

One Matters Award, Prairie Central

Northern Illinois Conference 2026

Grace United Methodist Church

Naperville, IL – Prairie Central

At Grace United Methodist Church in Naperville, making new disciples isn't a program — it's a way of life. Over the past year, the congregation has witnessed the profound gift of over 40 baptisms and professions of faith combined, a season of spiritual harvest that has touched every corner of the community.



What makes Grace's story remarkable isn't just the number — it's the range. This past year, Grace has baptized and welcomed people spanning the full breadth of human life, from infants carried to the font in their parents' arms to an 84-year-old who answered the call of grace after a lifetime of searching. Every one of them mattered. Every one of them was celebrated. And every one of them changed the congregation in the process.

But welcoming someone through the waters of baptism or the vows of profession is only the beginning. Grace understands that the Great Commission calls us to make disciples, not just members — and that distinction shapes everything they do. To that end, the church has walked over 200 people through a congregation-wide Bible in a Year challenge, creating a shared foundation of Scripture that has knit the community together across generations and backgrounds.





Building on that foundation, Grace has continued the journey through an ongoing congregation-wide study focused on the spiritual disciplines — practices of prayer, worship, service, and reflection that move faith from Sunday morning into the rhythms of everyday life. New believers and long-time members are learning and growing side by side, deepening their roots as they reach outward.



At Grace, the story of discipleship is never finished. Each baptism is a beginning. Each profession of faith is an open door. And behind every statistic is a name, a face, and a life being transformed by the love of Jesus Christ — one person at a time.