

**Grace English Lutheran Church**  
**384 Oak Street, Berlin, WI 54923**

*A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America*

Rebekah Tarras, Pastor

Email: [pastortarras@gmail.com](mailto:pastortarras@gmail.com)

Cellphone: 715-897-5393

Jessica Fritz – Worship and Music Coordinator

Jeremy Fritz – Choir Director

Sandy Peschke – Office Assistant

Penny Bahn – Office Assistant

(920) 361-1820

Web site: [www.gracelutheranberlin.org](http://www.gracelutheranberlin.org)

Email: [gracelutheranberlin@gmail.com](mailto:gracelutheranberlin@gmail.com)

THIS NEWSLETTER PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR

**Sunday Worship:**

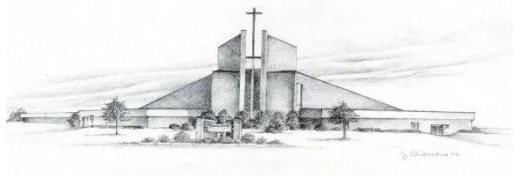
8:30 AM

**Office Hours:**

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am – 12:00 noon

Hometown Broadcasting: Sunday at 9:45 am

WRPN AM 1600 at 12:00 PM



## *Worship Services*

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

YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLbOerRk5PMk1QWI9qtZ5\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLbOerRk5PMk1QWI9qtZ5_g)



January 4 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

January 11 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

January 18 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

January 25 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

**Grace Lutheran's Mission:**

**We Gather to Worship, Grow, Care, and Share**

**“All Are Welcome In This Place”**

## A New Year, a New Rhythm: Introducing the Narrative Lectionary

January is often a time for fresh starts. Some people commit to fewer carbs. Some tackle closets. Some just hope to remember where they put the good pens.

As a church, we're also beginning something new. Not a resolution, but a rhythm of walking more intentionally through Scripture.



Starting this month, we'll begin using the Narrative Lectionary. This four-year cycle of readings is designed by professors from Luther Seminary to help us experience the Bible as a unified story from creation to resurrection and beyond. Instead of jumping between books from week to week, we'll follow the story in order, watching God's promises unfold. Through this approach, we'll see Scripture not as scattered moments, but as one sweeping narrative of God's persistent grace.

For the first part of the year, our readings will come from the Gospel of John. John is different from Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Those Gospels tell us what Jesus *did*. John helps us see who Jesus *is*. John invites us not only to observe Jesus, but to meet Him, follow Him, and find life in Him.

Near the end of the Gospel, John clearly states his purpose: "*These are written so that you may come to believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may life in his name.*" John 20:31. Through stories and signs, John wants us to experience Jesus so that we put our trust in Him.

John will be our companion from now through Easter. I invite you—yes, *you*—to immerse yourself in this Gospel these next few months. Read along at home. Listen to an audio Bible while you drive. Take notes during worship. Circle the verses that jump out. Argue with the confusing parts (John can handle it). Sit with the promises that steady your soul.

John whispers a simple invitation from Jesus: "*Come and see.*" (John 1:39, NLT) Come and see the One who brings light into our darkness. Come and see the One who knows us completely and loves us fully. Come and see the One who moves into the neighborhood and refuses to leave us alone in the dark. It's an invitation to meet Jesus again, not the Jesus we *think* we know, but the Jesus who still speaks, still heals, still surprises, and still calls us by name.

Blessings on this new year, this new rhythm, and this new journey of faith

*Pastor Rebekah*

P.S. Thank you to everyone who shared Christmas cards, treats, and gifts with us this season. Your kindness has been such a bright spot. Jeff and I have felt so loved. We're grateful to be part of a congregation that shows such genuine care. Thank you for blessing us in so many ways. We thank God for you and for the joy of serving together in this community of faith.

With love and appreciation,  
Pastor Rebekah & Jeff

**Grace English Lutheran Church  
Congregational Council Meeting  
Monday, November 10, 2025**

**Call to Order** by Linda Reetz at 5:30 pm (Packer Game @ 7:15 pm)

**Roll Call-** Attending: Linda Reetz, Terry Wallace, Bob Prellwitz, Sandy Peschke, Heidi Schramer, Anita Lind, Bonnie Kline, Pastor Rebekah and Tim Koch

Absent: Sue Shemanski

Terry provided Opening prayer.

**Approval of Amended Agenda** – Tim moved to approve the agenda as amended. Bonnie seconded. Motion carried. Amendment-add Safety Plan to New Business

**Secretary's Report** – Terry moved to approve October minutes as printed. Bob seconded. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report** – Bonnie moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Second by Anita. Motion carried.

Officers, Pastor and Standing Committee Reports

**President's Report** – Budget requests due date: 11/18/25

11/17/25 6:30 pm Parish Council meeting at Grace

12/3/25 9:00 am Christmas tree hunting & harvest

12/7/25 after service decorate church, council will be responsible for preparing lunch afterward, Fellowship & Caring committee will assist with set up and clean up.

Menu to be determined.

**Pastor's Report** –

Accomplishments/Activity Highlights:

- Attended the Synod Fall Theological Conference
- Led several sessions of the book discussion group with about 10 participants
- Led weekly bible studies at both First and Grace
- Worship and sermon planning
- Planning and teaching confirmation classes
- Offered prayers at a funeral visitation for Robert Grabe on 10/21
- Conducted a graveside service on 10/22 for Lester Bucholz
- Conducted a funeral for Susan Missel on 10/25
- Led the devotion for the Grace family event
- Met with the Mutual Ministry Committee
- Met with the Poy Sippi Food Pantry leadership
- Met with the worship committees
- Met with the finance committees
- Led the devotion at Soul Food
- Officiated the baptism of Charlotte Fenner at First on 11/2
- Conducted the funeral for Marion Ryan on 11/3
- Attended the Conference meeting
- Participated in the synod required training on Gender Justice
- Worked with the lay preaching group
- Attended various other meetings and church activities

Priorities for the next period:

- The community Thanksgiving services
- Advent and Christmas services

## **Committees –**

Fellowship and Caring – Bonnie: New style of coffee cups to be ordered. 2026 proposed budget submitted. Church & Tree decorating lunch will be the responsibility of the Council, F & C will assist with set up & clean up. Next meeting 12/14/25, committee will assemble goodie bags w/cards to deliver to our shut-in members.

Building and Grounds – Bob: Moriarty made service call for the large refrigerator/low on freon. North entry heater to be replaced. John Dehn did sidewalk edging at N/C, will get him a gift card in appreciation. Scott Dutcher contacted to do winter plowing again. Snowblower prepped for winter. Safety plan being reviewed/developed by Ryan, will update at our December council meeting. Light bulbs changed in sanctuary, must consult an electrician for guidance. 2026 proposed budget submitted. Next meeting: December 2025.

Christian Education- Anita: Have not met in November.

Worship and Music – Heidi: 2026 proposed budget submitted. No honorarium for guest speaker (per his request) for 11/9/25 service-Grace will donate his fee to the VFW of Berlin. Will request quote on services from Northern Sound (projector maintenance/hearing aid headsets) and Hull Audio Visual (hearing aid headsets). 11/9/25 Veteran Recognition, 11/23/25 Thank Offering Service, 11/25/25 Ecumenical Service hosted by the Methodist church, 11/30/25 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, the Narrative Lectionary to begin at Christmas, 12/14/25 Christmas program-A Paper Bag Service -“Sounding Joy”, 12/21/25 Choir to present the Cantata at the 8:30 am service and at First at 10:30am, 12/21/25 Blue Christmas service at 6:30 pm., 12/24/25 Christmas Eve Worship @ 4:00 pm, 7/19/26 Worship In The Park hosted by First Lutheran in Poy Sippi

Mission and Outreach – Tim: Committee met 10-19-25, prepared list of Missions for 2026, Ding Dong Dinners will be discontinued, discussed how information gets into the newsletter/email feeds, will continue to update the bulletin board display. Idea was suggested that in place of the Ding Dong dinners we prepare and have available simple food bags for our church members that may need a helping hand.

Finance Committee – Terry

### Unfinished business:

1. Financial Best Practices for Handling Congregational Income and adding other financial documents is on hold for a future meeting.
2. There is \$8133 in the cash account of the Leonard Jones Fund that will be moved to the church account to make expenses this month and for future need to pay insurance premium by Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>.
3. Discussion was held on writing articles about each of the church's investment accounts for the newsletter. These articles would include a definition of the fund, how the dollars are used and how anyone interested could contribute to a particular fund. Articles will be written for the Scholarship Fund, Endowment Fund, Auxiliary Fund, Leonard Jones fund and Capital Improvement.

### New business:

1. Property & Liability Insurance – Terry handed out 2026 comparison sheets. Erie Ins locks us in to a \$5000 deductible where most other insurance companies figure 1% of the total worth of the facility as the deductible. Motion made to stick with Erie, motion carried.
2. Budget Preparation-Committees are being asked to prepare and turn in their proposed 2026 budgets. A preliminary budget will be presented to the Council on 12/8/25, final budget to be approved by 1/12/26.

Next meeting to be held: 11/18/25 @ 10:00 am

Investment Committee: Terry – Handed out detailed reports on all accounts.

Outside the Box Outreach Committee-Heidi: Summarized all projects

- ❖ August – Complete
- ❖ September – Complete
- ❖ October – 8 crock pots have been purchased-event will be held at a date to be determined.

- ❖ November – 98 Hats and 76 pair of gloves/mittens delivered to Boys & Girls club, event will continue to run the entire month of November.
- ❖ December – Cookie bake date set for December 6<sup>th</sup>

2026 proposed budget amount prepared. More project ideas were discussed for the new year and also ideas on how to promote the work we are doing. Next meeting will be 12/10/25 @ 10:00 am.

### New Business

Insurance Approval – A comparison sheet was provided detailing costs from Erie 2025 and 2026. Terry moved to stay with Erie, Anita seconded. Motion carried.

Grace English Lutheran Church Safety Plan Policy – The existing safety plan was presented, briefly discussed and given to Ryan Dobbs for his assessment and recommendations. Ryan will review the plan and attend the 12/8/25 Council meeting for further discussion.

Closing Prayer – Pastor Rebekah

Bonnie moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Tim. Motion Carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:21 pm

Respectfully Submitted by:

Heidi Schramer  
(in Sue's absence)

### ADDENDUM:

Sue would like included: 2026 proposed budget submitted to office. 12/7/25 tree & church decorating event – CE will make chili and another soup for lunch, if council could provide deserts, discuss who would bring rolls/beverage. F&C will assist with set up & clean up and make coffee.

Linda Reetz – President		920-279-7899	<a href="mailto:linda.reetz0726@gmail.com">linda.reetz0726@gmail.com</a>
Terry Wallace – Vice President		920-344-1523	<a href="mailto:tw9696@outlook.com">tw9696@outlook.com</a>
Sandy Peschke – Treasurer		920-290-1551	<a href="mailto:kspeschke1950@gmail.com">kspeschke1950@gmail.com</a>
Sue Shemanski – Secretary		920-361-4506	<a href="mailto:shemanski5@yahoo.com">shemanski5@yahoo.com</a>
Heidi Schramer – Music/Worship		920-361-4097	<a href="mailto:schrumer@charter.net">schrumer@charter.net</a>
Anita Lind – Christian Education		920-290-1374	<a href="mailto:anita_lind@charter.net">anita_lind@charter.net</a>
Bonnie Kline – Fellowship/Caring		920-570-2787	<a href="mailto:razn6mom@yahoo.com">razn6mom@yahoo.com</a>
Tim Koch – Mission Outreach		920-789-8358	<a href="mailto:timkoch18@gmail.com">timkoch18@gmail.com</a>
Bob Prellwitz – Building and Grounds		920-361-0669	<a href="mailto:bobprellwitz@yahoo.com">bobprellwitz@yahoo.com</a>

### Auxiliary Fund – An Investment Fund with RBC

The Auxiliary Fund was created by the Council for the purpose of investing monies held in the Men's, Women's, Soul Food, and Christian Education accounts. The money for these accounts was held in the church's non - interest bearing checking account at Fortifi Bank prior to investing it with RBC.

The funds are only invested in a Money Market. In 2025, the amount invested since its creation in April was \$38,564.45. These accounts accrued approximately \$600 interest in 2025. The interest will be used for general expenses. The value changes in the Fund as income and expenses for the accounts occur.

All expenses for the above-mentioned accounts are paid from the Auxiliary Fund and monitored by the Finance Committee.

## Mission of the Month - Kidsave

At Kidsave, we believe in the potential inside every child. We strive to create change in our world so that all kids, everywhere, grow up in loving, supportive families, connected to caring adults.

Ukraine started with only three Kidsave team members and has since grown to include over 300 selfless volunteers and a fleet of 60 vehicles. These heroes, known as “Angels of Hope” in Ukraine, risk their lives daily to continue to evacuate women, children, and families out of active combat zones and into safety.

Since 2016, Kidsave has been deeply involved in reforming Ukraine’s overburdened child welfare system. With over 100,000 children languishing in institutions, orphanages, and boarding schools across Ukraine, Kidsave stepped in to change the outcome for these kids. When the invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022, our team on the ground moved quickly into action to help rescue and provide aid to those in war torn cities. What began as an operation to get the kids in our programs to safety soon expanded as our team answered the call to help those in danger across Ukraine.

Our programs operate in the U.S. and internationally in Ukraine, Sierra Leone, and Colombia.

Our programs help older kids in foster care and orphanages find meaningful, lasting connections with adults and families. Whether that relationship is with a mentor, a host family, or an adoptive forever family, our kids get a voice and a choice in who they get to know and who becomes their “family.”

Still, countless millions languish in orphanages and foster care. Kidsave’s goal is to be a catalyst for creating much-needed change. Our goal is to inspire governments, communities and individuals to find and provide families and permanent connections for their children. We hope you will join us.

**Kidsave...Because every child needs a family.**



The Grace Book Club’s book choice for January is **“I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor’s Journey on the Road to Peace and Human Dignity”** by Izzeldin Abuelaish.

A Palestinian doctor with a degree from Harvard, Dr. Abuelaish was born and raised in a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. He has crossed lines in the sand that divide Israelis and Palestinians for most of his life – as a physician and as a humanitarian who sees improved health and education for women as the way forward. When tragedy struck his family on January 16, 2009, he could have sought revenge and hatred, but instead he called for the people of the region to start talking to each other in the hope that the two sides could begin to come together in understanding, respect and peace.

In the words of Elle Wiesel: “This story is a necessary lesson against hatred and revenge.”

We will meet to discuss “I Shall Not Hate” on Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at a location to be determined. If you would like to read this book, please contact Cindy Wallace for a copy. If you have already read this book and would like to join us on Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> for discussion, please do, we would love to have you.

## Outside The Box Outlook

The Outside the Box Outlook Committee recently presented the Boys and Girls Club – Berlin with a check for \$1,000 for the “Adopt a Family for Christmas”. The gift will provide a Christmas for five to seven families.

We also purchased children’s books for a future program.

### **Congregational Meeting**

The congregational meeting will be on Sunday, February 8, 2026 immediately following worship. This important meeting is an opportunity for all members to gather, reflect on the past year, and look forward to what God has in store for us in the coming year.

We encourage everyone to participate as we elect new people to the church council, discuss ministry goals, budget matters, and other important aspects of our shared life together as a congregation. Your voice matters, and your presence will contribute to the continued health and vitality of our community. Please plan to join us as we celebrate what God has done and look ahead to the opportunities for growth and service in the year ahead.

### **Confirmation Update**

Confirmation Classes for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will resume on January 7 and continue each Wednesday at 6:30 pm until Lent. We will be focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus. Questions? Talk to Pastor.

### **Adult Bible Study Opportunities**

Adult Bible Study is held on Monday afternoons at 1:30 pm at First Lutheran and Tuesday afternoons at 3:00 pm at Grace Lutheran. The Monday group is beginning a study on the Psalms. The Tuesday group is beginning a study of the Gospel of John. Anyone is invited to join in. No experience is required. Bibles are available if you need one. Questions? Talk to Pastor Rebekah

### **Summer Bible Camp Registration is Open**

Crossways Bible Camp offers programs for all ages and families. Online registration is live at [CrosswaysCamps.org](https://www.crossways.org/camps). Sign up today.

### **Interested in Learning to Preach? Join Our Lay Preaching Class!**

Our lay preaching class is up and running, and we'd love to welcome a few new faces. If you have a heart for Scripture, enjoy encouraging others, or are simply curious about what goes into preparing a sermon, we invite you to join the next class on Tuesday, February 17 at 5:00 pm. If you're interested (or even just *maybe* interested), please let Pastor Rebekah know.

## **New Member Information**

### **Discover Your Place at Grace Lutheran Church**

At Grace, we are blessed to welcome visitors into our community. Whether you've joined us for worship, attended a special event, or simply stopped by out of curiosity, we're so glad you're here. Our doors are always open to those seeking a place to grow in faith, connect with others, and serve in meaningful ways.

If you've been wondering what it means to be part of our church family, we invite you to explore the possibility of becoming a member. Membership at Grace Lutheran Church is about more than attending worship; it's about finding your place in a community of believers who encourage, support, and inspire one another to live out God's love in the world.

If you are interested in learning more about Grace Lutheran and becoming a member, we invite you to an information session with Pastor Rebekah on **Sunday, January 11**, at 1 pm. This will be a time to ask questions, and find out more about becoming part of our church family. To sign up, please call or email the church office.





## Many, Many, Thanks:

To all who helped with decorating the church for Christmas, to the Shemanski/Voigtlander families for donating the beautiful tree.

To the members of the choir for the beautiful cantata.

To the Out of the Box Committee that baked and packed cookies to sell with the monetary donations (\$170) going to the Berlin Food Pantry.

To the families that purchased gifts for the angel tree.

To the families that bought poinsettias.

To all who have volunteered and helped out in many ways to make our worship services this holiday season merry and bright.

**We greatly appreciate you all!**



### November Income

Weekly Income	8,342.84
RBC Earnings	11,597.00
Bulletins/Radio Ministry	280.00
Thrivent Choice Dollars	109.00
Shared Ministry	4,386.95

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,715.79\$</b>
--------------	--------------------

Missions (In/Out)	481.38
Good Samaritan Fund	0.00
Soul Food	142.69
Women of Grace	0.00
Men of Grace	69.00
Christian Education/Youth	0.00
Scholarship Fund	0.00
Endowment Fund	0.00

### Beginning Balance January 2025

#### Investments:

Leonard Jones Fund	\$	1,361,456.39
Capital Improvement Fund	\$	321,917.64
Endowment Fund	\$	123,890.51
Auxiliary Fund	\$	29,841.29
Scholarship Fund	\$	5,903.55

### November Expenses

Wages and Payroll Expenses	\$16,546.49
Building & Grounds /Utilities	1,085.50
Worship Licenses/Supplies	394.30
Radio Ministry	300.00
Office/Miscellaneous	712.51
Caring Ministry	40.00
Outside the Box - Outreach	661.33

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 19,740.13</b>
--------------	---------------------

Missions (In/Out)	\$ 680.56.
Good Samaritan	0.00
Soul Food	0.00
Women of Grace	0.00
Men of Grace	0.00
Christian Education/Youth	0.00
Scholarship Fund	0.00
Endowment Fund	0.00

### Ending Balance November 2025

#### Investments:





	\$	1,476,436.15
	\$	333,729.06
	\$	133,181.57
	\$	29,687.52
	\$	5,975.93



## Mark your calendars for an afternoon of fun and fellowship!

On Saturday, February 7, First and Grace Lutheran Churches are coming together to host a Bingo Fundraiser at Grace Lutheran Church, located at 384 Oak Street, Berlin.

This exciting event will feature:

-  Bingo games for all ages
-  Delicious food for sale
-  A basket raffle
-  A silent auction

We are collecting items for the silent auction and basket raffle. If you would like to donate, please contact Heidi, Cindy or DeAnna or bring your contributions to church by January 30. Your generosity will help make this event a success!

Best of all, all proceeds from the event will go to support our local food pantries, helping those in need in our community.

Doors open at 11:00 and the games will begin at 12:00 noon. Bring your family, friends, and neighbors for an afternoon of fun, great prizes, and the joy of giving back.

Bring your family, friends, and neighbors for an afternoon of fun, great prizes, and the joy of giving back.

### Flowers

January 4 - Open  
January 11 - Open  
January 18 - Open  
January 25 - Open

### Radio Ministry

January 4 - Open  
January 11 - Open  
January 18 - In Honor of Grandma Tootsie's Birthday by the Goettl Family  
January 25 - Open

### Bulletins

January 4 - Open  
January 11 - Open  
January 18 - Open  
January 25 - Open

### Fellowship

January 4 - Open  
January 11 - Open  
January 18 - Open  
January 25 - Open

### Greeters

January 4 - Open  
January 11 - Open  
January 18 - Open  
January 25 - Open

### January Birthdays

- 1 Zayden Beck
- 1 Zeke Dobbs
- 4 Ruth Gelhar
- 5 Jerry Reetz
- 6 Lorainne Hetchler
- 9 Fawn Beck
- 12 Jessica Fritz
- 17 Darlene Wolfe
- 20 Samantha Koscher
- 23 Beth Bush
- 28 Donald Koscher
- 31 Allen Schmidt
- 31 Karen Schweigert



Happy Birthday  
&  
Happy Anniversary

### January Anniversaries

- 17 Michael & Bonnie Hermanson
- 17 Tim & Kathleen Krentz

If any birthdays or anniversaries were missed, please let the office staff know.

# JANUARY

2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1 Happy New Year	2	3
4 8:30 am Worship - No Communion – will be Sunday School	5 4:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	6 9:00 am Staff Meeting 9:00 am LWR Quilting 3:00 pm Bible Study at Grace	7 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 3:00 pm Investment Committee Meeting 6:30 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	8 11:45 am Soul Food St John's Hosts	9	10 8:00 am Men's Breakfast at First Lutheran 9:00 am - 4:00pm Craft Day at Grace Lutheran
11 8:30 am Worship with Communion and Sunday School 1:00 pm New Member Class	12 7:00 pm Council Meeting	13 9:00 am Pastor Conference 12:00 pm Book Club 3:00 pm Bible Study at Grace	14 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 6:30 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	15 11:45 am Soul Food Grace Hosts	16	17
18 8:30 am Worship with Communion and Sunday School	19	20 9:00 am Staff Meeting 9:00 am LWR Quilting 3:00 pm Bible Study Grace	21 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 6:30 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	22 11:45 am Soul Food River Shores Hosts 6:00pm Bingo Committee Meeting at Grace	23	24
25 8:30 am Worship with Communion no Sunday School	26	27 9:00 am Staff Meeting 3:00 pm Bible Study at Grace	28 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 6:30 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	29 11:45 am Soul Food All Saints Hosts	30	31