



Tower Echoes 2023

From the Pastor,

Prior to being ordained most of my adult service to neighbor was through working with my church.

I participated working with the Pilger food pantry which was sponsored by the local churches. I was the treasurer and main decision maker with the three churches food pantry and later the Saline Elder Care Community food pantry.

On my first Sunday in my second call I was told I was having lunch with the Wilber Rotary club and Heine would pick me up at my office at 11:45 a.m. Tuesday. After the meeting I was handed initiation papers and told to sign them since I was now a Rotarian. That was the beginning of my service with neighbors apart from being a Pastor.

When I moved to Cook I planned on maybe joining Cook Lions Club. I was asked and I attended a meeting and joined. This began my next step in serve with neighbors in my current call.

The September theme - Go And ... Serve with Neighbors. Notice it is not service to neighbor, but Serve with Neighbors. We can help others through our church, but sometimes the church can get more done to help others if it works along side with others who are not members of the church. When we become aware of a need we need to find the best solution to meeting the need. Sometimes the best solution is working with others who are not members of our church. I was able to service God through Rotary and Lions without being a pastor but merely a Christian concerned about serving my neighbor. Sometimes it's nice helping others without the pressure of being in charge. I know how ironic that sounds considering the fact that I am the President of Cook Lions Club.

Have fun in September serving God with church members and with neighbors.

Pastor Jim

Church Season: We will experience three more months of Time After Pentecost. The scriptures continue to challenge us to consciously live as children of God.

Church Festival Days: September 14: Holy Cross Day
September 21: St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist
September 29: St. Michael & All Angels

US Holidays: September 4: Labor Day
September 10: Grandparents Day
September 11: Patriots Day
September 23: Fall Begins

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2nd - Richard Roesener
6th - Nick Weber
9th - Cory Panko
11th - Lindsay Badertscher
Jaxson Thompson
Dean (Little) Wellensiek
12th - Amy Cropp-Perkins
17th - Robert Schmidt
24th - Kate Dietz
26th - Beth Panko
27th - Baker Schippert
29th - Dave Smith

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Sept 17th
Paul & Diane Wilken
Terry & Beth Panko
Sept 21st
Thomas & Ann Keigher
Sept 30th
Gene & Diane Ekhoff

A sign up sheet is available at the back of the church if you would like to provide Snacks for Coffee Fellowship time following worship.

Thanks to everyone for their kindness while I was in Lincoln and since! Also the prayers for William Yank. His report could not have been better!
Judy Brinkman

Sunday School

Sunday School will resume on September 10th following the Sunday Worship Service at approximately 9:30 a.m. Please help us share the wonderful story of Jesus with your children.

September

ALTAR COMMITTEE

Lori Brinkman

ASSISTING MINISTER

Sept 3 - Lori Panko
Sept 10 - Jack Moles
Sept 17 - Diane Ekhoff
Sept 24 - Kathy Helgren

Looking ahead:

October 1st—Crop Walk is scheduled
October 8—**Mission Festival** is at Grace Lutheran
Joint Worship will be @ 10:00 a.m.
Breakfast will be served starting at 9:00 a.m. Grace will be responsible for providing breakfast casseroles, juice, and coffee. Hope will be requested to provide rolls and side items. **People's City Mission from Lincoln** will be the main speaker for that day.

Grace Lutheran Church Women's Meeting Minutes

July 26, 2023

The Grace Lutheran Church Women's Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, July 26, 2023 by President Carolyn Cropp. Members present where: Carolyn Cropp, Joyce Roesener, Jody Bruns, Julie Effken, Penny Weber, Eleta Eisenhauer, Karen Cerny, Kathy Helgren and Pastor Jim Helgren.

President Cropp opened the meeting with a devotion from Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again. Rejoice".

Secretary report was given by Kathy Helgren and minutes read from the March 19, 2023 meeting. Motion was made by Julie Effken to accept the meeting minutes as read and second by Karen Cerny.

Treasurer report was given by Penny Weber. Motion was made by Jody Bruns to accept the Treasurer report and second by Joyce Roesener.

No bills were presented for payment.

Old Business:

- World Day of Prayer was successful with a gathering of 30 ladies. A collection of \$103.00 was given to Global Ministries.
- Spring Gathering for the Southeast NE Conference was attended by Eleta Eisenhauer, Karen Cerny and Joyce Roesener. A total of 90 women attended the conference. Eleta Eisenhauer was kind enough to serve two 2 year terms as the Southeast Nebraska State Board Representative. Her 4 years is now completed.
- Church spring cleaning was completed by Kris Gerking with women of the church giving monetary donations for payment.

New Business:

- Save to Serve will be August 4 thru 6 at Mosaic Bethpage Village at Axtell. In-kind offerings of greetings cards, fun socks for women, men, children, scented lotion, bath towels, and adult sized T-shirts are requested.
- Women of the ELCA Gathering will be held in Phoenix, AZ, September 21 thru 24. The theme is "Just Love". Nominations are needed to elect a new Southeast Nebraska State Board Representative. These nominations are to be submitted by August 15th. The Early Bird registration for the conference is due on September 1st. There are numerous items listed for in-kind offerings. The Women's Group has voted upon sending \$250.00 worth of diapers and wipes. The motion was made by Jody Bruns and second by Kathy Helgren.
- Women's Fall Convention will be held October 6 thru 8 at Carol Joy Holling Camp. The theme this year is "Be Still". The voting delegate's expenses will be paid for by the Women's Group. The in-kind offering requested is feminine hygiene products.
- Grace Lutheran Church Women's Group are seeking officer nominations and are due to Carolyn Cropp by August 31, 2023.
- Trunk or Treat was discussed and will be held on Tuesday, October 31, 2023 in the church parking lot. A Thrivent card will be applied for and used for the purchase of hot dogs, buns, chips, water and other items.
- Cream Chicken Dinner was discussed with a motion made by Penny Weber and second by Karen Cerny to hold the dinner on Sunday, November 12, 2023. Along with the cream chicken, salads and desserts will be served. Sign-up sheets will be available for desserts, workers, etc. and then calls will be made to fill in open areas.
- Thank you cards where received from Alta Bohling for Bill's funeral, Global Ministries for the \$103.00 donation from World Day of Prayer and Aiden Weber for his graduation quilt.

Dates to Remember:

- Mission Festival is on Sunday, October 8, 2023 at Grace Lutheran Church
- Women's Yearbook Planning Mtg is on Thursday, November 2, 2023 at 7:00 pm.
- Thankoffering Sunday, November 19, 2023
- Community Family Christmas, December, 2023, date to be determined.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm and Pastor Helgren led us in the Our Father.

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Helgren, Secretary

GO AND ...

Serve with Neighbors. We are being sent to work with others who may not belong to my church or family. The call to see a need and address it with the help of others. I did this when I helped neighbors corner and capture Porky the runaway pig. This serving may be delivering meals on wheels or helping to clean up someone's yard or storage shed as the VBS students did on Monday of VBS week. Continue to pray, listen, and share your story. Serve with neighbors will give you opportunities to listen to others and also to share your faith story.

GO AND....

SERVE WITH NEIGHBORS

As Mr. Rogers asked us – “Who is your neighbor?” Love grounds us as we engage with our neighbors living next door, the people in surrounding communities, and those living beyond our own horizons. Accompaniment calls us to use our God-given gifts and talents as we collaborate, learn from each other, and together walk in agape love.

Questions to Consider:

- Who is your neighbor? How do you know?
- What did you discover in walking with your neighbor?
- As you GO with your neighbors, how do you describe your vocation?

Prayer: God of Accompaniment, you meet us where we are at. Help us meet our neighbors wherever they might be and walk with them. Amen.

Suggested Songs: Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love (ELW 708) & God's Work, Our Hands (ACS 1000)

Learn More at www.nebraskasynod.org

September is Serve with Neighbors Month!

Here is your challenge: Lets create quilt blocks and assemble a quilt so that we can be reminded of how beautiful a thing working together and serving with our neighbor can be.

The criteria for the block should be that it be made out of any fabrics which feature grey and/or reds. Your finished block should ideally measure 10 and 1/2 inches. (The half inch allows for the blocks to be sewn together.) You should also place your name and or initials in the right hand bottom corner of the block up at least a quarter of an inch so they don't get lost in the connecting seam line.

Let's strive to have the blocks completed and returned to church by October 15. If fabric is an issue for you there will be some pieces that can be used or pieces to supplement what you already have in the church basement. Feel free to take what you need. If this project interests you it will be just fine if you make more than one block. If you have questions contact Joyce Roesener, Karen Cerny or Eleta Eisenhauer. Our goal will be to get forty eight blocks to make a serviceable size quilt. Alta Bohling is prepared to quilt it for us. Let's see what we can do. Plain and simple will be just fine. We need your block!

ELCA YOUTH GATHERING 2024

I have been informed that reservations for the Youth Gathering will open in September. Luther Memorial in Syracuse will be registering as soon as possible and if we plan on traveling with them we must plan on registering soon as well. So far I have a definite no and a maybe. Students who are presenting in 8th Grade through seniors in High School are eligible to attend. The 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering is July 16-20, 2024, in New Orleans. Pastor needs to receive maybe or yes by September 6, 2023. Those who may want to attend but are not definite yes, may register and later back out and we can still get a refund. Again, if you are considering attending contact Pastor right after you read this article! Registration begins September 15th.

IDEA

IDEA is an initiative of the Nebraska Synod in partnership with NLOM & MeLCM. ***IDEA*** stands for invite, discern, excite & act. People who notice gifts and talents, are not afraid to ask others to get involved, and are good at finding the right place for each person to be involved are invited to attend a gathering of like-minded people on October 1, 2023 from 3-5 p.m. at Carol Joy Holling Camp, Ashland. Contact Pastor for more information. Registration deadline is September 15, 2023.

KIDS FOR CHRIST 2023/2024

Welcome, welcome, welcome! All school age kids are invited to join us on the second and fourth Wednesday of each school calendar month for “Kids for Christ”. If there is no school at JCC that Wednesday there is no Kids for Christ.

Kids for Christ is an interdenominational after school program hosted by Grace Lutheran and also supported by the ladies at Osage. Kids share a snack, a devotion, a picture book story, usually a craft, some singing, prayer and an evening meal. This program has its goal to teach children that God loves them. Adults who have agreed to make this program work this year are Pastor Jim Helgren, Kris Ebeler, Erin Ebeler, Sarah Purcell and Eleta Eisenhauer. Rita Ruenholl and Julie Effken are great subs. The children come right after school and are ready to be picked up about 5:30 to 5:45. Students who are confirmation age and older work in the kitchen with Carl Purcell and Andrea Eggleston learning to cook, prepare and serve the shared meal. All are welcome. If we have more adults who wish to share time or talents they are welcome to come too. Your coming can be a onetime event, it does not have to be a commitment.

This year we are going to attempt to add some intergenerational experience to Kids for Christ. We are inviting senior citizens of our community to come share the evening meal with the kids. As we start this new venture we will not be charging for the meal. Any senior who wants to eat supper will be welcome. We do ask that seniors contact the church by noon on Monday before our Wednesday meeting so that groceries can be purchased to accommodate the group. The church phone, possible voice mail, is 402 864 4201. You are also invited to text pastor at 402-826-0613. Seniors should be at the church after 5 but by 5:15. We hope that this will be a win win. Seniors can enjoy a meal with fellowship and young people will eventually have the benefit of caring grandparent type people in their lives. Delivery of some meals could be arranged.

Please share information about this program with any area child or senior that you think might be interested.

Eleta Eisenhauer

Thank you, Thank you, Thank You for your contributions to the in kind offering Joyce Roesener and I were able to take along to Mosaic in Axtell. The second Saved to Serve opportunity for 2023 was held there. This was the 25th anniversary of this arm of the ELCW. We were happy to be part of a carnival entertainment for their residents on Saturday afternoon. We also did some cleaning in their laundry area and some weeded flower beds. We assembled and left behind over 100 appreciation bags for staff members. Our in Kind offering totals were amazing. We brought 110 Beanie Babies, 44 stuffed bears, 98 miscellaneous stuffed animals, 18 pairs of slippers, 70 containers of scented lotion, 90 new bath towels, over 100 Thrivent T shirts, and 564 pair of fun socks in addition to numerous greeting cards which will be signed and distributed as needed when some residents don't receive any on their birthdays or other special occasions. As the mountain of fun socks grew during counting so did the excitement. We felt that we had a great opportunity to share the love of our Lord and Savior. When we work together, we can accomplish amazing things! Again, we are so thankful we have such wonderful supporters in you, our women of the ELCA.

Eleta Eisenhauer

September 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
			Confirmation 6:00 p.m.	ELCW Meeting 7:00 p.m.		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
			Kids for Christ— 4:00 p.m. Confirmation 6:00 p.m.			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
		Piecemakers Blanket Making Church Council 7:00 p.m.	Confirmation 6:00 p.m.	Tower Echoes Deadline		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
			Kids for Christ— 4:00 p.m. Confirmation 6:00 p.m.			

Grace Lutheran Church Council

August 15, 2023

Grace Lutheran Church Council met on August 15, 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 Cheryl Grundman. Sarah Purcell was absent. Also in attendance was Pastor Jim Helgren 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 July 6, 2023, meeting. Mike Weber seconded. Motion carried.

The financial report as of July 31, 2023 was reviewed. Erin Ebeler 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:
 - Reviewed past visits to members.
- Future Events:
 - Aug. 30, 2023 – Will lead worship at Linden View
 - September 2023 – Pastor will be writing the “Pulpit Reflections” for Tecumseh Chieftain
 - National Youth Gathering
 - As of right now, only one or two kids are interested in attending.
 - Students need to let Pastor know right away if they're interested in going.
 - Pastor is in talks with Syracuse to join with their group.
 - Crop Walk – First Sunday in October
 - Plan to continue utilizing the Nebraska Synod's “Go And...” theme.
 - * Eleta Eisenhauer is working on “Go And...” banners for the church. There is a sign-up sheet at the back of the church if members would like to assist in this process.
 - * Temple Talks by members are taking place during the month of August – the theme is “Share Your Story.” Members are sharing about significant moments in their faith (e.g., how they chose to be a member of Grace; a time when God touched their life; etc.).
 - First Week: Sarah Purcell shared on reading the Bible over the course of the year.
 - Second Week: Hayden Wellensiek spoke about Church Camp.
 - Third Week: Eleta Eisenhauer will speak.
 - Fourth Week: Nick Weber will speak.
 - September Theme: “Go And...Serve with Neighbors”
 - IDEA – Pastor and Eleta Eisenhauer will be attending a meeting designed to excite people about becoming more active in church, including in leadership positions and/or overall events and activities.

Correspondence

Bret Wellensiek reviewed correspondence, which included a letter from Oaks Indian Mission thanking Grace for its gift.

Committee Reports:

Property: There is a group that is working to re-seed the lawns in the first part of September. They're looking at replacing a couple of trees but will not be able to get information on that until next week. The window company is coming on 8-16-2023 to begin work and review the windowpanes in the front doors of the church. During the church service on 8-13-2023, Joyce reported rain coming in through the bell tower.

Pastor reported that Gene Ekhoff has repaired the step going from the house into the garage. The water heater in the parsonage wasn't working a few weeks ago (a fuse had blown), and the issue recently re-appeared. Southeast Plumbing reported that where the fuses were was quite hot. Dave Smith was able to get an electrician to come in to repair the issue. Thanks to Gene and Dave for their efforts!

Worship and Fellowship: Sarah Purcell reported that the organ should likely be insured for \$150,000. The organ is to be inspected next week. Pastor reported that Nebraska Right to Life has asked if we had anyone who wanted to help man the Pro-Life booth at the Johnson County Fair. Information is being sent to Pastor on that booth. If anyone is interested in getting involved in that group, they should contact Pastor.

Youth: Erin Ebeler reported on Vacation Bible School. Approximately 25 students (age 3 – 6th grade) attended, and more than 10 junior high/high school aged kids assisted. Eleven to twelve adults assisted each week from Grace, Hope, and Osage churches. The Kids sang at the community church service on July 16, 2023.

Kids for Christ meals were discussed as well as the potential for inviting members of the community to join the kids for suppers and/or deliver meals to members of the community. Thanks to Andrea Eggleston for her work on this effort. The first Kids for Christ meeting is September 13, 2023, and will occur on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays when school is in session.

Memorial: During Vacation Bible School, problems arose with the ovens in the basement. Cheryl Grundman moved to provide \$700 to the Grace Lutheran Women's Group for the purchase of a replacement stove. Bret Wellensiek seconded. Motion carried.

Other Items of Discussion

- 75th Anniversary Committee: Will be meeting on September 13, 2023. Save the Date cards are being sent.
- Safety deposit box keys. One key has been identified and is kept by Diane Wilken in a fire-proof safe.
- Oct. 8, 2023 – Mission Fest is scheduled for that day with Worship at 10:00 a.m. Breakfast will be served starting at 9 a.m. Grace will be responsible for providing breakfast casseroles, juice, and coffee. Hope will be requested to provide rolls and side items. People's City Mission from Lincoln will be the main speaker for that day.
- Confirmation – The first parent/student meeting is scheduled for August 30, 2023.
- Sunday School will begin the week after Labor Day. Two classes will be taught this year, breaking up the younger and older kids. Thank you to Bret & Melissa Wellensiek for providing their leadership.
- Noisy Coin will be designated for the People's City Mission through the end of October.
- Next Council Meeting will be held on September 19, 2023, at 7 pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Ebeler



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