



TOWER ECHOES 2020

From the Pastor,

I am playing religious instrumental Christmas music in my office November 16 as I write my December newsletter article. It is putting me in a good Christmas mood as I begin to write about the joys of Christmas until Until I looked at my December church calendar and it reeks of no's.

No Sunday School Christmas Program at Grace or Hope. No Christmas Cantata this year. No in person Christmas Eve Worship at Hope this year. No, No, No! No watching the surprise on my great-grand children's faces when they open their gifts from papa. No family Christmas gathering this year. NO! NO! NO!

Christmas! Bah Humbug! I am on Scrooge's side this year. Where is the joy in Christmas this year? Wait. When Luther was in one of these moods his wife, Katie would simply ask Luther why he was so sad, "Did God die?" No God did not die. God cannot die until He is born. Wait Christmas is about the birth of God the Son. His birth changes everything. God has not abandoned the world; God broke into it. The joy of Christmas can not die. My expectations of Christmas 2020 might die, but Christmas joy based on Christ cannot die. Let the light of your Christmas joy shine this Christmas despite all the no this and no that.

Merry Christmas

Pastor Jim

Church Seasons: November 29—December 23 is the Advent Season. It is a time to prepare the home, church, and heart to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Church Festival Days:

December 20 - Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the Church	December 21 - Thomas, Apostle
	December 24 - Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Eve
	December 25 - Nativity of Our Lord
	December 26 - St. Stephens, Deacon & Martyr
	December 27 - St. John, Apostle & Evangelist
	December 28 - The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

U.S Holidays - December 7 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
December 21 - Winter Begins
December 25 - Christmas

Santa Claus is Coming to Town

Santa Claus is Coming to Town!

Saturday, December 12 at 1 pm

A drive up to see Santa in the alley behind the Cook Fire Department will be set up, and goodie bags will be given out for children and adults. Children are invited to drop off a wish list letter to Santa in a special mailbox on site. If they include a self addressed stamped envelope Santa will send a reply.

Christmas Eve Candlelight

Worship at Grace Lutheran with Communion is Scheduled for Thursday **December 24th**

7:00 p.m. Grace Lutheran Church

Offering has been designated to go to Lutheran family Services

There will not be a Christmas Eve Worship Service at Hope this year due to the increase of COVID-19 infections. There will be a 2020 service streaming at 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve on the Hope Lutheran and Grace Lutheran Facebook page.

The Sunday bulletin is available to anyone who would like it emailed, so you have it while watching at home. It is usually done on Friday and can be sent to you on completion. Please email the church @ grace68329@gmail.com or call the church @ 402-864-4201 & leave your email address.

If you would like to bring a **Poinsettia** to share with the church, you can bring them at any time. If the poinsettia is in memory or honor of someone, please add that information to the sheet on the counter in the SE Office where you can leave your Poinsettia. Be sure to label your poinsettia with your name for when you come to pick it up.



UPDATES

Please be sure to **send in any updates** (new addresses, phone numbers, email address, etc.) **for all family members** on the Church membership list, and for the ELCW Yearbook. Please let us know if you or someone you know is not receiving the Tower Echoes and would like to - we would like you to be on the list, either mail or by email.

Kate Dietz recently started working at The Bridge Behavioral Health in Lincoln. The Bridge is an alcohol and drug treatment facility. They offer medical detoxification and residential treatment for individuals who live in Southeast Nebraska. Many of their clients come in with little to no items or clothing and are not prepared for the cold weather. Most of their clients are males, but they do offer detoxification services to females. With COVID-19, the usual donations have gone down. They are seeking donations of the following items.

Men's Coats, Women's Coats

Winter Hats and Gloves

Men's Clothing – sweatshirts, sweat pants, jeans, t-shirts, shorts

Underwear, Socks, Shoes

Hygiene Items – especially African American hair care products

Shower Shoes – Old Navy Sandals work great!

Kate will be collecting donations at Grace Lutheran Church the first two Sundays in December. There will be a bin in the back of the church. If you are unable to get items to church but would like to donate call Kate at 402-335-7809 to arrange a pick up/ drop off.

From Amber Beard

So as you know my cousin, Casey, was in an accident and we didn't know if she was going to make it the first few days...then she started doing better and better! She has been by my side, and I hers, since kindergarten. We went to school together, college together, and been best friends throughout. She is close to her family, but can only see a few of them for 30 minutes a week. She is trudging through, but always with a smile. I love her so much!

I am reaching out to you in hopes that you'd send her a card of hope and love, letting her know we are praying for her!

I'd love to flood her room with cards! Please reach out to others who may want to join this card chain.

Casey Holsing
5401 South Street Room 105
Lincoln, NE 68506

<https://www.newschannelnebraska.com/story/42516360/beatrice-woman-airlifted-to-hospital-following-crash-at-highway-intersection>

Grace Lutheran Church Annual

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 17, 2021

Grace Lutheran Church will hold its Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 17, 2021 following worship services. Worship time will be changed to 10:00 a.m. Plans are being made to possibly do this virtually.

More information to follow.

Annual Meeting Reports should be turned in by the 22nd of December.

December 2020





DECEMBER

12/1-Jeramy Bridgmon
12/6-Shayla Thompson
12/9-Kenneth Rosenthal
12/10-Kathy Helgren
12/11-Jody Bruns
12/12-Evelyn Effken
12/13-Delbert Peters
12/14-Chris Weber
12/15-James Armknecht
Morgan Smith-O'Connor
Lisa Weber
12/16-Crytal Haake
12-20- Adeline Perkins
12/21-Ashlei McDonald
12/22-Amelia Walters
12/25-Jesus Christ Our Lord
12/26- Julie Effken
12/27-Melanie Bailey
12/30-Shari Siepelmeier

December Anniversaries

December 8 -
Keith & Eunice Weber
December 27 -
Larry & Colleen Naber

Our sincere thoughts and
prayers to the Families and
friends of

Verna Brinkman

Verna passed away on
November 25th at the age of
98 years. Her funeral service
will be held on Wednesday,
December 2nd at 2:00 p.m. at
Grace Lutheran.

Burial will be at the Grace
Lutheran Cemetery.

Grace Lutheran Church Council

November 17, 2020

Grace Lutheran Church Council met November 17, 2020. The meeting was called to order by President Paul Wilken. Pastor Jim Helgren started the meeting with a prayer. Council members present were Robin Eggleston, Paul Wilken, Richard Roesener, and Gene Ekhoff. Amber Beard was present via phone, due to quarantine. Those absent were Mitchell Brinkman. Also, in attendance were Pastor Jim Helgren & Diane Wilken, Sect/Treasurer. In the absence of Secretary Amber Beard, Robin Eggleston appointed Diane Wilken to take the minutes.

Grace & Louis Bentzinger was present. Grace was presented a framed picture "The Church Organist" for her 70 years of being an organist for Grace Lutheran Church. It is still hoped to have a celebration for her in the future.

Robin Eggleston made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 20, 2020 meeting. Richard Roesener seconded. The motion carried.

The financial report was reviewed. The account balances as of June 30, 2020 are:

Current: -\$1,735.93	PPP Loan: \$9,637.96
Memorial: \$12,549.57	Improvement: \$3,666.41
Luther League: \$5,094.09	

Diane Wilken received notice from the Mainstreet Bank that the PPP loan has been forgiven and this amount will be placed into the Current Fund. Richard Roesener made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Gene Ekhoff seconded. The motion was carried.

Pastor Helgren's Monthly Report:

Pastor Helgren provided his list of congregational visits & services. The funeral policy for Grace Lutheran at this point is still the same. Funerals can be held with social distancing, no luncheon. 3 students received 1st Communion on November 1st. The ELCW Thank offering will be on November 22nd. The Thanksgiving Eve Service will be on November 25th, 7:00 p.m. at Osage Church of Christ, with Pastor Helgren giving the message. First Sunday in Advent is November 29th. December 6th the ELCW Officers will be installed. Kate Dietz has requested that we collect gently used coats and healthcare items for some of the clients that she has that are in need. Council agreed to allow those to be collected. She will be collecting the first 2 weeks of December.

Committee Reports: Property Committee—Council—Gene Ekhoff

The water fountain in the basement is not shutting off. It was decided to take the water fountain out as it is not being used. One of the urinals was constantly running following the water issues in town and has been repaired. The tree by the NE door of the church will be taken down. The berries that it produces are a mess to clean up and have been tracked into the church carpeting. We are still in need of an electrician to place an outlet in the parsonage garage and on the east side of the church outside.

Worship, Evangelism, Music & Fellowship—Council-- Richard Roesener

Services are still the same – no lunches will be provided for funerals. Social distancing and masks are still required. Live organ music has been appreciated – Thanks Dean!

The Advent Wreath will be gotten out for the 1st Sunday in Advent on November 29th. Putting up the Nativity Scene was discussed.

Still waiting for information regarding the computer, amplifier & more music for the Carillon.

Reminder - We are writing down names of those attending worship – in case of an illness associated with worship. Communion cards will not be filled out during this time, we will use the names of those in attendance.

Parish Ed and Young People—Council—Amber Beard

Amber stated that the Grab & Go Sunday School has been well received.

The Luther League was asked to share cards & notes with members of the congregation that have been unable to attend in-person worship.

Stewardship & Memorial—Council—Robin Eggleston

The Noisy Coin Offering for November 29th will be collected for the Tanzanian Orphans, or the Johnson County Backpack Program if the Orphan balance is received.

Other Business

The Thanksgiving Offering will be designated to the Osage Food Pantry. The Christmas Offering will be designated to Lutheran Family Services. The service for Christmas Eve was discussed. Hope has decided not to have a live service that evening but will share a recorded service for their members. At this time Grace is planning to have live service – with Masks and Social Distancing required. Gene Ekhoff made a motion to purchase battery operated candles for use this year. Richard Roesener seconded. Motion carried. Diane Wilken will investigate this purchase. The Annual Meeting is planned for January 17, 2021. The Synod has approved the virtual meeting if that is what we need to do. We are checking our options for doing this type of meeting.

Next meeting will be December 15, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting was adjourned by Paul Wilken and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Electronic Giving

Grace Lutheran invites you to consider our electronic giving program as a way to automate your regular weekly/monthly offerings. Electronic giving is convenient for you and provides much needed consistency for our church. There is no cost for you to participate. If you are currently giving on a weekly/monthly basis you will no longer need to write 52/12 checks a year and help with the church's expense of envelopes. And when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your weekly/monthly offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis.

To get started, complete the Electronic Giving authorization form, located at the back of the church, the SE Church Office or one can be emailed to you and return it to the church office secretary - Diane Wilken.



Grace Lutheran Church

306 N. First St.

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Church Office: 402-864-4201

Pastor Jim Helgren: 402-864-2113

Church Email: grace68329@gmail.com