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

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rebekah Tarras, Pastor

Email: <a href="mailto:pastortarras@gmail.com">pastortarras@gmail.com</a> 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.gracel

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



THIS NEWSLETTER PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR

## Worship Services

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gelcberlin

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLbOerRk5PMk1QWI9qtZ5\_g



June 1 Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

June 8 Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

June 15 Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

June 22 Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

June 29 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"

### **Letter From the Pastor:**

This summer, First Lutheran Church in Poy Sippi reaches an incredible milestone of 150 years of ministry. That's a century and a half of baptisms and funerals, potlucks and prayer chains, Sunday School lessons and summer picnics. It's generations of people gathering around Word and Sacrament, rooted in the promises of God, living out their faith.



Grace Lutheran, though not quite as old, celebrates 92 years of faithful ministry in our community. For nearly a century, both congregations have been beacons of God's love, sharing the Gospel and serving others in Jesus' name.

As I reflect on the history of both of our churches, I am reminded of the many faithful people who have made this journey possible. By faith, they gathered to worship. By faith, they taught their children. By faith, they shared what they had. By faith, they built something that would outlast them.

Their stories echo the words of Hebrews 11, where we hear of the great cloud of witnesses, including Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Rahab, and so many others who lived "by faith." They didn't see the whole picture, but they trusted in the One who holds the future.

"By faith" is also our story. By faith, these congregations have weathered two World Wars, the Great Depression, and countless transitions. By faith, the Gospel has been preached from pulpits and whispered in hospital rooms. By faith, quilts have been sewn, casseroles delivered, offerings given, and songs sung in moments of both joy and sorrow.

Now, we are the ones entrusted with this legacy of faith. We are the "next chapter" in the ongoing story of First Lutheran and Grace Lutheran, a story that is still unfolding. With each step in this journey of faith, we build on the foundation laid by those who have gone before us, faithful people who trusted God's promises, who lived out their faith, and who made possible the ministries we continue today.

But the work is far from finished. The mission continues. By faith, we will carry the light of Christ into the future. We are part of something much bigger than ourselves. Together, we will share the Gospel, serve our community, and walk in faith, trusting in the One who holds our future.

Let us move forward with hearts full of gratitude for the past, joy in the present, and hope for what lies ahead. May we be faithful witnesses to the love of God in our time, just as those who have gone before us have been. Together, let's write the next chapter of this story—"By faith."

By faith, Pastor Rebekah Tarras

PS. First Lutheran's Anniversary Celebration will take place on August 10. Everyone is invited to join the celebration. Members of Grace Lutheran are invited to help with the celebration and serve the meal that day. Look for the sign-up sheet on the kiosk if you're interested. We look forward to celebrating this anniversary together with First Lutheran, honoring our shared history, and continuing our work in the name of Christ

### Grace English Lutheran Church Congregation Council Meeting Minutes April 14, 2025

Linda Reetz called the meeting to order at 6:56PM.

**Attending:** Linda Reetz, Terry Wallace, Heidi Schramer, Anita Lind, Bob Prellwitz, Craig Chovanec, Sue Shemanski, Bonnie Kline, Sandy Peschke and Pastor Rebekah Tarras.

Guest attending: Jean Dretske

Terri provided an opening Devotion.

No audience remarks.

**Agenda Approval**- Linda asked to move the Investment Committee Report and the Outside the Box Outreach Committee report to be included in the Treasurer's Report so that Jean Dretske could make these reports and not have to stay for the whole meeting. Terry offered a motion to approve the amended agenda and Craig offered a second. Motion carried as amended.

**Secretary's Report**- One correction Linda noticed for the March 2025 minutes. Under the Building & Grounds Report, Ryan Dobbs is preparing a safety plan for us and the Minutes mistakenly said Ryan Gravunder. This will be corrected and resent to the Committee. Anita moved to approve the minutes with this correction. Second by Heidi. Motion carried.

### Treasurer's Report-

- 1) Bonnie moved to accept the report as presented by Sandy. Second by Bob. Motion carried.
- 2) **Investment Committee Report** by Jean Dretske- Jean gave us handouts with the Investment Fund totals and explained that despite the present Market upheaval, we are invested conservatively and have only lost between 3-4% in the three funds (Leonard Jones, Endowment and Capital Improvement). At this point, we are "holding our own." The Investment Committee will meet with our Investor from RBC via Tele-health in May and in person at the end of the year. The separate group funds held in the checking account were moved to RBC this month so that Interest can be earned that will be reinvested in the General Checking Account at Fortifi Bank. This new account is called the RBC Auxiliary Account.
- Jean also circulated the Mission Statement and list of ideas the Out of The Box Outreach Committee has generated for use in the community of a small percent of the Leonard Jones fund. The Committee is requesting a distribution of ½% of the five year average (\$1,309,885.93) of the fund. This would be a total of \$6549.43 in 2025. Sue moved to accept the Committee's recommendation as presented. Second by Craig. Motion carried. It was decided to hold a Congregational Meeting on May 4th to ask the Congregation's permission for this spending. Sandy will post it in the newsletter and in the weekly email blast. It was decided to send out postcards to the members who do not get the email newsletter and "blast". Later this month Jean will also attend a meeting at the Catholic church of a committee attempting to do a similar outreach campaign to make sure we are not duplicating programs.

### Reports-

1) Pastor's Report- Pastor is finishing up Confirmation classes and had one child prepare for and take their First Communion class here at Grace (along with 4 from First). It has been a busy time of year with Lent; serving as Office Administrator at First and interviewing for the position; attending many church and community meetings and teaching the Lay Preacher class. She gave us some future dates that she will be on vacation or unavailable to preach. She reported that the Berlin Community Food Pantry needs more donations as the number of recipients is going up and donations down. They are also looking for a Vice President for their Board and a few more volunteers on Thursdays.

### 2) Committee Reports-

- -Fellowship and Caring- Bonnie reported that the Palm Sunday Brunch went really well. We think we served around 100 people. Easter cards and goodie bags were distributed to shut-ins. Their next meeting is May 4, 2025
- **-Building & Grounds** Bob reported that the sanitizer problem has been remedied. There was a leak found yesterday that he is looking into. We saved money on snow plowing this year! Spring clean up is starting and it was suggested he just set a date and ask the Congregation for help with window washing, yard clean-up, etc. The Committee is meeting again on June 9, 2025.
- **Christian Education** Anita reported that the last day of Sunday School will be May 11th. The Committee will serve Sundaes for Fellowship that day. We do have two kids signed up for Church camp this summer and possibly a third. The Committee is looking to update the "kid's bags" in the sanctuary. Pastor announced that Pine Lake Camp is hosting a Senior's One Day Camp on June 9th if anyone is interested.
- **Worship Report** Heidi handed out dates of Upcoming Worship events and recapped the Lent services. She announced that our Radio broadcast time has changed to 9:45AM.
- **Craig reported on the Mission and Outreach Committee** the April Mission of the Month was Grace's Scholarship Program. Craig stressed the importance of focusing on youth whenever we can.
- **Finance Committee** Terry reported on the Finance Committee activities. The Committee is reviewing and updating a Financial Best Practices Document. This month the money from the separate accounts (Men's Women's etc) was combined and moved to RBC into an Auxiliary Account. The groups can still access their funds whenever needed, but will be earning interest. Two new members have joined this Committee: John Koch and Jeff Lind.

#### **Unfinished Business**

- RBC Auxiliary Fund Update- done above
- DataPro Computer Update-Jason J. is working on getting the Microsoft License and then will contact us and start process for getting a new desktop computer for the office.
- Convection Oven- Deanna is gathering information and will report to us in the future

#### **New Business**

- -Outside the Box Outreach Committee- already reported on
- -Men's Brat Fry scheduled for June 18 -Heidi suggested we meet at church at 3PM to get prizes for Bingo hauled to the park and set up. She can also get the sound equipment there and set up for Bingo. Men will make the meat and participants will be asked to bring a dish to pass.
- -Confirmation Request- Our Constitution says that the Council has to approve persons requesting to be confirmed. There are 3 young men making this request this year: Zayden and Zander Beck and Charlie McCarthy. Anita moved to grant their request and approve their Affirmation of Baptism on May 4th. Second by Craig. Motion carried.
- -Pastor's Upcoming absences were discussed. It was decided that on June 8th Congregation members will fill in and we will not have Communion. By the end of July, two parishioners may have completed Pastor's Lay Preaching class and can probably lead the service on July 20 and July 27. August 10th Pastor will be busy with First's 150th Anniversary Celebration and we may be helping to serve brunch etc. It was discussed that we may not have a service that day and encourage all members to attend at First. Pastor will confirm the time of their service and brunch and get back to us.
- -Scholarship Committee- Nothing needs to be done now. They want to put \$5000 into a CD once they have that amount. Will need Council approval when they get there.

Bonnie moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:07PM. Second by Heidi. Motion carried and we ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted by: Sue Shemanski

#### ADDENDUM TO GRACE LUTHERAN COUNCIL MINUTES OF APRL 14, 2025

On April 15, 2025, Council President, Linda Reetz, sent the following message to all Council members via email following the 4/15/25 Finance Committee Meeting:

At the Finance committee meeting today, the scholarship committee has decided they would like to open an account at RBC in order to have more immediate access to their dollars; as well as earning a little that will help to build up dollars available for scholarships. Originally, they were going to put the money into an 8 month CD to earn a little interest. But once the CD was cashed, that CD would no longer exist and a new one would have to be opened when there was enough cash in the account.

After discussion, the Finance committee would be fine with having the scholarship committee open a new money market account with RBC. What I need from each council member is your opinion on whether you are in favor of allowing this.

Please respond to my email that you are either in favor of allowing the scholarship committee to open a new account or if you are not in favor of allowing. Once I have a majority of votes I can advise the scholarship committee of the decision. They have a meeting tomorrow.

The results were: 8 in favor, 1 absent. The request was approved.

The Scholarship Committee was notified of this approval on April 16, 2025.

Submitted by: Sue Shemanski

Linda Reetz – President	920-279-7899	linda.reetz0726@gmail.com
Terry Wallace – Vice President	920-344-1523	tw9696@outlook.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
Anita Lind – Christian Education	920-290-1374	anita_lind@charter.net
Bonnie Kline – Fellowship/Caring	920-570-2787	razn6mom@yahoo.com
Tim Koch – Mission Outreach	920-789-8358	koch6@charter.net
Bob Prellwitz – Building and Grounds	920-361-0669	bobprellwitz@yahoo.com



"Before We Were Yours" by Lisa Wingate is the book the Grace Book Club has chosen to read for June. Avery Stafford seems to have it all: a successful career, a handsome fiancé, and a lavish wedding on the horizon.

But when she returns home to help her father weather a health crisis, a chance encounter leaves her with uncomfortable questions and compels her to take a journey through her family's long- hidden history, on a path that will lead to one of America's most notorious real-life scandals — in which Georgia Tann, director of a Memphis-based children's adoption organization kidnapped and sold poor children to wealthy families all over the country.

We will meet to discuss "**Before We Were Yours**" on Tuesday, June 10th at a location to be determined. If you are interested in reading this book, please contact Cindy Wallace for a copy. If you have already read "**Before We were Yours**" please join us on June 10th for our book discussion. We would love to have you join us.

## A Kitchen Update for Grace Lutheran

(a proposal for a convention oven and a new stove)

As many of you know, the two stoves currently in our church kitchen have served us faithfully for over 60 years (43 of those in this building). While they have helped us feed generations, they're becoming less reliable and harder to clean and repair.

The church council is proposing we replace these aging appliances with a single high-quality gas stove and a convention oven.

What's a convention oven you may ask? Unlike a standard oven, a convention oven has a built-in fan that circulates very hot air evenly around the food. This makes food cook more quickly, evenly and often at lower temperatures. Think golden brown chicken nuggets, French fries, freshly baked cookies, or baked potatoes all perfectly done with greater consistency.

Why does this matter for our ministry? We often prepare meals for large groups such as Soul Food (4 churches are involved--feeding from 60 to 100 students per week). Men's breakfast, fundraisers, and community events. A convention oven will allow is to cook larger quantities of food more efficiently, saving both time and energy, not relying on Nesco's to try and keep food warm. Combined with a new stove, we'll have a more reliable, safer, and cleaner setup that supports the hospitality and care we're known for.

This update is about more than appliances - it's an investment in how we serve one another and our community. We're grateful for your continued support and welcome your questions as we consider this next step together.

**Convention Oven** 



6 burner gas stove



## Special Congregational Meeting

There will be a special Congregational meeting following worship on June 1, 2025 to hear and vote on a proposal from the Church Council to purchase a convention oven and 6-burner stove.

## Men's Sponsored Brat Fry

On Wednesday, June 18th the Men of Grace will be sponsoring the annual brat fry.

It will be held at Riverside Park in the North Shelter starting at 5:30 pm.

The men will provide the meat, beans, and beverages. Please bring a dish to pass (salad or desert).

Everyone is invited for good food, fun, and bingo!

Please sign up on the church kiosk or call the church office (920-361-1820) to give the men an approximate number to plan for.



## Mission of the Month - Lutheran World Relief

In 1945, our Lutheran forebearers had a vision and joined together to be the Body of Christ in the world, responding boldly to the needs of our neighbors in Europe after World War II.

For 80 years, they have served our neighbors in their greatest hour of need. They go where no one else goes, and stay as long as needed to minister to neighbors affected by poverty, hunger, sickness, violence, and more.

Floods, earthquakes, war and other emergencies affect everyone, but it's the world's poorest who suffer most. That's why Lutheran World Relief is there to offer help and hope, wherever and whenever disaster strikes. Clean water. Nourishing food. Safe shelter. Emergency supplies. Time and again, they act quickly to rush aid where it's needed most.

For more than 80 years, their compassion has been there, reaching the most vulnerable in their darkest moments. Emergency relief is essential in a crisis, but they don't stop there.

The world's poorest families need lasting solutions, not just relief. The world's poorest families need more than relief, they need lasting change. By supporting farmers, creating job opportunities for youth and improving health and education, we can help break the cycle of poverty together.

Sustainable development takes time, but love is patient. And although this work rarely makes the news, their impact truly transforms lives for generations.

This incredible outpouring of support for neighbors in crisis began in 1945 and has continued with each new generation of Lutherans. Please give to this worthy cause.

## Lutheran World Relief Kits

As in prior years, the Ladies of Grace will be putting together kits for personal care, school supplies, and baby care. When you are out shopping, whether it be retail stores, garage sales, or flea markets, keep an eye out for the list of items needed. Any item(s) can be dropped off at church, anytime during the summer months.

**Thrivent Action Cards** can be applied for to purchase items for the kits. If you apply for the cards and want someone to "shop" for you, the ladies of Grace would be happy to do so. Just let the office staff know.

Kits will be assembled in September. If you have any questions, contact Bev Chadwick at 361-0860.

#### **Personal Care**

- 1 light weight bath size towel dark color 20x40 or 27x52 (no larger please)
- 2 or 3 bath size bars of soap (8-9) ounces total in original wrapping
- 1 sturdy comb
- 1 metal nail clipper
- 1 toothbrush

#### School Supply Kit

- 4 70 sheet notebooks (wide or college rule)
- 1 30 centimeter ruler (or centimeters on one side inches on the other)
- 1 pencil sharpener
- 1 blunt pair of scissors
- 5 unsharpened #2 pencils
- 5 black or blue pens (no gel ink)
- 1 box of 16 24 crayons
- $1 2 \frac{1}{2}$ " eraser

#### **Baby Care Kit**

- 2 lightweight cotton t-shirts (no Onesies)
- 2 short or long sleeve sleepers (without feet)
- 2 blankets (between 36 – 52 inches)
- $1-jacket \ or \ sweater \ (include \ cap)$
- 2 pairs of socks
- 1 hand towel (dark color preferred)
- 2-3 bars of gentle soap (8-9 ounces total)

April Income April Expenses					
Weekly Income		12,644.13	Wages and Payroll Expenses	\$16,345.26	
RBC Earnings		3,154.00	Building & Grounds /Utilities	1,863.31	
Bulletins/Radio Ministry		202.48	Worship Expenses	583.82	
Thrivent Choice Dollars		3,324.00	Radio Ministry	385.00	
Shared Ministry	4,154.70		Office/Miscellaneous	490.29	
·		•	Postage/Advertising	25.00	
			Christian Education	69.71	
			Fellowship & Caring	286.44	
TOTAL	\$	23,479.31	TOTAL	\$ 20,048.83	
Missions (In/Out)		\$52.00	Missions (In/Out)	\$978.00	
Good Samaritan Fund		0.00	Good Samaritan	0.00	
Soul Food		62.35	Soul Food	0.00	
Women of Grace		245.00	Women of Grace	0.00	
Men of Grace		51.00	Men of Grace	0.00	
Christian Education/Youth		0.00	Christian Education/Youth	0.00	
Scholarship Fund		1,045.00	Scholarship Fund	0.00	
Endowment Fund		0.00	Endowment Fund	0.00	
Beginning Balance January 2025			Ending Balance April 2025		
Investments:			<b>Investments:</b>		
Leonard Jones Fund	\$	1,361,456.39	\$	1,380,521.76	
Capital Improvement Fund	\$	321,917.64	\$	318,473.92	
Endowment Fund	\$	123,890.51	\$	121,758.15	

## Affirmation of Baptism



On Sunday, May 4, 2025 Charlie McCarthy, Zander Beck and Zayden Beck were confirmed.

**Charlie** chose Joshua 1:9 for his bible verse: "Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Zander chose Matthew 19:26 for his bible verse: "With God all things are possible."

**Zayden** chose 1 Corinthians 9:24: "Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it."



**Andrew Rozek** – Graduated from Berlin High School

Favorite Memory of Grace: Coming to Soul Food every week

**High School Achievements:** Andrew graduated as the Salutatorian of his class. He was a member of the National Honor Society and Student Council. Andrew was involved in the Show Choir, Encore Choir, Musicals and Plays, Regional and State Solo and Ensemble, the Wordsmiths Writing Group, Academic Decathlon and Poetry Slan.

**Future plans:** Andrew will be headed to Lawrence University in the fall.



Aidan Pierstroff – Graduated from Berlin High School

**Favorite Memory of Grace:** His summers at VBS. He had the BEST time at Vacation Bible School!

**High School Achievements:** Aidan is Co-President of the Student Council and will be graduating #3 in his class. He is a member of the National Honors Society Drama Club, Key Club, Sound Wave Show Choir, Acavox, and Encore. He participated in the Academic Decathlon, Academic Quiz Bowl, Badger Boys State, WCDA Bass Clef Choir, and 4 years of Solo and Ensemble local and state. Aidan was a cast member all 4 years of the BHS Musicals:

**Future plans:** He will be attending UW Steven's Point in the fall to pursue a degree in Music Education.



Jake Schroeder – Graduated from Berlin High School

**High School Achievements:** Jake lettered in academics. He participates in the Work Based Learning program by working for a construction company.

**Future plans:** Jake will be entering the workforce with Soda Construction.

The graduates were presented with a quilt, made for them by the Women of Grace.

Congratulations and God's Blessing to the Graduates!











## Save the Date!

On Sunday, July 13, 2025 Grace Lutheran and First Lutheran will be having a joint worship service at Riverside Park- North Shelter House, starting at 10:00 am.

There will be a potluck following the service. More information to follow closer to the date.



## **Happy Birthday**

## **June Birthdays**

- 1 David Ziemann
- 4 Gary Batenhorst
- 5 Michelle Klawitter
- 6 Brian Mildebrandt Victor Schramer
- 10 Wilbur Drecktrah
- 11 Suzanne Ferron Carol Roehl
- 13 Bryce Dretske Allison Kessen
- 18 Patsy Hanson John Klawitter
- 19 David Schenk
- 20 Kathy Eid Adam Schenk
- 23 Connor Nelson Frank Neitzke
- Mary Pomplun
  25 Sarah Guenther
  Charles McCarthy
- 30 Fay McMonigal



## Berlin Community Blood Drive

**When:** July 1, 2025 from 10:30 am to 5:30 pm

Where: Grace Lutheran Church

Grace hosts the lunch. Look for the signup sheets on the kiosk later in the month.



### June Anniversaries

- 3 Mark & Mindy Goffard 25th
- 5 Dave & Renee Neitzke
- 8 Robert & Mary Sillanpaa
- 11 Edmund & Carol Roehl 65th
- 14 John & Sue Koch 45th
- 15 David & Jody Ziemann
- 27 Mark & Susan Calabresa

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

#### Outside The Box Outreach Committee

On May 4<sup>th</sup> the Congregation approved \$6,500.00 to be used for children who reside in the Berlin Area School District boundary. The funds will be used to improve the lives of children in need.

At this time, we are working with the Boys and Girls Club on the needs that are upcoming. They have given a list of items that are needed.

Our next meeting is June 4<sup>th</sup> at 5pm in the Church Library. Anyone is welcome to attend, and we would also like to have any suggestions that you may have. At that meeting we will establish a budget for the remainder of the year.

If you would like to contact the Committee, the members are Terry Wallace, Linda Reetz, Patti Batenhorst, Sue Calabresa, Karen Schweigert, Heidi Schramer, Carri McCarthy, Jean Dretske

## Rummage Sale

The Women of Grace's Rummage and Bake sale made \$2069.26. Thank you to everyone that helped in any way.



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Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 8:30 am Worship with Communion	1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran 4:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	9:00 am 9:00 am No Staff Meeting 9:00 am LWR Sewing	5:00 pm Outside the Box Outreach Committee Meeting	5	6	7
8:30 am Worship – No Communion	1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran 7:00 pm Congregation Council Meeting	10 9:00 am Staff Meeting	11	12	13	14 9:00 am 4:00 pm Craft Day at First Lutheran
New member Sunday 8:30 am Worship with Communion	1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran	9:00 am 9:00 am Staff Meeting 3:00 pm Finance Committee Meeting	18 5:30 pm Men's Sponsored Brat Fry	19	20	21
22 8:30 am Worship with Communion 1:00 pm Baptism	23 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran	24 9:00 am Staff Meeting	25	26	27	28
8:30 am Worship with Communion	1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran 6:00pm Preaching Class					