

2026/27 Program Guide

Check the online calendar to confirm @ gracepa.org



Weekly

Sundays

- Worship | 8:30 & 10:45am (10 am in Advent)
- Sunday School | September-May | 9:45am
- Adult Forum | September-May | 9:45am

Tuesdays

- Men's Breakfast | 7:00am year round

Wednesdays September-May (check online calendar)

- Quilters | 10am
- Life Together!
 - Confirmation - Online | 4:30pm
 - Life Together Dinner | 6-7pm
 - Children's Choir | 6-6:30pm
 - Children's Fun | 7-8pm
 - Confirmation - On Campus | 7pm
 - High School Youth Group | 7-8pm
 - Adult Chat with Pastor Matt | 7-8pm
 - Chancel Choir Rehearsal | 7-8:30pm

Thursdays September-May (check online calendar)

- Bible Study | 1pm
- Connections Cafe | 2pm (2nd/4th Thursdays)
- Handbell Choir Rehearsal | 5pm

Monthly

- Women's Night Out - 1st Thursdays | 7pm
- Work Day | 10am-Noon - 2nd Saturdays - check calendar
- Evening Prayer in the style of Taizé - 2nd Sundays | 7pm
- Grace Outdoors (as scheduled)
- Middle School Youth Group Event
- High School Youth Group Event
- Young Adult Event

September 2026 Edition

Periodic/Annual

- Blessing of Backpacks and Bicycles - August 9, 2026
- Rally Day! Start of fall programming - September 13, 2026
- Blessing of the Animals - October 4, 2026 | 10:45 service
- Beer & Hymns - Fridays, 7/3/26 and 10/9/26 | 5:30pm
1/15/27 and 4/16/27 | 5:30pm
- Reformationfest! - last Sunday of October, 10/25/26
- Trunk or Treat - Friday, October 30, 2026 | 6-8pm
- All Saints|Service for Surviving Families - November 1, 2026 | 7pm
- Advent Festival - November 29, 2026 | 11am
- Celebrate Grace! - February 7, 2027
- Men's Dinner - October 11, 2026 | 11am

Retreats

- Grace Goes to Mt Cross - Congregational Retreat at Mt Cross
Aug 28-30, 2026 | August 27-29, 2027
- Men's Retreat - at Mt Cross | Apr 23-25, 2027
- Women's Retreats:
On campus October 17, 2026 | 10am - 4pm
Weekend at Mt Cross | Mar 5-7, 2027
- Synodical Retreats at Mt Cross
Elementary & Middle School (3rd-8th) | 11/6-8/2026
High School (9th-12th) | 2/26-28/2027
- ELCA National Youth Gathering, Minneapolis | 6/28 - 7/2/2027



Grace Lutheran Church

PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA | GRACEPA.ORG
3149 Waverley Street Palo Alto, CA 94306

Youth Group: Join our Youth Group for a fun mix of activities, from engaging discussions and community service to exciting social events. It's a great way to connect with peers, grow in your faith, and be part of a supportive community. Youth Group meets weekly from 7-8:30pm on Wednesdays in the Youth Room. Contact Emily for more information!

Bible Study: Dive into our Weekly Adult Bible Study Sept-May for a deep, engaging exploration of scripture and ancient history with Pr Matt or Pr Friederike. Enhance your understanding, share insights, and strengthen your faith and get a glimpse of Sunday's sermon. Check the calendar for details. Interested? Contact Pastor Matt!

Women's Night Out: Join our fun-filled monthly gathering on the first Thursday of the month, 7-9pm. No topic is off limit: we cover everything from faith to menopause and cooking strawberry jam. Also, twice a year, we have retreats: In the Fall, a one day retreat on campus, and in Spring, a weekend up in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Connect with other women while deepening your faith and building a strong, supportive community. Would you like to learn more? Contact Pr Friederike.

Confirmation: Join our Middle School Confirmation Program and strengthen your faith through interactive activities and creative challenges. Build resilience, connect with friends, ask questions, and grow together in a vibrant, supportive community. Confirmation Classes take place on Wednesday, 4:30-5:30 on zoom, and 7-8pm in the Middle School Room. For more information contact Pastor Friederike!

Chancel Choir: Open to any singer of high school age and up. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 7:00-8:30 pm, and we sing most Sundays at the 10:45 service. All voice parts are invited, but we'd love the balance of a few more tenors and basses! No audition is required.

Mentor Sunday: Our Middle Schoolers are invited to join this special program as part of their confirmation journey: Once a month, during Sunday School time, 9:45-10:30am, the confirmands will meet with their adult mentor, a member of the congregation, to talk about God, the world, their experiences, faith, doubt, and questions. This unique programming creates bonds that reach beyond the usual age-group focus and are a great experience for both, mentor and mentee. For more information, contact Pastor Friederike.

Praises Ring: Grace's handbell ensemble rehearses on Thursday afternoons from 5:00-6:00 pm. The bells usually ring in church on the first Sunday of each month, plus Christmas Eve. No prior experience with bell ringing is necessary, although some basic music-reading ability is helpful. We have a couple of spots open this year; contact Tim Getz if interested.

Men's Ministry: This is an expanding ministry at Grace that includes breakfast every Tuesday morning at a local cafe for those who can make it, and this fall will include two dinner get togethers as well. In the Spring we will continue, but put our third Men's Retreat on the calendar now as the last one was a HUGE hit. It will be April 23-25, 2027! This program is intended to build relationship within your faith community in ways that will deepen your faith, and create a social counterweight to the loneliness affecting our society today. Contact Pastor Matt with any questions!

Sunday School & Adult Forum: Experience our Sunday School Program for all ages, from infants to adults, where we foster community and support faith development through every stage of life. Join us to strengthen connections, grow spiritually, and be part of a vibrant, multi-generational community. Sunday School & Adult Forum happen weekly from 9:45-10:30am between worship services. Contact Emily for more information!

Quilting: Our quilters meet Wednesdays from 10:30am-12pm in Brown Hall to work on the quilts for Grace's High School Seniors and the wider community. If you are interested in quilting or learning to quilt, this group welcomes you. First meeting is on 9/2. Contact Pr Friederike for questions.

Young Adults: Grace Young Adults gather monthly for fellowship, connection, and fun. This is a welcoming community for those navigating the transitions of adulthood, offering support, friendship, and meaningful time together. From escape rooms and café meetups to Friendsgiving, Christmas outings, game nights, and shared meals, there's always something to enjoy. Whether you've grown up at Grace or are new to the area, you are invited to be part of this vibrant and engaging group. Contact Emily for more information.

THINGS TO DO AT GRACE

Life Together Dinner: Join us for Life Together Dinners every Wednesday (Sept-May (with some exceptions . . . check the calendar!)), where everyone is welcome to enjoy a meal and build community - and then head off to our Bible Study, choir, youth group, or Confirmation class. Questions? Email Pastor Matt.

Connections Café: Connections Café happens bi-weekly, on the second and fourth Thursday, at 2 pm in the Emmaus Room. This group for the more senior members of our church gathers over coffee/tea and treats to connect with each other and learn a little something new from a wide range of topics and speakers and each other. Connections Café is a space where relationships grow and community deepens. Want to know more? Contact Pr Friederike.

Children's Choir: For children and youth in grades 1-8. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 6:00-6:30 pm. Contact Tim Getz for more information.

Communion Delivery: At Grace, we believe that no one should feel disconnected from the heart of our community—especially those who are unable to attend worship in person. That's why, on the first Sunday of each month, we extend the table through our Communion Delivery Ministry, bringing the sacrament to those who are homebound. We are always looking for drivers who can help deliver communion once a month, and for a coordinator who can call recipients ahead of time to confirm their availability and help organize the schedule. To learn more, receive communion at home, or get involved, contact Pastor Friederike.

Work Day: With a number of exceptions (check the calendar!) we will be meeting from 10am to noon on the second Saturday of the month with tasks to accomplish on campus. This is a great opportunity to provide support to the Grace community, help us as a congregation focus our limited maintenance resources on tasks that truly need a professional, and build relationships while working together. This is your church . . . let's dig in! Contact Pastor Matt

Grace Outdoors: Calling all outdoor enthusiasts! Join our monthly hike to explore beautiful trails, connect with fellow church members, and enjoy the great outdoors together, followed by a relaxing pub stop for food and fellowship. As scheduled. Interested? Email Pr Matt!

Visitation Group: Some members of our congregation are no longer able to come to church regularly because of age or health. Many of them have been part of Grace for years—showing up, building community, and supporting the life of our congregation. Even when they can no longer come to us, we want to make sure that the community continues to come to them. That's why we are starting a Visitation Group! Our pastors will, of course, continue to visit our homebound members—but sometimes it is simply wonderful to see another familiar (or new!) face from Grace, share a conversation, hear what's happening, and stay connected to the community. We are looking for volunteers who would enjoy visiting a homebound member about once a month, on your own schedule. No special skills are needed—just a little time, a listening ear, and a willingness to connect, we would love to have you be part of the Visitation Group! Contact Pastor Friederike.

PROGRAM STAFF:



SENIOR PASTOR
Rev. Matthew Smuts | pastormatt@gracepa.org

ASSOCIATE PASTOR
Rev. Friederike Wekel | pastorf@gracepa.org

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
Tim Getz | tim@gracepa.org

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY
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2026/2027 Key Dates for Your Calendar

2026

July

- 3 Beer and Hymns (5:30pm Emmaus Room)

August

- 9 Outdoor Worship (10:45):
Blessing of Bikes and Backpacks
Stakeholder BBQ: WSYG Trip Report
- 16 Annual Report Forum
- 23 Annual Meeting
- 28-30 Grace Goes to Mt. Cross
day and weekend options for the whole congregation

September

- 12 Campus Work Day (10am-12pm)
- 13 Rally Day Sunday - start of fall programming
Worship/Sunday School/BBQ
- 16 First Life Together (see front cover for more info)
- 26 75th Anniversary Celebration (5-7pm)
- 27 75th Anniversary: 9am Sunday School/Adult Forum
10am Worship; 11am Potluck Coffee Hour

October

- 4 Outdoor Service (10:45): Blessing of the Animals
- 9 Beer and Hymns (5:30pm Emmaus Room)
- 17 Women's Retreat (10am-4pm on campus)
- 25 Reformation Sunday
Reformationfest Brats & Beer!
- 30 Trunk or Treat

November

- 1 All Saints Sunday
Service for Surviving Families (7pm)
- 6-8 Elementary & Middle School Synod Retreat at Mt Cross
- 29 Advent: Single 10am Service
Advent Festival (11am Brown Hall)

December

Sunday Worship During December (Advent/Christmas):

Single 10am Service

- 13 Christmas Play during Worship 10am
- 16 Christmas Life Together
- 19 Finnish Christmas (5pm)
- 24 Christmas Eve Worship (4 & 6pm)
- 25 Christmas Day Worship (10am)

2027

January

- 3 8:30/10:45 worship times resume
- 15 Beer and Hymns (5:30pm Emmaus Room)

February

- 7 Celebrate Grace
- 10 Ash Wednesday (noon/7:30pm worship)
- 26-28 High School Synod Retreat at Mt Cross

March

- 5-7 Women's Retreat at Mt Cross
- 21 Palm Sunday
- 25 Maundy Thursday
Maundy Thursday Dinner (6pm) | Worship (7:30pm)
- 26 Good Friday (noon/7:30pm worship)
- 27 Easter Vigil | Worship (7:26pm - sunset)
- 28 Easter
Easter Brunch - Youth Fundraiser

April

- 16 Beer and Hymns (5:30pm Emmaus Room)
- 23-25 Men's Retreat at Mt Cross

May

- 2 Confirmation
- 16 Pentecost
- 23 Spring Concert (3pm)
- 23 Quilt Sunday

June

- 6/28-7/2 ELCA National Youth Gathering, Minneapolis

August

- 27-29 Grace Goes to Mt. Cross
day and weekend options for the whole congregation

