

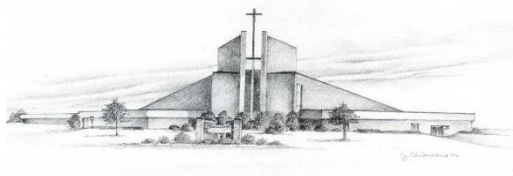
Grace English Lutheran Church,
384 Oak Street, Berlin, WI 54923
*A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America*

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THIS NEWSLETTER PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR

Sunday Worship:
8:30 AM

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



Worship Services

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gelcberlin

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

December 6	-	Worship at 8:30 am	(In person and online)
December 13	-	Worship at 8:30 am	(In person and online)
December 20	-	Worship at 8:30 am	(In person and online)
December 24	-	Worship at 4:30 pm	(In person and online)
December 27	-	Worship at 8:30 am	(Online Only)

Grace Lutheran's Mission: We Gather to Worship, Grow, Care, and Share

"All Are Welcome In This Place"



It's the most wonderful time of the year!

As I write this, I just came back from my first ever Christmas Tree lighting. I felt like a little kid filled with joy and excitement. There is something about this time of year: the rituals and the expectations that brings out the child in all of us. Even for those folks whose religious impulse might be minimal, there is something about this time of year that seems to open them up to the idea that maybe Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more!



As adults, we know there is work to be done before the season can really get underway. For me, that's what the season of Advent is about. It is time for preparation and getting ready. No, not decorating our church or our houses, although that can certainly bring us joy and be one avenue of sharing the true meaning of the season. But preparing our hearts for the coming Savior both at Christmas and his coming again. It's a lot like getting ready for when company is coming. We pick up the mess, clean the house, deck the halls, wait in anticipation and welcome our guest.

On the Sundays of the Advent season, the readings will give us time to reflect on how we are preparing to encounter God in a fresh way, paying attention to what is and what new possibilities there might be especially when everything seems different this year. Whether you worship in person or online, may this Advent season help you to prepare for the arrival of The Guest and remind you that God is faithful.

Father God, we thank You that You have promised to be with us no matter what difficult circumstances invade our lives and we lift up our many brothers and sisters in Christ who are facing increasingly hard times. We are watching and waiting for the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ and join with the Spirit in praying: "Come Lord Jesus". In these increasingly difficult times, we ask for Your strength and courage to face whatever lies ahead, knowing that the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us... and that nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. AMEN.

Meet with the Pastor Additional Opportunities

I have really enjoyed the meet with the pastor gatherings. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to meet with me. If you haven't had the chance to participate yet, I have added a few more dates for December. Please call or email the church office to let us know which date works for you.

Tuesday, December 1, 7 pm

Monday, December 7, 3 pm

Tuesday, December 15, 7 pm

REGULAR GRACE ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING – FELLOWSHIP HALL Monday, October 12, 2020

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

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

The September Council minutes were presented. Cindy Wallace made a motion to accept the minutes with Karen Macaulay seconding the motion. Motion approved.

Ministry Reports:

Pastor's Report: Pastor Rebekah was welcomed by the council and introductions were made. Pastor thanked the congregation for the great welcoming and basket of goodies. She is getting to know the members including the community by attending the Annual Food Pantry meeting. Pastor did advise that the Food Pantry is currently taking on a bathroom project at their current location to make water and bathroom facilities more accessible to volunteers and others. Pantry is looking for volunteers to help with construction and monetary donations. Pastor advised she has presided at one funeral so far and has met with the Soul Food leaders. Soul Food would like to get started again the first of November with handing out bagged lunches to maximum of 50 students in attendance with social distancing in Grace's Fellowship Hall. Discussion was held by council. Sue Shemanski made a motion to proceed with Soul Food starting in November; Karen Macaulay seconded. Motion approved. Soul Food will remain on Thursdays with Grace, All Saints and River Shores churches participating. Methodist Church has decided to not to participate at this time due to the pandemic.

Treasurer's Report: Cindy Wallace handed out the September Treasurer's Report. Matt Dretske made a motion to accept the report; Conrad Falk seconded. Motion Approved.

September Check Detail was handed out by Cindy Wallace. After reviewing the list of checks, Karen Macaulay made a motion to approve checks as issued; Tricia Prellwitz seconded. Motion approved.

Buildings & Grounds Report: Matt Dretske advised that Church Mutual Insurance Company has offered sensors to churches at no charge to monitor heat/temperature and water. Matt will advise Church Mutual that Grace will accept this offer and be the main contact person.

Concerns from the Audience: None

Old Business:

Two representatives from the Bloodmobile were present to advise the council of their plans how they would possibly use our Fellowship Hall starting in 2021 for blood drives instead of using their buses. By using our hall, they could handle more patients even with social distancing. They would bring in approximately 8 beds and still have room for registration and a canteen while still establishing social distancing in the hall. They have accomplished this in other churches our size. They would sanitize every chair, bed and table after every use; provide mats below the beds in the event any blood would drop on the floor. Council discussed the topic and had questions answered. Motion was made by Cindy Wallace to allow the Bloodmobile to use our Fellowship Hall if they desire in 2021; Sue Shemanski seconded. Motion approved.

As part of the project list discussed in previous council meetings, a tribute and plaque for Leonard Jones was discussed with Tricia Prellwitz bringing a couple plaque ideas. This will include history of Leonard and to be placed next to his flag box. Also, Barb Bellmer will be working on a plaque explaining the concept of the new altar cross design. Bill Bartlett will make up a list of the other projects discussed to be prioritized.

Bill Bartlett handed out the new revised Constitutions after the revisions voted on last month. With Pastor Rebekah now here, he felt we should form a sub-committee to fully review the constitution and make any necessary revisions to be voted on at the Annual Meeting in January. This committee will be comprised of Pastor, Tricia Prellwitz, Becky Guden and a congregational member.

New Business:

Bill Bartlett advised the council that we need to approve as new members, Pastor Rebekah Tarras and husband, Jeff Tarras. Sue Shemanski made the motion to approve Pastor Rebekah and Jeff as members; Cindy Wallace seconded. Motion approved.

Becky Guden brought up the idea to sponsor a Christmas tree in the Nathan Strong Park as part of the city's annual event. Cost is \$25 to sponsor and she will tag a tree after they are put up October 24. A small team will be needed to decorate then.

Installation service of Pastor Rebekah will be Sunday, October 18 at 8:30 a.m. with Bishop Mansholt and Pastor Amy officiating. They preferred to have the service outside due to the pandemic but with the upcoming weather forecast, Pastor will ask if they would reconsider an inside service. The service itself will involve members with various readings and locations in the sanctuary.

An updated picture of the council members was requested for the website and this will be at a later date when all can be present.

Pastor Rebekah advised her office hours will be Monday and Wednesday mornings at First Lutheran; and Tuesday and Thursday mornings at Grace leaving the afternoons open for other meetings and appointments. She would like to have some type of Meet & Greet with small groups but will see what people would like with the pandemic.

Pastor Rebekah discussed her ideas on getting Confirmation classes started and would prefer to combine students from First and Grace on one night a week. Council discussed with Wednesday evening being a target day and names will be provided from the office of students.

Bill Bartlett advised a computer is in need for Pastor. In discussion it was decided that Pastor did not prefer what type of computer and that Becky Guden will contact Data Pro, Grace's IT vendor, for information and pricing. Cindy Wallace made a motion to approve the purchase of a new computer for Pastor; Karen Macaulay seconded. Motion approved.

COVID update was discussed and whether Grace should remain with in-house worship or go back to virtual online only. Bill Bartlett advised that the Wisconsin Association of Churches recommended all churches go back to virtual; but after talking to Green Lake County Nurse she advised we could stay open with maintaining 50 or less in attendance. Motion was made by Tricia Prellwitz to remain open for in-house worship; Conrad Falk seconded. Motion approved.

Sue Shemanski led us in Closing Prayer. Cindy Wallace made a motion to adjourn; Karen Macaulay seconded. Motion approved. Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Guden
Council Secretary

2020 Council Information

Bill Bartlett - President	920-361-3053	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 - Sunday School	920-361-4506	shemanski5@yahoo.com
Karen Macaulay - Caring/Sharing	920-361-1821	Kigcooper9@gmail.com
Conrad Falk - Missions	920-229-2838	cmfalk6@gmail.com
Matt Dretske - Building/Grounds	920-229-8653	md3boys@charter.net

Maggie the Church Mouse

Rustle.....rustle.....clunk! Someone disappeared behind the altar into the hidden storage area between the stained glass windows. Being the curious creature that I am, I hunkered down in a dark corner beneath the pulpit to wait and see who and what might emerge from that space. One more rustle.....one more clunk..... and out came familiar church members, arms laden with boxes, artificial greens, and tree stands. Suddenly it occurred to me what was going on – my church family was preparing for Christmas!

Among the boxes were Grace's Christmas tree ornaments, reminding me that a towering evergreen would soon arrive and undergo a transformation with sparkling white lights and lovingly crafted decorations. Every year I am transfixed by this beauty. How lucky I am to be able to nibble my meals and take naps underneath this fragrant and breathtaking symbol of Christmas! Yet, the splendor is just the surface layer of a deeper and more meaningful experience. Even my lowly mouse instincts have picked up on this. At Grace we may be worshiping amid magnificent beauty, but what we are *really* doing is preparing our hearts for Christmas.

Near the tree is the brass Advent Wreath that gleams in the light of the sunshine streaming into the sanctuary. Adorned with candles to be lit sequentially in the weeks leading up to Christmas, the wreath's presence is a reminder that this is a season of preparation for the good news of the birth of baby Jesus. As each candle is lit, we reflect on messages of hope and joy in the gift of a Messiah, the light of the world.

My church family sets a wonderful example for me in preparing their hearts for Christmas. I know how fervently you all seek and create ways to extend love and joy to others. This year the handbells have come out of storage and a group of Grace musicians is practicing carols. Others are making preparations for a Ding Dong Dinner event in which meals will be brought to families in our community. On December 20th, a "Longest Night" service will provide comforting worship and music to all who seek peace in their hearts at Christmastime.

The people of Grace are preparing their hearts for Christmas. I learn by watching each of you, hidden though I may be. Merry Christmas to all!



Ding Dong Dinner

For the months of December, January, and February, we are collecting monetary donations for our Ding Dong Dinner outreach project. We will fill bags with a dinner (December is pasta, sauce, canned vegetables, a dessert mix, and fresh bread) and randomly drop them off in the community. Inside the bag will also be information about Grace and a table prayer.

Any donations will help. Thrivent cards would also be welcomed! If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Fritz at SinginSoprano1977@gmail.com or call the church.



Longest Night: Blue Christmas Evening Prayer December 20, 6:30 pm at Grace Lutheran

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

In the Northern Hemisphere, December 21 is the longest night, the winter solstice. It marks the shortest day of the year, the official start of winter. Tradition says that nature and all her creatures stop and hold their breath to see if the sun will turn back from its wanderings, if the days will lengthen and the earth will once again feel the sun's warmth. On the night before the darkest day of the year, we come with our honest yearnings seeking the return of light and hope. This service will be a space for prayer, scripture, and reflective music.

The Angel Tree



"Tis the season with Christ as the reason" An angel tree at Grace is set up with angels that represent less fortunate children and families within Green Lake County.

Please take an angel and purchase the item listed on the angel and return your purchase unwrapped in a bag, with the angel securely attached, to church by **Sunday, December 13.**



Christmas Eve Worship December 24 at 4:30 p.m.

On December 27, worship will be an online service only which is being led by the synod with the sermon given by the newly elected Bishop Anne Edison-Albright.

Mission of the Month For December ELCA Good Gifts

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we believe that God is calling us into the world—together. And with generous, loving hands, we can make a difference. ELCA Good Gifts is your opportunity to provide critical support to the ministries and programs that mean the most to you and the people you love.



ALTAR FLOWERS

December 6...In honor of their son Wesley's birthday by Stan and Sue Shemanski
December 13...In honor of their son Drew's birthday by Terry and Cindy Wallace
December 20...Given by Terry and Cindy Wallace
December 27...Online Service Only

RADIO MINISTRY

December 6....Jess Fritz and Carissa Fritz
December 13...In honor of Gene Hess's birthday by Lynn Hess
December 20...Sponsored by the Goettl Family
December 27...Sponsored by the Bill and Sue Bartlett

BULLETINS

December 6...In honor of her grandchildren by DeAnna Lueptow
December 13...In honor of Gene Hess's birthday by Lynn Hess
December 20...In honor of their son's birthday by Ed and Carol Roehl
December 27...Online Service Only

2021 Sign-up Sheets

The 2021 sheets are posted on the kiosk for radio ministry, bulletins, and altar flowers.

Many, many thanks to everyone for your sponsorship in 2020. Blessings for all you have contributed this past year. The family of Grace Lutheran has much to be thankful for.



December

- 1 Susan Carpenter
- 3 Jeremie Schmidt
- 4 Aubree Rozek
- 6 Jeremy Fritz
Harriet Henke
- 8 Eric Krebs
Megan Roehl
Wesley Shemanski
- 10 Brian Wallace
- 11 Ann Dehn
Grace Dobbs
Tayler Peschke
- 12 Kean Hermanson
Gene Hess
Kristine Labbus
Drew Wallace
Darlene Wilkes
- 13 Alaina Labbus
Judie Pinkall
Kaden Fritz
Kara Fritz
Ava Batley
- 14 Heather Schmidt
- 15 Allan Janes
Julie Sroka
- 16 Amy Batley
- 17 Roland Bahr
Destiney Krebs

December Birthdays Continued

- 19 Tamra Greening
Timothy Eastberg
Jeff Tarras
- 20 Edmund Roehl, Jr.
- 21 Bonnie Kline
- 25 Scott Wolfe
- 26 Susan Bartlett
Ashlyn Eastberg
Kristen Hermanson
Ryan Retzlaff
- 28 Joshua Koscher
- 29 Gracie Pence
Edmund Roehl, Sr
Kenneth Schram
- 30 Conrad Falk, Jr.
Elias Klawitter
Tom McCarthy
- 31 Rachelle Pribnow



December

- 3 Phil & Karen Pik – 15 Years
- 6 Matthew & Alissa Gies
- 12 Michael & Kristine McElligott
- 22 Vern & Barbara Tollakson
- 30 Scott & Amber Dutcher
- 30 Frank & Cindy Laudolff – 25 Years

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



2021 Offering Envelopes

Are ready to be picked up on Sunday or during office hours.



2020 Women's Advent Party

The Women of Grace have made a difficult, but necessary decision to cancel this year's Advent Party. We will however still hold our annual Prayer Pal exchange. On Sunday, December 6th, women can bring a small gift if they wish, and reveal themselves to their prayer pals. They will also be able to sign up to participate in the Prayer Pal exchange for 2021.

On the following Sunday, December 13th, you will draw a name for your Prayer Pal for 2021. If you are unable to be at Grace either of these Sunday's, or if you are uncomfortable attending, please call Cindy Wallace (229-3772) and she will coordinate your Prayer Pal exchange for you.

Decorating For Christmas December 12, 9:00 a.m.



Come and help decorate the church for Christmas.

All are welcome (within CDC gathering numbers). Masks are required.


Poinsettia Garden

Grace has purchased twelve (12) poinsettia plants for a poinsettia garden on Christmas Eve. If you would like to sponsor one in honor or memory of someone special in your life you may do so by letting the office staff know and pay \$15. Your name will be listed in the bulletin for the Christmas Eve service. After the service you are welcome to take them home.





December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
			6:00 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Bell Choir Practice			
6 8:30 am Worship with Communion	7	8	9 6:00 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Bell Choir Practice	10	11	12 9:00 am Tree Decorating
13 8:30 am Worship with Communion	14 7:00 pm Congregation Council Meeting	15	16 6:00 pm Confirmation Class 7:00 pm Bell Choir Practice	17 1:00 pm Support Group	18	19
20 8:30 am Worship with Communion	21	22	23 Office Closed 7:00 pm Bell Choir Practice	24 Office Closed 4:30 pm Christmas Eve Worship	25 	26
27 8:30 am Online Worship Only	28	29	30	31 New Years Eve		



East Central Synod of Wisconsin

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Dear Pastors, Deacons, and Lay Leaders,

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

This week begins a time of transition, both in the Church Year and in this office of bishop. The First Sunday of Advent is approaching and the next day, November 30th, will be my last in office as bishop of this synod. The Rev. Anne Edison-Albright will begin serving as bishop of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin on December 1. She and I have been meeting on a weekly basis during this time of transition.

Thanksgiving Day is this week also, so the week is about transitions and thanksgiving. For people of faith Thanksgiving is more than a national holiday for feasting and counting our material blessings. Thanksgiving is a time when we remember the Giver behind the gifts. It's more than a day and more like a lifestyle. Profound grace leads to deep gratitude. We praise God the Creator and Redeemer whose coming in Jesus Christ evokes an even deeper thanksgiving within and among us.

This year we observe Thanksgiving in the midst of this awful pandemic, when people are suffering from loneliness, sickness, disruption, economic hardship, and sorrow. At times like these I am reminded of the line in the liturgy of the Great Thanksgiving that says, "...it is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should *at all times and in all places* give thanks and praise..." And then we do, singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy" to God who has come to us in the flesh, in Jesus Christ, and keeps coming to us in water and Word and bread and wine. We give thanks and praise because of the Good News of God's Promise of eternal help and healing for this wounded and broken world.

As my time in office comes to an end I give thanks to God for the opportunity to have served among you. Moving to Wisconsin was never in my bucket list of things to do. But Anita and I both have enjoyed living here immensely and serving among you. When Paul wrote letters to those Christians living in places like Philippi and Thessalonica, he often wrote with deep love and affection, his emotion pouring forth. I feel the same way, giving thanks to God for all of you. I am so deeply grateful for the opportunity to have served in this part of Christ's Church, to have served among and with you, and to have experienced this part of God's creation. I will cherish the memories and rejoice in the many ways you have blessed my life and ministry.

I came to this synod in January of 2014, a frigid polar vortex with blizzard conditions blowing from the north the very day I arrived. I served about 5 months as interim bishop and then was elected to a six year term. As I look back over these years, I take some measure of satisfaction in having led the synod through those tumultuous times to better days of peace and unity. With staff and synod council we sought to focus our energies upon the mission to which God has called us through the

Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paraphrasing one of the Church's prayers, I pray that wherever we have missed the mark, God will reform things; wherever we have been right, God will strengthen it; and wherever we have inadvertently dropped the ball, God will provide. But I also leave knowing that our time together is finally not measured by successes or failures but by the loving embrace of God's mercy and assurance of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

When I was first elected to the office of bishop in 2001, a more senior bishop sent a note of congratulation along with a quote from St. Augustine. Printed on an 8 ½ by 11 piece of parchment looking paper, the quote read, "the task of the bishop is to keep the Church alert until the coming of Jesus Christ." I have always seen the work of the bishop as primarily tending to the Good News of God in Jesus. While there is oversight of congregations and pastors and deacons, and administrative work and a host of other duties, I have always sought to keep the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments central. For this is our life and our hope, and this is the Good News we have to offer the world.

November 30 is the Feast of St. Andrew, brother of Peter and one of the first of the twelve disciples of Jesus. Andrew was a missionary in the Mediterranean world. As we begin a new Church Year and a new chapter in the life of the synod, Andrew is lifted up as an example of our calling to follow Christ in faith and to let the love of God show forth in our lives.

Since my three-year old grandson is named Andrew, with the middle name Gerald, I will add, I take some delight in ending my time as bishop on the 30th of November. My last day as bishop will be one remembering both an apostle of the early Church and the seemingly boundless energy of a three-year old. The faith we share is one that has been passed on, generation unto generation, from those first female evangelists that visited the tomb on Easter morning to us today. We do this work and share this Good News so that the whole world, including lively and life-giving grandchildren and generations after them, may know the hope and healing that is ours in Jesus Christ.

Since people have asked, I will say that at least for the present Anita and I intend to remain living in Appleton. I remain open to serving the Church in some capacity somewhere further down the road. But first there will be days of rest, reflection and prayer. We shall see what God has in mind and entrust our lives and our future to the grace of God.

Finally, I want to assure you of my love and prayers for the synod and for Bishop-elect Anne Edison-Albright. I look forward to her installation when we shall promise to receive her as a servant of God and shepherd in the Church of Jesus Christ. With all of you I will promise "...to pray for her, help and honor her for her work's sake, and strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ."

The peace of Christ be with you all.

Bishop Jerry