



Vol. 57 September 2026

VOICE OF GRACE

The Fourth Is With Us

"Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, 'Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?' They answered and said to the king, 'True, O king.' He answered and said, 'But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.'" Daniel 3:24-25

We all know the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Three faithful men refuse to bow in worship of an idol and are thrown into a fiery furnace. Yet when King Nebuchadnezzar looks into the flames, he sees something astonishing: three men went into the fire, but four are walking among the flames.

What appeared to be certain death became a testimony to God's steadfast love and faithfulness. The three men were not alone. The Lord was with them.

One of Pastor Charles's goals for us during this season of sabbatical is increased independence. That doesn't mean we are learning to live or minister without him. It means that we are being encouraged to recognize that ministry belongs to the whole body of Christ. Each of us has opportunities to serve, to lead, to encourage, to teach, to welcome, and to share the love of Christ with those around us.

And if we're honest, that can feel a little like stepping into a furnace. When a ministry opportunity presents itself, we may wonder, "Am I ready for this? Am I equipped for this? Do I know what I'm doing?"

The answer isn't necessarily, "Yes! You've got this!"

The answer of faith is something better: You don't do this alone.

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus gathered disciples around Himself. He taught them, trained them, walked with them, ate with them, and sent them out to minister. They didn't wait until they felt completely ready before they began serving. They learned by following Jesus and by doing the work He gave them to do.

I remember hearing a youth ministry leader describe this approach a few years ago. She encouraged churches not simply to equip and then engage young people, but to engage and equip them along the way. Sometimes we learn how to serve by actually stepping forward and serving.

Looking back over my own life, I don't think I have ever felt completely qualified or ready for the task in front of me. My first orchestra concert in sixth grade taught me that eventually you have to get on the stage—even when your strings are still scratchy and out of tune!

Ministry can be like that. We step forward. We learn. We grow. We become equipped. And all the while, we remember that we are not alone.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego entered the furnace together, but more importantly, the mysterious fourth figure was there with them in the flames. Christians have long understood this to be Christ in their midst, present with His people even before He was born. And so it is for us.

(continued on next page)

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
Kim Chappell

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

PS-5 PRINCIPAL
Aleah Hearn
MIDDLE SCHOOL DEAN
Jacob McGee

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Susie Woods

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE
Gillian McIntee

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Christie Thompson

As Grace continues through this season of sabbatical, there are ministry opportunities all around us. Our school ministry, Grace Nights, Oktoberfest, the Fall Festival, and our Confirmation ministry are underway. On top of all that, there are souls in our community and neighborhoods whom God is calling us to serve and with whom we are to share the love of Jesus Christ. All these provide opportunities for us to step forward and serve.

Will we always feel equipped and ready? Probably not. But that is not the most important question. The most important question is - Who is with us?

Jesus is.

So let us step forward in faith. Let us engage in the ministry God has placed before us. Let us encourage one another, learn from one another, and trust that Christ will equip us as we serve.

Three went into the furnace, but four danced among the flames.



Pastor Steve

TUESDAY PRAYER SERVICE SUSPENDED

With the midweek emphasis being placed on the upcoming Wednesday Evening "Grace Nights," the 5:30 PM Tuesday prayer service is being suspended for the school year, beginning after the Tuesday Prayer Vigil on September 1. This decision was made at the Board of Elders meeting on August 4.

CHURCH-WIDE PRAYER VIGIL

We will be praying over all of our church ministry spaces on **Tuesday evening, September 1, at 5:30 PM.**

Meet in the Sanctuary at 5:30 PM and then be dispersed to appointed places to pray for the people who sit in the pews, all musical, church office, and meeting spaces.

One of the most impactful things you and I can do each day is to talk to God in prayer. When the Lord God Almighty moves - things happen. Our Lord even tells us, "You do not have because you do not ask God." (James 4:2) God says repeatedly in the Psalms, "Call upon Me," because He loves to hear from us. His promise is not only to hear us, but to answer us. In response to this gracious invitation, we will cover all of our meeting places with prayer, praying for God's Spirit to interact with each soul who will be present at that particular ministry space. We need your assistance to consecrate all of these dedicated spaces with prayers to God.

For those unable to come to the church campus at the appointed time, we will be emailing general prayers to all members so that they may also participate by praying from their homes and places of work. Please make plans now to participate and pray. We need pray-ers!

Oktoberfest

September 23 from 6-8pm



Food, Festivities & Fun

All are welcome.



Bring your family & friends!



COLOSSIANS



**Walking in the
Grove of Grace**

Begins Week of October 4th

A 5 week sermon series & small group study where we grow as those: **walking in Christ, rooted and built up in Him!**

Opportunities to sign up will be in the blue pages soon.



Let's Fill the Shelves Together!

P.A.C.E. COMMUNITY FOOD DRIVE BENEFITING THE MISSION

Food insecurity affects so many in our community, but together, we can help alleviate hunger

P.A.C.E is hosting a food drive to collect essential items for The Mission. Every donation brings us closer to building a hunger-free future. During this food drive those students and classrooms who collect the most donations will be eligible for prizes.

WHAT TO DONATE

- Canned foods
- Boxed pantry staples
- Nonperishable snacks
- Cereals and grains

DROP-OFF DETAILS

Location

Your child's classroom

Collection dates

August 28–September 6

Learn more

themissionwh.org

Grace Church members, please drop off food items at the church office.

Thank you!



Grace Lutheran Church Sunshine Club News



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



Pastor Appreciation Month - Join us in Trinity Hall on Thursday, Oct. 1 for a time to celebrate our pastors. We'll gather from 11-11:30 for fellowship, followed by devotions, announcements and lunch. A baked potato bar and dessert will be provided by the club. Special entertainment during lunch. Cards and notes are always a lovely way to say thank you. A thank offering basket will be passed to cover luncheon costs.

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.



Sip with Grace

We are mixing it up this month and doing an evening event for those of you who cannot meet during the day. Join us for a casual evening of connection and fun at Grove Roots Brewing Co. Whether you have worshipped with us for years or are walking through our doors for the very first time, we would love to get to know you better in a relaxed community setting! There are so many people who worship at another service time, or even sit on the same pew, that you haven't had the chance to meet. Now is the time!

When: Thursday, Sept. 24 at 5:30 PM (don't worry if you are a little late)

Where: Grove Roots Brewing Co. at 302 3rd St SW, Winter Haven

What to expect: Great conversation, zero pressure, and friendly faces eager to see you!

If you would like more information, contact Michelle Reddick at 863.293.8447 or mreddick@glwh.org.



We're excited to begin another year of Women's Ministry Circle meetings on **Thursday, September 10**, with Bible study and fellowship. Our meetings take place on the **second Thursday of each month at 1:00 PM, in the Mary-Martha Room**. As we've done in the past, we will have various fundraising activities throughout the year and hope all of you will participate in support. As usual, all proceeds from our fundraisers will be used to help two seminary students and will be contributed to a variety of mission projects. Becoming involved with this ministry is a wonderful avenue to make new friendships. Most importantly, it is a wonderful opportunity to serve Our Lord by serving others in His name.

Please mark your calendars as **Grace will host a Zone Rally on Saturday, October 17, from 9:00 AM to noon, in Trinity Hall**. Our speaker for this event is a representative from The Mission located here in Winter Haven.

A year-round opportunity to serve is with the Ladies Quilting Group which meets every Thursday morning in the Women's Center. This group welcomes anyone to visit or join - with or without sewing experience - as there are many tasks involved with the making of the beautiful quilts that are displayed annually in the sanctuary on Quilt Sunday.

FAMILIES IN THE PARK FALL KICKOFF

SEPTEMBER 27

AFTER LATE SERVICE

**Come enjoy games, swimming,
burgers, and hot dogs!**

PLEASE BRING A DISH TO SHARE

Bring swimsuits and towels if you plan to swim!

40 LAKE ARROWHEAD DRIVE
Winter Haven, FL 33880

RSVP TO BRITTIN LOCKE
(863) 508-9985

FOOD • FRIENDS • FALL FUN

★ GRACE LUTHERAN SCHOOL ★

FALL *Festival*

FRI, OCT 9 | 3:00 PM – 6:30 PM

DONATIONS *Needed*

FOR FALL FESTIVAL COUNTRY STORE

Grace Lutheran's Fall Festival is just around the corner!

We're seeking your generous donations to help stock our store! All types of baked goods are welcome, including store-bought treats! For every two dozen baked goods, or for two cakes/pies valued over \$10.00, you will earn one service hour.

We appreciate any and all contributions!

All baked goods must be delivered by:

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 9TH
BY 12PM





Service of Nine Lessons and Carols Saturday, December 12, 4 PM

What is the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols?

It began at Truro Cathedral, Cornwall, England, around 1880 and became famous after the dean of King's College Cambridge brought it to his choir in 1918. The original intent of the service was to draw visitors to the church at the Christmas season.

Festival Choir for Nine Lessons and Carols

Are you interested in singing carols and other music for Advent/Christmas with the choir? **Join the Festival Choir starting Thursday evenings at 6:30 PM on October 8.** The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols is to be held on Sunday, December 13, at 4 PM; the Festival Choir will also sing on Christmas Eve for the 7 PM service. If you would like more information or have any questions, please contact Thomas at tschulteis@glwh.org or call the church office.

Christmas by Candlelight Dinner ***Saturday, December 12*** ***5:30 PM - Trinity Hall*** ***Following the Service of Lessons and Carols***

We are serving a sumptuous dinner (from Longhorn Steakhouse) in an atmosphere of Christmas splendor. Come, join us.

Reservations only. Watch for details in the coming church bulletins.



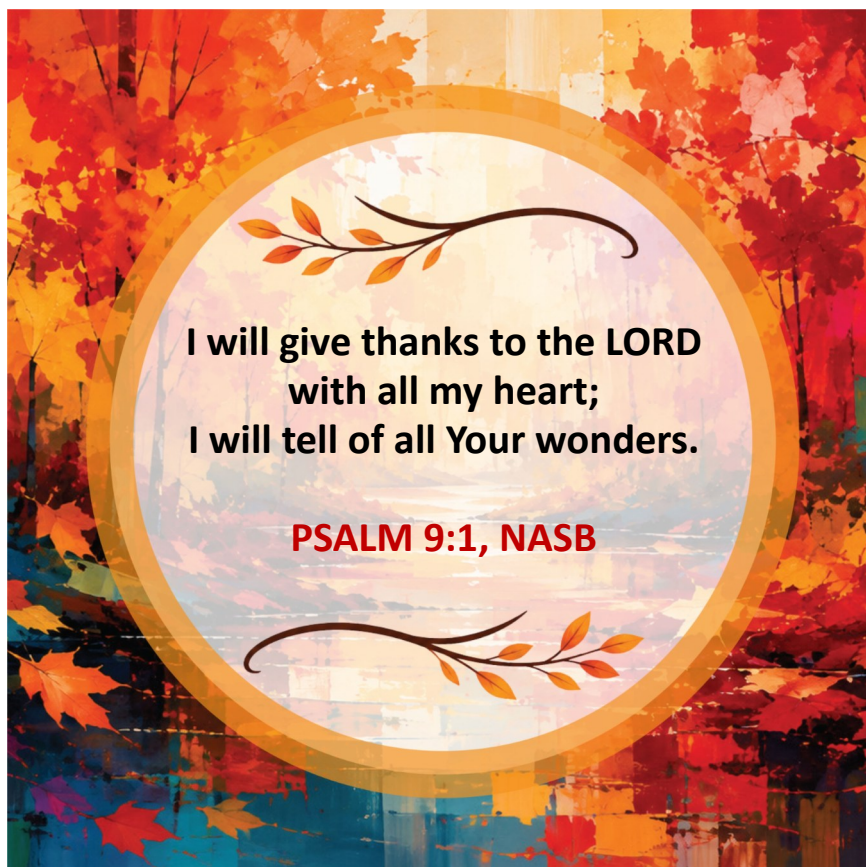
Treasurer's Report for the One Month Ending July 31, 2026

	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance
<u>Church</u>				
Income	\$ 90,447.38	\$ 90,447.38	\$ 120,222.25	\$ (29,774.87)
Expenses	\$ 118,584.76	\$ 118,584.76	\$ 116,596.27	\$ 1,988.49
Total Net Income (Loss) Church	\$ (28,137.38)	\$ (28,137.38)	\$ 3,625.98	\$ (31,763.36)

<u>School</u>				
Income	\$ 166,692.09	\$ 166,692.09	\$ 147,712.55	\$ 18,979.54
Expenses	\$ 425,756.67	\$ 425,756.67	\$ 380,059.52	\$ 45,697.15
Designated (In/Out Accounts)	\$ (7,222.34)	\$ (7,222.34)		
Total Net Income (Loss) School	\$ (251,842.24)	\$ (251,842.24)	\$ (232,346.97)	\$ (26,717.61)

Investment Assets

School Endowment Fund	\$ 410,599.73
Bernthal Endowment Scholarship Fund	\$ 149,332.00
All Other Scholarships/Investments	\$ 23,867.38



Parish Statistics

Marriages

Jim Campbell & Linda Davy - 8/8/26

Baptisms

*Julia Pauliina Raitio - 8/9/26
Evan Reid Guenther - 8/10/26
David Oliver Guenther - 8/10/26
Tommy Robert Beissinger - 8/16/26
Baron Lee Bessinger - 8/16/26
Skylar Marie Beissinger - 8/16/26*



What time is it? One of the most important concepts we learn growing up is the value of time. We constantly look at the clock to know when it is time for school to start, a meeting to begin, or the workday to happen. During the summer, our schedules change and our days become much more flexible. But as a new school year begins, time shifts back into focus.

This brings to mind Moses and the Israelites, who traveled through the desert for nearly 40 years. As they stood on the edge of the Promised Land, it was finally time to review God's plan. God wanted to remind them of His constant presence in the past and teach them how to use their time in their new home. There would be time to explore, time to build houses, time to defend their land, time to play, and time to work. For six days they could pursue these activities, but the seventh day belonged to the Lord. God commanded them to give that time back to Him, dedicating it entirely to rest and worship.

As we are finishing up the first several weeks of school, we are establishing new routines. Over the course of this year, we will learn many new things in math, science, social studies, and reading. More importantly, we will focus deeply on God's Word and what it means to live as His children. As 1 John 3:1a reminds us: "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are."

Because we are His children, God has a beautiful blueprint for how we should spend our time this school year. The Apostle Paul lays out this strategy perfectly in 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."

This year, our school community is focusing on three vital concepts from this scripture: walking, rooting, and building.

First, we are Walking in Him. Walking is a daily, step-by-step action. In all the coming weeks, walking with Jesus means making Him a natural part of our everyday routines—whether we are in the hallways, on the playground, or inside the classroom.

Second, we must be Rooted in Him. Just like a strong tree drives its roots deep into the soil to withstand severe storms, we must anchor our hearts in God's love and truth. When schoolwork gets challenging or friendships are tested, our deep roots in Christ will keep us steady.

Finally, we are being Built up in Him. God is actively constructing something beautiful in each of us. Every lesson we learn, every chapel service we attend, and every act of kindness we share helps build us up into the people He created us to be, overflowing with thankfulness. We are excited to be back to another school year. It is a season filled with time to explore, time to play, time to learn, and time to praise God. It will be a wonderful year filled with opportunities to grow. Please continue to pray for the students and families entrusted to our care and for our entire staff as we look forward to a fantastic year of walking, rooting, and building together in Christ!

In Christ,

Michael Rottmann
Executive Director of School Ministry



SCHOOL CALENDAR

September

- 1 - 4: P.A.C.E Mission Project
- 2: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 3:30AM
Grace Nights for All 6:00 - 8:00PM
- 4: Early Release
K - 5 N.U.T. Day
Midterm of 1st Quarter
- 7: No School - Labor Day
- 9: Grace Nights for All 6:00 - 8:00PM
Middle School Youth Group 6:30 - 8:00PM
- 10: Donuts with Dad (Hosted by P.A.C.E.) 7:00 - 8:15AM
- 11: P.A.C.E. Board Meeting 1:00 - 3:00PM
- 14 - 18: MAP Testing (Grades K - 3)
- 16: Uniform Sales 7:30AM - 3:30PM
P.A.C.E. Coffee Talk 8:15AM
Grace Nights for All 6:00 - 8:00PM
- 21 - 25: MAP Testing (Grades 4 - 8)
- 23: Grace Nights for All 6:00 - 8:00PM
Middle School Youth Group 6:30 - 8:00PM
- 30: No School - FL/GA President's Equip Conference

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.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 12 PM God's Guys 5:30 PM Church Campus Prayer Vigil 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	2 6 PM Grace Nights 6:30 PM Discover Grace Class	3 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 11 AM Sunshine Club @ Olive Garden 5:30 PM Trinity Bells 6:30 PM Grace Chorale	4 10 AM Bible Study - MM	5 5:00 PM Worship Svc
	6 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Confirmation 10:45 AM Worship	Labor Day 7 No School Offices Closed	8 7:30 AM Staff Devos 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	9 3:30 PM SM Training 6 PM Grace Nights 6:30 PM Discover Grace Class	10 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 5:30 PM Trinity Bells 6:30 PM Grace Chorale	11 10 AM Bible Study - MM 1PM PACE Bd. Mtg. 5 PM Worship Svc
13 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Confirmation 10:45 AM Worship	14 7:30 AM Staff Devos 9 AM Circuit Pastors 6:30 PM Elder Meeting	15 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 12 PM God's Guys 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	16 3:30 PM SM Training 6 PM Stephen Ministry 6 PM Grace Nights 6:30 PM Discover Grace Class	17 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 5:30 PM Trinity Bells 6:30 PM Grace Chorale	18 10 AM Bible Study - MM	19 5 PM Worship Svc
20 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Confirmation 10:45 AM Worship	21 7:30 AM Staff Devos 6 PM School Board	22 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	23 3:30 PM SM Training 6 PM Grace Gathering: Oktoberfest	24 9:30 AM LWR Quilters 5:30 PM Sip w/Grace - Grove Roots 5:30 PM Trinity Bells 6:30 PM Grace Chorale	25 10 AM Bible Study - MM	26 5 PM Worship Svc
27 8:30 AM Worship 9:45 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 9:45 AM Confirmation 10:45 AM Worship New members received @ 10:45 worship	28 7:30 AM Staff Devos 5:30 PM Bus Mgmt. 6:30 PM BOD	29 10 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Church Staff 4 PM Dementia Caregivers Meeting 7 PM Praise Rehearsal	No School 30 Presidents' Equip Conference 3:30 PM SM Training			



VOICE OF GRACE

Grace Lutheran Church
327 Avenue C, SE
Winter Haven, FL 33880

NON PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
LAKELAND, FL 33805
PERMIT NO. 1152

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO JESUS