



TOWER  
ECHOES  
2021

From the Pastor,

Some years are more stressful than other years. This has been a stressful year for Kathy and me, so far.

We had COVID in January. We had COVID reaction to the vaccine February 12-13 and March 12-13. We had the stomach flu April 12-13. I tested negative for COVID. I am writing this May 12 and waiting for illness to strike.

On youngest was in Serbia for three weeks in March. We had 2 dogs and a cat to care for. My two cats had to stay in the back part of the house. My son's animals all require special treatment for health issues and must eat according to a schedule.

My oldest is in the Army Reserve and his medical unit is now serving in Kuwait.

We have been in the planning stages for moving my sister to Cook. That will finally happen May 23. Stress about the move has lessened every time a detail falls into place. Still, every night in my head I am making the drive from Milwaukee to Cook.

The one thing that has helped us in our stress is prayer. Prayer for help with each issue. Prayer of thanks every time something goes right. Prayer just for the sake of prayer. Don't forget to invite God into your stress.

Trusting God requires believing God is with you. Prayer reminds one that God is present with you. Prayer reminds us that there are a lot of things out of our control, but not necessarily out of God's control.

Be God-centered and give some of your stress to God. Some stress can be helpful to help inspire us to do what we can. Too much stress can harm us mentally, physically, emotionally, and even spiritually. Pray and give God all or most of your stress.

Pastor Jim

"Sunday and Seasons Year B 2021"

Thursday, June 17

Emanuel Nine, martyrs, 2015

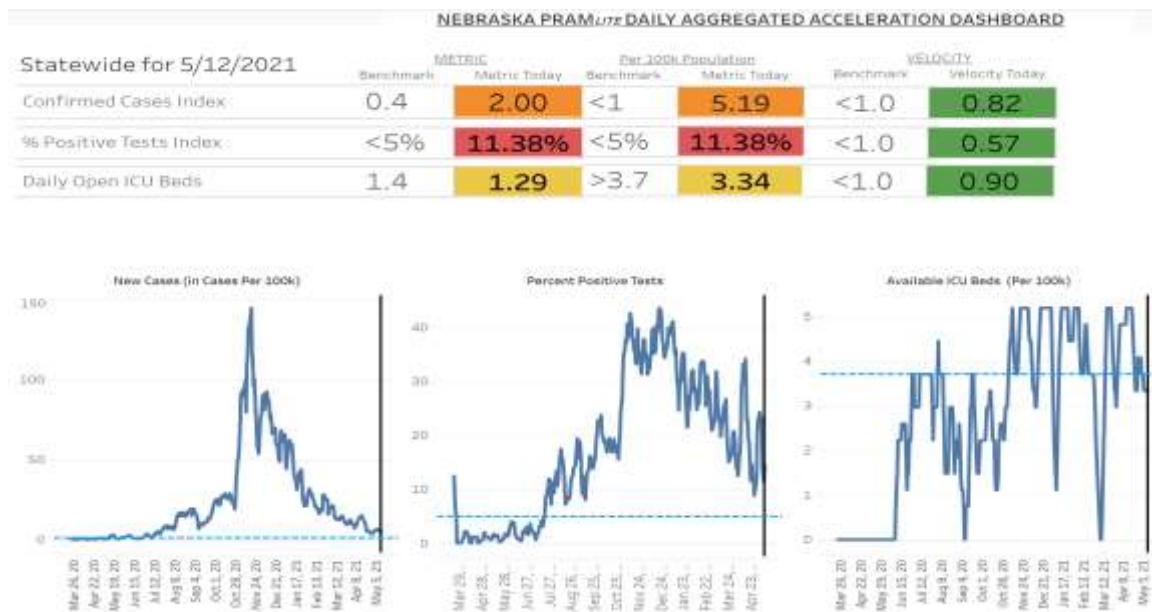
On June 17, 2015, Clementa C. Pinckney, Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lee Lance, DePayne Middleton-Doctor, Tywanza Sanders, Daniel Lee Simmons, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, and Myra Thompson were murdered by a self-professed white supremacist while they were gathered for Bible Study and prayer at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church (often referred to as Mother Emanuel) in Charleston, South Carolina. Pastors Pinckney and Simmons were both graduates of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. A resolution to commemorate June 17 as a day of repentance for the martyrdom of the Emanuel Nine was adopted by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on August 8, 2019. Congregations of the ELCA are encouraged to reaffirm their commitment to repenting of the sins of racism and white supremacy which continue to plague this church, to venerate the martyrdom of the Emanuel Nine, and to mark this day of penitence with study and prayer.

All,

We wanted to update you on our process for evaluating Grace Lutheran's COVID-19 guidelines. At this time, we are not lifting the requirement to wear masks while at church services, and we wanted to explain the reasoning behind that decision.

At each Council meeting since March 2020, the Council has evaluated this situation. We've sought guidance from a range of sources, primarily: The ELCA and Nebraska Synod, our liability insurer, the CDC, the State of Nebraska's directed health measures and recommendations, University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), and the recommendations of our local health department. We will continue to look at these sources as time moves on.

On May 13, 2021, the metrics from UNMC indicated that conditions in our health district were certainly moving in the right direction. However, depending on which metric you look at, we are still in either the yellow, orange, or red categories.



The CDC announced on May 13<sup>th</sup> (the same day as our May council meeting) that "fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing," except for certain situations including where required by law, a local business, or an employer. According to the CDC, people are generally considered to be fully vaccinated:

2 weeks after the second dose in a 2-dose series (e.g., Pfizer or Moderna vaccines), or

2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine (e.g., Johnson & Johnson vaccine)

If you don't meet these requirements, regardless of your age, you are NOT fully vaccinated.

So, the question at this point is when should we lift our mask requirement for church services? Right now, we don't know. We know that nearly EVERYONE (even the people who have been in support of the mask mandates) would like to not wear masks anymore. We would all like to see each other's smiling faces again unimpeded by a mask.

Based on the information that came out yesterday from the CDC, we need to seek information from our liability insurer, the ELCA, the Nebraska Synod, and the Southeast Nebraska District Health Department. For example, we are trying to learn information about the vaccination rate in our health district and, to the extent possible, Johnson County. We also want to ensure that our liability carrier agrees with a decision to lift the mask mandate for vaccinated individuals.

Finally, we want to ensure that everyone who wants to be vaccinated and/or has just recently been vaccinated has time for their shots to become fully effective prior to lifting the mandate for vaccinated individuals. We expect that the CDC's announcement may encourage some people who have been hesitant to get vaccinated to do so.

We will be back in touch after next month's council meeting with more information.

# ELCW Spring Gathering 2021

Sunday afternoon, June 27, at 3:00 o'clock in Dewitt will be our ELCW Spring Gathering being held in the summer time. Our guest speaker will be Prabhaker Shrestha, UNL's sustainability officer. His job is to "promote sustainability practices that are efficient, smart and fitting to our culture in Nebraska." In addition to learning we will be worshiping, studying and reuniting with other ladies of the Southeast Conference and renewing friendships and building new ones.

You can take part in this event by sending a registration form (found on the bulletin board in the basement) and \$18.00 to Gwen Edwards at 3402 Castile Drive Bellevue, NE 68123 by June 20<sup>th</sup>. Ladies from Grace will plan to car pool. Please discuss carpooling with Joyce Roesener.

This gathering always has an in kind offering. This year the in kind offering will be for Mother to Mother Ministry in Beatrice. Their needs include Diapers, (all sizes), pull ups, wipes, kids clothes size 0-8, baby items, cans of formula, baby food, gift cards to: restaurants, movies, haircuts, etc. and monetary donations. In addition we will collect for the Dewitt food pantry and their needs include paper products, toilet paper, paper towels, diapers, toothpaste, feminine hygiene products, peanut butter, cereal, pancake mix macaroni and cheese, and other nonperishable foods. We will also have an opportunity to help the University of Nebraska Lutheran center by bringing monetary donations for them to use as they get their new facility up and serving our young people. If you can't attend but would like to contribute to the Spring Gathering causes please leave items in the back of our church or see Joyce or Eleta with ear marked money donations.

An idea has been shared and will be discussed about eliminating a nominating committee and having volunteer churches offer to have Spring Gatherings and to have them involve close neighboring churches to plan and carry out the Gathering program. The idea is to cut down on travel time for planning committee members, to give smaller church women's groups more of a chance to participate, and to avoid the nominating committee job that no one seems to want.

An evening meal which is included in your registration fee is to be served about 7:00 and ladies will return home after they have shared food and fellowship. It has been a long while since we have had a fellowship opportunity with fellow Lutheran ladies so it is hoped that we can have a good representation attending from Grace Lutheran. Please pray for this event.

Eleta Eisenhauer, NSWO *Southeast Board Member*



Ladies of Grace,

Once again our ladies have served a funeral lunch. We are pleased to be able to offer this service to our member families. Covid has had an impact on that too. We did not offer our traditional lunch. The brownies and bars were made in quantity by a few. To those we say a big Thank You. We served fruit instead of salads, bottled water instead of glasses, and used individual disposable containers and plastic tableware. This caused us to incur some additional expense. If you were not contacted to do some quantity baking and would like to make a monetary donation to defray some cost you can do so by placing a donation in a regular envelope in the collection plate or by mailing it to the church attention Grace Lutheran Church Women. Thank You for considering this opportunity. We look forward to our more traditional ways returning.

June 2021

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>ALTAR COMMITTEE</b> - Julie Effken	1	2	3	4	5		
<b>WORSHIP DUTY</b> - 6/6 & 13—Julie Effken							
6/20 & 27—TBD							
<b>8:30 am Worship w/ Communion</b>	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>8:30 am Worship</b>	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<b>8:30 am Worship w/ Communion</b>	20	Bible Study 1:30 p.m.	Piecemakers Blanket Making	Church Council 7:00 p.m.			
<b>FATHER'S DAY</b>		21 Tower Echoes Deadline	22	23	24	25	26
		<<<<<<< Pastor at Confirmation Camp —June 20–25 >>>>>>>					
<b>8:30 am Worship</b>	27	28	29	30			
<b>ELCW Spring Gathering @ DeWitt 3:00 p.m.</b>							

**Church Seasons:** We have entered the Church Season of Sundays after Pentecost. This is the longest Church Season. It will continue until Advent begins. The texts are concerned with helping Christians to live out their faith and remain faithful to Christ until His return.

Church Festival Days:  
June 11 Barnabas, Apostle

U.S. Holidays: June 14 Flag Day

## Father's Day

The family of Evelyn Effken would like to thank you for the cards and phone calls mom received during her illness. Your kindness was very much appreciated by mom. Thank you also for the cards, food, flowers, and memorials since her passing. Your support has helped us during a difficult time. May God bless you all.

## JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

June 1st—Larry & Cheryl Grundman  
June 4th—Delbert & Darlene Peters  
June 11th—Matthew & Amber Beard  
June 20th—Carl & Sarah Purcell  
June 21st—Taylor & Sara Kuhl  
June 25th—Travis & Mikaela Thomas  
June 26th—Jay & Darmina Ullrich  
June 28th—Jesse & Rachelle Grof



Our sincere sympathies go out to the family of  
**Marianne (Poppe) Parde.**

Marianne passed away unexpectedly on May 10th. Her funeral was held on May 15th here at Grace Lutheran Church.

## JUNE BIRTHDAYS

3rd - Steve Bridgmon  
Tucker Drake  
6th - Kaiden Dorn  
7th - Kenna Thomas  
10th - Kelly Bridgmon  
Erica Medina  
13th - Kyle Wellensiek  
17th - Karsten Bruns  
18th - Trevor Brinkman  
19th - Ann (Moles) Keigher  
20th - Jack Moles  
Kurt Effken  
23rd - Tashayla Dorn  
25th - Travis Thomas  
26th - Angie Ekhoff  
Steven Carman  
27th - Mitchell Faris  
29th - Aaron Cropp  
Edgar Dorn

## Grace Lutheran Church Council

**13 May 2021**

Grace Lutheran Church Council met 13 May 2021. The meeting was called to order by Paul Wilken. Pastor Jim Helgren started the meeting with a prayer. Council members present were: Paul Wilken, Amber Beard, Bret Wellensiek, and Kate Dietz. Also in attendance were Pastor Jim Helgren and Diane Wilken, church secretary/treasurer. Absent Erin Ebeler Rolf and Mitchell Brinkman.

Bret Wellensiek made a motion to accept the minutes of the 16 March 2021 meeting. Kate Dietz seconded. Motion carried.

The financial report was reviewed. Kate Dietz made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Bret Wellensiek seconded. Motion carried.

### Pastor Helgren's Monthly Report:

As of 3 May 2021, Pastor was permitted to return to Ridgeview. Pastor will be able to see two people at Linden View for fifteen minutes each. Pastor is still able to visit congregation members at home. Pastor will be returning to Milwaukee. He will leave 17 May 2021. Pastor Hoffman will be leading the service at 0830 on 23 May 2021. Kate Woolf of Talmage will cover in case of emergencies. Confirmation (25 April 2021) and senior recognition (2 May 2021) both went well. The Synod Assembly will be held online 5 June 2021. Confirmation Camp 2021 will be June 20-25. Confirmation camp was discussed for 2022. A funeral will be held 15 May 2021. A decision was made that the congregation will be allowed to sing as long as masks stay on.

### Correspondence:

Electrical Repair Bill was received, Bret Wellensiek made a motion to pay the bill. Kate Dietz seconded. Motion passed.

### Committee Reports:

Property committee: Council – Bret Wellensiek:

Sidewalks – a contractor will begin in June  
Trees – three of the trees will be replaced

Worship, Evangelism, Music & Fellowship: Council – Erin Ebeler Rolf:

CCCLI License – will be under review

Parish Ed & Young People: Council – Amber Beard:

Vacation Bible School – no information has been received  
Cook Days Garage Sale for the Luther League – potentially will be planned

Stewardship & Memorial: Council – Kate Dietz:

The Grace Lutheran Pastor plaque was dropped off to be finished

Other Business:

Old Business:

Insurance

Open Doors Grant – the council will pursue the application for the grant so we may pay for a Carol Joy Holling Camp Counselor

New Business:

Weddings/Services/Communion

A mask is strongly encouraged. This will be reviewed at each monthly meeting.

Masks will still be required, but singing and use of the hymnal will be permitted starting  
23 May 2021

Duty Roster

Noisy Coin Offering Designation for May will go to Camp Carol Joy Holling

Next Meeting will be 17 June 2021 at 7PM

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

Respectfully submitted, Amber L. Beard



**Sidewalk update :** We have received \$9,000 toward a goal of \$12,750 to replace some of the sidewalks at church and at the parsonage. The contractor says it will be the first part of June when he can be here to do the work after we remove the old sidewalks. The council has also voted to put concrete on the east side of the church between the sidewalk/ parking lot and the church at a cost of \$1600. This is to try to keep water away from the east wall of the church basement. A few months ago when we had the big 3" – 4" rain there was water in the basement ALL along the east wall. (kitchen, Janitors room and both bathrooms)

# Summer is here!

This is the day the  
LORD has made;  
let us rejoice  
and be glad in it.

PSALM 118:24



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