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 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 Email: gracelutheranberlin@gmail.com

Sunday Worship:

8:30 AM

Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am – 12:00 noon Hometown Broadcasting WRPN AM 1600 at 12:00 PM



THIS NEWSLETTER PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR

Worship Services

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gelcberlin

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLbOerRk5PMk1QWI9qtZ5_g



January 7 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

January 14 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

January 21 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

January 28 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

Lutheran's Mission: We Gather to Worship, Grow, Care, and Share "All Are Welcome In This Place"

From the Pastor:

Give Joy

As I was reading through my emails the other morning, one from Margaret Feinberg caught my attention. I've used some of her Bible study materials and find them refreshing and hopeful. In her email, she shared the following story and I thought maybe it would speak to you as well.



"A few years ago, I wrote a book about joy where I tell the story of returning to the chemo ward for yet another brutal round of treatment. It was more than I could handle.

"I swung by a local party store on our way to the infusion center. My right hand clutched a bundle of red balloons. Intent on passing them out, I approached the long corridor of chairs filled with infusion patients.

A frail woman occupied the first chair. "My name is Margaret, and I've had a really difficult time in treatment. I'm in the fight of my life," I said. "I don't want to be here today, and I bet you don't either. I want to give you this red balloon in hope that it would bring you joy."

The woman smiled as she extended her arm: "I'd like that." Turning to the man next to her, I repeated my offer, but with a different result. "Not now," he said with bone-tiredness, "but thank you very much."

I approached the woman across from him. "I don't need a balloon, but I do need a hug," she preempted. I reached down and wrapped my arms around her neck.

The man who rejected my balloon cleared his throat, interrupting our moment. "Wait," he protested. "I didn't know you were giving away free hugs." I wrapped my arms around him, too.

One by one, I shuffled my way down the row, introducing myself and handing out balloons for nearly an hour. By the time I finished giving them all away, I had been inflated with just enough courage to take my seat and face the suffering that would come. That's when I discovered:

Joy is a gift we can offer even when we don't possess it ourselves. When we give it away freely, something mysterious happens: Joy multiplies. Jesus says, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6:38).

I always thought of the container as something external we hold as we watch it being filled, pressed down, shaken, and filled up more. I never considered that we are the containers. God fills us. One of the best ways to receive joy is to give joy.

Like me, you may not always feel like it. The day you need joy most may be the one you want to offer it the least. Give anyway and give generously.

Take the leap. Slip a grumpy store clerk a kind word of thanks. Give that friend who's always down on herself a compliment. Flash a smile to strangers who seem to be having a hard day. Drop off a surprise bouquet. Send a card. Hand out a balloon. Offer a five-second hug. Then wait to see what kind of fruit these seeds of joy bear. As you pour joy into others, joy will be poured into you."

Blessings to you friends as we begin this new year. May we be people who pour joy into others!

Pastor Rebekah Tarras

GRACE ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING NOVEMBER 13, 2023

Council members present; Pastor Rebekah, Heidi Schramer, De Anna Lueptow, Cindy Wallace, Becky Olsen, Gene Hess, Jody Ziemann, Sue Shemanski, Bob Prellwitz, Craig Chovanec

President Heidi Schramer called meeting to order. Vice President De Anna Lueptow gave opening prayer

Approval of Agenda. Motion made by Cindy Wallace to approve agenda as written, seconded by Sue Shemanski, motion carried.

Concerns from Audience. None

Secretary's Report. October meeting minutes circulated via email. Motion made by Cindy Wallace to accept report as written, seconded by Gene Hess, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report. October Treasurer's report and check detail presented. Motion made by Sue Shemanski to accept reports as written, seconded by De Anna Lueptow, motion carried. September and October Investment Profile presented.

Unfinished Business.

Extension of Soul Food 5th Quarter Events. Motion made by Becky Olsen to remove the item from the agenda until a member provides a plan for an event, seconded by Pastor Rebekah, motion carried.

Holy Conversations. Item tabled until December meeting.

Inactive Members. Council members will make contact with inactive members inviting them to upcoming Christmas season services.

Memorial Tree Plaque. Discussion on cost and verbiage of plaque for the planted tree. Motion made by Jody Ziemann to purchase a plaque, seconded by Gene Hess, motion carried. De Anna will contact Bev Chadwick regarding the plaque.

Ecumenical Service. 11.21.23 at 7pm. Sue Shemanski and Bob Prellwitz will serve as greeters. The Fellowship and Caring committee will provide fellowship following service.

Shared Ministry Covenant. This item will be discussed at the Joint Parish Council Meeting (executive officers only) at First Lutheran on 12.14.2023.

Puppet Service. 1.28.24.

Winter Bingo. 2.3.24. Discussion on the event. A committee will be formed to finalize plans at the 12.14.23 Joint Parish Council Meeting at First Lutheran.

Damascus Road Project. Discussion held. Motion made by Jody Ziemann to give Damascus Project information to the Missions and Outreach committee for future consideration, seconded by Cindy Wallace, motion carried.

New Business.

Monthly financial deficits. Sandy Peschke informed members of the current financial balance, upcoming expenditures, and potential deficit. Discussion held on finances. Motion made by Sue Shemanski to transfer \$15,000 from the RBC Account into general fund for expenses, seconded by Jody Ziemann, motion carried. **Funeral Policy**. Discussion held on the present policy. The office staff will serve as the point of contact and coordinators for funerals per policy.

Joanne Bulchuck Memorial. Discussion held on the memorial bequest. No stipulations or requests for usage of the memorial money indicated. Motion made by Sue Shemanski to transfer the memorial bequest into the Endowment Fund, seconded by De Anna Lueptow, motion carried.

Notification of monthly financials. Discussion held on best practice for relaying this information. Monthly financial reports will no longer be printed in the bulletin. This report will be placed on the table in the narthex along with the bulletins on the last Sunday of the month.

2024 Budget. Discussion held on upcoming 2024 budget. Figures requested by December 1st and may be sent to the office.

Conference Assembly. Heidi and De Anna attended the conference in October, provided a detailed report of the conference, including a financial report.

Christmas Tree for Altar. The Voigtlander Family has donated the tree. Members will decorate the tree on December 2nd at 9am.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). Discussion held. This item will be tabled at this time, allowing time to seek financial reports from the FCA.

Proposed Bylaw Addition. Pastor Rebekah, Heidi and De Anna authored and presented a Bylaw regarding Interns and the Church Council. Motion made by Jody Ziemann to present the proposed Bylaw at the Annual Meeting in February, seconded by Cindy Wallace, motion carried.

Article, "The Misunderstood Reasons Millions Stopped Going to Church". Sue Shemanski shared the article and members encouraged to read.

Committee Reports.

Pastor's Report. Pastor reported her official October acts included visitations to June Lubbert. Ongoing activities include; studying and preparing weekly sermons, preparing and teaching weekly confirmation class, participated in weekly text study. Worked with area Pastors to plan Thanksgiving service, worked with Jessica on Advent planning, wrote the monthly newsletter article and met weekly with Grace staff. Attended the Synod Fall Theological Conference, attended a three-part webinar on worship for all ages, prepared and led devotion at the Tailgating event, and attended a middle school football game.

Building and Grounds. Bob Prellwitz reported ongoing projects include; lawn and shrub maintenance, the Drawn to the Word painting was hung, touch up painting and small split in ceiling repaired. The snowblower is serviced for snow removal, will replace weather stripping on front doors, and will get bids for potential parking lot seal coating in 2024. Next meeting 12.11.23 at 6pm.

Christian Education. Sue Shemanski reported that the Fall Tailgate Event was well received with 30 people attending. She noted that many hands contributed to the success of the event. The committee is planning for an upcoming Advent Event on 11.29, 5:30-7:30 pm. The event will include; making of an upcycled Advent wreath, devotions and a spaghetti supper. Sunday School has 1-10 kids attending, and the new curriculum is going well. The committee has only two members and is looking for new members. No future meeting date scheduled.

Fellowship and Caring. Jody Ziemann reported that the committee is hosting fellowship following the 11.21 Ecumenical Service and following the Cantata Service on 12.17. Visitation of homebound members continues, we will make holiday treat plates for our homebound members on 12.17. De Anna is drafting a New Member protocol. The Caring Closet is stocked and open to all members who may be in need of some home or personal hygiene items. Next meeting is 12.10 following service.

Worship and Music. Gene Hess reported that Music is set through Christmas. Jess is arranging Altar Guild needs. Jeremy is working on technical issues with the livestreaming on Facebook, plan is to faze out Facebook Live. Members are encouraged to watch online streaming of services on the Grace website. Upcoming special services; Cantata Service is 12.17 at 830 am, Christmas Eve Service is 12.24 at 4pm., Puppet Service is 1.28.24, Lenten Services begin 2.14.24. Next meeting is 11.15, following choir rehearsal.

Mission and Outreach. Craig Chovanec reported that the November Mission Cause is the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. This sports ministry is an international program formed in 1954, has expanded to 114 countries touching millions of lives. It includes athletes at all levels; pro, college, high school, junior high and youth. The platform of sports is used to reach athletes and connect them to Jesus Christ. Values of integrity, service and teamwork are emphasized, a goal is to honor Jesus in all that we do. Programs include daily meetings, devotionals, team building and Bible study. Jeff Tarras will give an update on the program with additional information and pictures located on the bulletin board. The 1st Sunday of the month Food Pantry donations have increased over the past two months. The committee is planning to meet in the near future to finalize their schedule for 2024.

Motion to Adjourn.

Motion made by Jody Ziemann to adjourn, seconded by Cindy Wallace, motion carried Closing Prayer given by Pastor Rebekah.

Respectfully submitted Becky Olsen 11.14.23

Heidi Schramer – President	920-361-4097	schramer@charter.net	
DeAnna Lueptow – Vice President	920-229-4857	delueptow@gmail.com	
Cindy Wallace – Treasurer	920-229-3772	cindy_wallace@charter.net	
Becky Olsen – Secretary	920-290-4485	olsenfamilyshorthorns@gmail.com	
Gene Hess– Music/Worship	920-290-2023	gene2023@outlook.com	
Sue Shemanski – Christian Education	920-361-4506	shemanski5@yahoo.com	
Jody Ziemann – Fellowship/Caring	920-361-1326	lajirafa@hotmail.com	
Craig Chovanec – Missions/Outreach	920-361-3727	craigfchovanec@centurytel.net	
Bob Prellwitz – Building/Grounds	920-361-0669	bobprellwitz@yahoo.com	

Proposed Bylaw for Constitution

The church council is recommending the adoption of the following bylaw to our constitution. This will be voted on at the annual meeting February 4, 2024.

C12.01.04 In the event Grace English Lutheran Church is serving as a teaching congregation, the purpose of the learning experience is for the intern pastor to grow and develop their overall pastoral identity and experience all of the roles of being a pastor including participation in Congregation Council meetings. The intern pastor is expected to ask questions, offer input, and engage in discussion with council members. While the intern pastor has voice privileges, the intern does not have the ability to vote.

Constitution Corner

Our congregation has a constitution, that in addition to the Bible, serves to guide our life together as a church. This constitution reflects the theology and polity of this church as it organizes itself to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, share the sacraments, reach out to the neighbor with good news, and share the love of God in the world. Each month we plan to highlight a part of our constitution. The full constitution is found under resources on the website.

The Constitution outlines "this congregation shall have at least one regular meeting per year." This is usually referred to as the annual meeting. The date for this meeting is set by the Congregation Council for a time late January or early February. The annual meeting for 2024 is set for February 4, 2024.

The agenda at this meeting includes reports of the ministries of this congregation, adoption of a budget, election of officers, council and committee members, as well as any old or new business of the congregation.

In addition to the annual meeting, a special congregation meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation. The president shall also call for a meeting upon the written request of 25 voting members or by request of the synod Bishop.

Notice of all special meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or electronic means to all voting members as listed in the most current membership directory at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted. A quorum of 5% of the voting members is required for the business to be conducted. Voting by proxy or absentee is not permitted.

January Mission of the Month -



Founded by Lutherans in the United States at the end of World War II, grounded in Lutheran theology and building on decades of experience, Lutheran World Relief tackles global poverty by helping people adapt to the challenges that threaten their livelihoods and well-being.

We work with people based on need, regardless of race, religion or nationality and we do not evangelize. We provide aid in emergencies and help families restore their lives. We partner with communities to build and grow rural economies. We break the cycle of poverty, so families and communities can thrive.

Our Goal: Is to help people build self-sufficiency and create new community-owned approaches to problem-solving that will last long after our projects end.

Our Mission: Affirming God's love for all people, we work with Lutherans and partners around the world to end poverty, injustice, and human suffering.

Our Vision: A healthy world forever flourishing in dignity and justice.

Maggie the Church Mouse

"...Amen."

I finish my prayer as the promise of sun is just beginning to warm the sanctuary with color on a wintery Sunday morning. I had trouble sleeping last night – a bit unusual for a church mouse who has a silent building in which to snooze every evening. But, instead of fighting it, I crept out of my nest and went into the sanctuary to pray, in that pre-dawn time of solitude before people start arriving to set up communion, technology, and coffee pots.

As I'm sure you would agree, there's no shortage of things to pray about – gratitude for our blessings, repentance for our mistakes and failings, friends and family members grieving losses or in need of healing or support, not to mention all the troubles around the world. After a Christmas season of beauty, joy, and hope for many, there remain long lists of needs, worries, and concerns for many others. Along with the challenges of cold, blustery weather at this time of year, sometimes it's just overwhelming to muster up the strength and courage to handle it all.

But we are fortunate that Grace exists to draw people together in a place of worship and welcome. I am so blessed to watch all of you enter the doors of this church to attend services, participate in meetings, work together on projects, and plan for the life and sustenance of the church. You have a lot of day-to-day responsibilities and demands upon you as a congregation – not only in the form of hands-on work but also in terms of management and planning for the future of Grace. As the Annual Meeting nears, I hear some of you speaking of committee reports to write, finances to examine, budgets to prepare, Council members to designate...that's a lot to consider and discuss with one another.

So – that's why I decided to pray for my church family this morning. My prayer was for open hearts, open minds, and open ears as the family of Grace assembles and begins a new year together. I'll do all I can as your faithful church mouse to be a gracious listener and participant, with respect and goodwill in my heart. I hope you will, too.



Worship with the Scott Street Puppets - January 28, 2024

We are excited to welcome the Scott Street Puppets from Ripon to our worship service on Sunday, January 28 at 8:30 am. The puppets will share the word of God with all God's children from the youngest to the oldest.



Congregational Annual Meeting - February 4, 2024

Our congregation's annual meeting will be held following worship on Sunday, February 4. This is an important time for us to make decisions about our life together as a congregation for the coming year. The business will include approving a spending plan (budget) for the coming year and electing people to serve in leadership roles. We encourage all confirmed members to be part of this special meeting.



Confirmation classes for the 7th and 8th graders will resume on January 3 and continue each Wednesday at 6:30 pm until Lent. This fall we completed and overview of the Old Testament learning about how God was at work in the lives of the Hebrew people.

In the new year, we will shift to the New Testament focusing on the life of Jesus up to Lent and then the early church following Lent. Question? Talk to Pastor Rebekah.



Adult Bible Study

Adult Bible Study is held on Monday afternoons at 1:30 pm at First Lutheran in Poy Sippi. We are currently studying the book of Isaiah. Anyone is invited to join in. Questions? Talk to Pastor Rebekah.

Crossways Summer Camp Registration is Open



Campers love Crossways and believe in the impact of outdoor ministry.

ALL AGES: There are camp programs for youth (grades 1-12).

Confirmation camp, Family camp, Grandparent/Kid camp,

and something for people of all ages.

ALL SEASONS: Retreats (youth groups, crafting, family weekend) all

year long. Enjoy camp in each season.

ALL ARE WELCOME: As a camper or a volunteer. Check out ways to

volunteer.

Online registration is live at CrosswaysCamps.org. Sign up today!



Grace Lutheran and First Lutheran are planning a family/community BINGO event on February 3, 2024 from 12:00 noon to 3:00 pm.

Bingo cards will be free but there will be sandwiches, chips and desserts for sale (for lunch), along with raffle baskets and silent auction items to bid on. All profits will be divided between the Berlin and Poy Sippi Food Pantries.

If you have been in the Fellowship Hall recently, you will see an array of gifts already donated for the event. We are asking members from both churches to contribute items for bingo prizes and/or raffle items.

Please contact the office with any questions, or just drop off your items in the Fellowship Hall. More detailed information will follow in the weeks ahead.



Thank you for the beautiful cards and gifts this Christmas season. Jeff, Bev, and I are feeling very loved and appreciated.

Pastor Rebekah

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 and other members for the special music and readings.

To Barb Bellmer for the Advent pictures that adorned our front doors.

To the families that purchased poinsettias: Penny Bahn, Ruth Gelhar, Bev Chadwik, Helen Burch, Sue Shemanski, Gene Hess, Bill & Shirley Huck, Vic & Heidi Schramer, Jim & Pam Marks, Conrad & Mary Falk, Terry & Cindy Wallace, Bill & Sue Bartlett, Jeremy & Carissa Fritz & Family, Vic & Jean Dretske, Brian & Sara Mildebrandt & Family, Mike and Bonnie Hermanson, Ken & Sandy Peschke, Tony & Tammy Goettl & Family.

To the Fellowship and Caring Committee that baked and packed cookies for our shut-in families and the cantata.

To the families that purchased gifts for the angel tree.

To the members that decorated the tree in the park.

To those that took care of the little extras behind the scenes that helped enhance our worship this Advent and Christmas season.

And to all that helped in anyway for the funerals of Kelly Boening and June Lubbert.

We greatly appreciate you all!





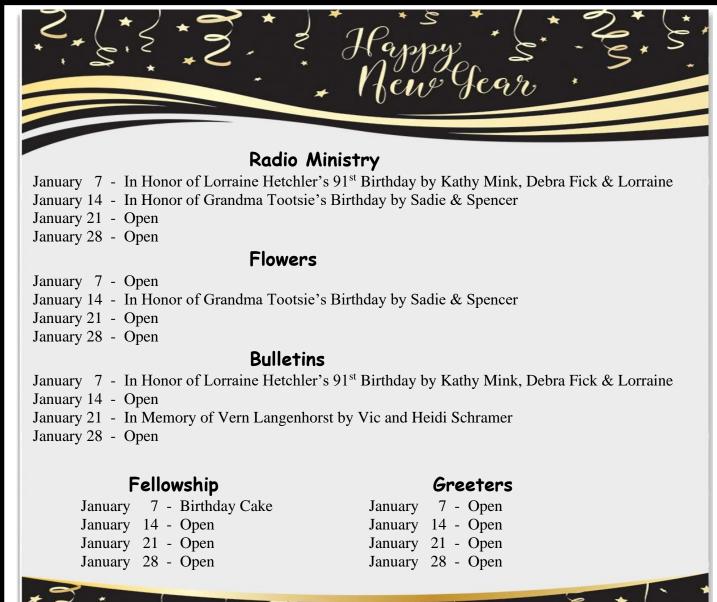
















The Grace Book Club will start off the new year by reading "An Invisible Thread" by Laura Schroff. Sub-titled "the true story of an 11-year-old panhandler, a busy sales executive, and an unlikely meeting with destiny", this is the true story of the author and Maurice Maczyk who lived just two blocks apart in high-flying 1980s Manhattan.

One day while out walking not far from her apartment, a little boy, eleven years old, stopped Laura in the street and asked for spare change. At first, she just walked away, but then, for some reason, she went back. And instead of just giving the boy a quarter, she took him to lunch. Guided by faith, conviction and love, Laura and Maurice build a lasting trust. This is the story of an unlikely friendship, but most of all, this is a book about how, if we learn to let go of fears and burdens and expectations, we can find ourselves plunged into the sweet, unpanned blessing of life.

We will meet to discuss this book on Tuesday, January 9th at 12 Noon at a location to be determined. If you would like to read "An Invisible Thread", please contact Cindy Wallace for a copy. If you have already read this book and would like to discuss it, please join us on January 9th.



January Birthdays

- 1 Zayden Beck
- 1 Zeke Dobbs
- 3 Craig Eckstein
- 4 Ruth Gelhar
- 5 Jerry Reetz
- 6 Lorraine Hetchler
- 9 Fawn Beck
- 12 Jessica Fritz
- 12 Tonia Krebs
- 12 Sharon Reeves
- 15 Evelyn Retzlaff
- 17 Darlene Wolfe
- 17 Eric Roehl
- 20 Samantha Koscher
- 23 Beth Bush
- 23 Macov Krentz-Thom
- 27 Candice Gravunder
- 28 Patrick Featherston
- 28 Annissa Haedt
- 28 Donald Koscher
- 30 Sharon Rhodes
- 31 Drew Dretske
- 31 Allen Schmidt
- 31 Karen Schweigert



This year the Women's Thankoffering was divided between the Soul Food Program and the Good Samaritan Fund.

Each group will receive \$687.50. A heartful thanks to all the Women of Grace that supported this mission.



January Anniversaries

- 7 Terry & Teri Wepner
- 8 Richard & Cheryl Heil
- 17 Mike & Bonnie Hermanson
- 17 Tim & Kathleen Krentz

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

Offering Envelopes for 2024 are available in the narthex. Please stop by to pick up your box, if you have not already done so. If we missed providing a box for you, stop by the church office and we will gladly get a box for you.

Another option is to consider online giving. To use this option, go to our website, go to the "Giving" tab, select "electronically" click on "link" and you will be taken to Grace's giving portal through Vanco. You can give a one-time offering and even setup recurring donations.

Thank you in advance for your generous support of the ministry at Grace.



Copies of monthly financial summaries will be made available on the table near the bulletins following the council meeting each month.

Food Pantry Sunday is the 1st Sunday of each month. Please bring an item and put it in the shopping cart.



Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1 Happy New Year	2 9:00 am Staff Meeting	3 5:30 pm Crafters Group	4 12:40 pm Soul Food	5	6
	Office Closed	10:00 am Community Blood	6:00 pm Joyful Noise	All Saints Hosts		
		Drive	6:30 pm Confirmation Class			
			7:00 pm Choir Practice			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
8:30 am	1:30 pm	9:00 am	6:00 pm	12:40 pm		8:00 am
Worship with Communion and	Bible Study at First Lutheran	No Staff Meeting	Joyful Noise	Soul Food River Shores		Men's Breakfast
Sunday School		9:00 am	6:30 pm	Hosts		At Grace
Canaay Concor	7:00 pm	Oshkosh	Confirmation Class	77000		
	Congregation Council Meeting	Conference Meeting	7:00 pm Choir Practice			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
8:30 am	1:30 pm	9:00 am	5:30 pm	12:40 pm		
Worship with	Bible Study at	Staff Meeting	Crafters Group	Soul Food		
Communion and Sunday School	First Lutheran	9:00 am LWR Quilting	6:00 pm Joyful Noise	Grace Hosts		
			6:30 pm Confirmation Class			
			7:00 pm Choir Practice			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
8:30 am Worship with	1:30 pm Bible Study at	9:00 am Staff Meeting	6:00 pm Joyful Noise	12:40 pm Soul Food		
Communion and Sunday School	First Lutheran	9:00 am LWR Quilting	6:30 pm Confirmation Class	All Saints Hosts		
			7:00 pm Choir Practice			
28	29	30	31	Feb 1	Feb 2	Feb 3
8:30 am Worship with	1:30 pm Bible Study at	9:00 am Staff Meeting	6:00 pm Joyful Noise	12:40 pm Soul Food		12:00 noon
the Puppets Communion - no Sunday School	First Lutheran		6:30 pm Confirmation Class	River Shores Hosts		until 3:00pm Bingo
Canady Concor			7:00 pm Choir Practice			Fundraiser