Mtg.	11 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	12 6 PM Confirmation Orientation	13 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 5:30 PM Trinity Bells 6:30 Grace Chorale	14 10 AM Bible Study - MM	15 10 AM 2nd Grade Family Bible Day 5 PM Worship Svc
16 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship 12 PM Pastor Reich's 30th	17 7:30 AM Staff Devos 6 PM School Board	18 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 12 PM God's Guys 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	19 8:15 AM PACE Coffee Talk 6 PM Stephen Ministry	20 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 5:30 PM Trinity Bells 6:30 Grace Chorale	21 10 AM Bible Study - MM	22 5 PM Worship Svc
23 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Confirmation 10:45 AM Worship	24 7:30 AM Staff Devos 5:30 PM Bus Mgmt. 6:30 PM BOD	25 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 4 PM Dementia Caregivers Meeting 5:30 PM Prayer Svc 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	26 6 PM Grace Nights	27 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 5:30 PM Trinity Bells 6:30 Grace Chorale	28 10 AM Bible Study - MM	29 5 PM Worship Svc
30 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Confirmation 10:45 AM Worship	31 7:30 AM Staff Devos					



VOICE OF GRACE

Grace Lutheran Church
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Winter Haven, FL 33880

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CONNECTING PEOPLE TO JESUS