



From the Pastor,

Will you be my Valentine? This is a question young people may ask somebody on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Chocolate, flowers, cards, and dinner dates are all part of this valentine tradition. Some single people become lonelier and/or depressed on this particular day as it emphasizes that you are alone.

Ash Wednesday screams to us that we are alone in our sin and separated from God. "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return." The last Sunday in the Time of Epiphany is the holy day – The Transfiguration of Our Lord. Just before lent begins we are reminded that Jesus is God's Son whom God loves very much and we should listen to him.

As we proceed through Lent we are reminded that God seeks us out through Jesus and even though we are sinful, through our sinful human nature, God refuses to allow us to be alone. God is with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit and the real presence of the Son in the bread and wine of Holy Communion. We begin Lent being reminded on Ash Wednesday that we are not alone because God wants to be with us and we will never be alone or without God.

Pastor Jim

**Church Seasons:** The Church Season of Time After the Epiphany extends through February 15. The church Season of Lent begins February 18 with Ash Wednesday. On this day ash will be placed on the person's forehead and reminded, "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return." Lent is a season to remember to repent of one's sins and turn our sights on Good Friday and Easter.

Church Festival Days: 2/2 – Presentation of Our Lord  
2/15 – Transfiguration of Our Lord  
2/18 – Ash Wednesday  
2/18 – Martin Luther, renewer of the Church, died 1546  
2/24 – Matthias, Apostle

U.S. Holidays: 2/14 – Valentines Day  
2/16 – President's Day

# 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

# FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

14th

Bill & Carolyn Cropp

Bruce & Carol Armknecht

26th

Les & Kris Gerking

## Lenten/Easter Offering

The offering for Lent has been designated to be sent to Oaks Indian Mission.



**During the month of February we will be collecting Socks, underwear & mittens/gloves for men, women and children to be given to the People's City Mission**



# February 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:30 am Worship w/ Communion 9:30 am Sunday School	2	3 Piecemakers Blanket Making All Day	4 7/8th Confirmation 6:00 p.m.	5	6	7
8 8:30 am Worship 9:30 am Sunday School	9 GLC & Hope Bible Study 2:00 p.m.	10 Piecemakers Blanket Making All Day	11 Kids for Christ 4:00 pm 7/8th Confirmation 6:00 p.m.	12 ELCW Meeting 7:00 p.m.	13	14 <b>HAPPY Valentines DAY</b>
15 8:30 am Worship w/ Communion 9:30 am Sunday School	16	17 Piecemakers Blanket Making All Day Church Council 7:00 p.m.	18 Ash Wednesday Worship @ Hope Lutheran 7:00 p.m.	19	20	21
22 8:30 am Worship 9:30 am Sunday School	23	24 Piecemakers Blanket Making All Day	25 Kids for Christ 4:00 pm Grace Confirmation 6:00 p.m. Lenten Worship @ Grace Lutheran 7:00 p.m.	26 Thursday Lenten Gathering @ Grace Lutheran 11:30 a.m.	27	28

## Wednesday Midweek Lenten Worship Service Schedule.

All services are at 7:00 p.m.

The midweek Wednesday Service theme will be the ELCA and Nebraska Synod material taken from Sundays and Seasons entitled “Conversations with Jesus; Service of Word for Lent”. We will discuss the conversations that Jesus has with others in the previous Sunday’s Gospel.

The Thursday Luncheon Midweek Worship includes the worship and theme from the night before and lunch. People may begin gathering at 11:30 a.m. Worship will begin at 11:45 a.m. with lunch being served 11:47 a.m.—12:15 p.m. The service will continue following eating of the meal. People may arrive and leave as their schedules permit.

February 18 - Ash Wednesday at Hope Lutheran

Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion

February 25 - Wednesday Midweek at Grace “Jesus’ conversation with the devil”

February 26 - Thursday Luncheon service @ Grace gather beginning @ 11:30 a.m.

March 4 - Wednesday Midweek at Hope “Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus”

March 5 - Thursday Luncheon service @ Grace gather beginning @ 11:30 a.m.

March 11 - Wednesday Midweek at Grace “Jesus’ conversation with the woman at the well”

March 12 - Thursday Luncheon service @ Grace gather beginning @ 11:30 a.m.

March 18 - Wednesday Midweek at Hope “Jesus’ conversation with the disciples  
and the man born blind”

March 19 - Thursday Luncheon service @ Grace gather beginning @ 11:30 a.m.

March 25 - Wednesday Midweek at Grace “Jesus’ conversation with Martha”

March 26 - Thursday Luncheon service @ Grace gather beginning @ 11:30 a.m.

## HOLY WEEK

**April 2 - Holy Thursday/Maundy Thursday** at Grace. 7:00 p.m. with personal absolution and Holy Communion and First Communion for Grace Lutheran  
4th & 5th Graders.

**April 3 - Good Friday** at Hope 7:00 p.m.

**April 5 - Easter/Resurrection of Our Lord**

Grace Lutheran - 8:30 a.m. Hope Lutheran - 10:00 a.m.

## **Grace Lutheran Church Council January 13, 2026**

The regular meeting of the Grace Lutheran Church Council was called to order by President Cheryl Grundman at 7:00 pm – Members present: Cheryl Grundman, Mike Carman, Robin Eggleston, Sarah Purcell (by phone), Lisa Weber and Diane Wilken Church Treasurer. Owen Weber (Luther League Rep)- excused. Pastor Helgren led with an opening prayer.

Minutes of the December 2025 meetings were reviewed. Sarah Purcell motioned to accept and Robin Eggleston second. Minutes approved.

**The Treasurer's report** was reviewed.

Robin Eggleston motioned to accept the treasurer's report, Mike Carman second, motion carried. The auditor's report showed excellent book keeping. The report recommended having two financial secretaries. Robin Eggleston motioned to create two financial secretary positions, and Mike Carman second. Motion approved.  
It was noted expenses have increased over the last few years.

**Correspondence:** none

### **Pastor's report:**

December visits reported on shut-ins, hospitalized.

Funeral was held for Rich Roesener on December 11.

Annual Meeting will be held following Joint Worship 10:00AM service at Grace on Jan 18. Potluck to follow.

Pastor will attend a zoom meeting on January 21 called "Preparing your Congregation for your Retirement"

Ash Wednesday service will be held at Hope on February 18.

Lenten services at Grace will be at 7:00pm on February 25, March 11 and March 25. Luther League will provide snacks for fellowship.

Thursday Lenten Luncheons will continue on February 26, March 12 and March 26.

Maundy Thursday will be at Grace at 7:00pm on April 2.

Confirmation will be held at Grace during worship on April 26 at 8:30 am. Confirmands include Jude Fricke, Hayden Wellensiek and Lucas Cropp.

Council approved the use of the church parking lot for the Hometown Fresh Program through the Lincoln Food Bank. The parking lot will be used on the 4th Wednesday of the month from 2-3pm during the months of March - November.

**Property** - (Robin chair) none

**Worship, Evangelism & Fellowship** - ( Sarah Chair) –  
Rogation Sunday is planned for May 3.

### **Parish Ed & Young People – (Mike Chair)**

Luther League will provide snacks for fellowship following Lenten Worship services at Grace.

### **Stewardship & Memorial – (Lisa Chair)**

Name plates for 2025 Memorial Board were ordered on January 5.

### **Old Business**

Erin Ebeler and Bret Wellensiek were appointed to update the current PA system to improve quality.

### **New Business**

As in previous years, Lenten offering will be designated to Oak Indian Center.

**Thank you** to Dave Smith for agreeing to mow the church lawn in 2026.

Thank you to Mike Carman for fixing the door in the southeast corner of the church basement.

Thank you to Robin Eggleston and Jody Wellensiek for their service on church council.

Next meeting – February 17, 2026 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Weber

# **ON THE ROAD AGAIN** with your Nebraska Synod Staff

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH ,COOK    APRIL 18, 2026    SATURDAY 10AM-3PM**

## **TRAVELING TOGETHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE**

**DO YOU WONDER ABOUT THE FUTURE OF GOD'S CHURCH?**

**DO YOU FEEL LIKE WE DON'T MEASURE UP TO WHAT THE CHURCH USED TO BE?**

**ARE YOU TROUBLED BY AGING BUILDINGS AND UNUSED FACILITIES?**

**DOES IT FEEL LIKE ALL THE CHURCH TALKS ABOUT IS PAYING THE BILLS?**

**DO YOU WANT TO BE THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS IN YOUR COMMUNITY BUT AREN'T SURE HOW TO GET STARTED?**

**If you answered YES to ANY of the above questions, this event is for YOU!**

"I am because we are." This isn't synod staff coming to you. This is an opportunity for all of us to come together with Jesus. In this time, we will learn about how the church is already changing and what the road ahead might look like for all of us. We will ponder what faithful innovation looks like in your community and how to pack your bags with actionable steps to bring back home. You'll have the opportunity to meet Synod Council members, Cluster Deans, and other local companions who are journeying with you on the way.

**Let us imagine the  
Adventure that awaits us  
as we travel this road as  
ONE Church Together!**

Learn More & Register  
<https://nebraskasynod.wufoo.com/forms/pikdmx0qbtzkb/>

# ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH JANUARY 18, 2026

The Annual meeting of Grace Lutheran Church was called to order at 11:03 AM by President Cheryl Grundman. Pastor Helgren opened the meeting with a prayer.

Annual reports were distributed - 31 voting members signed the attendance register.

The Secretary's report from January 2025 was reviewed. Russ Dietz motioned to accept. Gene Ekhoft 2nd the motion. Minutes approved as presented.

The following reports were reviewed from the annual report:

Pastor's Report

Statistical Report

Council President's Report

Treasurer's Report

Kids for Christ Report

Sunday School Report

Property Committee Report

Luther League Report

Memorial Committee Report

Stewardship Report

Worship, Evangelism, and Fellowship Report

WELCA President's Report

Women's Stewardship Report

Women's Treasurer's Report

Auditor's Report read into the record: Dave Armknecht and Jody Wellensiek reviewed the 2025 financial documents and found no discrepancies. The books are in good order.

Unfinished Business -

3 Point Ministry - The discussions with area churches were reviewed. A 3 Point Ministry is now being discussed, and various scenarios were generated if a 3 Points Ministry moves forward. No decisions have been made. A special meeting will be required if we move forward. Pastor Kate Woolf is interested in serving in a possible 3 Points Ministry. Also discussed were options if no 3 Point Ministry can be achieved. The other options include the use of an interim pastor, PMAs, or lay leaders.

Pastor Helgren has agreed to train members to do visitations and be lay leaders.

Eleta Eisenhauer suggested asking the Lutheran Student Center at UNL to help provide written sermons to be read by lay leaders.

New Business-

President Grundman requested discussion on the number of council members.

Jody Bruns motioned to have 5 council members. Julie Effken 2nd the motion. Motion carried.

Lisa Weber agreed to stay on council.

Mike Carman nominated Ryan Panko for the church council ballot.  
Cheryl Grundman, Mike Carman and Sarah Purcell have another year on their term.  
No other nominations were made.

Delegates for Synod Assembly - no volunteers were found. Diane Ekhoﬀ suggested younger members consider volunteering for this opportunity.

Financial Secretary. Two financial secretaries are now required. Joyce Roesener and Jody Bruns have agreed to serve.

Sunday School Superintendent - Bret and Melissa Wellensiek have agreed to continue.

A motion was made by Dean Wellensiek to accept the ballot as is. Robin Eggleston 2nd the motion. Motion carried.

Budget- President Grundman noted the budget included an increase to the amount allotted for a supply pastor. As the budget changes when Pastor Helgren retires, a special meeting may be needed. A motion to accept the budget was made by Gene Ekhoﬀ. Nick Weber 2nd the motion. Motion carried.

Thank you- President Grundman extended thank yous to Robin Eggleston for 2 years service on church council and to Jody Wellensiek for nearly 2 years service on council.

Judy Brinkman asked what is included in insurance costs. Judy wanted to know if the church only receives compensation for a claim if they rebuild. Judy suggested the council consider self insurance, and to talk to an insurance agent for further information. President Grundman thanked her for the suggestion.

Diane Ekhoﬀ asked what will be done with the parsonage if we do not have a pastor. President Grundman said no decisions have been made yet, as we wait to see if there will be a 3 Points Ministry.

Lisa Cropp suggested the council tour the parsonages of Faith and Grace to assess which might be best for a future pastor. Diane Ekhoﬀ suggested using resources from the Synod in what should be included in a parsonage for a pastor.

President Grundman appreciated the suggestions from all the women, and said that after a 3 Points Ministry is obtained, the councils will consider the suggestions, along with input from a future pastor.

Pastor closed with The Lord's Prayer.

Meeting was adjourned by consensus.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Weber, church council secretary



*Love*  
IN ACTION

### ***Our Love sends quilts and kits to those displaced and in need.***

The 183 quilts that were made by the Grace Lutheran Piecemakers were sent to the distribution warehouse in Minnesota. Minnesota received an approximate total of 95,779 quilts— from there 9,520 went to Djibouti, 5,100 to Liberia, 9,520 to Madagascar, 95,20 to Tanzania and 5,100 to Zimbabwe. Some of the quilts were also distributed to East, Central and Western United States facing devastating wildfires, hurricanes, floods and tornadoes.

The 100 School Kits were sent to Djibouti, Honduras, Sierra Leone, and again to the needy in the U.S. The School Kits allow children to continue their education.

Our 100 Personal Care Kits were distributed to Georgia (not U.S) and to the needy in the U.S.

The Baby Care Kits and Fabric Kits were sent to Liberia, Madagascar, Sierra Leone. Tanzania, Zimbabwe and the U.S.

One Hurricane survivor and displaced mother in Florida stated “The quilts were not only warm, but beautifully made. The quality was amazing, and it felt like a gift of love in every stitch.”

The U.S. was impacted by Hurricanes Helene & Milton, Wildfires in California, Severe weather across the south and Midwest and Flooding in Central Texas.

The Piecemakers also provide a quilt to members of families impacted by a fire locally.

Quilts are also sent to Foster Care Closet, People’s City Mission, Project Response, Bud’s Thrift Shoppe and Quilts are given to our High School Graduates.



# Happy February



*Grace Lutheran Church*

*306 N. First St.*

*P.O. Box 96*

*Cook, NE 68329*



Church Office: 402-864-4201

Pastor Jim Helgren: 402-864-2113

Church Email: [grace68329@gmail.com](mailto:grace68329@gmail.com)