



GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

351 Greenwood St (across from the borough park) Hop Bottom, Pa. 18824-9728

□ (570) 289-4468 (fax & phone) Preschool 4921

Rev. Kim E. Bode, Pastor Email address: hbgrace@epix.net

Pastor's Home 289-4081 Cell: 561-6909

Worship: Sunday at 10:00 am

Adult Bible Class: 8:45 am. **Sunday School** 9:00

Preschool: Runs from September through May for the 3-year-old and pre-kindergarten children. Call for more details. 289-4921 Find us on Facebook or our website: grace-lutheran-church.net



*Search me, O God, and know my heart:
try me, and know my thoughts:
And see if there be any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Psalm 139:23-24

CONVICTED:

Our Midweek Worship Series for Lent:

Most of us have probably been in a courtroom at one time. Have you ever found yourself as the defendant? The one who is being accused?

Convicted is our themed Lenten series that will enable us to step into a courtroom for Ash Wednesday and the following five Wednesdays of Lent. Each Convicted service will put a different Biblical person on trial, accused of an actual crime. Each side of the case will be argued, while we (the congregation) will serve as the jury.



The result is that each of us will be convicted in two ways:

1. Found guilty (convicted) that our sins were responsible for Jesus death
2. Become convicted of the fact that our Lord loves us and forgives all our sins.

Services will be held each Wednesday, beginning on March 6 (Ash Wednesday) at 7 p.m. Ash Wednesday will also have an 11:30 a.m. service.

Crimes addressed include:

Ash Wednesday: March 6; 11:30 AM and 7 PM):

Defamation of Character (Disciples)

Wednesday, March 13: 7 PM: Dereliction of Duties (Disciples)

Wednesday, March 20: 7 PM Treason (Judas)

Wednesday, March 27: 7 PM Perjury (Peter)

Wednesday, April 3: 7 PM Obstruction of justice (Pilate)

Wednesday, April 10 7 PM Rebellion (Barrabas)

Beginning on March 13, join us for soup and sandwich at 6:15, before worship. Sign up sheets will be in the back of the church.

NEWS AND NOTES

Good old **Paul Miller** is still weak. He is on a new path of medication for his Crohn's disease, and is (as always) very hopeful for renewed strength and health.

We continue to pray for cancer fighters in our midst:

- Beverly Walker, mother of **Ann Belotti**
- Adeline Fallon, former member

For ladies that are interested, Al Fallon will be having her monthly luncheon on Tuesday, March 12th at the D&L restaurant in Nicholson at noon.

Chloe Belotti has temporarily moved to Florida to live with her biological mother. A bold move. May the Lord watch over her there.

Carolyn Loch now sports a cane, but it has not slowed her down too much.

Lorraine Stanton, who broke her wrist, is learning how to use her left hand, and has been cleared for driving again.

A number of our members went to see the film "Run the Race" produced by Tim Tebow. It showed the struggles of faith against adversity. **Mary Niederberger** said it was a real "tearjerker".

One of our former members, Harold Loch, will be undergoing a heart valve replacement, and repair of an aneurism on March 7th. His address is 1433 Quarry Rd. Springville, Pa. 18844.

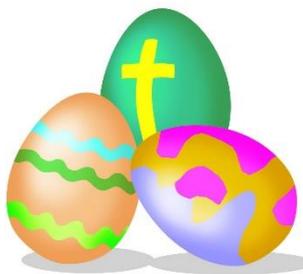
Did you know that the Saturday morning Ladies Bible Class (9 a.m. in fellowship hall) has been averaging around 10 people? That makes it our largest bible class at Grace!

In addition to working full time at the Rite Aid in Montrose, **Margaret Klees** is completing an on line course on “Coding and Billing” Get ‘er done!!

We are thankful that it was only a brief hospital stay for **Marion Erat** this past month. Tests were done, and it is as good as can be expected.

Mark your calendars

Egg Hunt



Our annual community Egg Hunt is set for Saturday, **April 20 at 10 a.m.** beginning in our church. Watch for the boxes in the back for your donations of eggs and candy. Bags with eggs to be de-taped will be available as well. Egg stuffing will be on **Tuesday, April 16 at 6 p.m.** in the Fellowship Hall. Many thanks to our Women’s Guild who generously sponsors this activity every year!



Friendly visits

Friendly visits will be on **March 10**, right after the afternoon Bible study. This time, we will head “south” visiting some of our shut-in members and the Bailey apartments. Please consider this ministry.

PRESCHOOL NEWS



February has started out a little better, than January - weather wise. We almost got two full weeks in without missing class. All three

classed had their Valentine parties, with only one delayed a day. Pastor Bode had to reschedule one chapel because of an early dismissal, and no afternoon class. And winter marches on. Stay tuned to more delays and cancellations in March. **Submitted by Anna Aten**

MARCH CELEBRATIONS



Birthdays:

4 Bode Norquist
5 Daniel Stankiewicz
5 Louise Knauer
6 Bertha Shoemaker
8 William Mead

12 William Zick
15 Rich Niederberger
16 Emily Stankiewicz
30 Lisa Smith

No Anniversaries in March?



LWML 38th Biennial Convention Information

Date: June 20–23, 2019

Location: Mobile, Alabama

Theme: "In Praise to the LORD!"

Scripture Verse: *Sing to the Lord, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations (1 Chronicles 16:23–24a).*

President: Patti Ross

Convention Goal Statement: Led by God's power, we praise and proclaim the Lord among all the nations.

Convention Objectives -- Each convention attendee will:

- Sing and rejoice in celebration of His Word.
- Tell of His salvation for all.
- Declare His glory among the nations.
- Go forth in His joy!

For more information see website: lwmlorg@lwml.

WOMEN'S GUILD NEWS & NOTES

Our February meeting was held on the 9th with 9 ladies and Pastor present. The congregation received letters of thanks from Interfaith and our Adopt a Family. The Egg Hunt was discussed (see separate article). Thanks was expressed to all who donated to our Valentine College boxes.

Our main discussion was about a new electronic sign for out front of the church. Patti and Meg have been working on prices, dimensions, etc. The small sign outside was given in memory of Emma Loch, so we want to be sure to be mindful of that and incorporate some of that into the new sign. A new sign would be able to be programmed by computer. Women's guild decided that if one is purchased, we could perhaps pay half (up to \$1,000). Patti and Meg will work with the trustees.

Important upcoming dates:

Saturday, March 16, 10:15: LWML meeting in Fellowship Hall. All ladies are encouraged to attend.

Thursday, April 4: Ladies day out. All ladies are invited to enjoy dinner at Remington's Restaurant in Tunkhannock. We'll meet in

the church parking lot at 4 p.m. (Remington's opens at 4:30). We will, hopefully, be back at church before dark. Order off the menu.

Saturday, May 4: LWML spring workshop (details to follow)

Saturday, June 1: Summer Lunch Box chicken barbecue at VFW in Lenox. Be thinking about baskets for the raffle and bake sale items. **Submitted by Anne Bode**

Operation Christmas Child



AFRICA

Operation Christmas Child and The Greatest Journey, the Gospel is breaking through the area's spiritual darkness.

"It has doubled the number of children we are able to reach with the Gospel."

A little more than a year ago, a church started in a small, shaded space between two mango trees. It's all because Operation Christmas Child shoebox recipients invited their friends and family to hear the Gospel at The Greatest Journey discipleship classes. 15 children responded to the church's invitation to a special Operation Christmas Child event. There, they heard the Gospel, received shoebox gifts, and were invited to learn more about Jesus through The Greatest Journey.



Bernard, one of the shoebox recipients, didn't hesitate in his desire to know more about Jesus. "The following Sunday I went to church," he said. Through the lessons, he learned that

Jesus died for his sins. Because of this, he received Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. "I started worshipping God that day," said Bernard. All 15 of the shoebox recipients participated in the 12-lesson discipleship course. With each lesson, the number of children in the class grew as the shoebox recipients invited friends and family to hear about Jesus.

"Soon we were the size of a small church, so we decided we should start a regular congregation," said Pastor Ransome. The

15 shoebox recipients graduated from The Greatest Journey and are part of the core church group, which currently totals almost 50 children and adults. Bernard, now 16, and the other children who are part of the new church are seeing God use their testimonies to change the lives of their parents and other family members. Bernard's father, mother, and older sister all have started attending church with him. **Submitted by Nancy Shoemaker**



Stewardship

At our recent Church Council meeting, President Rich Niederberger read a letter from District President Chris Wicher. He reported on the shortfall of funds given from congregations in the district for 2018. Many churches do not pledge to district or synod at all. Last year, Grace pledged \$8000 for the year. This year, we have decreased our pledge to \$7000 for 2019.

District officials adjusted their own budget for 2019. Some significant cuts that pertain to us at Grace are:

- Decrease grant support to Camp Pioneer from \$45,000 to \$13,000
- Eliminate support to Philadelphia Lutheran Missions

Many of our members have benefitted from the ministry at Camp Pioneer. Many of our ladies attend retreat their every September. In the past, our youth have attended retreats. It is suggested that we individually support Camp Pioneer on our own. Many in our congregation already do and for that Pioneer is thankful. Please consider this in your giving plan.

Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries is doing innovative things in downtown Philadelphia, reaching out to locals and college students. Please consider supporting this ministry on your own.

Grace has many needs of its own, and we realize that your resources are limited. God will continue to bless us and our giving. **Submitted by Anne Bode & Diane Nowalk, Stewardship Committee**

SUMMER LUNCH BOX



Chicken Barbeque Benefit for Summer Lunch Box Program is set for Saturday, June 1st at Elk Mountain V.F.W., Lenox Corners. Details to follow.
Submitted by Lorraine Stanton

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Church Council again met in the daytime on Friday February 15 at 11:00 AM. We had 14 council members attend both the January and February meetings so we will continue to meet in the daytime. The next meeting will be March 15 at 11:00 am. Loraine Stanton will conduct the meeting as Mary and I will be away on vacation.

Renovation Committee will have its next meeting on March 29 at 11:00 AM. Quotes for repairing or replacing the activities center roof have been received and additional quotes are being sought. We are also getting quotes for fixing the ceiling in the balcony, replacing the windows in the fellowship hall bathrooms, and replacing the narthex entry doors and the side entrance doors and the doors from the narthex into the church and for a complete narthex renovation per the architect's plans.

The congregation will be appointing a Lay voter for the Synod Presidential election in June. The Lay Voter and Pastor Bode will cast votes for Grace Lutheran.

Don't miss out on the many opportunities to participate in Bible Study and the Joining Jesus in his Mission meetings. New faces are always welcome.

Rich Niederberger, Council President

COUNCIL MINUTES

A meeting was held on February 15, 2019 with Fourteen Council members present.

Pastor opened the meeting stating that we should fear, love and trust God above all things. Council sang Hymn 729, 'I am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus', and the first verse of Hymn 594, 'God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It'. Pastor led council in prayer.

Minutes of the January council meeting, were read and approved.

Aubrey Monetta will be baptized on February 17 during service.

Treasurer's Report: Stan distributed his report and noted that the synod offering fell short by just 33 cents. Pastor stated that over half the congregations in the district do not pledge or give to synod. It was noted that repairs were over budget at this point due to furnace repairs. Stan also noted that the guest pastor amount was adjusted due to an error in calculation. The amount that was reported was a six month figure rather than a four month figure. It is denoted by an 'X' on the attached report. He also noted that the income amount was greater, due to an individual that donates quarterly rather than weekly. It was stated that a check for the Summer Lunch Box program was given by the Network for Good organization had yet to be deposited. Motion was made to accept the report and carried. A complete copy of the treasurer's report is on file.

Pastor's Report: Pastor distributed his report and asked for impacts. Some were shared. Various items on Pastor's report were highlighted and discussed. Pastor encouraged attendance at a men's retreat at Camp Pioneer in May. Patti Barankovich asked that another request for address changes be put in the bulletin. There is a faith-based movie to begin showing in February produced by Tim Tebow called 'Run the Race'. A complete copy of his report is on file.

Elders Report: Marie reported that the elders are scheduled to meet today. She also said that there will be an acknowledgement of Mrs. Fluck's twenty years as preschool teacher this year.

Worship Committee: Anne Bode reported that the next friendly visit is scheduled for March 10 with one visit to the Nicholson apartments. 'Convicted' will be the series selected for Lenten services. There will be two Ash Wednesday services on March 6th,

one at 11:30 and the other at 7:00. The first soup and sandwich gathering prior to Lenten service will be March 13 at 6:15. A sign-up sheet will be available to supply soup or sandwich for the Wednesday Lenten services. The Easter eggs will be set out for 'de-taping' soon. Egg stuffing with pizza provided will be on Tuesday, April 16 at 6:00. The Easter egg hunt will be Saturday, April 20.

Trustees Report: Lynn Adams reported that he sent emails out to the renovation committee with estimates from Phil Hodges. Two estimates were provided for the parsonage roof. One estimate was \$8500 for laying the shingles over the existing single layer with some repairs like clearing off the moss. The other estimate of \$11,790 was to tear off the shingles with additional repairs. Both estimates were all-inclusive except permits. There are some upgrades available including shingle quality and ice guard length. Mr. Hodges sent multiple references, certifications and liability insurance information as well, he expects half down and the other half upon completion. He took measurements to replace the balcony ceiling and some ceiling tiles in the sanctuary, to replace the exterior doors with some that will be used when the narthex renovation occurs. The next renovation committee meeting is on Friday, March 29 at 11:00. Lynn said that he would contact Perini Construction for additional quotes and Adams Cable regarding WiFi access in the parsonage.

Financial Secretary: No report.

Sunday School Superintendent: Meg Klees was not able to attend the meeting but sent the following report. 'I was thinking maybe July 22-26 for VBS unless that conflicts with anyone's schedule, or if you wanted me to try for after Friendship Sunday again. I was also thinking that if I go with the 'Roar' theme, it might be fun for the last night (day) we go to Animal Adventure Park (Harpersville, NY). I will double check on prices for groups as well as the price of a bus. I thought maybe we could have the kids who could pay, pay and the church could cover the rest. (?). Let me know.' The council agreed that July 22-26 would be good. Meg should find out pricing for the next meeting.

Stewardship Committee: Anne Bode reported that she and Diane Nowalk continue to write newsletter articles. Anne has been researching fund-raising ideas for the renovation.

Evangelism Committee: Art stated there was no report.

Women's Guild: Anne Bode reported for the Women's Guild. The Valentine's Day college boxes were packed on February 9. The egg hunt boxes will be placed out soon for donations of egg stuffing supplies (candy). Money was donated to a family in need. On April 1, the Women's Guild will meet at the church at 4:00 and I go to dinner at Remington's in Tunkhannock. May 4 is the LWML spring workshop. June 1 is the SLB chicken BBQ. There will be a basket raffle and bake sale. Patti Barankovich stated that the trustees have indicated that there is electricity available for a new church sign. It was noted that the stone work for that sign was donated in memory of Emma Loch and should be incorporated into the proposed new sign. The Women's Guild has voted to donate up to \$1000 for this sign. Carolyn Loch is expected to contact Paul Miller to see if he still wishes to donate to the sign in memory of Carol Miller. The next WG meeting will be March 15 at 10:15. Lorraine Stanton will chair the meeting.

Youth Report: No report made. There was a Christmas party held in December.

Christian Education Report: Eileen Gundell reported that the preschool will be celebrated at service on April 7. A request was made to put together a video of the children singing or at various activities, to be shown at the service. The congregation was thanked for the donation of \$2000 given since the request was made for support. Marie Doty represented the Elders at the board of education meeting. At the end-of-the-year preschool picnic, Lana Fluck's twenty year achievement as preschool teacher will be honored. Eileen will submit an article to the Montrose Independent in either March or April inviting former students or to provide pictures for a photo board as part of the acknowledgement. Wednesday, March 20 at 9:30 will be the next board meeting.

Administrator of Day School: Anna Aten reported that the preschool missed several sessions due to severe weather. There may be make-up classes scheduled. An indoor activity will be decided upon to replace the usual bowling outing since the Nicholson alley is closed due to flood damage. There will be a

hoagie sale scheduled soon. There are already two four-year old applications in for next year. After discussion, it was decided to see if the web site could provide a preschool application form, as well as, a link, to the LCMS site.

Unfinished Business: Art Gundell reported for the transitional committee. There is only one blank slot on the committee lists. Art will provide a copy of the questions for each committee. He requested to be informed of meeting dates and times since he'd like to attend. The first Part A, organizational analysis, meeting led by Rich will be at the Niederberger home on February 16 at noon. The first financial analysis meeting, led by Stan Klees, will be Wednesday, February 20 at 5:30 at the church. This meeting has a snow date of Thursday, February 28, same place and time. Discussion regarding the book 'Autopsy of a Deceased Church' subtitled 'Twelve Ways to Keep Yours Alive' by Thom Ranier was discussed.

New Business: Pastor said there needs to be a meeting ASAP regarding meeting with the Circuit Visitor (counselor). Art Gundell and Rich Niederberger will contact him. Rich Niederberger read a letter from Pastor Wicher regarding the diminished funds sent to synod from all congregations. This was a \$56,000 shortfall. Pastor Wicher emphasized continued giving. Prayer was offered by council for the district. Grace Lutheran submitted a signed pledge of donations. Patti Barankovich asked about a dinner to commemorate Pastor's retirement. A date of September 21, 2019, was set. A committee will be set up and work should begin soon since those wishing to attend need to be notified, as well as location established. Synodical elections, including President, will take place in July 2019, in Florida. The congregation needs to select a member, along with Pastor, to vote for candidates. These selections must be made 90 days prior to elections (by March 24). Research must be done to select candidates. There will be a quick congregational meeting after service on February 24 to select the lay person who will vote.

The next meeting of Council will be Friday, March 15 at 11:00. Lorraine Stanton will chair since Rich will be away. There will be a congregational meeting with potluck on Sunday, April 7 after service.

Since there was no other business, the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer..

Respectfully submitted,

Dorothy Klees, Secretary with Mary Niederberger



To Call a Pastor

On January 26 we went over our answers to the set of preliminary questions and came away with a good characterization of ourselves, along with a clearer picture of the areas in which we need to work for improving our ministry. We have now begun working on the self-study documents required by the District before we can receive the names of pastors that we might consider for a Call. Rich Niederberger's group, working on Document A – organizational analysis study, met on February 16 and started their work. Lynn Adams heads a subcommittee of Document A, concerned with building and facilities. Stan Klees's group will meet on February 28 to work on Document B – the financial review study. Steve Schulze will lead the group working on Document C – ministry evaluation study, when he and Jean return from Florida around mid-March. Patti Barankovich has her group studying the materials for Document D – Pastoral style and evaluation. All together, we have 31 of our members involved in the self-study committees.

As we discovered with the preliminary questions, it is encouraging when we get together and discuss what it is we do here at Grace for our Lord's Kingdom. When all the groups have finished their work, it will be presented to the church council and voters. Following the approval of those, it will be sent to the District office. Upon the approval of the District, we will be eligible to receive names of pastors for us to consider. Hopefully, that will occur sometime this fall. Please remember that there is a severe shortage of pastors in our church body. Pray that the Lord provides a man that will fulfil the needs we find in our self-study work.

Submitted by Art Gundell

The Last Word...

My brother is a Pastor in Florida. He likes to post devotional thoughts on Facebook. In one, he spoke about the true meaning of the Sabbath day, a day of rest. Here is basically what he said:

*The good news is that there is a God,
and the even better news is that it is not you.*

Thanks bro!

Pasta Ki E. Boode



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“The Pastor keeps referring to
‘this morning’s text’ ... but which one?”

