



GLOW

Grace Lutheran Church of Winchester

From the Desk of Pastor Mark



Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Part of my church sponsored health plan includes incentives in encouraging a healthy lifestyle. Some examples of these incentives include regularly monitoring weight and vitals, participating in exercise programs, and the opportunity to engage with an online community for the purpose of accountability. For the most part, I do have some regular routines that I have committed to, but I occasionally take advantage of some of these programs. But what I've learned is that if my commitment tapers off, or there are gaps in my monitoring, I will get reminder emails to encourage me to get back on the horse.

What I've also noticed is that if the gaps turn into a clear decommitment on my part, then the emails take on a different tone as well. Initially, the emails will apply a tone of trying to make me feel guilty and reminding me of all the health benefits that I am losing out on for not staying with the program. Whether I'm simply too dense or too ignorant, those communications rarely ever inspire me to renew my commitments.

But after a time of getting no response from me, the messaging in the emails changes to starting over, making a new commitment. All the way back to start. Anything that may have previously been gained has been wiped out, the slate is clean, and the goals and the methods to achieve those goals are brand new.

February 18 is Ash Wednesday, the transition into the Season of Lent, and a time of starting over in how we understand our relationship with God through Christ. While Lent is often perceived to be a time in which we enter into a practice of *denying* ourselves (no soda, no candy, no meat, etc.), what Lent really is, is a time in which we are invited to *pre-pare* ourselves; specifically, to prepare ourselves to be messengers of hope and joy to those who long to receive the Good News of Jesus Christ. This is traditionally done through fasting, prayer, and good works. Fasting is meant to prepare us to be reliant on the bread that God sustains us with over the bread which will leave us hungry again. The time spent in prayer is meant to strengthen our relationship in preparation to proclaim the message of God's love. Participation in good works is our response to the command of Christ to see beyond

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February 2026

Ruth's Pantry

Needs

- Canned Peas
- Canned Carrots
- Shampoo, Body Wash
- Bar Soap, **Cereal**
- Hamburger Helper
- Pasta Noodles
- Cooking Oil
- Sugar, **Cereal**
- Salt and Pepper
- Cereal, Cereal**
- Paper & Plastic Bags

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our own needs and desires and prepares us for a lifetime of being the hands and feet of Christ for those who may not even have their most basic needs being met. As well, baptism is traditionally not celebrated in the Lutheran Church during the Season of Lent, harkening back to the ancient traditions of the church when the Lenten time was used to prepare candidates for baptism, which would then happen in mass on Easter.

Lenten discipline is not about denying ourselves or making temporary sacrifices: to the contrary, it's about being fulfilled and it's about preparing ourselves to be the persons who God has made us and called us to be from this moment on, until we take our last breath. It's about starting over. We are all going to come up short of some of the goals that we set for ourselves and that others set for us. We're also going to come up way short in the expectations that God has for us. Sin will undoubtedly trip us up sometimes. But if we are prepared to be able to respond to these failings, we are assured that we will never get so knocked down that we can't get up again.

While the emails from the health plan usually don't generate much of a response from me, I am aware of what they are calling me to do and to be. Lent can be the same opportunity. With God's nudging, my hope is that, with the right frame of mind and the gentleness of that nudging that I will renew all my commitments to being the person that I want to be as well as the person that God needs me to be. Quite honestly, it's the least I can do to say "thank you" to a God who loves me and provides for everything that I need.....and more.

In Christ,

Pastor Mark



Holy Lament

A Worship Series for Lent

Lament is described as a passionate expression of grief or sorrow, and is an appropriate response that we as Christians may have to the events in our lives, in our nation, and in our world.

Each week we will turn to scripture to consider what it means to sit with our grief rather than try to push it aside. We will discover that many faithful believers have wrestled with grief, sorrow, and questions for God about why the innocent suffer.

This series understands lament as one of the more faithful things we can do. When we approach God with honesty and humility, and we admit that some things are too big for our hearts to bear, we will find there not a disapproving God but one who weeps with us. We will find a God who can take our grief and disappointment and transform them into holy joy and renewed hope. We will learn, ultimately, that Jesus' death on the cross—the place to which the season of Lent leads us—is the reason we never mourn as those without hope.

Weekly Lenten worship is at 5:30 p.m.

PANCAKES!!!

On Tuesday, February 17, from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m., you will again have an opportunity to dine at Grace at the annual "night before Ash Wednesday" pancake dinner.

This all-you-can-eat culinary treat is prepared and served by the energetic team of volunteers who run Ruth's Pantry. It is a **fund-raiser** for the Pantry. The cost of a ticket is whatever you wish—a free-will offering—money that will be used to purchase needed food and supplies for the patrons of Ruth's Pantry.

Mark your calendars. Come hungry. Prepare for an evening of fun and good eats! See you there!



Confirmation

This month the students in our Confirmation class are taking what they have learned about Paul and the letters he wrote to churches to share the Word of God. They are participating in the "Hearts across America Challenge."

Our students have sent Valentine's Day cards to ELCA Congregations in all 50 states with the hope that they will receive a response back from every state.

In the hallway at Grace, look for a United States map on which the students are keeping track of replies. Follow along with our class and see if we can share and exchange the word of God with friends across the entire country!



February

The 80+ birthday gang

- 17 Sandra Terio
5009 Grandview Road
Larsen, WI 54947
- 20 Yvonne Zobel
5905 Oak Lane Drive, Box 350
Butte des Morts, WI 54927
- 28 Germaine Anderson
1447-7 Tullar Road
Neenah, WI 54956



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Patti Nelson, Vice President	920-858-6394	sewthegardener@hotmail.com
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Other Key Contacts

Building and Grounds	920-470-2574	Rob Nelson, Chairperson
Business Manager: Alissa Olson	920-277-7619	graceofwinchester@gmail.com
Music: Todd Repp, Jessica McGinnis, Carol Reichert		
Custodian — Gene Walter		
Power Point Master — Patti Nelson		

Love flows from Grace

May you have the power to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ!

February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Pantry Challenge: 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Adult Forum	2 9:00-11:00 a.m. Ruth's Pantry 4:00-5:00 p.m. Ruth's Pantry	3	4 9:00 a.m. Women of Grace 5:30 p.m. Worship Ser- vice of the Word	5	6	6
8 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Adult Forum	9 9:00-11:00 a.m. Ruth's Pantry 4:00-5:00 p.m. Ruth's Pantry	10	11 8:30 a.m. Sewing Circle 5:30 p.m. Worship Ser- vice of the Word 6:15 p.m. Confirmation	12 1:00 p.m. Leah Circle	13	14 
15 9:30 a.m. Worship with Praise Band 10:30 a.m. Adult Forum	16 9:00-11:00 a.m. Ruth's Pantry 4:00-5:00 p.m. Ruth's Pantry	17 4:30-7:00 p.m. All-you-can eat PANCAKE SUPPER	18 9:00 a.m. Women of Grace 5:30 p.m. Ash Wednes- day Worship	19 8:36 a.m. Prop- erty Team	20	21
22 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Adult Forum	23 9:00-11:00 a.m. Ruth's Pantry 4:00-5:00 p.m. Ruth's Pantry	24	25 8:30 a.m. Sewing Circle 5:30 p.m. Lenten Wor- ship	26	27	28

February	
Ushers	Greeters
February 1 — Team 3	Team 3
February 8 — Team 4	Team 4
February 15 — Team 5	Team 5
February 22 — Team 6	Team 6

Keeping in Touch

General email address:

graceofwinchester@gmail.com

Grace Web site: glcw.org

Grace: [Facebook.com/graceofwinchester](https://www.facebook.com/graceofwinchester)

Ruth's Pantry: ruthspantrygrace@gmail.com

Ruth's Pantry: [Facebook.com/glcw.ruths.pantry](https://www.facebook.com/glcw.ruths.pantry)

The email Prayer Chain.

Lutheran World Relief

Traditionally, we collect items for Personal Care kits during the weeks of Lent. You are encouraged to bring items for the LWR quilts throughout the year, (we ALWAYS need used sheets and bedding).

During Lent, be on the lookout for very wide-tooth combs and individually wrapped toothbrushes, although we do have a supply those items left from last year. What is **most** needed this year is 4-ounce bars of MILD soap and dark colored lighter-weight bath towels.



In 2025, LWR distributed more than 315,000 quilts and 485,000 kits across 15 countries. "Your gifts are a comforting reminder to our neighbors that, even on their darkest days, the love of Christ is near."



—LWR newsletter

Ruth's Pantry "Collection Challenge"

The Ruth's Pantry Collection Challenge Sunday (to help stock the shelves) is coming up. When you come to Church on Sunday, **February 1**, please bring personal hygiene items—deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, body wash, etc.

"Early" Notice: The first Sunday challenge in **March** requests are in. You are encouraged to bring cleaning supplies—disinfecting wipes, glass cleaner, dusting sprays or wipes, toilet bowl cleaner, magic erasers, etc.

Thank You (3)

The Ruth's Pantry team would like to give our greatest thanks to our friends at Immanuel Lutheran Church of Zittau for their incredible support. We recently received many wonderful donations from the members of Immanuel Lutheran, and we cannot thank them enough for helping to support our mission!

ALSO . . .

According to a letter we at Ruth's Pantry received from our partners at Feeding America, Ruth's Pantry provided approximately 19,652 meals in 2025! Of course, this would not have been possible without your (Grace Lutheran members) continued support. Thank you for helping Ruth's Pantry make 2025 a year of giving!



AND another Thank You

Thank you for the Christmas cards and the ornament at Christmas. In fact, I'd like to thank Grace Lutheran for all you do for me from afar. I am comfortable in Oconto, and I enjoy being near my son. But in my heart, Winchester will always be my home.

— Mary Thompson

Who Paints the Sky?

The dawn awakens slowly with streaks of red and gray . . . the east is painted first.

Who paints the sky?

The sun appears and warms the earth. It glows but only for a while . . . the day lights with promise . . . a time to grow, a time to work, a time to rejoice.

Who paints the sky?

Then come the storms with clouds of black and gray . . . flashes of light and energy, rumbles and sounds loud and clear . . . first close, then distant, then far, far away . . . the raindrops fall.

Who paints the sky and who makes the rain?

Then the day slowly fades away in clouds of pinks and yellows . . . it continues to fade until it is no more . . . and, the stars shine brightly in the night sky . . . their glow bothered only by the moon.

But who paints the sky?

Thank you, God, for the sun that shines in the day . . . and the moon and stars that shine at night . . . thank you for all the beautiful sunrises and sunsets that have brightened our lives.

You, and only You, can paint the sky.

Thank You!

—Ann



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February

2026



Grace Historical Notes

1894 The congregation established a Sunday School, with the first Christmas Program given that year. In 1907, English was first used in Sunday School, at the request of some parents. Previously, all teaching was in Norwegian. In 1916 English became the only language used in Sunday School

1913 In this year, it was decided that persons other than Scandinavians could become members of the church.

1915 The Young People's Society paid for a piano, the choir section, and the seats.

1917 and 1918 the individual communion cups were purchased and donated by the Young People's Society to replace the one large chalice, which had been used for communion up to this time. They also purchased and installed new bookracks for all the pews.

1918 It was decided to have an equal number of services in English as in Norwegian. Norwegian continued to be used as a language of worship upon occasion until the early and mid-1940s.

1924 At the annual meeting on January 16, 1924, 70 members were present. The constitution was read paragraph by paragraph, and some changes were approved.

1924 At the Trustee meeting in March, it was resolved that: "hereafter we do not light the Christmas tree until such time as we can discontinue the use of candles." (The church had no electricity)

—Facts are assembled and submitted by David Christianson, with the help of several people who went through historical materials and pulled out data of note.