

March
2019
Edition

The Lamp

Grace Lutheran Church

Growing in Grace—Making Christ Known

PASTOR'S

Ponderings

Many of you can recall learning about Paul Revere's famous ride, shouting "The British are coming! The British are coming!" at the top of his lungs to alert the people of what was about to happen. That legendary ride and its wake-up call allowed Boston and the surrounding towns to prepare for the coming conflict.

Lent does the same thing for us, each year. It moves through our towns and churches and families, reminding us that Good Friday is coming. It prepares us for the coming conflict.

However, our conflict, of course, is not with an army or really anyone else at all. Our conflict during Lent is with ourselves. Starting with Ash Wednesday, we receive a stark reminder that we are dust, and to dust we shall return. We wrestle with our own mortality. We remember that we, too, will die.

Ash Wednesday sets the tone for the rest of the season of Lent. During Lent, we refrain from saying "Alleluiah!" Many people fast from food or other pleasures during this season. For everyone, it is a time of silence, reflection, darkness, and wrestling with our doubts, our fears, and ourselves, revealed in an honest light.

By the time we get to Good Friday, we all see ourselves in the crowd chanting "crucify him!" We know ourselves for who we are. We have realized that we shall not ascend to God, and that we are unable to cleanse ourselves of our individual sins as well as our corporate, systemic sin.

The good news of the gospel, however, is that we do not need to ascend to God. Rather, God has descended to us. God has come alongside and suffered with us, in Jesus Christ. Jesus has shared our humanity, and all that it entails, and struggled through all we struggle through in Lent. And he didn't stop there: he kept descending, even to the dead, where he proclaimed victory and snatched the keys of sin and death.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel. We know that Easter awaits. But we strip Easter of its power if we refuse to engage in the long road leading to Good Friday. If we are faithful to the process of Lent, we will indeed find ourselves exuberant at the end of the process. Until then, we join together to walk an uncomfortable road. Not alone, but with the Holy Spirit inside us, Jesus leading the way, and each other at our side, moving together toward the week we call "Holy."

In Peace,

Pastor Seth

Pastor Seth Hecox

Financial Report

I wanted to share a few things about the finances.

First, the NiCor bills as a result of the new boiler. Our January bill was \$554 versus the January 2018 bill of \$865, with the same average temperature. Our February bill is \$940, but we had extreme cold temperatures. So the new boiler IS paying off.

Our snow removal bill for January was \$260, but for February it is \$1,520!

For 2018 our actual income for the last 6 months was \$73,565. Our actual expenses were \$77,574. Short \$4,009. The first half of the year we were short \$4,850. So we have been using our "reserves", I guess I will call it, for a year now. This is our checking account. There is not any extra reserves to use anymore.

For January 2019 our actual income was \$9,326. This is with rent money. Our average offering was \$2,234 per Sunday. Our budget amount needed per week is \$3,300. Our actual expenses were \$16,478. This however, includes an extra payroll of \$3,377.00, with three pay-periods in January.


For February 2019 our actual income is \$10,430 or \$2,608/week. Our actual expenses are \$10,686, or \$2,671/week. This is for bills we paid. We still have Portico Insurance to pay for January and February of \$5,560.

The winter months are the most expensive months, so if we can get through March with no snow and warmer temperatures, that would help reduce the bills.

Peace,

Regina Bauer

In Our Prayers



Members: Marie Christian, Helen Warke, Curt Fox, David Kirstein, Norma Siebring, & Brian Melvin

The Bereaved: Roy & Bonnie Hill, their family and friends, as they grieve the death of Roy's brother, Paul

Friends and Family of Grace: Kathie Parton (Kim Bell's mother), Juanita (Jodi Dzak's mother), Rocky (nephew of Jackie Danalewich), Jacob Zigafoose (neighbor of Mary Smith), Barb (friend of the Sodas), Mary Ellen Webb (sister of John Filas), Fritzie Ceveno (friend of the Kirsteins), Kurt Stefans (son-in-law to the Warkes), Tina McBride (friend of Maryann Ricken), David DeWald (Irving DeWald's brother), Irma Wagner (sister-in-law of Joann House), Dorothy Ann Milling (Joann House's niece), Jack Zdanowski (Warkes' nephew), Jeanne Kieffer (friend of the Warkes), Sarah Hazelrigg (granddaughter of Jean Peterson) Matt Prodehl (son-in-law of Dan Bell)

Home-bound: Jean Goodwin (*home*), Theresa Klager (*Heritage Woods, Minooka*), Dolly Hoover (*Sunny Hill, Joliet*) (mother of Karen Nielsen), Edie Hess (*Heritage Woods, Manteno*)

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES ~ JANUARY 13, 2019

Present Council Members: Pastor Hecox, Dave Phillips, Lynn Christian, Phil Keller, Diane Carr, Joshua Wilkes

Opening Devotions: Dave opened with devotion and prayer

Additions and approval of agenda:

Pastor Gary Erikson Assistant to the Bishop
Mission Faith and Vitality Initiatives-East Conference

Discussed Faith and Vitality Initiatives which include conferences and congregational surveys. Conferences are intended to have all churches actively involved in their own wellbeing; approximately 8 sessions first year; 4 the following. Pastor and up to three members could attend. No fees associated with the conferences. Paid for through grants secured by Pastor Gary Erickson. Ideally Grace would do a Congregation Vitality Survey before and after the conference initiative. Developed by ELCA to measure subjective perception of the church. The survey questions relate to the members relationship with God, each other, and relationship the world. The surveys also provide affirmations and opportunities in the congregation. Provides a vitality and sustainability score to the congregation. Available in paper or online link. The survey takes about 15 minutes and the only cost is the scoring of the survey at Baylor University and producing the report. 75 surveys will cost about \$250, which provides a 12-page report with summary page. Benchmarking on how Grace compares to other congregations our size would be provided. The survey can be taken anytime, no deadline. They would need about one month notice to provide us with the surveys. Approximately 2-4-week turnaround on results of the survey. Questions for council to consider:

How Many Surveys?

When?

Pay directly or pay synod back?

Council will consider participating in the intuitive and survey.

Minutes of December Council Meeting

Minutes reviewed from previous Council Meeting. Lynn motioned to accept, Dianne second. All in favor. Dave will notify congregation of need for members to fill out a properties request form prior to using the building for any event through the Lamp and Trifold.

Treasurer's report: Treasurers report reviewed. Phil motioned to accept, Josh second. All in favor. Pastor to clarify the VBS credit in November. Council approved use of miscellaneous contribution to be put towards negative flower account in 2018.

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Pastors Report

Recommended a conversation with members about what is the driving decision making of the church. Consider our priorities about what is important as we look toward growth.

Confirmation will be planning a youth service in March.

Lent will continue to have meals, Pastor is considering compline services during this time.

Committee Report

Financial Review Committee- Pastor working with Financial Audit Team and will bring recommended and any new practice to council

Properties- Properties will investigate doorbell for preschool issues.

Youth- Boundary waters planned, one group will be going. Council did not object to youth group fundraising Superbowl board.

Fellowship/Outreach teams will combine. – Senior Lunch open to member and may bring guest. Friday February 15th at noon. Would like to start having semi-regular meals a few times a year.

New Business

Next Council Meeting- February 10, 2019. Diane will provide the Devotion.

Closing Prayers by Pastor Seth.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lynn Christian



Missionary for a Day ~ March 2019

03/06	Patricia Fox	For Ash Wednesday
03/08	Dave & Terry Phillips	Bill Germanois' Birthday
03/10	Mark & Brenda Lange	In Honor of their Wedding Anniversary
03/13	Gary Gruhn	
03/17	Dan Bell	In Memory of Chet & Betty Kennedy
03/20	Susan Trimby	In Memory of Vivian Trimby
03/23	Karen Nielsen	For Mom's and Kevin's Birthdays
03/27	Red & Sharon Folkestad	In Honor of Red's Birthday

Volunteers

	Acolytes	Liturgist	Lector
03/03	Charlie Lussenhop	Jordyn Reents	Madison Gorges
03/06AshW	Jacob McPherson	Jim Hankins	Karen Nielsen
03/10	Jace Christian	Susan Trimby	Frank Dickey
03/13W	Hannah Melvin	N/A	Lynn Stehlik
03/17	Reese Fitzpatrick	Jackie Danalewich	Jody Godsey
03/20W	Jacob McPherson	N/A	Gary Gruhn
03/24	Charlie Lussenhop	Christy Ziller	Jackie Danalewich
03/27W	Jace Christian	N/A	Lynn Stehlik
03/31	Hannah Melvin	Katelin Mrjenovich	Teresa Higgins
04/03W	Charlie Lussenhop	N/A	Jackie Danalewich
04/07	Jacob McPherson	Dee Elsner	Laurie Humann

	Assistant	Greeters	Ushers
03/03	Jenny Kucharski	H.Melvin/H.George/ J.&M.McPherson	G. Moyers/J. & J. Christian
03/06AshW	Arlene Hankins	M. & P. Keller	M. & W. Ricken/T. & D. Phillips
03/10	Doris Dickey	M. Smith & L. Salazar	J. & A. Hankins/L. & K. Stehlik
03/13W	N/A	M. & S. Soda	D. Bell & S. Long
03/17	Maryann Ricken	S. Trimby/J. Stranich	C. Ziller, G. Gruhn, T. & D. Phillips
03/20W	N/A	D. & G. Robertson	J. & A. Hankins
03/24	Dee Elsner	G. Gruhn/J. James	B. Elsner/J. Hankins/D. & G. Robertson
03/27W	N/A	C. & J. Filas	M. & W. Ricken
03/31	Maryann Ricken	T. & D. Phillips	D. Bell, S. Long. L. & K. Stehlik
04/03W	N/A	J. & H. Hankins	D. Bell & S. Long
04/07	Susan Trimby	C. & B. McPherson	B. Elsner, C. Ziller, L. & K. Stehlik

Altar Guild: Christy Ziller

Women of the ELCA

Women of Grace Lutheran Church - come join us for a wild night of White Elephant Dirty Bingo! On Thursday, March 14th in the Fellowship Hall at 7:00pm. What is that? Well, bring a new gift you may have received as the White Elephant Gift, in a gift bag. We will play bingo, and as each person wins, that gift may be taken from the table or stolen from you if you have a good prize. Yes, it will be chaotic, but it should be fun! Snacks will be provided. Hope to see you there!



Summer Youth Events

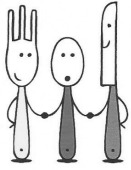
VBS - June 10-14

Campfirmation - June 23-28

\$425/student expected

Boundary Waters - July 28-August 3





Seniors' Lunch

Senior Lunch

Our first ever Senior Lunch was so much fun! 30 total people enjoyed eating together, singing together, conversing, and everyone had a good time. A big thanks goes to Thrivent for providing financial funding so we could host the Senior Lunch free of charge. The Outreach/Fellowship Team will start looking at the next Senior Lunch in late spring or summer!

Sunday School



For all our pre K - 5th grade kids, we'll have Sunday School on Sunday mornings. Kids in these grades will start off the church service in the sanctuary with their families, then Pastor Seth will dismiss them after the Greeting and Announcements. They'll go to their Sunday School room to interact with each other and older kids while they hear stories, color pictures, and engage the gospel reading for that Sunday.

Maryann Ricken, Cindy Filas, and Chelsea Hecox are the primary adults connected to Sunday School right now, but we can always use a couple more adults and a couple older kids to help out.



Confirmation/Youth



Sundays at 6pm are when we meet for Confirmation and youth events. Pastor Seth and Christy Ziller lead Confirmation classes. Confirmation is for any baptized member who has not been confirmed yet, usually in 6th-8th grade. This month, we will be leading the youth-led worship on March 3, hosting the Lent midweek soup suppers, and learning about the Lutheran perspective on Life, the Universe, and Everything!



Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study

Every Tuesday, we meet here at Grace's fellowship hall at 10:30am for study, discussion, and prayer. From now until Easter, we are reading together from the book "Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter." Copies are available for free for you. All women are welcome.



Men's Bible Study

Every Thursday morning at 9:30am, we have Men's Bible Study at Mikki's. All men are welcome to join us as we preview the next Sunday's lectionary together. Our discussions revolve around Scripture, current events, and our prayer concerns, all of which we pray over together.

Choir

Choir practice is on hold for now. Currently, the plan is to hold off on choir practice until after Easter. Please keep choir director Helen Warke in your prayers as she journeys through her treatments.

Got Unused Gift Cards?

If you have any gift cards you aren't likely to use, please donate them for Grace Lutheran Preschool's Easter Raffle Basket fundraiser. At our Easter Egg Hunt, the Preschool will raffle off some baskets filled with goodies, and gift cards are always a welcome addition to any gift basket!

Anniversaries ~ March 2019

03/04 *Beth & Chris McPherson*

03/10 *Brenda & Mark Lange*

Birthdays—March 2019

03/01 Pr. Seth Hecox	03/03 Shelby Eaker	03/06 Sophia Moyers
03/08 Chris McPherson	03/09 Lorri Kucharski	03/11 Christy Ziller
03/14 Beth McPherson	03/21 Roy Hill	03/23 Edie Hess
03/24 Rita Welegala	03/25 Allison Moyers	03/27 Earl (Red) Folkestad
03/30 Brenda Lange		