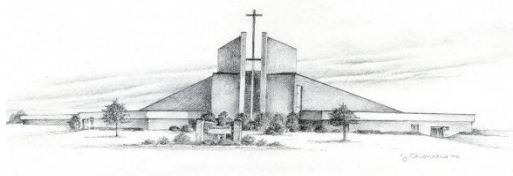


Grace English Lutheran Church
384 Oak Street, Berlin, WI 54923
*A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America*

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: Sunday at 9:45 am
WRPN AM 1600 at 12:00 PM



Worship Services

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gelcberlin

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



- March 1 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- March 4 - Lenten Service at 6:30 pm (In person and online)
- March 8 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- March 11 - Lenten Service at 6:30 pm (In person and online)
- March 15 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- March 18 - Lenten Service at 6:30 pm (In person and online)
- March 22 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- March 25 - Lenten Service at 6:30 pm (In person and online)
- March 29 - Joint Worship Service at 10:00 am (In person and online)

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

From the Pastor

As I write this, the sun is shining through my office windows, the birds are chirping outside, and it's nearly 50 degrees, and it is only February. I heard a weather forecaster call this "false spring," which feels about right, especially since we still have the entire month of March ahead of us.



March often gives us a false spring, just enough warmth to make us think winter is finished, followed quickly by a reminder that it's not quite time yet. Lent works the same way. We catch glimpses of hope, but we don't skip the hard parts. This year, as we journey through the Gospel of John, we are invited to stay with Jesus all the way to the cross.

I'm reminded of how tempting it is, on a warm February day, to put away the winter coat or stop checking the forecast, only to regret it a few days later. Lent asks us to resist that same temptation in faith. Not to rush ahead. Not to pack away the hard parts too soon. But to stay present to the story as it unfolds.

Our Scripture readings this month take us through the final days of Jesus' life. On both Sundays and Wednesdays, we are slowly walking with Jesus toward the cross. *Slowly* is the key word here. No fast-forwarding. No skipping ahead to the resurrection.

Our Lenten journey is more like a slow cooker than a microwave. John's Gospel takes its time, letting the story simmer. Jesus speaks honestly, loves faithfully, and stays all the way to the end. This season isn't about rushing to Easter; it's about letting God's love sink in deeply, over time.

And as we walk this road with Jesus, we trust that God meets us not just at the end, but in every step along the way.

I hope you'll join us for worship, prayer, and fellowship as we walk this road together.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Rebekah

Worship Together This Lent

In addition to Sunday worship, you are invited to pause mid-week and gather around God's Word during the season of Lent. These services offer space to breathe, pray, and linger with Jesus' story—especially in the middle of busy weeks.

Mid-Week Lenten Worship

- Wednesdays at 1:30 pm – First Lutheran, Poy Sippi
- Wednesdays at 6:30 pm – Grace Lutheran, Berlin

Whether you come for quiet reflection in the afternoon or worship at the close of the day, each service invites us to slow down, listen, and remember that God meets us right where we are.

Grace English Lutheran Church Congregational Council Meeting January 12, 2026

Call to Order by Linda Reetz

Roll Call- Attending: Terry Wallace, Linda Reetz, Sandy Peschke, Heidi Schramer, Sue Shemanski, Bob Prellwitz, Anita Lind and Pastor Rebekah

Absent: Tim Koch

Guest: Gary Batenhorst

Terry provided Opening devotion reminding us we are stewards of our church, not owners.

Approval of Agenda – Heidi moved to approve the agenda as presented. Sue seconded. Motion carried.

Secretary's Report – Anita moved to approve December minutes as printed. Bob seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Electric bill has gone up quite a bit this month. We earned approximately \$670 interest on the RBC Auxiliary account that was set up in April 2025. Sue moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Second by Terry. Motion carried.

Officer and Standing Committee Reports

President-Linda shared:

Linda passed around a resignation letter from Bonnie Kline. The Nominating Committee will have to recommend someone to replace her at the Annual meeting for the one year remaining in her term.

Linda asked for volunteers to do a skit during announcements at the end of the service this coming Sunday regarding how Thrivent Action Teams work. Gary B., Linda, Terry and Anita volunteered.

Pastor's Report- Pastor provided a written report. Her report described the activities she has participated in this past month including all the Christmas services, one funeral and one baptism, writing annual reports, leading weekly Bible studies at both churches and one week of vacation.

Committees –

Fellowship and Caring – Asking for prize baskets for the Bingo event. Would like one from every committee if possible. There are 9 homebound members and we will have kids decorate Valentine bags and kids and families make Easter cards Mar. 1st for these individuals. They have also signed up for Mar. 11 to serve a soup supper.

Building and Grounds – Bob reported that he asked Ken Neubauer to do snow removal and salting sidewalks. He has agreed to do it for \$55 each time now. Sandy asked Bob to check if he can provide a certificate of Liability Insurance (see under New Business below). We also discussed having Ryan Dobbs come and present the Safety Plan to the congregation at a meeting right after a service once it is finalized.

Christian Education- Anita shared that we will be hosting Fellowship and another Family Easter craft day right after the service on Mar. 1, 2026. We are thinking of serving pancakes and sausage with fruit and some cupcakes (for Fat Tuesday or Mardis Gras). Paper Bag Pageant went well on Dec. 14th. We will sign up to serve a soup supper and provide cakes for Fellowship for Graduation and Confirmation Sundays. We hope to have the kids play instruments on Mother's Day along with at least one hymn. Pastor agreed to talk to Jess about this.

Worship and Music – Heidi stated they heard back regarding the projector in sanctuary and that it may just need a good cleaning. She and Deanna will address this now that the Christmas tree is down and they can use both projectors again. Lent begins 2/18/26 with Ash Wednesday service and a soup supper. Palm Sunday will be 3/29/26 at 10AM at Grace with First attending. Maundy Thursday service will be 4/2/26 at First at 6:30PM and Good Friday at Grace on 4/3/26 at 1PM

Mission and Outreach – No report as Tim was ill.

Finance Committee – Terry handed out the Minutes of the Dec. Finance Comm Mtg. Four items were voted on tonight under New Business

Investment Committee – Terry provided an account summary of all accounts showing continued gains in the last month and the entirety of 2025.

Outside the Box Outreach Committee- Heidi reported that a \$1,000 remaining balance was donated to the Boys & Girls Club. It was decided to request 6/10 of 1% of the rolling 5 yr. balance of the Leonard Jones Fund at the Annual meeting for use in 2026. Books were bought for each child in Sunday School to be given out on their birthdays with the small amount left in 2025 funds.

Unfinished Business

Safety Plan- Ryan Dobbs joined us during Committee Reports above and we adjusted the agenda to hear his thoughts. He has completed a draft safety plan and reviewed some of his questions with us (Are our doors numbered on the outside? How many people or entities have the code for the door and how often is the code changed? Who knows CPR within the Congregation?) He gave Bob a list of questions and will email the Safety Plan to the office so they can forward to all of us for review and comment/additions or corrections. He agreed to present the plan to congregation members after a service once it is finalized.

Electric Panel Bids – Terry Wallace moved to recommend to the Congregation to approve at the annual meeting the replacement of the lighting control panel that controls the lights in the sanctuary based on the quote from Lighthouse Production for \$7,165 and the quote from John Lundt Electric for \$2,346.00 to do the electrical changes. Total would be \$9,511. This funding would come from the Capital Improvement Fund and is based on the recommendation of the Finance Committee. Second by Bob Prellwitz. Motion carried.

New Business

The **Finance Committee recommended staff raises** coincide with the Federal Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) at 2.8% for all staff for 2026. Terry moved to accept this recommendation and Sue seconded. Motion carried with 2 Abstentions and 7 “Yes” votes. (This does not include Pastor as her benefit pkg was already approved.)

Terry Wallace moved that Council approve the 2026 Budget Proposal as prepared by the Finance Committee and as presented today with the following changes:

- 402.125 Current Giving – Add \$3,000 for a total of \$140,000
- 403.114 Thrivent Choice Dollars – Add \$1,000 for a total of \$5,000
- 402.135 RBC distributions – Add \$5,000 for a total of \$53,000
- 404.119 Outside The Box Outreach - Add \$8,076.31 for a total of \$8,076.31
- 440.102 Endowment Income – Add \$5,009.15 for a total of \$5,009.15
- 502.131 Snow Removal – Add \$1,000 for a total of \$2,800

Second by Anita. Discussion ensued re: putting the Income of Endowment and Outside the Box funds into the Budget Proposal because these expenses show up on this report already. Sandy agreed to do so. Motion Carried.

Bldg and Grounds Comm. Is requesting help with shoveling and salting the sidewalks. Terry moved to hire Ken Neubauer for snow removal at \$55/time. Second by Sandy. Motion carried. (Sandy offered to help Ken if he needs it in establishing a Liability Certificate)

Terry moved, per the recommendation of the Finance Committee, to recommend to the Congregation for approval at the Annual Mtg, a request by the Outside the Box Outreach Committee to withdraw six-tenths of 1% of the 5 year average of the Leonard Jones Fund to be used for projects at church and in the community for youth. The amount for 2026 is \$8,076.31. Second by Heidi. Motion carried.

Sue moved to request the Congregation to increase the spending limit to \$8,000 (rather than the current \$5,000 as stated in section C12.05c of our Constitution) per the Finance Committee recommendation. Second by Terry. There was much discussion that Council members felt this was not a high enough limit considering

the cost of things today. An amended motion was presented by Terry to increase the spending limit to \$10,000 and increase the amount to require 2 bids if the project total is \$15,000 or more. (Presently, the Constitution states 2 bids are needed if the total amount for a project is over \$10,000). Second by Anita. The Amended motion carried.

We shared our Pastor evaluations with the Council and Pastor. Linda Reetz will collate and meet with Pastor separately regarding this.

Closing Prayer – Recited Lord’s Prayer together.

Anita moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Bob. Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Sue Shemanski
Secretary

Terry Wallace – President		920-344-1523	tw9696@outlook.com
Gary Batenhorst – Vice President		920-344-1523	batenhorstpj76@gmial.com
Sandy Peschke – Treasurer		920-290-1551	kspeschke1950@gmail.com
Sue Shemanski – Secretary		920-361-4506	shemanski5@yahoo.com
Heidi Schramer – Music/Worship		920-361-4097	schramer@charter.net
Carissa Fritz – Christian Education		920-229-2851	ccfritz413@gmail.com
De Anna Lueptow – Fellowship/Caring		920-229-4857	delueptow@gmail.com
Tim Koch – Mission Outreach		920-789-8358	timkoch18@gmail.com
Bob Prellwitz – Building and Grounds		920-361-0669	bobprellwitz@yahoo.com

Lenten Soup Lunches & Suppers

During Lent, join us for simple meals and shared fellowship before worship.


- **12:30 p.m. at First Lutheran** – Soup Lunch
- **5:45 p.m. at Grace Lutheran** – Soup Supper



Please check the kiosk to sign up for providing soups and desserts.

Bible Camp Registration Is Open!

Summer plans? Consider Bible camp. **Crossways Bible Camp-Pine Lake** offers faith-filled programs for kids, youth, and families—there’s truly something for every age.

 Online registration is now open at CrosswaysCamps.org.

Bible camp is one of those places where faith sticks—through worship, friendships, laughter, and a little healthy camp chaos. It’s a gift that keeps on giving long after the mosquito bites fade.

Looking Ahead to Holy Week

This spring, Grace Lutheran and First Lutheran are continuing to live into our shared ministry by walking through Holy Week together. These days tell the heart of the Christian story—from joyful praise to deep sorrow, and finally to resurrection hope. Experiencing them as one wider church reminds us that we do not journey with Jesus alone.

Palm Sunday – March 29 at 10:00 am

We begin Holy Week together with one joint worship service at 10:00 am at Grace Lutheran, followed by a brunch. In worship, we will hear John's telling of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, a moment filled with hope, tension, and longing. The crowd celebrates Jesus as king, not fully understanding what kind of king he will be.

Maundy Thursday – April 2 at 6:30 pm

We gather at First Lutheran in Poy Sippi for Maundy Thursday worship centered on John's account of Jesus at the cross. This service brings us to the place where love is poured out completely and nothing is held back. As we hear Jesus' final words—"I am thirsty" and "It is finished"—we will also share in Holy Communion, receiving the gift of Christ's body and blood, given for us. At the table, we are reminded that even in the shadow of the cross, grace is still being offered and love still meets us.

Good Friday – April 3 at 1:00 pm

At Grace Lutheran in Berlin, we gather for a Service of the Word shaped by several readings from the Gospel of John, woven together with hymns, silence, and reflection. We listen to the story of Jesus' final hours slowly and intentionally—lingering with the words, the music, and the weight of love poured out.

Easter Sunday – April 5

The journey leads us to resurrection morning!

- 8:30 am at Grace Lutheran, Berlin
- 10:30 am at First Lutheran, Poy Sippi

We will proclaim the good news that death does not get the final word—love does. As we move through these holy days together, may we find strength in shared worship, comfort in familiar stories, and renewed hope in the promise that God is always bringing life out of death.



“A Man Called Ove” by Fredrik Backman is Grace’s Book Club Choice for March. Ove is known as a curmudgeon – the kind of man who points at people he dislikes as if they were burglars caught outside his bedroom window. He has staunch principles, strict routines and a short fuse. People call him “the bitter neighbor from hell. But behind the cranky exterior there is a story and a sadness.

So, when one November morning, a chatty young couple with two chatty daughters move in net door and accidently flatten Ove’s mailbox, it is the lead-in to a comical and heartwarming tale of unkempt cats, unexpected friendship and the ancient art of backing up a U-Haul. All of which will change one cranky old man and a local residents association to their very foundation.

We will meet to discuss “A Man Called Ove” on Tuesday, March 10th at 12 Noon in the Grace Library. We will enjoy a potluck lunch and watch “A Man Called Ove” the movie based on the book. If you would like to read “A Man Called Ove”, there are copies available in the Church Office. If you have already read this book and would like to join us on March 10th, please do, we would love to have you.

Mission of the Month - Disaster Relief

Lutheran Disaster Response collaborates with other disaster response organizations and religious entities in the United States and around the world. This enables the greatest stewardship of resources and maximum impact of response. We are a welcome partner because we respect the perspectives and strengths of others.

Lutheran Disaster Response abides by the principles of accompaniment, walking together in a solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality. Every disaster is local, and local communities and organizations are best-equipped to address needs following a disaster.

Lutheran Disaster Response strives to help the church continue to be church in the midst of disaster — following Christ's call to share hope and healing with our neighbor in need. Some key areas of work include:

- Providing emotional and spiritual care for people who have been affected by a disaster and for leaders who respond to a disaster
- Coordinating volunteers through our local affiliates
- Assisting refugees in a holistic way by meeting the varied needs of the community
- Promoting disaster risk-reduction by helping communities build their assets thereby reducing the effects of likely disasters
- Providing long-term recovery efforts by addressing the unmet needs months or even years after a disaster strikes

January Income		January Expenses	
Weekly Income	16,157.08	Wages and Payroll Expenses	\$17,006.36
RBC Earnings	4,000.00	Building & Grounds /Utilities	2,483.64
Bulletins/Radio Ministry	490.00	Radio Ministry	300.00
Thrivent Choice Dollars	48.00	Office/Miscellaneous	695.50
Shared Ministry	4,121.66	Office/Miscellaneous	987.68
TOTAL	\$ 24,816.74	TOTAL	\$ 20,485.50
Missions (In/Out)	\$ 1,205.84	Missions (In/Out)	\$ 0.00
Good Samaritan Fund	10.28	Good Samaritan	0.00
Soul Food	562.11	Soul Food	0.00
Women of Grace	765.00	Women of Grace	0.00
Men of Grace	0.00	Men of Grace	0.00
Christian Education/Youth	0.00	Christian Education/Youth	0.00
Scholarship Fund	108.08	Scholarship Fund	0.00
Endowment Fund	0.00	Endowment Fund	0.00
Outside the Box Outreach	0.00	Outside the Box Outreach	0.00
Beginning Balance January 2026		Ending Balance January 2026	
Investments:		Investments:	
Leonard Jones Fund	\$ 1,494,760.24		1,532,233.85
Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 340,519.14		349,568.23
Endowment Fund	\$ 135,983.58		139,050.72
Auxiliary Fund	\$ 31,382.89		27,526.26
Scholarship Fund	\$ 6,611.633		4,628.67

THANK YOU

To Everyone that helped make the Bingo Event a huge success!

- The faithful members of Grace and First Lutheran that organized, setup, and worked the event and made desserts for the lunch.
- To Tanner Zabel for calling Bingo
- The individuals and groups that donated baskets, silent auction items, and bingo prizes.
- All the people that came and bought a lunch meal, raffle tickets, bid on items, and played bingo!

A total of **\$5,382** was raised for the Berlin and Poy Sippi Food Pantries.





Flowers

- March 1 - Sponsored by Linda Reetz
- March 8 - Sponsored by Bev Chadwick in honor of her 86th Birthday and Meg Roggow's 77th Birthday
- March 15 - Open
- March 22 - Open
- March 29 - Open

Radio Ministry

- March 1 - Sponsored by Linda Reetz
- March 8 - Sponsored by Bev Chadwick in honor of her 86th Birthday and Meg Roggow's 77th Birthday
- March 15 - Open
- March 29 - In Honor of Tom & Tracy Sillanpaa's 25th Wedding Anniversary by Bob and Mary Sillanpaa

Bulletins

- March 1 - In Honor of her son Bob's Birthday by Shirley Huck
- March 8 - Sponsored by Bev Chadwick in honor of her 86th Birthday and Meg Roggow's 77th Birthday
- March 15 - Open
- March 22 - Open
- March 29 - Open

Fellowship

- March 1 - Christian Education
- March 8 - Meg & Bev
- March 15 - Penny
- March 22 - Jean & Vic Dretske
- March 29 - Palm Sunday Brunch

Greeter

- March 1 - Bev
- March 8 - Open
- March 15 - Open
- March 22 - Phyllis
- March 29 - Open

March Birthdays

- 3 - Dona Eury
- 6 - Heather Hermanson
- 8 - Beverly Chadwick
- 9 - Meg Roggow
- 15 - Ellen Lehr
- 16 - Susan Calabresa
- 17 - Kenneth Peschke
- 21 - Tony Goettl
- 21 - Lisa Tatgenhorst
- 26 - Ryan Dobbs
- 23 - James Gropp

Happy Birthday
&
Happy Anniversary

March Anniversaries

- 18 - William & Fay McMonigal
- 23 - Don & Connie Koscher
- 26 - Matt & Sydney Renik



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

2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 8:30 am Worship - with Communion and Sunday School	2 4:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	3 9:00 am Staff Meeting 9:00 am LWR Quilting 3:00 pm Bible Study at Grace	4 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 3:00 pm Outside the Box 5:45 pm Soup Supper 6:30 pm Lenten Service 7:00 pm Choir Practice	5 11:45 am Soul Food St John's Hosts	6	7
8 8:30 am Worship - with Communion and Sunday School	9 6:00 pm Council Meeting	10 9:00 am Staff Meeting 12:00 pm Book Club 3:00 pm Bible Study at Grace	11 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 5:45 pm Soup Supper 6:30 pm Lenten Service 7:00 pm Choir Practice	12 11:45 am Soul Food Grace Hosts	13	14 8:00 am Men's Breakfast At First 9:00 am - 4:00pm Craft Day at Grace
15 8:30 am Worship with Communion and Sunday School	16	17 9:00 am Staff Meeting 9:00 am LWR Sewing 10:00 am Finance Meeting 3:00 pm Bible Study at Grace	18 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 3:00 pm Investment Committee 5:45 pm Soup Supper 6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Worship Service 7:00 pm Choir Practice	19 11:45 am Soul Food River Shores Hosts	20	21 9:00 am Outside the Box Outreach – Crock Pot Dinners
22 8:30 am Worship with Communion - no Sunday School	23	24 9:00 am Staff Meeting 3:00 pm Bible Study Grace	25 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 5:45 pm Soup Supper 6:30 pm Lenten Service 7:00 pm Choir Practice	26 11:45 am No Soul Food	27	28
29 10:00 am Palm Sunday Joint Worship with communion – no Sunday School Brunch to Follow Worship	30	31 9:00 am Staff Meeting 3:00 pm Bible Study Grace	April 1 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	April 2 11:45 am Soul Food All Saints 6:30pm Maundy Thursday at First	April 3 1:00 pm Good Friday Service at Grace Lutheran	April 4