

THE Visitor

April 2026

Grace United
Methodist Church
318 N Center Street
Geneseo, IL 61254
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geneseograce.org

The Naomi Prayer Discipleship

A Testimony of Small Beginnings, Big Prayers, and God's Quiet (and Sometimes Funny) Miracles

Let me share a testimony, not a fairy tale, not a drama series, but a real church story where God showed up quietly, often very early in the morning.

It All Started with One Person and a Very Early Alarm Clock

The Naomi Prayer Discipleship did not begin with a committee. It did not begin with a budget. It did not begin with a finished church building. It began with one person, one promise, and one painful alarm clock set at 6:00am. Every day. At the church. Rain or shine. Sleepy, or extra sleepy. At that time, we had: **No money. No finished building. Just a 24 x 12 meter church skeleton and one very big prayer: "Lord, please finish Your house because right now, it looks very unfinished."** For six months, that was it. **No fundraising letters. No pressure. No strategy. Just prayer and coffee strong enough to resurrect the dead at 6:00am.**

God Said: "You Pray - I'll Do the Adding"

After six months, two women joined, still every day, still at 6:00am, still praying faithfully. And then, without announcement, something began to happen. Materials started coming. Money started appearing. Donations arrived from places we didn't expect. **We didn't know where they came from, but we were very sure Who sent them. It was as if God was saying, "Relax. I heard you."**

Retired Teachers Joined and the Prayers Got Bigger in number

After one year, three retired teachers joined the group. Now we were seven prayer warriors meeting daily. And let me be honest retired teachers do not rush anything. Not lessons. Not stories. And definitely not prayers. Their prayers were long, very long. Long enough to test your legs if you were standing! But God was patient and through them, we learned patience, too. And by this time, the church building was almost finished.

The Birth of "Naomi" – A Prayer That Multiplies

The group was officially named *Naomi*. Soon, we grew to twelve members including husbands. (Yes, husbands were recruited slowly and carefully!) Naomi became a ministry of intercessory prayer: For people. For families. For needs. For the sick. Every single day. We also began collecting small daily offerings, not for ourselves, but to help those who needed medicine. Prayer was no longer just words. It became compassion in action.

From Prayer Group to Church "Botika" or Pharmacy/Drugstore

Because of this ministry, we established a small *Botika*, a medicine center in the church. Doctors from the congregation volunteered. Children received medicine. Adults received care. And something beautiful happened: people came for medicine, but they stayed for prayer, for love, and for hope. The church did not grow by force. It grew through service. Through faithfulness. Through prayer.

Pastor Cel



Pastor Excelsis (Cel) Biteng
Email: celbiteng@gmail.com

318 N Center Street
Geneseo, IL

Sunday School:
Adult Classes 8:00am
Ladies Bible Study
10:00am

Worship Sunday at 9:00am
Kids Worship (Ages 4-11)
Sunday at 9:00am

stayCONNECTED



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Geneseo Grace

2026 Offering Needed to Meet Monthly Budget

\$30,833.00

February 22 - March 22

\$24,489.24

General Fund

YOUR GIVING MAKES
A DIFFERENCE.



For your convenience we have 3 ways to give online!

Scan the QR code | website: geneseograce.com |
Download the "Vanco" mobile app



Date	Attendance		
	Worship	Sunday School	Wednesday
Feb. 25 & March 1	77	19	13
March 4 & 8	65	19	15
March 11 & 15	72	20	12
March 18 & 22	97	20	22





Please Join Us

Maundy Thursday
Women's Lunch 12:00pm
Service 7:00pm

Good Friday
Service 12:00pm

Easter Sunday
Worship 9:00am

Easter Egg Hunt
following Worship Service



Note the earlier date!



OWLS Lunch

Thursday, April 9 at 11:30am



Join us for lunch followed by a program by Nancy & Walt Holling, Master Gardeners. They will present a gardening program on container gardening. This will be extremely informative for those interested in flower or vegetable gardening. Sign up in the lobby or call the office.

Sunday, April 19
at 6:30pm.

Men of Grace (UMM) invites all men for dessert and fellowship. Our District Superintendent, Rev. James Fielder, will be our guest speaker. Please put this on your calendar.

Friday, April 10
at 9:37am in the library
Everyone is welcome to join us as we work on sewing, crocheting, crafting, etc. projects & enjoy chatting with each other!




- 01 - Jamie Cucci, Leonora Good
- 03 - Ron Vroman
- 07 - Chuck Boardman, Adelaide Sheffler
- 08 - Lacey Burris, Marian Shelton
- 10 - Olivia Orton
- 11 - Carlye Akers, Janey Neumann
- 13 - Chelsea West
- 16 - Tom Hudson
- 17 - Lyn Gradert
- 18 - Harrison Hill
- 22 - Doug Emerick
- 24 - Larry Goodwin, Carly Verbeck
- 29 - Deb Wyffels

LOOKING BACK WITH



Do you know what the names Woodring, Rife, Hoerner, Engelter, Goodwin, Webb, and Biteng have in common??? They are just a few surnames of more than 50 pastors who have served (or are serving) Grace Church. After Easter, in the lobby of the church, there will be a **"Ministers of Grace Church" album available for your viewing.** The album is a "work-in-progress," so if you can supply any missing or better-quality photos, they would be appreciated. Grace Church has truly been blessed with many wonderful shepherds.



- 15 - Brad & Tammy Dunker (31)
- 16 - Larry & Linda Goodwin (54)
- 20 - Todd & Marlene Ashpole (41)
- Steve & Susy Coleman (24)
- Landon & Sharon Neumann (24)

PRAYER list



MISSION PROJECT REQUEST FOR DONATIONS

Adopted children & families	Bonnie Aureda
Peggy Betcher	EJ Biteng
Greg Bodeen	Kim Brake
Mike Clark	Corlette
John Davis	Ruth Ann Eaker
Family Member	Cathy Gaudet
Larry Goodwin	GUMDROPS Families
Nikki Haars	Margaret Hitzhusen
Mary Kintigh Family	Andrew Lord
Joe Loucks	Clarice Massingill
Michelle Matheis	Karen Myhre
Cheryl & John Opsal	Patty
Mary Petre	Powell's Brother
Ellen Rubino	Barb Sigwalt
Jann & Traci Sigwalt	Sally Swanson
Todd	

Those in Assisted Living & Nursing Home:

Joyce Criddle	Cathy Gaudet	John Riggs
Connie Ryner	Barry Snodgrass	Carolyn Stenzel
Rita Webb		

The Youth Group will be collecting **donations for Midwest Mission's** Personal Dignity Kits & Home Care Kits. We plan to deliver the kits, along with any donated bicycles & pedal sewing machines, this summer.

Items can be left in the F&F 5-gallon buckets that will be available in the lobby. Monetary donations are also welcome.

PERSONAL DIGNITY KIT:

- 1 - hand towel (no kitchen towels)
- 1 - washcloth (no dish cloths)
- 1 - adult toothbrush (individually packaged)
- 1 - bar soap 3-4 oz.
- 1 - shampoo 12-19 oz - lid taped
- 1 - deodorant 2-3 oz - stick, roll on, or pump
- 1 - lotion 8-10 oz - lid taped
- 1 - 1 gallon resealable plastic bag

HOME CARE KIT:

- *liquid household cleaner 56-80 oz total (no pump or spray bottles)
- *dish soap 42-64 oz total
- *liquid laundry detergent 100-150 oz total
- *1 scrub brush with or without handle



We accept gifts for OCC. Each month will have a donations list. Please leave your items in the lobby in the OCC drawer of the hutch. Thank you! During APRIL we are collecting combs, hair brushes, & hair ties.

*God makes
all things new*



Drop off items no later
than April 15

April



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<p>Regular Sunday Events</p> <p>8:00am - Adult Sunday School 9:00am - Worship 9:00am - KIDS Worship 10:00am - Women's Bible Study</p>			<p>1</p> <p>9:00am - Staff Meeting 9:30am -Worship Staff Meeting</p> <p>6:00pm - Worship Service 7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>2</p> <p>12:00pm - Women's Lunch</p>  <p>MAUNDY <i>Thursday</i></p> <p>7:00pm - Maundy Thursday Service</p>	<p>3</p> <p>12:00pm - Good Friday Service</p>  <p>GOOD <i>Friday</i></p>	4
<p>5</p> <p>Regular Sunday Events</p>  <p>Easter Egg Hunt following Worship</p>	<p>6</p> <p>8:00am - Prayer Group, Library</p>	<p>7</p> <p>1:00pm - Book Club, Library</p> 	<p>8</p> <p>9:00am - Staff Meeting 9:30am -Worship Staff Meeting</p> <p>6:00pm - Worship Service 7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>9</p> <p>11:30am - OWLS Lunch, Otterbein</p> 	<p>10</p> <p>9:30am - Stitches Garden, Library</p> 	11
<p>12</p> <p>Regular Sunday Events</p>	<p>13</p> <p>8:00am - Prayer Group, Library</p> <p>6:00pm - Opal Circle, Chapel</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:00am - Pearl Circle Meeting, Chapel</p>	<p>15</p> <p>9:00am - Staff Meeting 9:30am -Worship Staff Meeting</p> <p>6:00pm - Worship Service 7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	16	17	18
<p>19</p> <p>Regular Sunday Events</p> <p>6:30pm - Men of Grace, Otterbein</p>	<p>20</p> <p>8:00am - Prayer Group, Library</p>	21	<p>22</p> <p>9:00am - Staff Meeting 9:30am -Worship Staff Meeting</p> <p>6:00pm - Worship Service 7:00pm - Choir Rehearsal</p>	23	24	25
26	<p>27</p> <p>8:00am - Prayer Group, Library</p>	28	29	30		
				<p>11:00am - Medicare Educational Meeting, Otterbein</p>		