



TOWER
ECHOES
2022

From the Pastor,

The Green Bay Packers lost their playoff game on January 23. You don't understand the gravity of the situation. They lost at home in freezing cold and snow. Perfect Green Bay football weather. There were hopes that this was the year they finally beat the 49er's in a playoff game and head to the Super Bowl and win it all. Hearts were broken and all was lost. Hope squashed. The 2022-2023 season will probably be a rebuilding year. Hope for a Super Bowl trophy are years away from now. All hopes dashed.

Wait! As Katy would say to Martin Luther on one of his super depressed days, "Why the long face, has God died?" No. God is not dead. Jesus is still reigning in Heaven with God the Father. The Holy Spirit is still present in my life and the life of the Church. My football team is just a pleasant diversion in my life. An opportunity to do an activity away from church and real-life problems. Is it more fun when my team wins? Absolutely it is. But the world didn't stop turning. The joys of life are still there. God is still alive and working in my life. Forgiveness is present for those times I make the Packers my idol and put all my joys and hopes in life on a championship season.

Life isn't over until next season. Life in football is over, but life in Christ remains. My life goes on as long as I allow Christ to live in me and I live for Christ.

The lights are out at Lambeau Field, but Christ's light shines in the world. Seek out the light of Christ.

Happy Epiphany Season!

Pastor Jim

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1st—Mikaela Thomas
3rd—Prestin Thomas
5th—Eliot Bohling
6th—Bill Cropp
13th—Rachelle Grof
16th—Louis Bentzinger
18th—Charla Eggleston
20th—Devon Roesener
23rd—David Armknecht
27th—Ethan Bohling
29th—Diane Roesener

SAVE LABELS AND CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Clip and collect labels from Best Choice, Clearly Best Choice, and Best Choice Superior Selections for your favorite non-profit organizations.

The Save-A-Label program helps non-profit organizations and schools easily raise needed money. These labels need to be sent in the Best Choice Company in groups of 1,000 UPC symbols. Some items to look for are: canned goods, dairy items, baking products, cereals, etc. These products are carried by independent local grocers. These nearby grocers have them in stock: Tecumseh Central Market, Russ's Market, Beatrice, Super Savers & Russ's Market in Lincoln.

I will mark a container for the labels and have it in the church kitchen. Thank you for your help.

Karen Cerny



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

14TH

Bill & Carolyn Cropp
Bruce & Carol Armknecht

26th

Les & Kris Gerking

Assisting Minister

March

6—Diane Ekhoff
13—Bret Wellensiek
20—Sarah Purcell
27—Kathy Helgren

Church Women United
World Day of Prayer
March 4th at Grace Lutheran
Church, Cook

PIECEMAKERS

The Piecemakers meet every Tuesday during the months of January, February and March - all day. And you are welcome to join them if and when you feel safe doing so. Please come and join in the fellowship of making some beautiful warm blankets for those in need.



Ash Wednesday
— Lent Begins

**Ash Wednesday is March 2nd.
Worship this year will be held at
Hope Lutheran Church.**

Church Seasons: We are in the Church Season of time After Epiphany. It is a time we seek out God's light as the Wise Men sought out God's anointed king of the universe by following the light of the Bethlehem Star.

Church Festival Days:

February 2—Presentation of Our Lord
February 18—Martin Luther, member of the church died, 1546
February 24—Mathias, Apostle
February 27—Transfiguration of Our Lord

U.S. Holidays

February 2—Groundhog Day
February 13—Super Bowl Sunday
February 14—Valentine's Day
February 21—President's Day

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February 2022



Grace Lutheran Church

Annual Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2022

The Grace Lutheran Church Annual Meeting was called to order by Council President Paul Wilken on Sunday, January 16, 2022, following the worship service. There were 30 members signed in at the meeting. Pastor Jim Helgren began the meeting with a prayer.

A motion was made by Diane Ekhoff and seconded by Robin Eggleston to approve the minutes as printed from the January 17, 2021 Annual Meeting. Motion carried.

The Pastor's Report was reviewed. Pastor discussed he is still learning how to use the Communion wafer dispenser that he is now using.

Council President Paul Wilken reviewed the reports and opened each one for discussion.

Discussion on committee reports was provided, as follows:

The Property Committee Report for 2021 was presented by Bret Wellensiek. It was noted by Paul Wilken that the replacement of sidewalks at the church & parsonage was rebid (due to current higher prices) to increase the original bid by approximately \$765.

The Women's Stewardship Report was created by the Secretary of Stewardship, Joyce Roesener. This year, 2021 a new record 654 quilts were created. A round of applause to all those who helped create those blankets for this worthwhile project.

Auditor's Report was completed by Jody Bruns and the books were found to be well organized and in good order.

The congregation was updated on the recent Cluster meeting held with Synod representative Megan Morrow. Combining local churches with closures and declining memberships was discussed. There will be another meeting on February 13 with Hope, Grace, Faith and St. Matthews for further discussion. The Council will talk about asking for volunteers to make a committee for this.

Council Members Paul Wilken, and Amber Beard completed their terms on the Church Council. Discussion ensued as to how many Church Council Members were needed for 2022. Julie Effken made a motion to maintain the council of five (5) members, with the understanding that there will be one (1) high school member in attendance. Kathy Helgren seconded. Motion carried.

Amber Beard consented to serve for another 2-year term. Nominations were opened for the other two-year term left available on the Church Council. Carl Purcell and Robin Eggleston were nominated from the floor but declined at this time. Council members will contact other congregational members who were suggested to see if they would be willing to serve. Youth Council Member will be Tucker Drake.

Coverage for Worship duty was discussed – members suggested in past years to help cover to keep the number of Council Members down to 5 from 9. It was suggested to call members and offer 1 or 2 weeks to cover worship duties.

Eleta Eisenhauer and Dean Wellensiek were nominated and accepted to attend the Nebraska Synod Assembly June 2-4. This will include a cluster meeting on February 5 to nominate candidates for a new Nebraska Bishop to be elected at the Synod Convention. Motion carried to accept them as delegates.

Richard and Joyce Roesener agreed to be financial secretaries again.

Lisa and Nick Weber, and Melissa Wellensiek volunteered to continue serving through their leadership of the Sunday School Program, as they do an exceptional job in that role.

Council President Paul Wilken opened the discussion about the letter received from Bishop Maas on the upcoming celebration of the Nebraska Synod 150th Anniversary. The Synod is inviting all churches to help raise \$150,000 to use for 3 Ministries supported by the Nebraska Synod - Mission Field Nebraska, Nebraska Leadership & training and Congregational Resources. It was suggested to either collect designated offerings from the congregation or to give a specific amount from the Grace Lutheran general fund. Dean Wellensiek made a motion to send \$500 from the general fund. Sarah Purcell seconded. Motion carried.

Members of the Grace Luther League will be attending the ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis, MN, July 24-28, and will be collecting donations today at the Soup Luncheon.

It was decided to create a committee to start planning for the 75th Anniversary in 2024. If anyone is interested, please contact a council member.

The 2022 Proposed Budget was reviewed and opened for discussion. Diane Ekhoff motioned to accept the 2022 budget as presented. Richard Roesener seconded. Motion carried.

The 2022 Church Council will have a quick reorganizational meeting being held promptly following the annual meeting.

The meeting concluded with the Lord's Prayer. Members were again invited to join in the basement for the Luther League Soup Luncheon. The meeting was then adjourned, and the reorganizational meeting commenced.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Wilken, Recording Secretary

Grace Lutheran Church Council

January 18, 2022

Grace Lutheran Church Council met January 18, 2022. The meeting was called to order by Diane Wilken. Pastor Jim Helgren started the meeting with a prayer. Council members present were Amber Beard, Bret Wellensiek, Kate Dietz, Erin Ebeler Rolf, and Mike Weber. Also in attendance were Pastor Jim Helgren and Diane Wilken-church secretary/treasurer. Absent was Tucker Drake.

Election of Officers:

Bret Wellensiek nominated Amber Beard for President. All were in favor of this/no objections.

Kate Dietz nominated Bret Wellensiek for Vice President. All were in favor of this/no objections.

Bret Wellensiek nominated Kate Dietz for Secretary. All were in favor of this/no objections.

Bret Wellensiek made a motion to accept the minutes of the 12/14/21 meeting. Erin Ebeler Rolf seconded. Motion carried.

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

Pastor Helgren's Monthly Report:

Filled in at Linden View twice

Is scheduled at Good Samaritan Society on 1/27.

Transferred Charlene Helgren into church membership to Grace Lutheran on 1/9.

Provided a list of congregational visits for the last month.

The community pastors will not be doing a round robin for Lenten services due to COVID-19.

He shared updates on other local churches.

Correspondence: Organ Service Contract was ended with Darrow.

Committee appointments were as follows:

Property – Mike Weber

Worship, Evangelism, Music, and Fellowship – Erin Ebeler Rolf

Parish Education & Young People – Bret Wellensiek

Stewardship & Memorial – Kate Dietz

Property Committee: Council – Bret Wellensiek provided information for Mike Weber

Trees will be replaced in the spring.

Sidewalk project – the bid increased about \$700 and is re-scheduled for April.

Parsonage Window – waiting for the replacement to be installed

Snow Removal – Bret and Hayden Wellensiek scooped the sidewalks and are willing to keep doing this.

Warthog did the parking lot at the beginning of the month.

Worship, Evangelism, Music, and Fellowship – Erin Ebeler Rolf

There was discussion on the possibility of wearing masks again in church as COVID-19 numbers are on the rise. At this time, masks are not required, instead each member gets to make the decision on if they wear a mask or not. Masks will be available for those who wish to wear them.

Parish Education & Young People – Amber Beard provided an update for Bret Wellensiek

There are five youth and one sponsor planning on attending the ELCA Youth Gathering this summer in Minneapolis. Amber Beard plans to register everyone for the event. She also discussed the potential budget for the trip.

Stewardship & Memorial – Kate Dietz

Members of the church suggested that new battery-operated candles be bought for the windows for next year's Christmas season. Will be looking into prices for this.

Old Business

Meeting at Faith regarding area churches is set for February 13, 2022, but a time has not been sent. Discussed making a committee for these meetings. At this time Bret Wellensiek, Erin Ebeler Rolf, Kate Dietz, and Paul Wilken will be attending this meeting.

New Business

Services/Communion –

There was discussion regarding the worship duty roster and ways to get more members involved.

At this time, it is covered until the next Council meeting.

Cranberry Hymnal – Organists will pick songs out of the Cranberry Hymnal and will make a copy for the bulletin.

Noisy Coin Offering Designation – January-April will be designated to the Oaks Indian Mission.

75th Anniversary Committee – Dean Wellensiek, Sarah Purcell, and Melissa Wellensiek.

Next meeting will be February 15, 2022, at 7pm.

Meeting was adjourned by Amber Beard and the meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Kate Dietz



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