

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

THIS NEWSLETTER PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR

Sunday Worship:

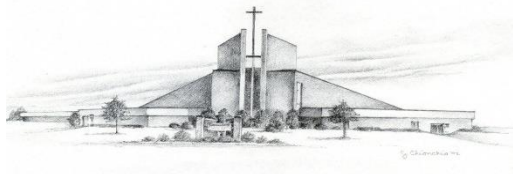
8:30 AM

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/UCLbOerRk5PMk1QW19qtZ5_g

January	1	-	Worship at 8:30 am	(In person and online)
January	8	-	Worship at 8:30 am	(In person and online)
January	15	-	Worship at 8:30 am	(In person and online)
January	22	-	Worship at 8:30 am	(In person and online)
January	29	-	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 Pastor Rebekah:

“A record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.... She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:1 and 21



As I was reading my devotions in the season of Advent, I kept thinking about what it must have been like for Zechariah or Mary or Joseph to hear a message from the Lord. It had been four hundred years since the Hebrew people heard from God. During that time middle eastern empires rose and fell, and the tiny nation of Israel suffered under the domination of greater powers like Greece and Rome.¹

And then something momentous happened. A baby was born – a baby unlike any who had ever come before. But what is most important is not just the baby, it is the fulfillment of God’s promise in the Old Testament to send a Messiah.

People all over the world had been eagerly waiting the Messiah. They believed his coming would change the entire history of the world. Could this baby be the long-expected king?

To answer that question, the Gospel of Matthew begins with a genealogy tracing Jesus’ lineage back to Abraham, the father of the Jewish race, and includes David the great Jewish king. Matthew starts with Jesus’ roots to show the connection of Jesus’ arrival with the Old Testament story line. Jesus was a Jew, the son of Abraham. And, a king, the son of David. He is indeed the Messiah they were waiting for, the fulfillment of God’s promises throughout history and the continuation of God’s work.

This year our lectionary readings are primarily focused on the life and ministry of Jesus as it is recorded in the Gospel Matthew. Each Gospel writer has their own unique way of telling the story. They gathered all the stories and traditions about Jesus into a coherent understandable story for the early Christian communities. Scholars believe each writer was responding to the needs of a particular Christian community in a particular location and time.

Matthew seems to be writing specifically to people of the Jewish community to show that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah according to Jewish tradition. Jesus’ life is shown as the fulfillment of the promises God made to the Jewish people throughout their history. Jesus is often shown to be a true teacher of the Jewish Law. The Gospel describes Jesus’ teaching in a simple effective way. This would indeed be very helpful for those becoming early Christians. Particularly, Matthew connects the continuity between Judaism and Christianity².

While written hundreds of years ago, Matthew’s gospel is still relevant for us today. Scholars believe it was probably written during the decade 80-90 AD when the early church was experiencing many trials and tribulations and was intended to offer Christians hope. And isn’t hope something we could all use today as well? Matthew’s Gospel also contains some of the most practical insights for every day living. As we begin our journey through the Gospel of Matthew this year, may you be renewed in hope and insight for living as a follower of Jesus.

Pastor Rebekah

¹ Yancey, Philip and Stafford, Tim. “A Bridge from Old to New” The Student Bible, NIV. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996)

² Zanzig, Thomas. Jesus is Lord, A Basic Christology for Adults. (Winona: St. Mary’s Press, 1982)

**REGULAR GRACE ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING – FELLOWSHIP HALL
Monday, November 14, 2022**

Present: Bill Bartlett, Cindy Wallace, Tricia Prellwitz, Sue Shemanski, Matt Dretske, Jody Ziemann, Craig Chovanec, Linda Reetz, Intern Pastor Kathy Cartwright, and Pastor Rebekah Tarras.

President Bill Bartlett called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and Pastor Rebekah led us in opening devotions.

The October minutes were presented. Jody Ziemann moved to approve the minutes. Sue Shemanski seconded the motion. Motion Approved.

Ministry Reports:

Pastor Rebekah presented her written report listing church related activities in the past month.

The October Treasurer's Report from Cindy Wallace was reviewed. Craig Chovanec moved to approve as presented. Matt Dretske seconded. Motion approved. The October Check Detail was then reviewed and Sue Shemanski made a motion to approve all checks as presented. Matt Dretske seconded. Motion approved.

Bill Bartlett explained the Investment spreadsheet shows some improvement over the past month, but that the market remains volatile.

Matt Dretske presented the Building and Grounds report. Leaves are done, the winter supplies are out and ready, the person doing snow plowing will continue to plow for our church, the emergency light between the South entry doors continues to not work and an electrician has been contacted.

Christian Ed committee spokesperson, Sue Shemanski shared that the Advent wreath making event will happen on Wednesday, November 16 with a spaghetti supper, explanation of Advent, and then wreath making. The response has been quite high. The committee members will also begin planning during the month of January for VBS to be held sometime in July. Jeff Tarras will be the lead person hosting a sports-related VBS aimed at elementary age students in the community.

Jody Ziemann presented the Fellowship and Caring committee report. Ding Dong Dinners will be handed over to the Mission and Outreach committee. However, Christmas cookie plates will be made and delivered to the homebound. Future activities will be valentines for the homebound and Fat Tuesday pancake meal with Bingo to kick off the Lenten season.

Worship and Music report was presented by Tricia Prellwitz. There continues to be a dead spot for the microphones in the middle of the altar area, the music schedules have been set for upcoming months, the idea of having a Christian rock Sunday similar to Polka Sunday will be explored, the use of a song leader to teach congregation members when learning new songs will be tried, exploring a church musical with Jeff Tarras as the person in charge will need further discussion.

Craig Chovanec gave the Mission of the Month report. We currently are focusing on Sudan relief, next month will be Good Gifts. The committee will be meeting soon to select the roster of Missions for each month of 2023.

Old Business:

Bill Bartlett announced that the Grace Lutheran officers will join the First Lutheran officers for a Joint Council Meeting on December 19, 2022, 6:30 pm at First Lutheran.

Christmas Day services have been finalized. Sue Shemanski moved to offer an online service and a joint service at First Lutheran beginning at 10:30 am. Jody Ziemann seconded the motion. Motion approved. Breakfast will also be service at the First Lutheran service.

Decorating of the Christmas tree will be on Saturday, December 3, 9:00 am. Council members are responsible for obtaining a tree, putting the tree up, and decorating the church. Announcements will be made that all members are welcome to come and help.

Linda Reetz shared the Congregation Survey Committee suggestions. An Ad Hoc committee consisting of Pam Marks, Jean Dretske, Scott and Karen Schweigert, Jeff Tarras, and Linda Reetz compiled the results of the surveys completed by congregation members. The suggestions were shared with church committees and the Council. It will be up to the committees and pastoral staff as to which suggestions might be implemented.

Continuation of the Internship program was discussed. Bill Bartlett shared estimated costs between Grace Lutheran and First Lutheran if the respective congregations vote to apply for an Intern during 2023-24. Estimated costs will be shared at the special congregation meeting on Sunday, December 4 following the worship service. Any questions or concerns from congregation members will be addressed prior to the vote.

Tom McCarthy has agreed to serve a three-year term on the Audit Committee. Cindy Wallace moved to approve Tom McCarthy as a member of the Audit Committee. Craig Chovanec seconded. Motion carried.

New Business:

The annual meeting will be Sunday, January 29, 2023 following the church service.

Pastor Rebekah's compensation package for 2023 was presented. It follows our synod's guidelines. Sue Shemanski made a motion to approve the 2023 pastor compensation package. Jody Ziemann seconded. Motion approved.

The church needs to create a sick leave policy. It was discovered that there is not a current policy. When the policy is created, it will cover pastoral staff as well as salaried staff. The new sick leave policy will be presented at the December meeting for discussion and approval.

Becky Guden has been working on the church's inventory for the insurance company. All the pictures have been taken and now a cost value to every item in the inventory is being added.

A request from ThedaCare to use the Fellowship Hall on December 5, 6, or 7 from 11:30-1:30 was approved.

The current check signing authorization procedure was discussed. Currently, two council officers are the only authorized signees. Bill Bartlett moved to allow the office staff member most familiar with the church's finances (currently that is Sandy Peschke) and one council officer to be given authorization to sign checks. Craig Chovanec seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

The results of Pastor Rebekah Tarras' evaluation were shared.

Closing prayer was led by Pastor Rebekah.

Tricia Prellwitz made a motion to adjourn. Sue Shemanski seconded. Motion approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Reetz

Church Council

Bill Bartlett – President	920-229-9155	wlbartlett54923@gmail.com
Linda Reetz – Vice President	920-361-2845	linda.reetz0726@gmail.com
Cindy Wallace – Treasurer	920-229-3772	cindy_wallace@charter.net
Becky Guden – Secretary	920-361-0364	bguden@live.com
Tricia Prellwitz – Music/Worship	920-572-7521	goodrich@vbe.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
Matt Dretske – Building/Grounds	920-229-8653	md3boys@charter.net



Annual Congregation Meeting

Our congregation's annual meeting will be held following worship on Sunday, January 29, 2023. This is an important time for us to make decisions about our life together as a congregation for the coming year.

Business will include approving a spending plan (budget) for the coming year, electing people to serve in leadership roles, and more. We encourage all confirmed members to a part of this special meeting.

Mission of the Month — Lutheran World Relief



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.

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.



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

Pastor Rebekah

Thank you to the council and congregation for the Christmas gift. It is our pleasure to work for and with the members of this congregation.

Penny and Sandy

Thank you church family for all your cards, calls, prayers and goodies. I am home and getting ready for therapy. Also, thank you to the choir for the beautiful cantata.

Mary Gropp

Thank you for providing the delicious desserts, assisting in the kitchen and with clean-up duties. We are so grateful for our Grace Church family this holiday season. Giving of your time and baking talents at this December blood drive, especially two days after Christmas, we truly appreciate you. We heard many positive comments about the delicious food and that is because of YOU! See you in 2023! Our dates are July 3 and December 26.

Spencer & Tammy Goettl



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 members for the special music.

To the families that purchased poinsettias: Penny Bahn, Ruth Gelhar, Marion Ryan, Deanna Lueptow, Sue Shemanski, Craig Chovanec, Michelle Klawitter, Selma Ceman, Gene Hess, Vic & Heidi Schramer, Bill & Laura Nelson, Jim & Pam Marks, Conrad & Mary Falk, Terry & Cindy Wallace, Henry & Lois Stark, Bill & Sue Bartlett, Jeff & Pastor Rebekah Tarras, Vic & Jean Dretske, Tom & Carrie McCarthy & 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.

To the families that purchased gifts for the angel tree.

To all who have volunteered and helped out in many ways to make our worship this holiday season merry and bright.

We greatly appreciate you all!

Maggie The Church Mouse

It's winter – that time of year when my whiskers vibrate each time I say “Brrrrrr!” I'll admit – I'm in a bit of a mood over the cold, damp weather that has settled in and depressed me. I plop down with a sigh and proceed to slip into a full-fledged case of the blues. Am I the only one feeling this glum?

I toss and turn as I attempt to nap, but some thoughts from deep inside won't allow me to rest. I have heard – over and over again – about people who are sick, homebound, widowed, alone in nursing homes, or facing problems of all kinds that weigh them down. Yet here I am – plump with scraps and crumbs, comfortable in a beautiful church home– slipping into the trap of self-pity when there are so many others who have so much more to be sad and worried about.

I need to shake off my dejection and follow the example of those I've watched who know how to do the little things that brighten others' days...the people who set their sights on lifting others' spirits...on taking a few extra minutes to listen...on stepping forward to greet and meet someone new. Sometimes after church I witness a thoughtful person extend an invitation to another to attend fellowship together.

I overhear people offering rides to one another when planning to attend the same church events. There are prayer pals who brighten each others' days with cards and kindnesses, men who get together once a month for breakfast and a Christian message, members who gather to share an interest in reading, quilting, sewing, singing, or Bible Study. And what about the need for baked goods for the Blood Drives and Soul Food: anyone who likes to bake can bring in goodies to help a good cause and leave with a little more joy in his or her heart.

I push up off my belly to stretch, shake, and motivate myself. Enough of this moping and melancholy! There are things I can do, right here within the community of Grace, even if I need to push myself a bit outside of my comfort zone. Yes, it's a cold and wintry time of year, but it's a perfect time to spread warmth to others. If you need any ideas, look around the corners of the church for me. I'd love to brainstorm with you!



Book Club News



Grace's Book Club is starting the year off by reading “Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love” by Elizabeth A. Johnson. In this book, the author examines the relationship between our faith in God and our love of the natural world and concludes that our love of the natural world is an intrinsic element of faith in God.

Intern Cathy will lead our discussion of “Ask the Beasts” on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 1:00 pm. If you are interested in participating in Grace's Book Club, please contact Cindy Wallace. We would love to have you join us.

Ding Dong Dinners

In the months of January, February, and March, we are collecting monetary donations for our Ding Dong Dinner outreach project. We will fill 50 bags each month with a dinner and randomly drop them off in the community.

The first packing and delivery will be on January 14. Any help and donations will be greatly appreciated. Thrivent Action cards to help with the expenses would also be welcomed!

Radio Ministry

January 1 - Open
January 8 - In Memory of Lynn Hess by Gene Hess
January 15 - In Honor of Grandma Tootsie's Birthday by Sadie and Spencer
January 22 - Open
January 29 - Open

Bulletins

January 1 - Open
January 8 - In Memory of Lynn Hess by Gene Hess
January 15 - Open
January 22 - In Honor of Lek's 2nd Birthday by Sue Shemanski
January 29 - Open

Flowers

January 1 - Poinsettias
January 8 - In Memory of Lynn Hess by Gene Hess
January 15 - Open
January 22 - Open
January 29 - Open

Fellowship

January 1 - Signing Crew
January 8 - Open
January 15 - Open
January 22 - Open
January 29 - Open

Greeters

January 1 - Penny Bahn
January 8 - Open
January 15 - Open
January 22 - Open
January 29 - Open



Bible Study on Revelation

If you've ever been confused by reading the Book of Revelation, you are not alone.

A dragon with seven heads... A beast rising out of the water... Death riding a pale horse... Brimstone and blood falling on the earth... The mark of the beast: 666... There's definitely a lot to take in!

But don't let the symbolism and the language be a stumbling block on your journey to understanding this unique book. There is also blessing, comfort, and hope to be found in its pages.

The Book of Revelation doesn't have to be intimidating or confusing. Join Pastor Rebekah for a study on the Book of Revelation. Mondays 1:30 pm at First Lutheran beginning January 16 and Thursdays 6:30 pm at Grace beginning January 19.

Confirmation Resumes January 11, 2023

Confirmation classes resume on January 11. Intern Pastor Kathy will be leading the study on the Lord's Prayer.



January Birthdays

1. Zander Beck
Zeke Dobbs
3. Craig Eckstein
4. Ruth Gehlar
5. Jerry Reetz
6. Lorraine Hetchler
9. Fawn Beck
Sherry Luebke
12. Jessica Fritz
Tania Krebs
Sharon Reeves
15. Evelyn Retzlaff
17. Darlene Wolfe
Eric Roehl
20. Samantha Koscher
21. Kaitlyn Schulz
23. Beth Bush
Nancy Ewald
Macoy Krentz-Thom
27. Candice Gravunder
28. Patrick Featherston
Annis Haedt
Donald Koscher
30. Kathy Fabricius
Sharon Rhodes
31. Drew Dretske
Allen Schmidt



January Anniversaries

7. Terry & Teri Wepner
8. Richard & Cheryl Heil
17. Mike & Bonnie Hermanson
Tim & Kathleen Krentz
22. Kurt & Anne Kirk

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



This year the Women's Thankoffering was divided between the Berlin Food Pantry and Soul Food.

Each group will receive \$625. A heartfelt thanks to all the Women of Grace that supported this mission.



2023 envelopes are ready and can be picked up during office hours or after church services on Sunday.

Communion at the Rail

The option of going forward to the communion rail will be offered in worship on the first Sunday of each month.

For those who prefer to commune in their seats or have difficulty going up front, individual communion elements will still be available.

JANUARY

2023

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 8:30 am Worship No Communion or Sunday School	2	3 9:00 am Staff Meeting 9:00 am LWR Sewing 4:30 pm Executive Committee Meeting	4 5:30 pm Crafters Group 6:00 pm Joyful Noise 7:00 pm Choir Practice	5 Soul Food All Saints Hosts	6	7 9:00 am Undecorate the Church
8 8:30 am Worship with Communion at the rail and Sunday School	9 7:00 pm Church Council Meting	10 9:00 am Staff Meeting	11 6:00 pm Joyful Noise 6:30 pm Confirmation 7:00 pm Choir Practice	12 Soul Food River Shores Hosts	13	14 8:00 am Men's Breakfast at First Lutheran 9:45 am Pack and Deliver Ding Dong Dinners
15 8:30 am Worship with Communion and Sunday School	16 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran	17 9:00 am Staff Meeting 9:00 am LWR Sewing	18 5:30 pm Crafters Group 6:00 pm Joyful Noise 6:30 pm Confirmation 7:00 pm Choir Practice	19 Soul Food Grace Hosts 1:00 pm Care Givers Group 6:30pm Bible Study at Grace Lutheran	20	21
22 8:30 am Worship with Communion and No Sunday School 12:00 noon Intern Committee at Grace	23 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran	24 9:00 am Staff Meeting	25 6:00 pm Joyful Noise 6:30 pm Confirmation 7:00 pm Choir Practice	26 Soul Food All Saints Hosts 6:30pm Bible Study at Grace Lutheran	27	28
29 8:30 am Worship with Communion and Sunday School 9:30 am Annual Meeting	30 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran	31 9:00 am Staff Meeting				