

Living with Christ, Growing in Grace!



Evangelical
Lutheran
Church in America



*Rooted In Christ - Growing in Love -
Branching out in Service*



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

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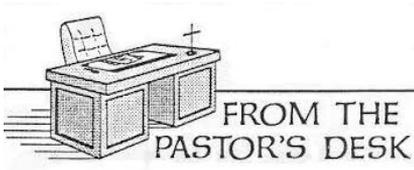
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Grace & Trinity Newsbites

FEBRUARY 2021



Here we are in February already - by the time the next newsletter is printed we will have been through a year of pandemic living. We would all like it to just be over.

There is hope; vaccinations are rolling out; some of the 'numbers' that we have been watching are going in a good direction. We are tired of physical distancing, masks and staying home or at least curtailing our time spent in crowded spaces. So many have died; lives have been turned upside down and all the way around. We are all ready for it to be done with. Sadly, though we are still in the 'layers of decision making' for everything, and will be for a while. I encourage you, all of us, to be patient, prudent, and diligent in caring for others. In 1 Corinthians, Paul reminds us that our individual freedoms, are in a sense, always in negotiation with the command to love and serve our neighbors. Luther says that we are free in Christ and bound by love for neighbor. Wesleyan theology says we are to 'Do no harm & do good.' Our lives are a balancing act of loving and caring for self and neighbor; which together are how we embody our love of God. Each of us, guided by the Holy Spirit, in discernment with others, lives that out differently according to our vocation and calling. May God continue to give you wisdom and understanding, compassion and courage, strength and perseverance as you follow Jesus, a citizen of God's kingdom, while in residence in this earthly one.

Traveling mercies,
Pr. Priscilla

LENT 2021

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17. There are traditional practices – fasting, prayer and giving alms – which are meant to strengthen our walk with Jesus, our life as disciples. We are invited to be open and creative in thinking about these Lenten disciplines.

For instance, fasting from certain foods or habits might be good – but maybe the fast is necessary because it provides space to feast. So maybe it's a fast from judgment that allows us to feast on new experiences or compassion; or fasting from what used to be so that one can feast on the present. Prayer can take many forms – a 40-day retreat is a fine time to consider what prayer is and how prayer fits into daily life. See the box with ideas for prayer. Giving alms might be money to a specific cause, or it could be giving away the new thing and making do with the old.

On Ash Wednesday we are reminded that we are made of the same stuff as the earth and stars, but still, are finite. A reminder that might make us want to reexamine, to paraphrase Mary Oliver, what we are doing 'with our one wild and precious life'. That reminder is a good beginning for the church's annual 40-day retreat. A retreat held in the midst of our daily life, in which we are called to reflect on our priorities, to contemplate the choices we make, to take a good, hard, and loving look through our lives to see what idols we have created, to discern if it's God or us 'in whom we trust'. A time to amend or re-orient our lives that we, who see because we believe, might live more abundantly, joy fully, with greater love. It's our annual 'spring cleaning' event; time to de-clutter, refresh and renew; so that we might see more clearly who we are and where we are heading. With a bit less clutter, inside and out, we make room for gratitude, generosity, joy and peace.

May we all be open to the Spirit who leads and guides us in ventures undreamed of, to places we might rather not go, who empowers and encourages us to be faithful disciples of Jesus the Christ. May our observance of Lent lead to a joyful Easter time.

PRAYER

Here's an idea for a Lenten prayer practice that I hope might become a prayer habit. Take home a bulletin and read the Sunday lessons as a daily devotion. For those with a Grace bulletin: Pray through the list of names on the prayer list every day. Use the prayers of intercession for daily prayer. Other ideas: Each time you come into the church building, pray for all who will enter the building that day. As you sit in the sanctuary, pray for all who will sit in the pews that day. As you enter your home, pray for all who live there, and all guests and workers who might pass through that day. As you leave your home, pray for all in need of prayer and that you might be a sign of Christ's presence to all you will meet while away from home. Pray as you enter/leave your car, your work place, school, a store, the theater, etc; pray for the first responders and those in need of care/correction whenever you hear a siren – ambulance, fire, or police. What other ways could you incorporate time/space for prayer in your day?

Lent and Holy Week for Trinity and Grace.

Wednesday evening services will be at Trinity; 6:45. This year "What's your story?" will be the question running through the Lenten services. Each week we will meet different people and hear their story of meeting Jesus. You never know who you might meet!

Sadly, no suppers this year; and no men's Friday breakfast.

Pencil in – to be determined by councils in their February meetings.

- Last year the plan was for Maundy Thursday service to be at Trinity and Good Friday at Grace. This year? April 1 & 2 at 7pm.
- Last year the plan was for a sunrise service at Trinity and 9 AM service at Grace on Easter. This year? A sunrise service would be outside, at 6:45 or so. April 4.

The plan last year was for an Easter breakfast at Grace in between services. February is too early to say whether that will be possible or not. Watch for more news in March.

Last year we had planned an **Easter egg hunt** for the Saturday before Easter – that would be April 3rd this year. **Want to plan this?** We have eggs; we have some Easter prizes and a bunny suit! We had a Thrivent Action team grant – shall we try again? **It's not too early to get it on the calendar.**

Youth and Family Ministry

We had a great idea proposed for a fun winter activity - to do some snow art at the Villa and St. Joe's; ideal time for residents to be able to enjoy the fun (through the windows) would be on a weekend after lunch. We need to find a time when 10 or so of our children & youth, and some parents, could spend an hour or two. Talk amongst yourselves and let's find a time that would work.

Another idea is a service project for 5 -8 children/youth - to help sort items in the family 'boutique' at Lutheran Family Services in Fremont. We'd spend an hour or two learning about the services provided and working together. We could organize 2 different times if we have enough availability. Let's find some dates that work for us & then we'll see what works for LFS staff.

Our Epiphany gifts, given in Jesus' name, to Lutheran Family Services.



In Our Prayers this Week:

To See An Updated List Please Contact The Office.

Trinity News

February Birthdays & Anniversaries

March Birthdays & Anniversaries

To See An Updated List Please Contact The Office.

Notes from Trinity Church Council's January Meeting (pending council approval)

Our meeting held on January 20, 2021 was opened with prayer and called to order with Jim Sherwood, presiding. Present were Jackie Blocher, Bev Meyer, Terry Nelson, Pastor Priscilla, Jean Schlickbernd, Barb Schroedter, Jim and Kathi Sherwood and Tom Swenson.

Tom reported that there was a bill for \$695 for lawn care service out of Lyons. Terry moved; Beverly seconded to pay the bill. Pastor met with Bev and Kathi to discuss Lenten services and to pick out hymns. Kathi reported there has been a schedule set for serving the church with a start date of June, 2021. Pastor has Sunday School students reading through a portion of the Bible and is inviting the whole church to accept the challenge to do likewise. Jackie reported that all church funds have been moved to CharterWest.

Under Business to come before the Council:

Financial duties and arrangements were reviewed and Tom will go over procedures to follow on how to record/make up deposits following Saturday night church services.

Memorial monies and records – the money will go into designated funds.

There was discussion that we have a standing committee write up a letter to families of lost loved ones that the minister/mortuary can use.

It will list specific needs for the church. No decisions were made, more discussion to follow.

Information on land history was revisited and discussed. Items to consider are how Trinity should use the gift going forward, how much do we 'give

away' and what is our mission and the purpose for the money we keep. Decisions need to be made at the next meeting.

Lenten services will start on Ash Wednesday, February 17th, at 6:45. There will be no meals served this year, and will be combined services with Grace, to be held at Trinity.

Pastor Priscilla asked about building sanitation with more frequent use of the building. Following discussion, it was moved by Tom and seconded by Barb to purchase a room ionizer for Trinity. Beverly will contact Pam Peterson for more information on the one Grace purchased earlier.

Streamlining our Council, it was decided we need to have a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. Please note – BEVERLY WILL NOT SERVE AS SECRETARY. (it is now in black and white)

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted – Beverly Meyer (for the last time.)

Grace News

February Birthdays & Anniversaries March Birthdays & Anniversaries

To See An Updated List Please Contact The Office.



Reminder: Friendship Circle does not have a regular meeting in January or February.

We can make a decision later on about our March meeting time. Stay well.

Happy New Year!

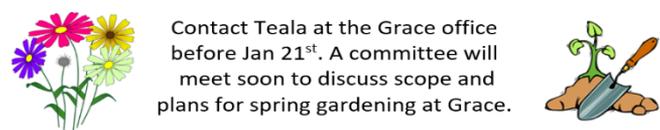
Elveria Thietje is turning 100 on Feb. 8th, 2021. Please join her family in celebrating this special occasion! Send a card, give her a call or drive by and "Honk your Birthday Wishes" between 1 - 3pm on Monday, Feb. 8th. They are asking everyone to be safe, socially distance and wear a mask. Address for cards and drive by event is 771 E. Willow, West Point, NE 68788. Elveria is the mother of Janice (Dean) Lubker, Dale (Darlene) Thietje, Joyce (Glen) Rodick. She is the loving Grandmother of 4 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

Think Spring!

Do you have an eye for landscaping? Do you like to dig your fingers in the dirt? Is weeding your quiet time?

Contact Teala at the Grace office before Jan 21st. A committee will meet soon to discuss scope and plans for spring gardening at Grace.

Grace office: 372-2050



Grace Lutheran Church

Council Minutes January 12, 2021 (pending council approval)

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Vicki Furchert. Other council members present: Lynn Stofferahn, Melissa Nielsen, Pam Petersen, Kathy Mahannah, and Bob Wilson. Pastor was also in attendance.

Pam made a motion to accept the agenda. Kathy seconded, and motion passed.

Kathy made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 8, 2020 meeting. Bob seconded, and motion passed.

Pastor report: no report

President's report: Members who have reports to submit for the annual meeting need to get them to the church office.

Treasurer Report: Melissa moved to accept the treasurer's report. Pam seconded, and motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Property: no report

Worship & Music: no report

WELCA: will not meet in February or March

Christian Education: no report

Endowment: Nearly all of the 2020 requests have been reimbursed for payment.

Memorial: no report, New Member: no report

OLD BUSINESS:

- Grant money from Immanuel and Nielsen Foundation: The grant money received will be used to purchase protein that will be distributed in coordination with the monthly Salvation Army and Northeast Community Action Partnership distributions.
- Annual Meeting: date had been set for January 31 immediately following worship. Attendance will be in person and virtual via Facebook livestream. Those watching remotely will be able to call or text their attendance and votes to a council member. The contact numbers will be posted.
- Audit of books: Willis Mahannah will be asked to audit general fund. WELCA books have been audited. Luther League books will be audited by Melissa Nielsen. Need someone to audit Endowment.
- Agenda for annual meeting: Lynn and Kathy agreed to be on the ballot for the next council term starting in February 2021. Vicki has expired her two terms and was thanked for her service. Vicki will contact members to see if they would agree to be nominated for Endowment committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Lent: Lenten services will be offered at Trinity, subject to their approval.

The next regular meeting will be February 9, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

Kathy motioned & Pam seconded to adjourn the meeting and was closed with the Lord’s Prayer at 7:00 pm.

In action taken via email on December 9, 2020, the budget was changed to reflect \$2,500 taken from pastor’s salary and moved to pastor furniture allowance. Pam made the motion, it was seconded by Lynn and motioned passed.

Submitted by Melissa Nielsen, Secretary

<p>Grace Lutheran Church Financial Report – December 2020 General Fund for December</p>
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To See An Updated List Please Contact The
Office.

**Grace Ev. Lutheran Church
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Address Service Requested