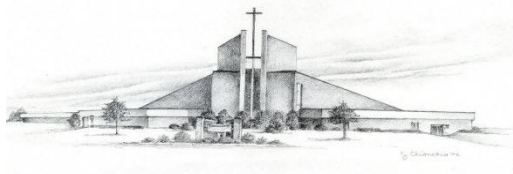


**Grace English Lutheran Church**  
**384 Oak Street, Berlin, WI 54923**  
*A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America*

Rebekah Tarras, Pastor  
Email: [pastortarras@gmail.com](mailto:pastortarras@gmail.com)  
Cellphone: 715-897-5393  
Jessica Fritz – Worship and Music Coordinator  
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Sandy Peschke – Office Assistant  
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(920) 361-1820  
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Email: [gracelutheranberlin@gmail.com](mailto: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](https://www.facebook.com/gelcberlin)

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



- April 2 - Maundy Thursday Worship Service at First Lutheran at 6:30 pm
- April 3 - Good Friday Service at 1:00 pm (In person and online)
- April 5 - Easter Sunday Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- April 12 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- April 19 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- April 26 - 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”**

## *From the Pastor*

April 2026

This year, April begins in the middle of Holy Week. We end March with Palm Sunday, and then we slow down and stay with the story of Jesus' final hours. We walk with Jesus to the table on Maundy Thursday, to the cross on Good Friday, to the quiet waiting of Saturday. Then on Easter Sunday, we say it again: death does not get the last word.



Most of us would prefer to skip the suffering. We'd rather jump straight into Easter morning; in fact, that's what a lot of people do. We want the joy without the grief, the celebration without the cross. But we need the cross. We need to remember what Christ has done for us. And when we do, the rest of the story becomes even more of a celebration.

When we've actually walked through Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the quiet waiting of Saturday, the news that the tomb is empty becomes even more meaningful. Everything changes. Death does not get the final word. What looked finished turns out to be just the beginning.

That's the promise of Easter. Not that suffering is ignored or erased, but that it is met and overcome by the life of Christ. As Paul writes, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:54–55, NLT).

Easter doesn't rush us past the hard parts of life. It meets us right in them and reminds us they don't get the last word. Because of Jesus, love wins. Because of Jesus, life is stronger than death. Because of Jesus, the story is not over.

Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed.

We invite you to walk this story with us. Join us for Holy Week as we gather at the table on Maundy Thursday, stand at the cross on Good Friday, and celebrate the good news of resurrection on Easter morning. Whether you've been here every step of the way or you're just finding your way back, there is a place for you here.

And the story doesn't end at the empty tomb. On April 12, we wrap up our time in the Gospel of John, where we've been hearing who Jesus is and what love looks like when it refuses to quit. And then we turn to Acts...where resurrection gets legs.

We'll meet Paul and Ananias, two very different people pulled into the same story of grace. We'll sit with Paul and Silas in prison, where chains fall, hearts open, and a whole household is baptized in the middle of the night.

In other words, Easter keeps happening. Resurrection moves out of the empty tomb and into real lives—messy, surprising, ordinary lives shaped by the love of Christ. And that same Spirit is still at work among us.

So come and see. Because this story isn't finished yet.

*Pastor Rebekah Tarras*

# Grace English Lutheran Church Congregational Council Meeting February 9, 2026

Call to Order by Terry Wallace

**Roll Call-** Attending: Terry Wallace, Sandy Peschke, Heidi Schramer, Sue Shemanski, Tim Koch, Bob Prellwitz, Carissa Fritz, De Anna Lueptow and Pastor Rebekah

Absent: Gary Batenhorst

Pastor provided an Opening devotion centered on the meaning of Baptism and demonstrating that serving on Council is living out our Baptism.

**Approval of Agenda** – Tim moved to approve the agenda as presented. De Anna seconded. Motion carried.

**Secretary's Report** – Sandy moved to approve the January 2026 minutes as printed. Heidi seconded. Motion carried. Sandy agreed to print out the Minutes for our meetings starting next month.

**Treasurer's Report** – Sandy reported that we did receive two large offerings in January from two Congregants who gave their full year of offering in one lump sum. The utility bills were very high the last 2 months and Bob and Terry have worked on calibrating the thermostats to see if this will reduce the bill. Sue moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Second by Tim. Motion carried.

## Officer and Standing Committee Reports

- **President**-Terry shared:
  - Executive Committee members of the Council are asked to attend the Joint Parish Council meeting at First Lutheran on Feb. 16 at 6:30PM.
  - Asked for volunteers to do a Thrivent Choice Dollars skit encouraging members to ask Thrivent to donate their Choice Dollars to Grace on March 8th. Volunteers are: Sue S., Tim K., Bob P. and Gary B.
  - Terry and Sandy asked that Gary B complete paperwork to become a check signer now that he is an Officer. Sandy will get the paperwork for him.
  - Pastor is concerned because there has been an increase in scam texts and emails saying they are from her to church members and persons in the community. She is improving her security on her electronics and an email will be sent to Congregants this week warning them about this scam.
  - Soul Food is receiving another Webster Foundation grant this year, but we do not know the amount yet.
  - There will be a training/orientation for Council members at our March meeting starting one hour before the mtg (orientation at 6PM/Mtg at 7PM)
  - Council is being asked to serve the soup supper on March 25
- **Pastor's Report**- Pastor provided a written report and reminded the Council that she will be on vacation Feb. 19-22. Jeremy Fritz will be the lay preacher for that Sunday.
- **Committees** –
  - Building and Grounds**- Bob provided a written report and also reported that he and Terry have been re-calibrating the thermostats in hopes of improved functioning and lower utility bills.
  - Christian Education**- Sue and Carissa reported that this committee will be serving pancakes and sausage during Fellowship and encouraging families to stay and make Easter decorations on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The SS kids made Valentine bags for shut-ins. Emails have been sent to parents asking if they'd like their children to have an adult pen pal from the congregation. We discussed getting Camp information out to the congregation and Pastor will ask Jess to put in the bulletins and on the screen on Sunday mornings. The Christian Ed. Committee will pay 50% of camp costs per child who attends Grace.
  - Fellowship and Caring** – Valentine bags with small gifts have been delivered to shut-ins. Next mtg of this committee is March 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Finance Committee-** Terry handed out the Minutes from an electronic meeting of the Finance Committee that was held to recommend to the Council that they approve and bring to the Congregation a request to replace the lighting control panel that controls the lights in the sanctuary. This request was approved and taken to the Council at their January meeting. The next in-person meeting of this committee is tomorrow, Feb. 10, 2026.

**Investment Committee-** Terry provided a summary of all accounts showing an approximate \$43,574 total gain in the last month.

**Mission and Outreach-** Tim reported that the schedule for Monthly Missions has been set up for the entire year.

**Outside the Box Outreach Committee-** Heidi reported that the committee is very happy that the Congregation approved their request to use \$8076.31 of the Leonard Jones Fund over the 12 months of 2026 at the Annual meeting on Feb. 8th.

**Worship and Music** – The livestream of our services that is played on You Tube has been cutting out and jerky. Jeremy Fritz has offered to look at it to see if he can troubleshoot before we call in a repair person.

#### **Unfinished Business-**

**Safety Plan-** The Safety Plan drafted by Ryan Dobbs has been sent to Council members for our review before our next meeting. Sandy agreed to make hard copies so that we can review and make notes on them. Please pick up in the office Sunday AM and at our next meeting we will set a date for Ryan to come and explain this to the Congregation.

**Electric Panel Bids** were approved at the Annual Mtg and Terry has signed the proposals and sent back to service providers. This could still take 8-10 weeks.

**Snow shoveling** -Neighbor Tom Ottman has been volunteering with his riding snowblower. Bob feels he and Gary can do the rest of the clean-up around the building.

**Increasing the spending limit** to \$10,000 without Congregation approval in an emergency was approved by the Congregation at the Annual meeting.

**Updating the Constitution** with the Synod changes was approved at the Annual meeting. Sandy will do this in the Constitution and on the website.

#### **New Business**

We need to do a new property inventory video in case there would be a natural disaster or theft- we are wondering if Sadie Goettl might be able to do this for us? We could start now but want to make sure we include the new light control panel once installed.

It was decided we need to add a Continuing resolution to Chapter 13 of the Constitution to add the Outside the Box Outreach Committee into the Constitution. Linda Reetz has volunteered to write it and we can add next month.

Grace is looking for two volunteers to attend the Synod Assembly in Oshkosh June 4-6, 2026. Registration is supposed to be in by March 1<sup>st</sup>. (We wondered if Patti and Gary Batenhorst would be interested?)

We discussed an earlier meeting time and decided on 6PM for all future Council meetings. (March mtg will be at 7PM, but with orientation for Council members at 6PM prior to the meeting). NEXT MEETING IS MARCH 9, 2026.

Closing Prayer – Recited Lord’s Prayer together.

Tim 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@gmail.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

## Park Bench



Congratulations and thank you to all the members of Grace Lutheran and First Lutheran for collecting 1,000 pounds of plastic to recycle.

Your efforts have been rewarded with this beautiful bench.

Now unto the next 1,000 pounds so First Lutheran can receive a bench!

A special thank you to Linda Reetz for organizing this project and Jerry Reetz for his time to weigh and take all the plastic to the recycling stations.

The Grace Book Club has chosen the book **“I Can Only Imagine”** by Bart Millard as their book for April.



The inspiring song, *I Can Only Imagine* by MercyMe, is a favorite Christian song for many and it has touched millions of people around the world. But few know about the pain, redemption, and healing that inspired it. Bart Millard the lead singer of MercyMe, shares how his dad’s transformation from abusive father to man of God sparked a divine moment in music history. This book goes behind Bart’s life to discover how God repaired a broken family, prepared Bart for ministry through music, and wrote the words on his heart that would change his life forever. *I Can Only Imagine* is a front-row seat to witnessing God’s presence throughout Bart’s life. Whether falling in love with his childhood sweetheart or mourning his father’s death, founding MercyMe or flailing in the midst of its success, Bart continues to place his trust in God’s plans—plans that continue to surprise and surpass what he could have ever imagined.

We will meet to discuss **“I Can Only Imagine”** on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at a location to be determined. If you would like to read this book and join us, please let Cindy Wallace know and she will get you a copy. If you have already read this, please consider joining us for discussion, we would love to have you.

## Mission of the Month - Damascus Road

The April Mission of the Month is the Damascus Road Project. Damascus Road was founded in 2009 and is dedicated to fighting the evil of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. They are committed to bring awareness through educating, restoring and empowering the abused, and advocating for the prevention and abolition of sex trafficking.

They also assist those who have been victimized, advocate for survivors, conduct training, raise awareness, partner with law enforcement, and coordinate outreaches.

Damascus Road Project, Inc. is nearly 100% specially trained volunteer run 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. We operated for 15 years with only volunteers, and have now grown to a place where we have been blessed to be able to hire our first staff members! We have over 120 years of collective experience working in the anti-human trafficking movement in Wisconsin, Las Vegas, and across the United States, as well as abroad.

Damascus Road Project serves the community with a three-fold approach:

1. Educate - Community and professional education and training opportunities are offered to all community members
2. Locate - They provide community outreach to identify those being victimized
3. Advocate - They connect with those who have been victimized and offer support, compassion, encouragement and mentorship, as well as connection to appropriate resources and services

<b>February Income</b>		<b>February Expenses</b>	
Weekly Income	12853.00	Wages and Payroll Expenses	\$17,700.52
RBC Earnings	4,000.00	Building & Grounds /Utilities	3,071.81
Bulletins/Radio Ministry	490.00	Radio Ministry	300.00
Thrivent Choice Dollars	716.00	Office/Miscellaneous	506.69
Shared Ministry	2,080.00	Worship & Music	204.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 20,139.00</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 21,783.02</b>
Missions (In/Out)	\$ 2,991.00	Missions (In/Out)	\$3,751.28
Good Samaritan Fund	25.00	Good Samaritan	12.18
Soul Food	3,053.00	Soul Food	0.00
Women of Grace	555.00	Women of Grace	78.00
Men of Grace	68.00	Men of Grace	0.00
Christian Education/Youth	0.00	Christian Education/Youth	0.00
Scholarship Fund	1470.00	Scholarship Fund	0.00
Endowment Fund	5,009.15	Endowment Fund	0.00
Outside the Box Outreach	0.00	Outside the Box Outreach	0.00
<b>Beginning Balance February 2026</b>		<b>Ending Balance February 2026</b>	
<b>Investments:</b>		<b>Investments:</b>	
Leonard Jones Fund	\$ 1,494,760.24		\$ 1,568,760.05
Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 340,519.14		\$ 356,406.05
Endowment Fund	\$ 135,983.58		\$ 137,210.88
Auxiliary Fund	\$ 31,382.89		\$ 27,351.86
Scholarship Fund	\$ 6,611.633		\$ 4,642.96

## WE NEED YOU!

### Grace's Annual Rummage Sale will take place Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>

There are many ways you can help:

- **Donate** – Donations can be brought to Church beginning the Monday after Easter (April 6<sup>th</sup>) We will have areas marked for people to leave their donations. Please only put your things in designated areas.
- **Bake** – We will again have a bake sale this year and we welcome any baked goods.
- **Sign Up to help:**
  - **The Week Before the Sale:** We will need help the week prior to the sale to sort and organize the donations and arrange and set-up the fellowship hall.
  - **The Day of the Sale:** We will need help on the day of the sale during the sale.
  - **The Afternoon Following the Sale:** We will need help following the sale for clean-up.
  - **Drivers:** We will also need a couple of people willing to deliver leftovers to various places.
- **Shop** - Come and shop on the day of the sale: **8:00 am – 1:00 pm with the \$2.00 bag sale starting at noon.** You never know what treasures you will find! Tell your neighbors, your friends, everyone you know! The more the merrier.



If you have any questions or if you need your donations picked up please call Cindy Wallace @ 920-229-3772.

## Outside the Box Outreach Committee

On Saturday March 21<sup>st</sup> we held a Kids in the Kitchen Day. We partnered with the Berlin Boys and Girls Club and hosted eight families. The children ranged from age three to seventeen. Along with a parent they prepared four crock pot meals.

We provided the crock pots, a container of baking and cooking supplies and all of the ingredients. A makeshift grocery store was setup with all of the ingredients needed for the four meals and the children had fun shopping. Each of the families were very appreciative. The event was made possible by Thrivent Action card and Grace Lutheran Leonard Jones Memorial Fund.



## Bible Camp for 55+ at Crossways

Embark on an adventure-filled day at Pine Lake Bible Camp near Waupaca! Join Pastor Rebekah and others for Camp Senior, a day with laughter, camaraderie, and memory-making. From outdoor activities to cozy bible study chats, there's something for everyone. Embrace the spirit of youthfulness, reconnect with nature, and make new friends. Come experience the joy of Camp Senior!

**Date:** July 9  
**Time:** 9:30 am - 3:00 pm  
**Cost:** \$25.00  
**Register:** [www.crosswayscamps.org](http://www.crosswayscamps.org)



### Flowers

- April 5 - Easter Garden
- April 12 - Easter Plants
- April 19 - In Honor of Penny & Sandy for Professional Administrative Week by Pastor Rebekah
- April 26 - Open

### Radio Ministry

- April 5 - In Honor of Sadie Goettl's 23<sup>rd</sup> Birthday by her family
- April 12 - In Memory of Bill Huck by Shirley Huck
- April 19 - In Honor of Henry & Lois Stark's 70<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary
- April 26 - In Honor of Jeremie and Jackie's 30<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary by Mary Pomplun

### Bulletins

- April 5 - In Honor of Sadie Goettl's 23<sup>rd</sup> Birthday by her family
- April 12 - In Memory of her mother Beatrice Duerr by De Anna Lueptow
- April 19 - In Honor of Henry & Lois Stark's 70<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary
- April 26 - In Honor of Jeremie and Jackie's 30<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary by Mary Pomplun

### Fellowship

- April 5 - Easter - No Fellowship
- April 12 - Open
- April 19 - Open
- April 26 - Open

### Greeter

- April 5 - Bev
- April 12 - Open
- April 19 - Phyllis
- April 26 - Open



## April Birthdays

- 2 Jayce Retzlaff
- 2 Candie Strebelinski
- 3 Sadie Goettl
- 4 Jon Dehn
- 7 Carrie McCarthy
- 9 Dina Dretske
- 14 Suzanne Cutts
- 14 Anna McCarthy
- 15 Kim Lehr
- 15 Amber Dutcher
- 16 Hannah Olsen
- 18 Jean Sprague
- 18 Joby Zietlow
- 19 Jody Ziemann
- 21 Catelyn Olsen
- 22 Chloe Dutcher
- 23 Scott Dutcher
- 25 Lori Nitzke
- 26 Tom Zuhlke
- 26 Scott Greenig
- 28 Sara Mildebrandt
- 28 Janice Retzlaff
- 29 Scott Schweigert
- 30 Heidi Schramer

## Happy Birthday & Happy Anniversary



## April Anniversaries

- 5 Frank & Lori Nitzke - 35<sup>th</sup>
- 7 Henry & Lois Stark - 70<sup>th</sup>
- 25 Tim & Pat Magdanz
- 27 Jeremie & Jackie Schmidt - 30<sup>th</sup>
- 30 Chris & Dawn Bludau

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

## Little Dresses for Africa



On Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, during the monthly craft day we will be sewing dresses for the Little Dresses for Africa Mission.

We will begin at 9:00 am to mid-afternoon (come for any part of this time or stay for the entire time).

We need sewing machine sewers, hand sewers for buttons, ironing, pinning, etc. You don't need to know how to sew.

Please sign up on the kiosk. If you have any questions, contact Jean Dretske.



**WHAT:** Berlin Community Blood Drive

**WHERE:** Grace English Lutheran Church  
384 Oak Street

**WHEN:** April 28, 2026 from 10:30 am – 5:30 pm

Walk-ins are Welcome!



2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	2 11:45 am Soul Food All Saints Hosts 6:30pm Maundy Thursday Worship at First	3 1:00 pm Good Friday Worship at Grace	4
5 Easter Sunday 8:30 am Worship - with Communion - no Sunday School	6 4:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	7 9:00 am Staff Meeting 9:00 am LWR Sewing 3:00 pm Bible Study at Grace	8 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 6:00 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	9 11:45 am Soul Food St. John's Hosts	10	11 8:00 am Men's Breakfast At Grace 9:00 am - 4:00pm Craft Day at First
12 8:30 am Worship with Communion and Sunday School	13 6:00 pm Council Meeting	14 9:00 am Conference Meeting 12:00 pm Book Club 3:00 pm Bible Study at Grace	15 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 6:00 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	16 11:45 am No Soul Food	17	18 8:00 am Grace Rummage Sale
19 8:30 am Worship with Communion and Sunday School	20	21 9:00 am Staff Meeting 9:00 am LWR Sewing 10:00 am Finance Meeting 3:00 pm Bible Study Grace	22 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 6:00 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	23 11:45 am Soul Food Grace Hosts	24	25 11:00 am Funeral at Grace
26 8:30 am Worship with Communion - no Sunday School	27	28 9:00 am Staff Meeting 10:30 am-5:30 pm Berlin Community Blood Drive 3:00 pm Bible Study Grace 5:30 pm Lay Preaching Class at Grace	29 8:30 am Chair Yoga Class 6:00 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	30 11:45 am Soul Food River Shores Hosts		