

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

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THIS NEWSLETTER PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR

Sunday Worship:
8:30 AM

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



Worship Services

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gelcberlin

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

- December 5 - Worship at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- December 12 - Worship at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- December 19 - Cantata Worship at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- December 19 - Blue Christmas Worship at 6:30 pm (In person and online)
- December 24 - Christmas Eve Worship at 4:30 pm (In person and online)
- December 26 - Worship 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"



From the Pastor:

As I drove through downtown Berlin this morning, workers were hanging Christmas wreaths, the park is filled with trees in preparation for the lighting and holiday parade, and many yards are filled with Christmas decorations. The words “It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas...” are stuck in my head.



But, in the Church calendar, we aren’t there yet. First, we have the season of Advent, a season of waiting. Do you remember as a kid having to wait to open presents on Christmas? It felt like torture seeing gifts under the tree with my name on them but having to wait and wait and wait to be able to open them. Sometimes this time of waiting for the coming of Christ feels like that – like we are waiting forever. During Advent we are waiting both for the celebration of Christ’s arrival on earth in human form as the baby Jesus but also for his arrival that is yet to occur. It is this strange time of already and not yet.

The tone of the readings in our Advent worship are of longing and preparing for the coming of Christ. As the body of Christ, we carry different longings. What were the deep longings stirring in the hearts of the original hearers of Luke’s gospel? What did they expect from the promised Messiah? A conquering king? A mighty warrior? An avenger? What are the longings in our lives today? How are we preparing for Christ’s coming?

Advent invites us to enter into this time of waiting in hope: for peace, for joy, for the restoration of all that is broken, for the fulfillment of all things in Christ. While waiting is often a challenge for us, we can use this time to prepare our hearts and our minds for the coming of Christ.

I encourage you to do something intentional in this season that will help you prepare for the coming of Christ both at Christmas and when he comes again. You might consider using an Advent calendar with daily readings; an Advent devotion book to guide you through this season of waiting; or refresh your view of Jesus by reading one chapter in the Gospel of Luke every day of December. Here are some free Advent resources to explore:

- God Pause from Luther Seminary provides a free Advent devotional written by seminary professors: <https://www.luthersem.edu/godpause/advent-devotional/>
- Daily Readings from Advent Conspiracy <https://adventconspiracy.org/devotionals/>
- Hope Rekindled Advent reading plan
https://livingbydesign.org/advent/?gclid=CjwKCAiAp8iMBhAqEiwAJb94z0iICeSrWUOyLsvZ28TgSzVYaxzF1X0o3xN0MmIjOOKofQ2wul0F_hoC0nEQAvD_BwE

Blessings to you in this season of waiting,
Pastor Rebekah Tarras

**REGULAR GRACE ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING – FELLOWSHIP HALL
Monday, October 11, 2021**

Present: Bill Bartlett, Cindy Wallace, Matt Dretske, Tricia Prellwitz, Becky Guden, Sue Shemanski; Karen Macaulay; Pastor Rebekah Tarras. Linda Reetz and Conrad Falk were absent.

President Bill Bartlett called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and Pastor Rebekah led us in an opening devotion and prayer.

The September Council minutes were presented. Cindy Wallace made a motion to accept the minutes; Sue Shemanski seconding the motion. Motion approved.

Ministry Reports:

Pastor Rebekah presented her written report and highlighted that she did have two funerals so far in October. In September she did five homebound visits with communion; plus other hospital visits and phone calls. Pastor also was busy planning and conducting Confirmation Classes; Bible Studies; various committee meetings; synod meetings and held her first high school youth study of this school year. She did note that she may be attending the Synod Fall Theological Retreat on October 25th to the 27th; has graciously accepted a Pieta sculpture and a wood table to be used in the narthex from the Sandy Krynik memorial. Grace sponsoring a Christmas Tree in the Nathan Strong Park was brought up and council agreed to take care of that. With all the duties Pastor Rebekah has between the two parishes, Tricia Prellwitz agreed to help organize lay persons to help with the homebound members which will include distribution of communion.

Cindy Wallace handed out the September Treasurer's Report and September Check Detail. Tricia Prellwitz made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented; Matt Dretske seconded. Motion approved. After reviewing the list of September checks, Matt Dretske made a motion to approve checks as written; Tricia Prellwitz seconded. Motion approved.

The Investment profile spreadsheet was reviewed by Bill Bartlett. September was a down month but RBC advised not to worry as the market is recovering but to expect ups and downs in the next several months.

Matt Dretske presented the Buildings and Grounds Committee spreadsheet of projects and noted that edging along the sidewalks is completed and thanked Jim Lehr and Mark Labbus that helped. They have added some rocks in the landscaping with a member donating larger rocks from their land to hold the areas better. Also noted was that the carpet replacement around the altar will start this week.

Sue Shemanski from the Christian Education Committee reported that Sunday School has started with only a few attending. Bible distribution was held with 10 youth being invited and only 1 youth was present to receive their Bible.

Worship & Music Committee report was presented by Tricia Prellwitz and highlighted that the HOPE series went very good and was well received; training on the new audio/video technology is being held; Blue Christmas Service will be December 19 at night; Christmas Cantata will be December 19 with a public presentation on December 15; a 4:30pm Christmas Eve service is being planned for December 24; currently working on updating the Wedding Booklet; and celebrating members 80+ years will be planned for a Sunday in June.

Karen Macaulay advised that the Caring & Sharing group will be making gnomes after the service on November 7 to be distributed to the homebound members.

There was no Mission Report; no other concerns brought to the council and no member audience.

Old Business:

It was noted that a Building Usage form has been completed and on file by the person using our facility; and all church personnel are aware of this form.

Tricia Prellwitz advised that All Saints Sunday, October 31 will be also Don Timm Recognition Sunday to honor all his wood mosaic contributions he had donated to Grace. His family has been invited to attend and participate in the service.

Soul Food was discussed with only Grace and River Shores congregations participating to date. Council will urge to start this program even though it is just the two churches and they may have to host twice a month. If other church(es) come forward to participate, the frequency to host can be adjusted.

Council discussed current COVID procedures and agreed to remain with current policy. Congregation has requested more singing since the majority have been vaccinated, but council understands the current county number of cases is high and we have to remain patient. Council will keep an eye on the status.

New Business:

As Tricia Prellwitz had previously reported, the Worship & Music Committee will be working on a special Sunday service in June to honor all members that are of 80 years and older. They would like to include pictures in a slideshow presentation and interviews. A subcommittee will be formed to start the planning process and gathering of items.

The Tentmakers organization was discussed whether or not Grace should participate. Sue Shemanski made a motion to pursue, gather more information, start educating the congregation on what this program is and advise Tentmakers that Grace may request a team for the 2022 program. Cindy Wallace seconded. Motion approved.

Pastor Rebekah led council in Closing Prayer.

Tricia Prellwitz made a motion to adjourn; Matt Dretske seconded. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Guden, Council Secretary



Join us this December as we celebrate Christ's birth. There are a number of worship experiences this month. All worship services will be in person and livestreamed on our Facebook page and our YouTube channel.

December 5th - Second Week in Advent 8:30 am

December 12th - Third Week in Advent 8:30 am

December 15th - Christmas Cantata Community Performance 7:00 pm

The choir will do a community performance of our Christmas Cantata, *The Sound and The Silence*. Refreshments will be available afterwards. All are welcome! Invite your neighbor!!

December 19th - Fourth Week of Advent (Cantata Sunday) 8:30 am

December 19th - Blue Christmas Worship 6:30 pm

While Advent is a season of hope and Christmas is a season of joy, not everyone feels hopeful or like celebrating. Grief, illness, aging, depression, loneliness, unemployment, and loss are magnified. Even those who are not struggling with losses may feel the stress of preparations and expectations around Christmas time. The Longest Night/Blue Christmas service is a time and place of solace during the often frenetic days surrounding the celebration of Christmas. We come together seeking healing and room to share grief, sadness, loneliness, or confusion when these emotions often feel out of place during the holidays.

December 24th - Christmas Eve Worship 4:30 pm.....Family Candlelight Service

December 26th – First Sunday after Advent 8:30 am

Maggie the Church Mouse

Spattered with rain and icy cold, the glass around the church door frame told of a blustery day that would be better spent inside. A good day for exploring, I thought, or maybe for nestling into a quiet corner for a nap. In one of the storage areas, I skirted around boxes and bins in the warmth of the enclosure, looking for a cozy spot...when suddenly I came to a halt by a little painted figure of baby Jesus. Not yet placed in the creche that graces the narthex at Christmas time, he looked so tiny and alone.

My memory took me back to last year and the table of sculpted characters that surrounded the baby. I remembered Mary and Joseph, an angel, a shepherd, kings and animals. They must be packed somewhere nearby. But seeing the tiny Jesus, all alone, brought to mind the fact that he started life as a helpless baby, needing love and care, nourishment and a name. Just like you and I did. As with ordinary people and animals, Jesus had to grow and mature and, with the help of his earthly family, learn to take care of himself and live among others. In many ways, he was like the rest of us on earth.

Because I pay attention during the services here at Grace, I know that the story of the life of Jesus continues through the years he devoted to teaching and healing. I also know that he encountered problems along the way. In the soft light of the storage room, perched alongside this little figure of baby Jesus, there was suddenly something very comforting about the realization that even he must have known the hardships of this life on earth.

Like me, he probably knew what it's like to be hungry, cold, lonely, and lost. But he also knew in his heart that God was always watching over him. He could turn to his heavenly father in prayer, he could cry out to him in pain, and he could praise and thank him for blessings. He could count on God's faithful presence. Instantly I felt a little less alone. I fell asleep soundly, curled up against the cradle of baby Jesus.

It must be nearing the time that we will hear the Christmas story once again at Grace. In fact, I've heard it will be told in music as well, in two cantata performances. The women of Grace are planning an Advent Brunch to celebrate the birth of Jesus, and Pastor Rebekah will be leading a workshop for all who struggle with sadness at a time when they wish to feel joy. The people of Grace are working to make Christmas a time for everyone, not just for the joyful but for the lonely and the lost as well.

I look forward to seeing baby Jesus laid in the manger, surrounded by the figures who welcomed him to this earth. I'm going to pause before it often to ponder the story. I'm sure many of you will, too. After all, the story is for every one of us.



Mission of the Month

Grace Lutheran Youth Ministry

Greetings from the Missions Committee:

With Christmas drawing near and gift giving is on our hearts and minds, let us encourage you to consider how you may support the Grace Youth Ministry. We have partnered again with a church or two to resume Soul Food every Thursday. We invite the Berlin High School students to a lunch and devotion. We take turns preparing a meal. Funds are helpful for us to purchase needed food items and supplies. We have had over 50 students attending, including a few from Grace.

We have been meeting with our High School youth every other Sunday at noon for a meal and Bible study. Again, as you can see, food is always a good way to “feed” teens. Any help with this is most welcomed!

We are also looking at possible youth gatherings, nearby and the National Youth Gathering in 2022. Funding these kinds of events is a way for you to help pour into the hearts of these young adults to help them grow in their Christian faith.

We are hoping to offer scholarships to various church camps in 2022 as well which is another great way to support the Grace Youth so they can afford to attend. Camps are one incredible way to reach them and have an impact on their young lives.

One possibility, still in consideration, is a possible partnership with Tentmakers and a Year on Mission team of 4 young adults who come to develop a youth and family outreach for Grace to grow.



Thank You..... to Grace Lutheran and its members who have supported FCA and its ministry. We are starting a FCA Huddle at the Berlin High School, Wednesday mornings before school. We are grateful for your support to make this happen.

For God's Glory,
Jeff Tarras, FCA Staff



Fellowship

December 5 - Kline's
December 12 - Mildebrandt's
December 19 - Caring & Sharing Committee
December 26 - Open

Bulletins

December 5 - Open
December 12 - Open
December 19 - Goettl Family
December 26 - Open

Radio Ministry

December 5 - Open
December 12 - Given by Bill & Sue Bartlett in honor of Jeremy & Jess
at Cantata Time
December 19 - Goettl Family
December 26 - Open

Flowers

December 5 - Open
December 12 - In Honor of Drew Wallace's Birthday by Terry and Cindy Wallace
December 19 - Goettl Family
December 26 - Open

The 2022 sign-up sheets are posted on the kiosk for radio ministry, bulletins, altar flowers, and fellowship.

Many, many, thanks to everyone for your very generous sponsorships in 2021.



Surviving the Holidays Seminar
Sunday, December 5, 1:30-4:00 pm
Grace Lutheran Church

Are you dreading the holidays, knowing that everything has changed and that happy memories from past years can't be recreated? Wondering how you will survive the weeks surrounding Thanksgiving and Christmas? Our Surviving the Holidays seminar is especially for people who are grieving a loved one's death.

You'll learn:

- How to deal with the many emotions you'll face during the holidays
- What to do about traditions and other coming changes
- Helpful tips for surviving social events
- How to discover hope for your future

To register call (920) 361-1820 during office hours.



Angel Tree Program

There are many ways to share our blessings during this Advent Season. One very familiar way is the "angel tree".

Again, this year members of Grace will have the opportunity to pick an angel off the tree in the Fellowship Hall to help make Christmas a little more "merry" for those less fortunate.



Ladies Advent Dinner

- Sunday, December 12, 2021. Dinner will be served at 12:00 noon
- Music Recital at 1:00 pm
- Dinner catered by Moose Inn is beef tips and baked chicken with all the trimmings. Gluten free option is available.
- Cost is \$14.00
- Make your reservation for the meal by Sunday, December 5.



December Birthdays

- 1 Susan Carpenter
- 2 Leighton Cox
- 3 Jeremie Schmidt
- 4 Aubree Rozek
- 6 Jeremy Fritz
- 8 Eric Krebs
Megan Roehl
- 10 Brian Wallace
- 11 Ann Dehn
Grace Dobbs
Tayler Peschke
- 12 Kean Hermanson
Gene Hess
Kristine Labbus
Drew Wallace
Darlene Wilkes
- 13 Alaina Labbus
Kaden Fritz
Kara Fritz
- 14 Heather Schmidt
- 15 Allan Janes
Julie Sroka
- 17 Roland Bahr
Destiney Krebs
- 19 Tamra Greening
Timothy Eastberg
Jeff Tarras
- 20 Edmund Roehl, Jr.
- 21 Bonnie Kline
- 25 Scott Wolfe

December Birthdays (Continued)

- 26 Susan Bartlett
Ashlyn Eastberg
Kristen Hermanson
Ryan Retzlaff
- 28 Joshua Koscher
- 29 Gracie Pence
Edmund Roehl, Sr
Kenneth Schram
- 30 Conrad Falk
Elias Klawitter
Tom McCarthy



December Anniversaries

- 3 Phil & Karen Pik
- 6 Matthew & Alissa Gies
- 12 Michael & Kristine McElligott
- 22 Vern & Barbara Tollakson
- 30 Scott & Amber Dutcher
- 30 Frank & Cindy Laudolff

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

2022 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes are ready and can be picked up after church on Sunday or during office hours.

December

2021

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1 5:30 pm Craft Group 6:00 – 7:00 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	2 12:45 pm Soul Food 6:30 pm Bible Study at Grace Lutheran	3	4 9:00 am Decorate the Church for Christmas
5 8:30 am Worship with Communion & Sunday School 12:00 Noon Youth Bible Study 1:30 – 4:00 pm Surviving Christmas	6 9:00 am Church Cleaning 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran	7 9:00 am Staff Meeting No LWR Quilters	8 6:00 – 7:00 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	9 12:45 pm Soul Food 6:30 pm Bible Study at Grace Lutheran	10	11 No Men's Breakfast
12 8:30 am Worship with Communion & Sunday School 12:00 Noon Ladies Advent Dinner 1:00 pm Music Recital	13 9:00 am Church Cleaning 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran 7:00 pm Congregation Council Meeting	14 9:00 am Staff Meeting	15 5:30 pm Craft Group 6:00 – 7:00 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Cantata	16 12:45 pm Soul Food 5:00 pm Christian Education Meeting 6:30 pm Bible Study at Grace Lutheran	17	18
19 8:30 am Cantata Worship Service & No Sunday School 12:00 Noon Youth Bible Study 6:30 pm Blue Christmas Worship Service	20 9:00 am Church Cleaning 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran 7:00 pm Joint Parish Council Meeting at First Lutheran	21 9:00 am Staff Meeting No LWR Quilters	22 No Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	23 No Soul Food No Bible Study at Grace Lutheran	24 4:30 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service	25 Merry Christmas
26 8:30 am Worship with Communion & No Sunday School	27 9:00 am Church Cleaning No Bible Study at First Lutheran	28 No Staff Meeting	29 No Confirmation Class No Choir Practice	30 No Soul Food No Bible Study at Grace Lutheran	31 	