

The Grace Greeter!

**Grace Lutheran Church 2225 Washington Lincoln, NE 68502
January 2021**

Wisdom for Cold, Dark Days

As I write this, it is a cold, cloudy day. It seems January is full of days like today. It can make the evening seem long and the day seem short.

Your hands and feet never seem to warm up to the idea that it is cold outside! Again!

So I found some wisdom for the long, dark, cold days of January.

This is an excerpt from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech "Where Do We Go From Here?," delivered at the 11th Annual SCLC Convention, Atlanta, Georgia, August 16, 1967":

"And I must confess, my friends, that the road ahead will not always be smooth. There will still be rocky places of frustration and meandering points of bewilderment. There will be inevitable setbacks here and there. And there will be those moments when the buoyancy of hope will be transformed into the fatigue of despair. Our dreams will sometimes be shattered and our ethereal hopes blasted. We may again, with tear-drenched eyes, have to stand before the bier of some courageous civil rights worker whose life will be snuffed out by the dastardly acts of bloodthirsty mobs. But difficult and painful as it is, we must walk on in the days ahead with an audacious faith in the future....

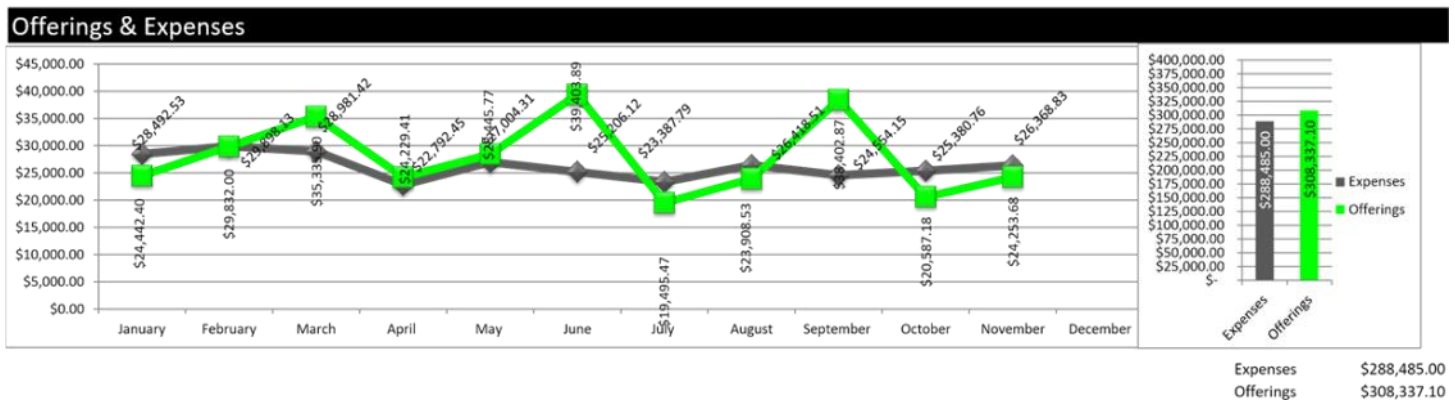
When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." - MLK

Pr. Eric Tesker



- ◆ **PLEASE CONTACT US!** HIPPA laws do not allow the hospital to notify the church if there is a member in the hospital. The patient or a family member must contact the church office to let us know that about the hospitalization. **During office hours, call 402-474-1505 or email office@egrace.org to let us know. Thank you!**
- ◆ To contact Pastor Eric after office hours, you can call or text him at 308-708-1146 or email pr.eric@egrace.org.
- ◆ The deadline for the next Greeter will be January 20th.
- To help us stay connected during our time apart please send an email or letter with any personal update you want to share about yourself or prayer concern for someone else. We will post these under news and prayers in our weekly digital newsletter and our monthly newsletter.

Update



2021 Giving Envelopes

You can pick-up your box of 2021 giving envelopes in the atrium after worship on Sunday morning or during the week Monday-Friday 9am-3pm.

Five Tips For the Pandemic Weary



With the pandemic increasing its impact close to a year after it began and the dark days of winter upon us, many are feeling the weight of grief, frustration, and sadness. The number of people experiencing anxiety and depression has increased by 10-15% since the start of the COVID crisis. Here are some tips to help as we wait for the vaccine to become readily available to all.

1. Reflect and accept. Take note of your mental landscape and accept that negative feelings are appropriate in difficult times. It's okay to not be happy about these challenges.
2. Breathe and meditate. One minute of deep breathing helps slow the fight-or-flight response and can be a reset for calm and focus.
3. Stop "doomscrolling." Scrolling through anxiety producing posts on social media can stoke fear. Limit your time on social media and screens.
4. Restore and replenish. Set reminders to take a walk, play with your dog, enjoy a cup of tea, etc. Deliberately choose activities that fill your cup, and make sure it is for rejuvenation vs. avoidance.
5. Be active. Physical activity releases stress and fear. Dance a little, walk in the sunshine, or listen to your favorite music while on the treadmill. Let your body let it go.

Adapted from the UC Health article, 5 Tips for Handling Pandemic Fatigue: <https://www.uchealth.org/today/5-tips-for-handling-pandemic-fatigue/>.

Notice of Congregational Meeting
January 24, 2021 at 10:00 AM in the nave
Snow Day (January 31, 2021 at 10:00 AM in the nave)

At this meeting we will accomplish the following agenda items:

- Approve a 2021 Budget
- Vote for new Council Members
- Amend our 2017 Constitution
- Receive Reports

To prepare for this meeting a copy of the 2021 budget will be available in the narthex and outside the office starting January 17.

A ballot for new Council members will be available the day of the meeting.

The following changes are suggested for our current 2017 Congregational Constitution:

Chapter 12.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, and five (**currently six**) members of the congregation. Any voting member of the congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service, which is no more than two consecutive two (**currently three**) year terms. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be elected at a legally called semi-annual meeting of the congregation during the month of November. The term of office shall be for two (**currently three**) years. The term of office begins on January 1 and ends on December 31. Newly elected Congregation Council members and those who will continue on the Council shall be installed at a Sunday worship in December following their election.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next semi-annual meeting. Individuals who have served less than a full term in this way shall be eligible for election to complete the term at the semi-annual meeting.

Grace Lutheran Covid-19 Ongoing Response

When Martin Luther was dealing with the Black Plague in his time, he wrote, *"I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others.... If my neighbor needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go..."* (Luther's Works, Volume 43, pg. 132).

Worship Life (Sunday service only. No Saturday service until further notice)

The following temporary changes will occur for the foreseeable future:

- As always, if you are ill or at risk, **please stay at home** and watch the service online.
- Wearing a **face covering that covers the mouth and nose is required** while you are in the building. A disposable mask will be provided if you do not have one.
- We will **enter** the building through the **North doors**. The doors will be locked at 9:10. All other doors will be locked.
- At the north door you will be given a **bulletin**. You will **take this home** with you after worship. Do not leave it in the building.
- There will hand sanitizers at the entrance door to the sanctuary. **Sanitize your hands** prior to entering the worship space.
- **Sit** only with persons from **your own household**.
- During worship we ask you to **refrain from physical contact** especially as you greet one another. Practice good "physical distancing". Use a wave in place of a hand shake. 6 feet is the minimum. 12 feet is recommended.
- There will be **no offering**. There will be an offering basket located in the narthex.
- There will be **no sharing** of the Peace.
- There will be **no singing out loud**. You can hum or sing to yourself.
- The **presiding minister** will not greet you after worship.
- There will be **no assisting minister, reader, or acolyte**
- There will be **no nursery available**.

Community Life

- There will be **no fellowship** after worship.
- **Sunday school, Adult Education, and Confirmation** will be in-person or virtually during this time. We will announce this at the appropriate time.
- **Committees, auxiliary groups, and council** will meet in-person or virtually. This will be left to our committees, auxiliary groups and council to decide.
- **Choirs** will meet in-person or virtually. Choirs will need to decide how they want to meet.

Giving and Stewardship

Offering income during a time like this could be a concern. How can you give if you cannot make it to worship? Two easy options are to mail your offerings to the church office, deliver them in person to the office, or take advantage of online giving on our website. Good stewardship also involves self-care. Be aware of and maintain your health. Engage in the best practices of handwashing, wearing a mask, staying home if you are sick or at risk, and physical distancing.

Greetings in the name of the much anticipated Christ child,

2020, blending into 2021, has not been quite the year we imagined as we moved from Nebraska to begin this next phase of our lives, but we have enjoyed almost every minute!

Dustin is just a few months shy of finishing his Masters of Divinity program. Since mid-March, our church has been recording weekly services for members to watch online (<https://vimeo.com/goodshepmpls>); going forward Dustin will preach about once per month. Distanced ministry was not the internship experience Dustin thought he would have, but one full of learning and re-envisioning the role of the church. Classes continue to go well, being the first cohort of students, there have been some learning curves along the way. He had the opportunity this summer to test out of Greek class and then actually became the TA for 2 different Greek professors - those undergrad Greek classes 10 years ago paid off!

Rachel continues to enjoy her job as a media specialist, she spends evenings reading books, instead of grading papers. This year was supposed to be the year she focused on growing readership, but has been the year of converting the district to a 1:1 Chromebook program for 5-12 students (iPads for K-4) and laptops for teachers. Additionally she has been working with teachers to help create lessons for distance learning. It has been a lot more tech, and finally getting around to recording some of those awesome tutorial videos she had planned last year, nothing like a crisis to motivate! At the end of the spring semester her colleagues nominated her as one of the 5 employees of the semester for the entire school district, a humbling honor as a first year teacher in the district. She is currently slightly behind on her reading goal of 104 books for the year (2 per week), but working diligently to get it done, graphic novels and audio books are her friend right now!

Aislynn started Kindergarten this fall; we elected for Hastings Online Academy, knowing that a shift to distance learning was likely to happen. She has thrived in school, becoming a Zoom and SeeSaw expert. She says her favorite subject is math, but we think it is a close tie with reading. She has become quite the artist and loves her gel pens dearly. She misses choir at church, but loves to see friends at Sunday School. She enjoys getting to visit church with dad on Thursdays when they go to record services.

Everett is living his best life each day at daycare. He and the other 2 boys his age are the 3 amigos and enjoy each other's company. His new favorite toy is small brick Legos, his creativity in builds is quite impressive. He has developed quite the personality over the past year, his language and vocabulary growing every day. He has developed a love for knock knock jokes, and sometimes gets the punch line to work out in his favor! He can't wait to turn 4 in May and then add one more so that he can be 5 and go to Kindergarten like Aislynn.

2021 is full of hope and excitement. We look forward to learning where Dustin may receive a call in late spring, but we likely won't know until mid-summer. At the end of June, just as we are likely to move closer to that call, we will welcome baby Haider number 3 into our family; Rachel and baby are doing well, the kids are excited for a sibling now that they have seen ultrasound pictures and believe that there really is a baby in mom's tummy, it took some convincing!

We miss you all, we wish the events of 2020 had been different and that we could have traveled to see more of you. With a move and baby in 2021, our summer travel plans are likely curtailed again. We are with you in spirit and wish you all the best this Christmas season and throughout the year.

Love, The Haiders

November Council Meeting
Tuesday, November 10, 2020



Present via Zoom: Neil Larson, Doug Krueger, Cindy Eberspacher,
Connie Thorson, Carla Ingersoll, Jan Branting, Roger Potts, Pr. Eric Leshar

Absent: Karen Billings resigned

Neil Larson called the council meeting to order at 7:00 PM

Opening Prayer: Neil

Approval of Council Minutes:

Roger moved to approve the October meeting minutes with one change to the draft. The proposed amendment to the constitution should read to keep the council term limits to two consecutive terms of two years each. Doug seconded. Motion passed.

President's Update/Correspondence: Thank you card from Prescott Elementary for donations; Karen's resignation from church council.

Neil moved to accept Karen's resignation from church council. Roger seconded. Motion passed.

Staff Reports:

Pastor Eric's Report: submitted

Director of Music Report: submitted

Financial Secretary's Report: submitted

Treasurer's Report: submitted

Roger made a motion to accept the reports as submitted. Jan seconded. Motion passed.

Committee Reports:

Finance/Stewardship – council position remains vacant

Worship & Music – email submitted expressing concerns about Lincoln in Red Zone and holding church services

Parish Ed – written report submitted

Congregational Life – did not meet; no report submitted

Property – written report submitted; still working on roof quotes

Social Ministry – Jan reported that their committee recommends donating \$4,000 to Community Partnership Action Fund, who directly supports The Gathering Place, matching our gift for a total of \$8,000.

Jan motioned that we take \$4,000 to give to Community Partnership Action Program who will match it, for the Gathering Place.

Roger seconded. Motion passed.

Prescott will not allow us to come into their school. Council approved the plan to have each family pick-up their Christmas box in the gymnasium.

Memorials – did not meet

Doug made a motion to accept the committee reports as printed. Roger seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business:

Red Zone Review – Congregational meeting needs to happen with 23 members present; can be moved from November to January.

Pastor is waiting on the Synod for an official response about option to hold this meeting digitally, if necessary.

Roger motioned to keep our church open and continue our services as we have been doing provided safety protocols are kept in place. Cindy seconded. Seven approved and one abstained. Motion passed.

New Business:

BSA Bankruptcy Review – Provided information for us to be aware of. No pending cases of sexual abuse with minors in our area.

Christmas Eve service will be at 6 PM. We will take reservations limited to 50 people to allow for some walk-ins. Will announce in newsletter. No need for reservations for 10 AM Christmas Day service.

Roger read the closing prayer.

Being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Connie Thorson, Secretary

The Gathering Place

With the Lancaster County COVID-19 Risk Dial in the "Red Zone" currently, the assistance of volunteers at The Gathering Place is not being utilized. Instead, staff people from Community Action Partnership (of which The Gathering Place is an outreach effort) are serving to prepare and distribute meals seven days per week.

Prescott Elementary

Thank you to everyone who donated materials, helped pack and distribute the Prescott School Christmas boxes. Because of Covid the recipients were asked to come to Grace to pick-up their boxes. Most did this but a handful did not show up. The good news is that the left over boxes were distributed to Grace members in need and other members of our community.

Thank you for your continuous support of Prescott School.
Pat Lickei

The Lutheran Food Pantry

CURRENT NEEDS LIST:

- Fruit juice (large bottles & small juice containers)
- 1 pound bags of rice
- Boxed instant potatoes
- Pancake mix
- Pancake syrup
- Condensed soups
- Snack items (individually wrapped cookies, crackers (with cheese or peanut butter), and wrapper fruit snacks, etc).
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Thank you for your continued support of the Lutheran Food Pantry. The food needy in our community depend on you!

PANTRY HOURS:

Please bring your donations to St. Andrew's Lutheran at 1015 Lancaster Ln between the hours of 8-12 am Tuesday through Friday.

Birthdays

<u>David Stokke</u>	<u>Jan 1</u>
<u>Beverly Madison</u>	<u>Jan 2</u>
<u>David Ripa</u>	<u>Jan 2</u>
<u>Grant Jensen</u>	<u>Jan 3</u>
<u>Charlyne Berens</u>	<u>Jan 4</u>
<u>Mandi Haumont</u>	<u>Jan 6</u>
<u>Dean Dumler</u>	<u>Jan 7</u>
<u>Nancy Melichar</u>	<u>Jan 7</u>
<u>Nancy Schilke</u>	<u>Jan 7</u>
<u>Rod Basler</u>	<u>Jan 8</u>
<u>Gene Garza</u>	<u>Jan 10</u>
<u>Jeffrey Rosno</u>	<u>Jan 11</u>
<u>Jessica Anderson</u>	<u>Jan 14</u>
<u>Estelle Riemann</u>	<u>Jan 15</u>
<u>Elysabeth Wells</u>	<u>Jan 15</u>
<u>Luke Fillbert</u>	<u>Jan 16</u>
<u>Jennifer Klein</u>	<u>Jan 16</u>
<u>William Anderson</u>	<u>Jan 17</u>
<u>Judy Holtgrewe</u>	<u>Jan 18</u>
<u>Carolyn Ossian</u>	<u>Jan 18</u>
<u>Michelle Jensen</u>	<u>Jan 19</u>
<u>Rhonda Ihrle</u>	<u>Jan 20</u>
<u>William Hokanson</u>	<u>Jan 22</u>
<u>Yvonne Nielsen</u>	<u>Jan 22</u>
<u>Eliza Williams</u>	<u>Jan 22</u>
<u>Kiley Schumacher</u>	<u>Jan 23</u>
<u>Abbie Andersen</u>	<u>Jan 24</u>
<u>Steven Paschold</u>	<u>Jan 24</u>
<u>Drew Ostermeyer</u>	<u>Jan 25</u>
<u>Kyle Thorson</u>	<u>Jan 25</u>
<u>Rachel Haider</u>	<u>Jan 27</u>
<u>Adam Fitzgibbon</u>	<u>Jan 28</u>
<u>Nancy Anderson</u>	<u>Jan 30</u>
<u>Blake Rathjen</u>	<u>Jan 30</u>

Anniversaries

Robert and Mandi Haumont Jan 10





January 3:	Worship Bell Quartet A	9:00 am 9:45 am
January 4:	WELCA Board Meeting	9:00 am
January 5:	Al-Anon Committees	9:30 am 7:00 pm
January 6:	WELCA Unit Meeting Confirmation	1:00 pm 7:00 pm
January 7:	Quilting Bell Quartet B	9:00 am 7:00 pm
January 8:	Respite Care	5:45 pm
January 9:	Danish Sisterhood	1:00 pm
January 10:	Worship Bell Quartet A	9:00 am 9:45 am
January 12:	Al-Anon Wildlife Rescue Council	9:30 am 7:00 pm 7:00 pm
January 13:	Confirmation	7:00 pm
January 14:	Quilting Bell Quartet B	9:00 am 7:00 pm
January 17:	Worship Bell Quartet A	9:00 am 9:45 am
January 19:	Al-Anon WELCA Group 6	9:30 am 7:00 pm
January 20:	WELCA Group 3 Confirmation	1:00 pm 7:00 pm
January 21:	Quilting Bell Quarter B	9:00 am 7:00 pm
January 22:	Pinewood Derby	5:00 pm

January 23:	Pinewood Derby	9:00 am
January 24:	Worship Bell Quartet A Meeting	9:00 am 9:45 am 10:00 am
January 26:	Al-Anon	9:30 am
January 27:	Confirmation	7:00 pm
January 28:	Quilting Bell Quartet B	9:00 am 7:00 pm
January 31:	Worship Bell Quartet Meeting (snow day)	9:00 am 9:45 am 10:00 am

January Holidays

Date	Name	Type
Jan 1	New Year's Day	Federal
Jan 6	Epiphany	Christian
Jan 7	Christmas Day	Orthodox
Jan 14	Orthodox New Year	Orthodox
Jan 18	MLK Jr. Day	Federal
Jan 20	Inauguration Day	National
Jan 28	Tu Bishvat/Tu B'Shevat	Jewish



Grace Staff & Council

Rev. Eric Lesher

Senior Pastor

308-708-1146

pr.eric@egrace.org

2020 Church Council

David Sage

Parish Administrator

office@egrace.org

Anne Melang-Thoren

Director of music

anne@egrace.org

Jennifer Aliwarga-Carlson

Assistant Organist

Robert Stimbart,

Custodian

Judi Schroeder

Nursery Coordinator

Elizabeth Krueger

Nursery attendant

Neil Larson

Carla Ingersoll

Vacant

Jan Branting

Cindy Eberspacher

Doug Krueger

Roger Potts

Vacant

Connie Thorson

Jim Krueger

Council President

Vice President

Congregational Life

Social Ministry

Parish Education

Memorials

Property

Stewardship/Finance

Secretary

Treasurer



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