

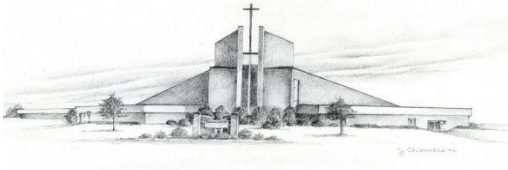
Grace English Lutheran Church
384 Oak Street, Berlin, WI 54923
*A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America*

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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



- February 4 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- February 11 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- February 14 - Ash Wednesday Service at 6:30 pm (In person and online)
- February 18 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- February 21 - Lenten Service at 6:30 pm (In person and online)
- February 25 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)
- February 28 - Lenten Service at 6:30 pm (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:



A friend of mine does ministry with the Portage County Juvenile Detention Center. In a recent newsletter, she shared that she has been working with a young man who was a former student at the detention center. This young man reached out on social media with a lot of questions about faith. He shared that he is homeless and struggles with sobriety and then he shared “I need to find a church that won’t kick me out.”

Liz said that comment got her thinking. What are the places and spaces people like this young man would be welcome in our community and how often is it our churches? While a faith community might not blatantly escort someone out, what other things are they (or perhaps I should say “we as a church) doing? Maybe it’s a lack of acknowledgment, side looks, or being asked to stay only in certain parts of the church. Are we being fully welcoming to anyone and everyone who has faith questions regardless of personality traits, mental illness, appearance, etc?

I keep thinking of the words from Matthew 25:34-36, 40, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me..... ‘Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me.’”

I once heard it said there are only two people in this world - yourself and Christ. Christ comes among us in disguise. He is hidden in the form of the most vulnerable and even the downright wretched. Isn’t that a challenging perspective? I know it challenges me. Do I see each person I meet as Christ in the flesh? And even more than that do I serve them as if they are Jesus with skin on?

We aren’t called to serve others because we think they’re worthy. We are called to serve others because Christ thought them worthy of dying for. We are called to serve others because Christ thought we were worth dying for. Jesus chose to die for you and for me, and for all the least of these including the young man I mentioned above.

It is my hope and prayer, that you know the love and mercy of Jesus, and that love overflows from you into the lives of everyone around you. It is my hope and prayer that I will be known as a person who shows love to all people and welcomes them in our midst. I know I’m far from perfect, but I also know that if each of us makes an attempt to welcome others in our midst, and show the love of Christ, together we will make a difference in our world.

Pastor Rebekah Tarras

Grace Youth Information

No Confirmation classes during Lent

There will be no weekly classes during Lent. Students are encouraged to participate in worship. Questions? Talk to Pastor Rebekah

First Communion Class

Pastor Rebekah will be offering communion instruction for any students in 4-6th grade who have not yet had their first communion. The class will be Sunday, February 18, 1:30-4:30 pm at Grace Lutheran in Berlin. To ensure we have enough materials, please sign up by February 12 by calling the church office.



**GRACE ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL MEETING
12.11.2023**

Council members present; Heidi Schramer, De Anna Lueptow, Becky Olsen, Pastor Rebekah, Sue Shemanski, Jody Ziemann, Bob Prellwitz, Craig Chovanec, and Gene Hess. Absent Cindy Wallace.

President Heidi Schramer called the meeting to order.

Vice President De Anna Lueptow gave the opening prayer.

Approval of Agenda. Heidi Schramer added 12.31.23 Service. Becky Olsen added Pastor Rebekah's 2024 compensation and wages package and Support Staff 2024 compensation and wages package. Motion made by Jody Ziemann to approve agenda with additions, seconded by De Anna Lueptow, motion carried.

Secretary's Report. November Secretary's Report circulated via email, corrections made to report. Motion made by Sue Shemanski to accept report as written with the corrections, seconded by Bob Prellwitz, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report. November Treasurer's Report and check detail presented. Motion made by Sue Shemanski to accept report as written, seconded by Jody Ziemann, motion carried. November Investment profile information shared.

Old Business.

Holy Conversations. Discussion held and concluded on the Holy Conversations.

Inactive Membership. Council members will make contact with members on their respective lists. Council members have reached out via phone and/or via Christmas card mailings inviting these members to upcoming services. We plan to continue this practice into the upcoming year. Pastor Rebekah suggested a possible review of our membership.

Roy Chadwick memorial plaque. Has been completed and placed by the newly planted tree.

Shared Ministry Covenant. Discussions held our Shared Ministry Covenant with First Lutheran. Council members voiced questions, concerns, and provided input about the present Covenant. Discussion will continue at the Joint Parish Council on 12.14.23.

Joint Parish Council. Will be held on 12.14.23 at 6:30pm at First Lutheran Church.

Puppet Service. Will be held on 1.28.24.

Winter Bingo. Will be held at Grace on 2.3.24. The committee, with members from Grace and First, will provide updates following their meetings.

Proposed Bylaw. The proposed bylaw addition regarding interns and the council will be written in the upcoming newsletters and will be presented to the congregation for consideration at the annual meeting.

FCA. Heidi presented a 2023-24 budget breakdown authored by Jeff Taras. Discussion held. Motion made by De Anna Lueptow to table this item until the annual budget numbers are available and reviewed, seconded by Sue Shemanski, motion carried.

Budget. Reminder to all committee members of needed budget numbers for the annual report.

New Business.

Advent Artwork. Discussion held on possible preservation of Barb Bellmer's artwork. Motion made by De Anna to table to gather more information from Barb, seconded by Jody, motion carried.

Budget Meeting. Members set the meeting for 12.21.23 at 8:00 am for review the 2024 budget.

Joint Service. First Lutheran has requested a joint service on 12/31/23 due to floor replacement in their fellowship hall. Discussion held, executive members will inform First of tentative proposed joint service time of 9:00 am on 12/31/23 at the Joint Parish Council meeting on 12.14.23.

Pastor's Compensation/Wage Package. Discussion held. Input requested from Pastor and council members regarding proposed figures. Discussion will continue at the Joint Parish Council meeting on 12.14.23.

Committee Reports.

Pastor's Report. Official Acts included the funeral of Arwayne Weiss and baptism of Novin McPeak. Ongoing activities at Grace include studying and preparing weekly sermons, planning for the Christmas season worship services, teaching confirmation class, leading devotions at Soul Food and Advent event, meeting with family members for funeral and other needs, writing newsletter article, meeting with various committees, staff, and council members, and attended the Oshkosh conference.

Building and Grounds. Bob Prellwitz reported that routine building and grounds duties continue. He presented a proposal from Wolf River Asphalt and Sealcoating for parking lot resurfacing, their proposed cost is \$15,900. The second company contacted has completed their 2023 season and asked to be contacted in the spring for a further quote. Discussion on the cost, no action taken at this time.

Christian Education. Sue Shemanski reported that the Family Advent Event was well received. The evening included a spaghetti supper, devotion and making an Advent wreath. Family feedback was positive. Sunday School attendance is 1-8 students weekly. No date for next meeting.

Fellowship and Caring. Jody Ziemann reported that the committee met 12.10.23. Group will be serving fellowship following the Cantata Service, they will make homebound Christmas treat plates on 12.17.23. Discussion held on their budget. Next meeting is 1.14.24.

Worship and Music. Liaison Gene Hess provided a detailed report for the group. Christmas services are planned. Cantata Service at Grace on 12.17 at 8:30am and at First at 1030am. Cantata service also on 12.20 at 6:30pm. Blue Christmas Service is 12.17 at 630pm. Christmas Eve Service is at 4pm on 12.24, no am service that day. Puppet Service is 1.28.24. Lent Season Services begin 2.14.24 at 630pm. Group is researching alternative music services. Jess is organizing altar guild duties. Group continues to problem solve the livestream issues, and is planning to move to only the YouTube livestream, gradually over the next few months. They will work to solve the problem of radio broadcasting also. The budget for the group is completed. Next meeting is 1.3.24 at 8:00pm.

Mission and Outreach. Craig Chovanec reported that the December Mission Cause is Good Gifts. This mission helps people in 83 countries, and is especially fitting during the Christmas season. The three main areas of interest are the purchasing of farm animals, educational gifts, and health related items. He notes that 1/3 of the world lives in poverty and the goal is to provide a long term solution. He also reports that the committee has met and is planning their 2024 mission causes.. The group is planning for 12 mission causes in 2024, including potential new projects of the Damascus Road, the Good Samaritan Fund and the Honor Flight Program. Flexible changes of the causes may arise if natural disasters arise. The group plans to complete the Ding Dong Dinners in February and March 2024 and would be very grateful for anyone in the congregation to help with the event, time commitment is about an hour. He reported that Food Pantry donations continue to show an uptick and is thankful to all who support this program.

Adjournment. Motion made by Becky Olsen to adjourn, seconded by Gene, motion carried.

Closing prayer given by Pastor Rebekah

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Olsen, Secretary
12.14.23

Heidi Schramer – President	920-361-4097	schramer@charter.net
DeAnna Lueptow – Vice President	920-229-4857	delueptow@gmail.com
Cindy Wallace – Treasurer	920-229-3772	cindy_wallace@charter.net
Becky Olsen – Secretary	920-290-4485	olsenfamilyshorthorns@gmail.com
Gene Hess– Music/Worship	920-290-2023	gene2023@outlook.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
Bob Prellwitz – Building/Grounds	920-361-0669	bobprellwitz@yahoo.com

Constitution Corner

Our congregation has a constitution, that in addition to the Bible, serves to guide our life together as a church. This constitution reflects the theology and polity of this church as it organizes itself to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, share the sacraments, reach out to the neighbor with good news, and share the love of God in the world. Each month we plan to highlight a part of our constitution. The full constitution is found under resources on the website.

The second chapter of the constitution is a confession of faith outlining some basis tenets of our faith.

*C2.01. This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*C2.02. This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

- a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
- b. The proclamation of God’s message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God’s Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God’s revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God’s Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

*C2.03. This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

*C2.04. This congregation accepts the Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.

*C2.05. This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

*C2.06. This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

*C2.07. This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God’s mission in the world.

Maggie the Church Mouse

It's a quiet day at Grace and I have the church to myself. Scooting past the stained glass windows in the narthex, I stop to wonder when was the last time I entered the library. Maybe it would be a perfect place to nap today! So under the door I squeeze, then let my eyes adjust to the dim light in the room.

Books cover the shelves, and colorful cloth hangings create an inviting wall straight ahead. Behind me a coffee maker perches, smelling faintly of the dark brew. To my right I spy a large wooden plaque on the wall: I've never paid attention to it before, and I wonder what it says? Though I'm not an accomplished reader yet, I'm able to carefully sound out the title: Grace Lutheran's Leonard C. Jones Memorial Fund. I am about to learn who this man was, and what his connection was to my church.

Paragraph by paragraph, I make my way through this story about Leonard, a former member of Grace who grew up in Berlin and eventually went to work in Texas. After both his brother and father passed away, Leonard's mother, Edith, was alone most of the time, other than when he made visits and used vacation time to be with her. But in between those times, Edith received generous help from the people of Grace, who stepped up willingly to check in on her, shop or do laundry, bring cards from the Sunday School children, deliver Meals on Wheels, and pray with her. Peter Quello, Grace's pastor at the time, visited her regularly.

Donna Kirk is one of the current members of Grace who knew Edith and Leonard. Working as the church office manager during the time that Pastor Quello served, she helped arrange for much of the care extended to Edith Jones. It is Pastor Quello who wrote the tribute to Leonard Jones on this plaque, after Grace later received a bountiful bequest from his estate. In a few sentences, he describes how the love of a church family is God's love carried out with human hands:

"God's grace and love are active in ways we often don't see or realize. Leonard saw it. He gratefully walked in faith all his life and wanted the family of Grace to continue to let the light of Christ and His love shine through Grace."

Though I'm just an elementary reader, I'm so glad I've been able to decipher these words. Clearly Leonard Jones appreciated how loved his mother was by the people of Grace. As Pastor Quello wrote, it was God's work done with their own hands. What a powerful image! It is also a reminder that taking care of one another is a core mission of Grace.

Leonard Jones's gratitude for the work of this church inspired him to provide for our future as a congregation, and in gratitude I will in turn make it my daily prayer during the season of Lent to thank God for this gift. Please join me in sending up many prayers of thanks. My little voice needs bolstering by all of yours. Every one of us can and should play a part in sustaining this church as a place of Grace

Direct Thrivent Choice Dollars by March 31, 2024

Did you know.....Eligible Thrivent Financial members who have accumulated Choice Dollars from January thru December 2023, have until **March 31, 2024** to direct them to a non-profit of their choice. Don't miss this opportunity to recommend that Thrivent Financial provide outreach funding to **Grace Lutheran Church of Berlin**.

If you have questions about Choice Dollars, contact your Thrivent agent or the office staff at Grace.

In 2023, Grace received **\$5,026** in Choice Dollars from our members. Thank you to all for your donations!

SOUP IS ON

Our Lenten season will be starting soon, as will our traditional soup suppers. New this year, per a simple question from Pastor Rebekah, “why don’t we start on Ash Wednesday?” And so it begins, our 1st soup supper will be on Ash Wednesday, February 14th. Suppers will begin at 5:45 pm, with service beginning at 6:30 pm.

In addition to the favorite recipes of the past, we are adding a couple of new ones to fill our extra week. We are in need of soup makers and dessert bakers.

A signup sheet is on the kiosk and recipes are on the table in the narthex. Thank You in advance for partaking in this wonderful time of fellowship. Whether you prepare a soup or dessert, help with serving, or simply come to eat, it is greatly appreciated. Come and nourish your body with soup, then your soul with the Lenten Service.

February 14	Chicken and Rice	Corn Chowder
February 21	Hamburger	Potato
February 28	Beef Barley	Outback Onion
March 6	Chili	Cream of Broccoli
March 13	Cheeseburger	Taco
March 20	Lasagna	Creamy Chicken and Rice



February Mission of the Month - Damascus Road

Damascus Road Project was founded in 2009 and is dedicated to fighting the evil of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. They are committed to bring awareness through education by restoring and empowering the abused and advocating for the prevention and abolition of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

Damascus Road Project, Inc. is 100% specially trained volunteer run, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. No one draws a wage, so 100% of funds donated directly serves our local communities.

Damascus Road Project has over 40 years of collective experience working with human trafficking in Wisconsin, Las Vegas, and across the U.S., as well as aboard. We have worked alongside a national missing children’s organization, other anti-trafficking NGO’S, and local law enforcement, resulting in recoveries each year.

We serve the community with a three-fold approach:

1. **Educate:** Community and professional education and training opportunities are offered to all community members.
2. **Locate:** Provide community outreach to identify those being victimized
3. **Advocate:** Connect with those victimized and offer support, compassion, encouragement and mentorship, as well as connection to appropriate resources and services.



Ding Dong Dinners

In the months of February, and March, Sunday, February 11 and Sunday, March 10, the Mission Outreach Team will be filling fifty (50) bags with a “dinner” after the Sunday worship service and randomly dropping them off in the community.

Any help will be greatly appreciated. Contact Craig Chovanec for more information.

Anyone able to apply for a Thrivent Action card to help with the expenses would also be welcomed

Women of Grace Annual Bakeless Bake Sale



The month of February means it is time once again for the Women of Grace’s annual Bakeless Bake Sale.

This sale allows our busy women to contribute to the needs of others without having to bake a thing!

All monies raised by this Bakeless Bake Sale will be used to support the many projects of the Women of Grace.

A more detailed letter containing envelopes for the Bakeless Bake Sale and the Thankoffering Service will be mailed out the first part of February.

Join Us For Mid-Week Lent Worship Services

Wednesday, 1:30 pm at First in Poy Sippi
Wednesday, 6:30 pm at Grace in Berlin

Our mid-week Lent Theme this year “Thy Will Be Done”

Not as I will, but as you will,” Jesus prayed to his Father the night before he went to the cross for our salvation.

And that is our prayer as well this Lent as we seek to do God’s will in our lives, as we draw near to the observance of Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection during Holy Week.





winter
BINGO

Saturday, February 3rd
Noon to 3:00pm
Grace English Lutheran Church
384 Oak Street, Berlin

50/50 Raffle

FREE BINGO

Basket Raffle

\$5.00 - BBQ or Hot Dog, Chips, Dessert, Drink
Event proceeds go to Berlin & Poy Sippi Food Pantry

Sponsored by Grace English Lutheran Church, Berlin
& First Lutheran Church, Poy Sippi



winter
BINGO

Saturday, February 3rd from Noon- 3:00 pm
At Grace Lutheran Church, Berlin

Mark Your Calendar
Grace & First will be hosting a Winter Bingo,
50/50 Raffle & Basket Silent Auction.

Donate A Basket
We are asking for your help in donating a basket.
Have fun & be creative!

All Are Welcome
Please plan to attend - bring your family &
friends & join in on the fun!

Event proceeds go to Berlin & Poy Sippi Food Pantry

Radio Ministry

- February 4 - In Memory of Gary McGrath by Michelle and John Klawitter
- February 11 - Sponsored by the Goettl Family
- February 18 - Open
- February 25 - In Memory of Lynn Hess by Gene Hess

Flowers

- February 4 - Open
- February 11 - Open
- February 18 - Open
- February 25 - In Memory of Lynn Hess by Gene Hess

Bulletins

- February 4 - In Memory of Gary McGrath by Michelle and John Klawitter
- February 11 - Open
- February 18 - Open
- February 25 - In Memory of Lynn Hess by Gene Hess

Fellowship

- February 4 - Fellowship & Caring
- February 11 - Open
- February 18 - Open
- February 25 - Terry & Cindy Wallace

Greeters

- February 4 - Open
- February 11 - Open
- February 18 - Open
- February 25 - Open

“Thunder Dog” The True Story of a Blind Man, His Guide Dog, and the Triumph of Trust by Michael Hingson is the Grace Book Club choice for February.

When one of the four hijacked planes flew into the World Trade Center’s North Tower on September 11, 2001, Michael Hingson, a district sales manager for a data protection and network security systems company, was sitting down for a meeting, his guide dog, Roselle was at his feet. Blind from birth, Michael could hear the sounds of shattering glass, falling debris and terrified people flooding all around him. But as Roselle sat calmly beside him, Michael chose to trust Roselle’s judgement and not panic. They were a team!

A true story of a blind man, his guide dog and the life changing power of faith and trust in the face of Terror, **“Thunder Dog”** is an intriguing look at the bond between humans and animals, and a book not to be missed.

We will meet to discuss this book on Tuesday, February 13th at a location to be determined. If you are interested in reading **“Thunder Dog”** please contact Cindy Wallace to get a copy. If you have already read this book, please join us for our book discussion, we would love to have you.





February Birthdays

- 1 Luke Johnson
- 2 Alissa Gies
Douglas Kline
- 3 Kathleen Krentz
- 5 Matthew Dretske
Thomas McCarthy
- 7 Alexander Konen
- 8 Amber Rozek
- 9 Cary Eckstein
- 10 Brian Retzlaff
- 12 Brandon O'Brien
- 14 Mark Labbus
- 19 Mara Ferron
Mark Goffard
Susan Shemanski
Sydney Renik
- 21 Sophia Falk
- 23 Emily Carpenter
- 28 Edward Carpenter
Lois Mattice



February Anniversaries

- 14 Kristin Koch & Tim Seaman
- 20 Steven & Connie Smits
- 23 Scott & Karen Schweigert – 40th

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



Food Pantry Sunday is the 1st Sunday of each month. Please bring an item and put it in the shopping cart.



We are so grateful to our Grace Church family this holiday season. Giving of your time and baking talents for the first blood drive of the 2024 season, we truly appreciate you.

Thank you for providing the delicious desserts, assisting in the kitchen and clean-up duties. Our next date is July 9.

Goetl Crew...Tammy & Spencer



February

2024

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1 12:40 pm Soul Food River Shores Hosts	2	3 12 noon - 3:00 Community Bingo at Grace
4 8:30 am Worship with Communion and Sunday School	5 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran	6 9:00 am Staff Meeting 9:00 am LWR Quilting	7 5:30pm Crafters Group 6:00 pm Joyful Noise 6:30 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Choir Practice	8 12:40 pm Soul Food Grace Hosts	9	10 8:00 am Men's Breakfast At First Lutheran
11 8:30 am Worship with Communion and Sunday School	12 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran 7:00 pm Congregation Council Meeting	13 9:00 am Staff Meeting	14 5:45 pm Soup Suppers 6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service 7:30 pm Choir Practice	15 12:40 pm Soul Food All Saints Hosts	16	17
18 8:30 am Worship with Communion and Sunday School 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm First Communion Class held at Grace	19 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran	20 9:00 am Staff Meeting 9:00 am LWR Quilting	21 5:45 pm Soup Suppers 6:30 pm Lenten Service 7:30 pm Choir Practice	22 No Soul Food	23	24
25 8:30 am Worship with Communion - no Sunday School	26 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran	27 9:00 am Staff Meeting	28 5:45 pm Soup Suppers 6:30 pm Lenten Service 7:30 pm Choir Practice	29 12:40 pm Soul Food River Shores Hosts		