

Grace Lutheran Newsletter

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH • 1100 G STREET • FAIRBURY, NE 68352

February, 2023

The Pastor's Pen – February 2023

Dear Grace Lutheran Church Community,

Grace, mercy and peace be yours from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

We are well into the new year, a month gone now, and life has begun to settle in. Are we back to our routines, or are we still in the "New Year's Resolution" phase? Maybe some of both! Within the life of the church, routine is often a foreign word!

First, you can see dramatic changes taking place on the west side of church. The new outside approach to the west door is forming and by the time you get your newsletter, all of the concrete should be poured. What a nice addition to make an attractive and functional entrance into our church. Beyond that large project, everything looks pretty "routine!"

Except that in the church, there is little routine. Today the organ tuners are here, so that takes a few minutes away from the routine. Yesterday, a member was preparing for surgery so I went over to their house for a devotion and communion. At other times, I'll try to work at preparing my sermon and someone calls that a member is in the hospital so I make my way to see them. And at other times, a member stops in my office to get something off their chest. My point is that, while I may plan my day, it rarely turns out the way I had it arranged!

And that's all okay. If we want to be people-focused (and I do), then the little interruptions and disruptions are okay. Yes, they do put me behind in the routine work I need to do, such as preparing sermons and Bible studies, but the Lord always seems to help me get done what needs to get done! But, as a community here at Grace Lutheran Church, there is more that you can do to help out!

When I arrived here in October 2020, I heard a lot of talk about how the people of Grace wanted to "be the church." People wanted to take responsibility for the ministry that was done here. I remember talking to Derek Anderson and mentioning to him how great it would be if that were true, and I could actively be the resource person and cheerleader for all the ministry activities. How great it would be if we could accomplish ministry in that way! That's why it is vitally important that we identify who we are as God's community here at Grace. What is it that we can focus on and do well with the gifts that God has given us?

At this moment, as your pastor, I NEED YOUR HELP! I spend too much time tired and frustrated at the ministry that is being done, but is being done either late, or when I'm tired (and so not fully present) or when I have a bad attitude about it. I'm confessing to you that all of these thoughts and feeling are real for me. BUT YOU CAN HELP!

We have 27 shut-in visits that someone could help with. I try to get to each person once a month, but sometimes that's impossible. Do you like to visit? Then you could help. We currently have 6 families that could use a nice meal delivered. Do you like to cook? Then you could help! We are hosting the Nebraska District LLL Convention on March 18. Are you able to set up and take down chairs or tables? Do you like to bake cookies? Do you like making cakes or bars for dessert? Then you could help! Do you like kids? Would you like to be a teacher or a teacher's helper? Then you could help!

Does it seem like I'm asking for lots of help? I'm sure it does, but that's who the church is and what it does. It helps! Not just our own members but others in our community. It's the second great commandment after loving God – Love your neighbor! Helping is part of our identity. How can you do your part?!

In Christ, *Pastor Emery*



Ark Encounter Trip Cancelled – I was not able to generate enough support to tour the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum this summer. As such, if you registered for the trip, I will be returning your deposit soon.

Matthew West in Concert – Don't miss an opportunity to see Christian singer, Matthew West, in concert at Christ Community Church in Beatrice on February 24. Look for further information in this newsletter as well as how to get a 20% discount on your tickets.

Anniversary 2023 – It isn't too early to reserve June 24-25 on your calendar for our 100th anniversary! Saturday's activities include an evening concert with Riven, a Southern Gospel quartet, and Jennie Williamson, a Christian singer from Nashville. Sunday's activities include guest speaker, Rev. Mark Bangert for Sunday services and special speaker, Rev. Dr. Dale Meyer for our afternoon celebration worship! More details to come!

Lent begins this month on Feb. 22, Ash Wednesday. Worship services will be at 4:00 PM and 6:30 PM each week, with food and fellowship beginning at 5:00 PM. All are encouraged to join us! Bring a guest!

Imposition of Ashes – I will be at church on Ash Wednesday to impose ashes if you would like to do that. I'll be here 7:00 – 8:00 AM, 12:00 – 1:00 PM, 3:00 – 3:30 PM, and 5:30 – 6:00 PM.

7-8 Grade Confirmation Class – Don't forget that we meet on Sunday, February 5, 2:00 – 5:30 PM. Supper will be provided.



As I begin writing this, I look down at my calendar to notice that it is "National Belly Laugh Day." Who knew? Furthermore, the question arises...when is the last time I experienced a true belly laugh? What was the cause? I can recall several instances in the recent past that caused me to chuckle, smirk, giggle, chortle, or outright lol, but a real, deeply rooted belly laugh, seems like ages ago.

It may even be unseemly for a grown adult to experience such a departure from protocol to issue forth such a breach in civility. Or does it? Life is filled with unlaughable experiences. The pressures we all face, in their myriad designs, keep our sense of humor in check all too often. But should that be the case? Are we not filled with joy by our relationship with our Savior? Shouldn't that joy be manifest in our daily lives? Shouldn't we genuinely express that joy without reservation?

How about you? Had a good belly laugh lately? Might I prescribe that adage that "laughter is the best medicine?" Give it a try. Cut loose a good belly laugh and see if the troubles of this world take a momentary break and give way to that deeper joy within us.

Guy

Upcoming Events

- February 12...**Super Bowl Party 5 PM in the Fellowship Hall. **All-Skate Event**
- February 18...**Urban Air Trampoline Park. Meet at church @9 AM. **TruthSeekers Event**
- February 22...**Ash Wednesday Service and the beginning of Lent
- February 25...**Progressive Dinner **God Squad Event** We will need host houses and drivers

Stellar VBS online registration for Participants and volunteers is now open! Go to www.vbspro.events/p/events/gracefairbury to register.

Home Visits: Please sign up for a Home Visit if you have not already done so!

Midweek Snack Signup is on the table downstairs.

ATTENTION

High School Youth and Parents

There will be a **MANDATORY** meeting on Sunday, February 5 at 10:45 AM.



The Nebraska District LLL Convention will be held on Saturday, March 18, here at Grace. The theme is "Telling the Good News" and the guest speaker will be Rev.

Dr. Kurt Taylor of Concordia University, Wisconsin. He is currently an Associate Professor of Theology and serves as the director of the Church Ministries program at Concordia University-Wisconsin. Pre-registration is \$50 per person if registered by March 1. Registration at the door will be \$60. Registrations are on the table by the bulletin boards.

Join Matthew West this spring as he shares songs and stories for God's glory on the "My Story, Your Glory Tour!". "My Story" embodies the countless stories fans have shared with Matthew over the years and the importance of keeping God at the forefront in our everyday lives. "Your Glory" is the first

full set of vertical, worship songs that Matthew has written for one of his records.

He will be at Christ Community Church in Beatrice on Friday, February 24. Scan the QR code for tickets and save 20% using the code INSIDER.



Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, February 22. A meal will be served beginning at 5 PM which will be in between the Lenten services. The meals will be sponsored as follows:

- Ash Wednesday - Lutheran Laymen's League
- March 1 - Anniversary Committee
- March 8 -
- March 15 - Grace Lutheran Youth
- March 22 -
- March 29 -

As you can see, there are still several available. If you would be interested in sponsoring a meal, please let the church office know as soon as possible.

The "Bible Break" group will be finishing the book of Esther. Our next Bible study will be "God's Relentless Love - A Study of Hosea" by Sharla Fritz. We will begin this study February 7 and would love to have you join us on Tuesdays at 12 Noon.

Altar Guild will clean brass after the Ash Wednesday services on February 22. Please make plans to help with this project.

For God so loVed the world
thAt He gave His
onLy
begottEn
SoN,
thaT whoever
belIEves
iN Him should not perish
but havE everlasting life.

(John 3:16, NKJV)

FEBRUARY - AT A GLANCE

High School Youth & Parents will meet on Sunday, February 5, 10:45 AM.

7th & 8th Grade Confirmation Class will meet Sunday, February 5, 2:00 PM - 5:30 PM.

Mary Circle will meet Tuesday, February 7 at 1:30 PM at the church. **PLEASE BRING YOUR LWML QUARTERLY TO THIS MEETING.** Hostesses will be Vickie Emery and Sherril Wegele.

Parents Night Out will be Saturday, February 11, 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM.

Pastor Emery has services at Cedarwood on Sunday, February 12 at 2 PM and at Gardenside at 3 PM. He will have services at Heritage on Thursday, February 23 at 10 AM.

All Skate Event will be Sunday, February 12 at 5 PM for the Super Bowl Party.

Quilt Tying is Monday, February 13, at 1 PM.

Elders will meet Tuesday, February 14 at 7 PM. Church Council will follow at 7:30 PM.

Ladies Aid will meet on Thursday, February 16 at 1:30 PM. Naomi Schroeder and Pris Stelling will serve.

TruthSeekers will meet at the church at 9 AM to go to the Urban Air Trampoline Park.

A Community Servant Outreach will be held on Saturday, February 18 for the High School Youth at the Jansen Bible Church.

"Ladies Night Out" will be Sunday, February 19 at 6:30 PM.

The Anniversary Committee will meet Tuesday, February 21 at 9 AM.

Ash Wednesday Services will be held Wednesday, February 22 at 4 PM and 6:30 PM. A meal will be held beginning at 5 PM.

God Squad will meet on Saturday, February 25 for a Progressive Dinner.

A Zone 9 LLL Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 26, 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM.

FEBRUARY

2023 MISSION GOAL

\$1,570

\$30,000