

TOWER ECHOES 2023



From the Pastor,

Early Monday evening, March 20th I was looking out the living room picture window and I saw a potbelly pig walking in my neighbors yard. Now, this is something one does not see everyday in Cook, a pig walking down the street in Cook. I told Kathy to call and report it to the Sheriff's department and I will follow the pig in order to report where it is located and keep my neighbor safe.

One neighbor was surprised when I warned him a pig was coming his and his son's way. The pig stopped in his yard and he took a picture of it and posted it on Facebook hoping to locate the owner.

The pig crossed the street and walked into the back yard on the north side of Dewey Street and headed back towards my house. More people started in following the pig. We managed to pen the pig between my neighbor to my west fenced in yard and their rear garage. There was a person on each end of the pig's escape routes so he just went under the fence and was now in a fenced yard so we just waited for the owner to show up. My neighbor has video of this part of the event.

The Sheriff deputy told my wife that a woman had reported a missing pig and he called her and she eventually arrived and then the real fun started. Potbelly pigs are really fast and can run underneath the legs of people trying to keep it cornered. Once we were able to grab it I learned what the phrase "squealed like a pig" means. They then pushed the pig into it's kennel and put it in the owners vehicle.

Turns out his name is Porky and he lives four miles north of Cook. He had been in town for several hours including a visit to Gayleen's yard. She has a picture of Porky.

Even when Porky had the chance to be freed from the yard and go home he resisted those trying to lead him home where he could truly be free. We resist people and opportunities to be freed from our sins. People refuse to go to church to confess their sins and worship God. People deny the existence of God so they can pretend they are not even sinners. People avoid recovery so they do not need to give up their addiction of try a new healthier way of life.

Jesus died for Porky the potbelly pig people who can not find their way home to God on their own. The Porky the potbelly pig people who would rather run around in their lives fenced in by sin than allow it to be removed by repenting and allowing the blood of Christ to wash away their sin. Lent is the season to adjust our sin and Easter is the season to be lifted out of the fence of our sinful yard.

Christ is Risen! He Is Risen Indeed!

Pastor Jim

Church Seasons: The Church Season of Lent ends at Midnight April 8. The season of Sundays after Easter begin April 9 with the Resurrection of Our Lord. This is a season of Joy. The joy of knowing there is more to life than death. Through Jesus life, death, and resurrection. He conquers sin, death and the power of the Devil over us.

Festival Days: April 2 Palm Sunday
April 3, 4, 5 Days in Holy Week
April 6 Holy (Maundy) Thursday
April 7 Good Friday
April 8 Holy Saturday
April 9 The Resurrection of Our Lord
April 25 Mark, Evangelist

US Holidays: April 1 April Fool's Day
April 9 Easter
April 15 Tax Day
April 22 Earth Day
Jewish Holidays April 5 Passover Begins
April 13 Passover Ends

HOLY WEEK

April 2 - Palm Sunday - Worship at Grace Lutheran Church - 8:30 a.m.
Worship at Hope Lutheran Church - 10:00 a.m.

April 6, Holy (Maundy) Thursday Worship with communion at
Hope Lutheran Church - 7:00 p.m.

April 7, Good Friday Worship at Grace Lutheran Church - 7:00 p.m.

Resurrection of Our Lord - April 9

Easter Sunday Worship at Grace Lutheran Church - 8:30 a.m.
(No sunrise service or breakfast at Grace this year)

Easter Sunday Worship at Hope Lutheran Church - 10:00 a.m.

HAPPY SPRING LADIES:

It was voted that the church women hire Kris Gerking to do the Annual Spring Cleaning of the church. We are asking for monetary donations to help pay for the cleaning.

Please send your donations to Penny Weber, 62357 738 Rd, Cook, NE 68329 and indicate donation for cleaning.

Thank you for your support of the Grace Lutheran Church Women.

Carolyn Cropp—President of Grace Women's Group

BASKETS OF PROMISE

The Women of Grace are again sponsoring the "Baskets of Promise" project for Lutheran World Relief. This has been a successful project and we thank everyone who participated in the past and again this year.

For 5 weeks we will be collecting a different item that will be used to assemble the items for the Personal Care Kits. We will end the collection on Mother's Day as we honor these mothers by helping them ensure health for themselves and their families by being able to use these kits that we provide for them.

April 16 - Bars of Soap (4-5 oz.) Any brand in the original wrapping.

April 23 - Bath Towels (lightweight, maximum size 52" x 27", dark colors are recommended).

April 30 - Toothbrushes (adult size, in original packaging)

May 7 - Nail Clippers (Metal, attached file optional).

*May 14 - **Mother's Day** - this will be the last Sunday of the gathering, so you can bring any of these items.*

The above collection dates are suggestions. Items can be brought at anytime.

April Birthdays

5th – Ryan Panko

7th – Gayleen Eden

8th – Janet Dieckgrafe

9th - Lisa Cropp

13th – Robin Eggleston

15th – Mitchell Brinkman

17th – Tom Brinkman

19th – Robyn Faris

21st – Michael Carman

24th – Lori Panko

28th – Owen Weber

29th - Amber Beard

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

14th - Joe & Ellen Brinkman

29th - Dave & Diane Smith

Assisting Minister

April

2— Carl Purcell

9—Bret Wellensiek

16—Diane Ekhoﬀ

23—Erin Ebeler

30—Eleta Eisenhower

Easter Lilies

If you would like to bring an **EASTER LILY** to share with the church, you can bring them at any time. If the Easter Lily is in memory or honor of someone, please add that information to the sheet at the back of the church. Be sure to label your Easter Lily with your name for when you come to pick it up, there are labels on the counter in the SE office.



Noisy Coin Offering will
be collected the last
Sunday of the month.
So save your change and
make some NOISE!

Confirmation

The Rite of Confirmation is April 30th during the Worship Service. The following young man has completed his three year confirmation program and is ready to affirm the faith to which he was baptized:

PRESTIN THOMAS

APRIL 2023

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

							1 
2 PALM SUNDAY 8:30 am Worship w/ Communion 9:30 am Sunday School	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9 EASTER SUNDAY 8:30 am Worship w/ Communion No Sunday School	10 Bible Study 1:30 pm 	11	12 Kids for Christ 8th Grade Confirmation 4 pm	13	14	15	
16 8:30 am Worship 9:30 am Sunday School	17 Resurrection SUNDAY 8:30 am Worship w/ Communion 9:30 am Sunday School	18 Piecemakers Blanket Making Church Council 7:00 p.m.	19 8th Grade Confirmation 4 pm	20	21 TOWER ECHOES DEADLINE	22	
23 8:30 am Worship 9:30 am Sunday School	24	25	26 Kids for Christ 8th Grade Confirmation 4 pm	27	28	29	
30 8:30 am Worship 9:30 am Sunday School							



Grace Lutheran Church Council

February 7, 2023

Grace Lutheran Church Council met on February 7, 2023. The meeting was called to order by President Bret Wellensiek. Pastor Jim Helgren started the meeting with a prayer. Council members present were Erin Ebeler, Mike Weber, and Sarah Purcell. Councilperson Cheryl Grundman was absent. Also in attendance was Pastor Jim Helgren, church member Paul Wilken, and Diane Wilken – Church Secretary/Treasurer.

Previous Month's Minutes and Treasurer's Report

Bret Wellensiek made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 9, 2023, meeting. Mike Weber seconded. Motion carried.

The financial report was reviewed. Sarah Purcell moved to accept the treasurer's report. Mike Weber seconded. Motion carried.

Election of 2023 Council Officers and Committee Assignments

Officers of the Council for the 2023 year were decided upon.

President: Bret Wellensiek

Vice-President: Mike Weber

Secretary: Erin Ebeler

Worship and Fellowship: Sarah Purcell

Property: Mike Weber

Youth: Erin Ebeler

Stewardship/Memorial: Cheryl Grundman

Pastor's Monthly Report

Pastor gave his monthly report. Among items shared included information on status of students to be confirmed, monthly visits, and updates on members of Grace facing health challenges. Pastor thanked all of those who had provided support for he and Kathy following her surgery. Addison Clara Dietz will be baptized on February 19, 2023. Lenten Services will begin with Ash Wednesday service being held at Grace on Feb. 22, 2023. Mid-week services will alternate locations from there between Grace and Hope Lutheran. Local pastors will rotate among the churches in the area for Wednesday evening services during Lent.

Committee Reports:

Property: Paul Wilken provided an update on needed repairs to the stained-glass windows within the church. Repair is needed to 20 windows (some are bowed, some cracked, and some have missing glass). Paul received a repair bid from the same vendor that assisted St. Paul Osage Church in the amount of \$8,200. Paul has also contacted a vendor in Omaha, but not heard back from them yet. To put storm windows on all windows for protection from the outside would be an additional \$23,900. There is a great deal of air intruding through the windows in their current condition.

Mike Weber reported that the plumbing issues at the church and parsonage seem to be repaired. Bob Eichenberger will be painting the doors on the church this spring. Pastor reported that the backyard of the parsonage needs some attention as it has been torn up by various construction work over the last year.

Worship and Fellowship: Worship roster reviewed, and it is currently filled through March. Additional assistance from church members is needed.

Youth: Lisa and Nick Weber have been talking to teens and their parents to encourage their involvement in youth group. Pastor reviewed information on the national youth conference to be held in July 2024. The second half of Sunday School materials have been received.

Vision for Ministry in 2023

Pastor reviewed his goals and vision for ministry during 2023. His focus areas included the following:

- Continuing to teach 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Confirmation classes (regular meetings plus special meetings for certain youth as needed)
- Work to improve the VBS program.
- Continue leading worship and preaching.
- Encourage confirmation youth to attend church camp.
- Perform mid-week/special services as needed.
- Being prepared for major church events in advance
- Attending Synod events
- Hosting a new member class
- Encouraging outreach and friendliness to new people who visit the church.

Council members suggested that additional areas of focus should include visiting those who were sick, at home, or in the hospital or nursing home on a more regular basis. Additionally, the Council believed that additional outreach to dormant members should be performed.

Other Items of Discussion

- Lenten offerings as well as the Noisy Coin offerings in February / March 2023 will go to Oaks Indian Center
- The 75th Anniversary Committee has met.
 - ◇ Their current members are Andrea Eggleston, Dean Wellensiek, Melissa Wellensiek, Pastor Helgren, Sarah Purcell, and Lori Panko.
 - ◇ Current Plans for June 24, 2024, includes:
 - * Pastries / Coffee before church
 - * The Bishop will preach
 - * John Weber will play the organ.
 - * Save the Dates will be sent.
 - * Video presentation of memories will be prepared.
 - * Tickets for meals will be sold.
 - ◇ Sarah Purcell noted that seed money may be needed for things such as postage.
 - ◇ The committee plans to meet again on April 26, 2022
- A picture directory is being considered.
- The Council remains open to discussions between the congregations of Hope, Grace, and Faith re: future cooperation. Erin Ebeler noted that she identified papers in her father's office from his time on the church council in 2006 that related to similar discussions that were held at that time. She will follow-up with individuals identified in those papers about what happened to the discussions at that time.
- Confirmation will be held on April 30, 2023
- Spring Cleaning of beams, windows, fans, and related items assigned to Council will occur at the end of March / beginning of April at a time to be coordinated with others involved in spring cleaning. All help is welcome!

- Confirmation Camp will occur June 18-23, 2023.

Next Council Meeting will be held on March 7, 2023, at 7 pm

Meeting was adjourned by Bret Wellensiek, and the meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Erin Ebeler



Grace Lutheran Church Council

March 7, 2023

Grace Lutheran Church Council met on March 7, 2023. The meeting was called to order by President Bret Wellensiek. Pastor Jim Helgren started the meeting with a prayer. Council members present were Erin Ebeler, Mike Weber, Sarah Purcell, and Cheryl Grundman. Also in attendance was Pastor Jim Helgren, church member Paul Wilken, and Diane Wilken – Church Secretary/Treasurer.

Previous Month's Minutes and Treasurer's Report

Cheryl Grundman made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 7, 2023, meeting. Mike Weber seconded. Motion carried.

The financial report was reviewed. Mike Weber moved to accept the treasurer's report. Cheryl Grundman seconded. Motion carried.

Pastor's Monthly Report

Pastor gave his monthly report. Among items shared included the following:

- Past Events:
 - ◇ Feb. 21 – Larry Naber's funeral was presided over by Pastor Helgren in Tecumseh at Wherry Mortuary
 - ◇ March 3 – World Day of Prayer was hosted at Grace. 21 members of community attended. We are grateful to the JCC 4th Grade Class for coming to sign the Taiwanese song they had been practicing.
- Future Events:
 - ◇ Will be doing an Addiction Survival Kit for Clergy (8 hour workshop)
 - ◇ March 28 – Synod is holding a service for pastors and PMAs; will be done as a part of the cluster.
 - ◇ Pastor is ordered to appear for jury duty at the federal courthouse in Lincoln in Mid-March
- Pastor shared information on people he had visited and outreach he has made to individuals.
- Pastor reviewed status of potential confirmands.
- Re: visiting inactive members, Pastor requested a list of names to begin contacting and some clarity on our goals in reaching out (e.g., simple contact, request to come to church, etc.)

Correspondence

Bret Wellensiek reviewed contract for organ servicing from Harris Organ Services. Sarah Effken had spoken to Chris at Harris Organ; organ was tuned at the end of November. They agreed to move the next tuning from before Easter to the summer time. Other non-actionable correspondence was also reviewed.

Committee Reports:

Property: Paul Wilken reviewed the bid received from Architectural Glassarts (Lincoln; did Osage church). Additional inspection was done of the windows, only 11 windows have vents that are damaged, and the cost of repairing those vents was \$4,960.

Paul sent pictures to Rainbow Art Glass (Omaha) to receive an additional bid. They bid between \$8,150 and \$9,025 to repair the 11 windows.

Brown Glass in Nebraska City had an alternative method of protection that did not involve the installation of new storm windows. Their method would include removing screens and sealing the windows with glass and caulk. The glass would act as protection on the outside. The cost of doing that to 17 windows was approximately \$1,800. The cost may be reduced if some of the current glass is able to be re-used. Architectural Glassarts agreed that this was a potential protection option that could work. Paul will ask Architectural Glassarts to price that as an option.

Council went upstairs to inspect windows. During that inspection, Pastor Helgren identified condensation that had come through onto one of the pews at the front of the church.

Thanks are given to Brian Mannschreck for oiling the bell prior to Easter. Councilmembers are grateful Brian is not scared of heights and donated his time to do this!

Regarding Pastor's backyard, there's a drain that needs to be buried and grass planted. Paul will coordinate the performance of the work with Dave Smith.

Special thanks are extended to Paul Wilken for his continued efforts in managing these projects.

Worship and Fellowship: Worship roster was reviewed, and it is currently filled through March. Additional assistance from church members is needed for April as soon as possible.

Sarah Effken reviewed a new flyer for use in distributing information about upcoming Easter week services, as well as questions to consider asking current and dormant members about their engagement in church activities.

Youth: Kids for Christ continues to have a great turnout of kids. Thanks to Eleta Eisenhower and all the volunteers who make that event happen.

Lisa and Nick Weber will be meeting with teens and their parents after church service tomorrow. Luther League will also be hosting cookies following the March 8th Lenten service. They are planning to do bowling in mid-March; date to be discussed during March 8th meeting. The confirmation students were invited as well to start building engagement sooner.

Other Items of Discussion

- The Council remains open to discussions between the congregations of Hope, Grace, and Faith regarding future cooperation.
- The status of Easter Sunrise service was discussed. Decisions will be made following the youth meeting on March 8, 2023.
- 75th Anniversary Committee
 - ◇ The group is working on the mailing list. If you have names/addresses to add, please review the list that will be at church and give updates to Sarah Purcell.
 - ◇ Sarah Purcell reviewed the confirmation pictures. Sarah Purcell, Paul Wilken, as well as Lisa and Nick Weber worked on identifying names and adding missing confirmation class pictures. Diane Wilken will assist Sarah on updating names.
- Confirmation will be held on April 30, 2023
- Spring Cleaning of beams, windows, fans, and related items assigned to Council will occur at 1 pm on March 26, 2023. All help is welcome!

- Confirmation Camp will occur June 18-23, 2023. Pastor Helgren will not be able to attend; Pastor Kate (Faith Lutheran) will be in attendance and help with our kids. Thanks Pastor Kate!
- Pastor Helgren is working to find coverage while he is on vacation this summer.
- Pastor Helgren talked with Pastor Ken West at St. Paul Osage about having VBS at Grace during Summer 2023. Pastor Ken West will discuss the issue with St. Paul Osage's council. Pastor Helgren will report back.
- Easter Worship offering will go to Vacation Bible School; or, if not needed, the donations will go toward the window repair.
- Pastor Helgren will talk to potential church members about chairing the picture directory project.
- Black curtains for Good Friday Service will be hung after Palm Sunday Service.

Next Council Meeting will be held on April 18, 2023 at 7 pm.

Meeting was adjourned by Bret Wellensiek, and the meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Ebeler



ELCW Meeting

March 18, 2023

A short meeting was held after church on March 18th.

Church Cleaning: A motion was made to let Kris Gerking do the major spring cleaning with the ladies making a monetary donation to help with the cost. The motion was seconded. After discussion it was voted to have Kris do the Spring Cleaning.

Food Stand on Sunday of Cook Days: Alta Bohling made a motion that we have a food stand for Cook Days. With some discussion motion failed for lack of second.

Meeting was adjourned.

Carolyn Cropp, WELCA President



Grace Lutheran Church

306 N. First St.
P.O. Box 96
Cook, NE 68329

Address
Correction
Requested



Church Office: 402-864-4201
Pastor Jim Helgren: 402-864-2113

Church Email: grace68329@gmail.com