



Granite Falls Lutheran News December, 2021

Baby's First Christmas

First, neither Joyce nor any of our family members (to the best of my knowledge) are expecting a baby. Second, this won't be an early telling of the Christmas story; we'll have plenty of time for that later. Third, it's not about those pictures or ornaments that we received after the birth of each of our four kids, that we now dutifully (and emotionally?) hang on our tree, now that they've all grown up and moved out of the *last* house we lived in.

This "Baby's First Christmas" is really about me as your Pastor. Last year, it just did not seem like Christmas, though it was my first year here. No packed Christmas Eve worship services. No college students home on break. No overdressed, fidgeting children waiting to open presents, falling asleep at the late service. No 'three-generation' pews, or even "four-generation!" No kneeling at the communion rail. No candle lighting and singing "Silent Night." Having done this for thirty years as a pastor, it was such a "non-Christmas" for me; maybe for you too.

But, our Lord willing, we will finally be together this Christmas, and I will finally get to experience a Granite Falls Lutheran Church Christmas Eve! I have heard so much about them over the last 16 months! And the greatest, best part of that will be seeing you—seeing you all, or as many as can come—and finally getting to be with your family that evening. It may only be for a fleeting moment, but linked in prayer and song and bread and wine and the company of angels and the communion of saints, by God we will do it!! And you will remember all those past Christmas Services, and be deeply connected with Jesus and God, and family and friends, and neighbors and community, and I will be soaking it all in for the very first time—like a "Baby's First Christmas."

And so we gather, with some real babies celebrating first Christmases, newlyweds celebrating first Christmases, parents celebrating first Christmases, widows observing first Christmases. But in all those "firsts," including mine, a baby Jesus. May the Holy Spirit connect us all with his innocence and trust and care in the One who sent this Baby on the First Christmas!

Pastor Mark & Joyce Manning

*"Jeg er sa glad hver julekveld, ti da blev Jesus fodt;
Da lyste stjernen som en sol, og engler sang so sodt."*

"I am so glad each Christmas Eve, the night of Jesus' birth!
Then like the sun the star shone forth, and angels sang on earth!"

Worship in December

Worship with us on Sunday Mornings at 9:00am.

Come let us worship together as we sing praises to our God and grow in faith together.

Sunday, December 5 - Second Sunday of Advent

Holy Communion

Scripture: : Luke 3:1-6

Sunday, December 12,- Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday School Christmas Program

Holy Communion

Scripture: Luke 3:7-18

Sunday, December 19, Fourth Sunday of Advent

Senior Choir Christmas service

Holy Communion

Scripture: Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

Friday, December 24, Christmas Eve Services

2:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 7:00 pm

Scripture: Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

Sunday, December 26, - Lessons and Carols

Scripture: Luke 2:41-52

Adult Faith Formation Class

What do Mennonites believe?

Why do Mormons call themselves "Latter Day Saints?"

How is the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod so much like us and yet we do so little together?

Why are they called "Methodists?"

Beginning Sunday, December 5th,

after worship we will begin an Adult Sunday Faith Formation class called **"Honoring Our Neighbor's Faith"**

where we get the chance to study another denomination or religion each week-- and you choose which ones you want to study. Please come for a cup of coffee, a little reading, and some discussion about "our neighbor's faith."

November Ministerial Acts Funerals

Don Finnes - November 8th

Doug McCoss - November 16th

Craig Bakkelund - November 23rd

Lynn Johnson - November 24th

Online Worship Services

Worship services will continue to be livestreamed on the GFLC Facebook page.

If you are unable to tune in live, the services will be posted to Facebook and YouTube after being streamed.

Worship services are also aired on the local cable channel 8 on Sundays at 7:00 PM.

GFLC Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/GFLCGFMN/>

GFLC YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/gflcMNeIca/feed>

"Sing, Choirs of Angels!"

December 19th

Senior Choir

Christmas Worship Service

9:00 am





Youth Ministry

We're starting to increase the number of youth events, and I wanted to highlight the three we have coming up. If you would be interested in helping out with the planning or volunteering for any of these events, please reach out to me!

On December 8th we're going to be baking cookies as a part of a Confirmation service project, which we will be distributing that night. We're going to be giving these away to our members who are 80+ years old in Granite, as well as all of the immediate neighbors of the church.

On December 11th we're going to be hosting a 'Christmas Parent Break,' where parents of 4-12 year olds can drop off their kiddos from 10:00am to 4:00pm. We're going to have fun activities (maybe even some cookie baking!), lunch, snacks, movie time, and likely some naps. After dropping off their kids, parents are encouraged to go do whatever they want! This event doesn't cost anything for the parents, it's just a way for us to give back to our young parents.

Sometime in January, we're going to have a family sledding outing. We don't have the date of this fully set, but we're probably going to go the weekend of 22nd-23rd or the 29th-30th.

We hope you're able to join any (or all) of these events, either as a volunteer, as a parent, or as a youth!

Pastor Paul

Notes from Pastor Paul

The last six months have marked a lot of progress for us at GFLC! We've worshipped, baptized, visited, and planned through an uncertain future. This community is at it's best when we're all working together, and I wanted to highlight a few moments of this.

In June we sent youth and parents to the BWCA, and participated in the Western Fest parade. In July I covered for Clarkfield Lutheran one Sunday, helped Baxter Lutheran get their livestream functioning, Pr. Manning and I planned the Confirmation schedule, and I presided over the wedding of Logan and Hailey DeBlicke. In August Anna and I visited Greece, we hosted VBS at GFLC, and I presided over the wedding of Lucas and Hannah Christians. We started up Confirmation and Sunday school in September, we prepared to host our Bishop's installation, we hosted a 20th Anniversary memorial service for 9/11, and I presided over two funerals, as Pr. Manning was out with Covid-19 for two weeks. In October we hosted our Bishop's installation, which brought in bishops, pastors, and lay people from all around the country! I also started the Youth Advisory Board, and covered for Light of Christ Lutheran in Delano so Pr. Bruce Kuenzel could come visit. In November, we held our new member class (with seven new members in attendance), I attended an anti-racism retreat and a variety of community events, and we had our Semi-Annual meeting. Overall, we achieved quite a bit in the last six months!

There are three tangible goals I have for outreach over the next six months:

Youth Outreach

1. Have a minimum of one non-Confirmation Youth Event per month

Social Media Outreach

2. Continue to increase outreach through Social Media by posting two videos per week to Facebook, YouTube, and possibly Instagram

Younger Adult Outreach

3. Create quarterly events for adults aged 18-40, with the hope of deepening relationships and sparking joy.

Thanks for being a partner in this journey!

Yours in Christ, Pastor Paul

Blessings
COUNT THEM ONE BY ONE

December 2021

Children's Church & Sunday School Schedule

(age 4 thru 1st Grade)

(2nd thru 6th Grades)

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| December 5 | Children's Church - 9:00 am Sunday School - 10:00 am |
| December 12 | Sunday School Christmas Program - 9:00 am |
| December 19 | Children's Church - 9:00 am No Sunday School |
| December 26 | Children's Church 9:00 am No Sunday School |

Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday, December 12th

9:00 am



What's Happening at GFLC in December

| | | |
|---------------|---------|--|
| December 5th | 9:00 am | Holy Communion Worship Service |
| December 12th | 9:00 am | Sunday School Christmas Program w/Holy Communion |
| December 19th | 9:00 am | Senior Choir Christmas Service w/Holy Communion |
| December 24th | 2:00 pm | Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship w/Holy Communion |
| | 4:00 pm | Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship w/Holy Communion |
| | 7:00 pm | Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship w/Holy Communion |
| December 26th | 9:00 am | Lessons and Carols Worship Service |

Let's De-Mystify "The Budget"

One of the quickest ways to see people's eyes glaze over, or get them uninterested in ministry, is to haul out the budget. It simply does not motivate people to action (or good giving, for that matter either.) But let me do some explaining...and use your imagination...

Imagine a pastor visiting you in the hospital or at your home, or Ginny posting and updating our website, or Scott and Karla preparing for a funeral, or Lynn and Joyce playing music, or Val keeping track of all our finances.

= \$367,390, or 70% of our budget, is people doing ministry for you and with you.

Imagine the tools it takes to put on worship: music and instruments, maintenance, etc.

= \$12,400, or 2.3% of our budget, helps those people make worship happen for you and with you.

Imagine the tools it takes to help pass on the faith to new and future generations, not including all of your valuable volunteer time. = \$9300, or 1.7% of our budget is in our Sunday School

Imagine the real tools, the fuel, the machines, the maintenance, electricity, and the insurance it takes to keep our building looking beautiful, not including all your valuable volunteer time. = \$69,120 or 13.2% of our budget, provides a "home" for our ministry here in Granite Falls.

Imagine offices with no computers or software, no paper supplies or fasteners, no copiers or printers, not including the talent and dedication of those who work with them. = \$9,800, or 2.3% of our budget, give them the tools and technology for modern ministry.

While responsible ministry requires that we have dollar\$, real ministry requires that we exercise **imagination** and **vision** so that we can responsibly use those resources to God's ministry and Christ's purpose. Look for our new Vision and Mission Statement to give us inspiration and guidance in using your gifts **imaginatively for ministry!**

ESPRESSO TIME

Espresso Time will be the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month at the church, with appropriate social distancing, for those who are comfortable.

For the safety of all, if you are not feeling well, please stay home.



Last chance for your picture to be taken for the Church directory!

We will be taking photos before and after worship on December 12th.

There are also appointments available during the week.

Contact the office.



GFLC Semi-Annual Fall Congregational Meeting Minutes

Sunday, November 21st, 2021, 10:00am

President Larry Thielen called the Fall Semi-Annual Meeting to order at 10:15am on November 21st, 2021 in the church sanctuary. A quorum was present. Larry asked for a motion to approve the agenda and the minutes from the Spring Semi-Annual meeting. Motion by Les Bergquist, second by Karla Bjorndal. Passed.

Pastor Mark Manning gave his report. He started by thanking the women of the church who led our worship. He mentioned the Executive Committee's ongoing work on our Church's Vision and Mission. Covid-19 is still presenting challenges to our congregation and leadership as we try to make decisions regarding the very public nature of our congregation and ministries, especially as they pertain to worship and Christian education. We pray for our members and their families at this difficult time. Pastor Paul will send his report out. The church financial report updates as of 10/31/21 were included in the annual report. We are hopeful for an increase in the months of November and December.

Larry explained the review process that the church council had followed to begin the process of bringing our constitution and by-laws up to date. The council recommended (**Pastor's edit: *considering***) changes to constitution provision 9.03. The congregation was notified at least 30 days prior to this meeting. If a vote passes, it is effective as of December 1, 2021. No second vote would be required. The proposed constitutional changes to be considered are as follows:

Current Text:

9.03.a Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every ordained minister shall; 1) preach the Word; 2) administer the sacraments; 3) conduct public worship; and 4) provide pastoral care.

Proposed Additions to Consider:

9.03. 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel; 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication; 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.

A motion was made by Les Bergquist to not adopt these proposed changes and keep 9.03 as is. It was seconded by Jon Martinson. Discussion was invited before the individual votes were taken. There were concerns in the congregation as to why we need to list these. Pastor Paul explained the changes were recommended as our constitution currently does not match the model constitution provided by the ELCA in this section, this change would just add in the duties in the ELCA Model Constitution. These four items are listed in our two Pastors' letters of call. Pastor Mark and Pastor Paul are open to more discussion before we decide on this. Elaine explained the four points. The re-read motion was to not adopt these changes. Ballots were distributed and collected. The results of the vote: 59 YES, 22 NO, 1 ABSTAIN. The motion to leave constitution provision 9.03 unchanged passed; no changes will be made.

Larry asked for a motion to approve the budget. Motion was made by Tim Johnson, second from Terri Dinesen. Discussion was opened up to the congregation. Cheryl went over repairs and larger projects of the church. Passed.

Larry asked for a motion to shred the ballots. Motion was made by Paul Hoernemann, second from Terri Dinesen. Passed. Voting results were given confirming no changes will be made to the constitution and bylaws. Pastor Manning gave the closing prayer.

Larry allowed for any last questions or discussion. There was a question about the status of our custodian, Joe. Pastor Mark explained we are getting month by month updates and it has been 14.5 months since his injury. A motion to adjourn the semi-annual meeting was made by Karla Bjorndal, seconded by Ali Mensink. Passed.

Larry Thielen adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Kayla Anderson, Council Secretary (Edited for publication by Pastor M)

Updated information?

Do you have a new address, a new phone number, e-mail, or have you switched to using only a cell phone and your land-line is no longer in use? We are in need of your updated information. If you have had a change, or are not receiving any email messages, please contact the church office so that we may better stay in contact with you!

Confirmation Cookie Baking Night

December 8th in the evening.

We're going to have some folks baking, and delivering cookies!! If you know of someone (or yourself) within the city limits of Granite Falls who would like cookies, please let the office know. They don't need to be members.



Christmas Childcare Day

December 11, at

GFLC 10:00 to 4:00 pm

This is for kids in Pre-K to 6th grade (older kiddos are welcome too!) Parents can use this time for shopping, relaxing, etc. If you would like to volunteer or sign up your kids, please contact the office.



GFLC Church Council Minutes + Tuesday, November 9, 2021 7:30 pm

Present- Larry, Elaine, Kenton, Kayla, Ali, Shawnn, Terri, Kelly, Cheryl, Pastor Mark, Pastor Paul

A. Opening: Larry called the meeting to order. Devotions were given by Kelly. The Vision and Mission Statements were recited.

B. Consent Agenda: Last month's minutes and Pastor's reports were emailed out in advance. Financial Statement and Reports, Property, Worship/ Music, Stewardship and Outreach reports were also emailed out in advance. October contributions were down. The checkbook balance as of 10/31/21 was \$14,271.26. **Motion:** Shawnn **Second:** Terri **Action:** Passed

C. Old Business

1. Request for Shared Pastoral Service Agreement with Yellow Medicine Lutheran of Hanley Falls. President's Report. Request to delay action on this item to a later council meeting. Delayed action until April.

D. New Business

1. Membership: transfer in of Jeff & Jackie Ettesvold, Decker, Lainey, and Elin; Anna Drees, formerly Anna Skow-Anderson. Transfer out of Sarah Bollman. **Motion:** Kelly **Second:** Terri **Action:** Passed

2. 2022 Church Ministry Budget- two years ago we were down pastors and only paying one pastor, this year prices are increasing, Pastor Paul got married which added more insurance for family. We do have a Budget Cushion Fund of \$69,380.10. Ask Val about line of credit. **Motion:** Shawnn **Second:** Terri **Action:** Passed

E. Other Church Council Items

1. Report on current COVID-19 Policies, Procedures and Strategies- We will continue to use collection plates.

2. Pastor Mark and Pastor Paul: Monthly summaries were emailed out ahead of time.

3. Report on Policies and Staff updates: **Custodial Position update:** Pastor Mark gave update- still waiting. We will look to find a temporary part-time custodian to relieve Bjorndals.

4. Fall Semi-Annual Meeting Agenda- Discussion about changing any bylaws. Do we want to risk losing people over this topic?

5. Vision and Mission Statement Report- review at next meeting.

6. Congregational/Council Officers Report. There were no agreements settled on with the revised Associate Pastor description duties. Larry and Kenton dismissed themselves during the meeting. Pastor Mark handed out an Explanation of Constitution & By-Laws.

F. Committee Ministry Discussion and Oral Reports

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted: Kayla Anderson, Council Secretary (Edited for publication by Pastor M)



Next monthly Council meeting: Tuesday, December 14th at 7:30 pm

December 2021

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| | | | 1 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:00 PM Confirmation Class | 2 | 3 Office Closed Pastor Paul Out | 4 7:00 AM Men's Bible Study YME Band Cookie Baking |
| 5 9:00 AM Worship with Holy Communion 10:00 AM Adult Faith Formation Class 10:00 AM Sunday School | 6 Pastor Manning Out | 7 10:30 AM Staff Meeting 5:30 PM Executive Committee Meeting 7:00 PM Property Committee Meeting | 8 2:00 PM GF Care Center Worship 5:15 PM Education Committee Mtg 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:00 PM Confirmation Service Project | 9 2:30 PM Espresso Time | 10 Office Closed Pastor Paul Out | 11 7:00 AM Men's Bible Study Christmas Parent Break 10am - 4pm |
| 12 9:00 AM Sunday School Christmas Program 10:00 AM Adult Faith Formation Class | 13 9:00 AM WELCA Board Mtg Pastor Manning Out | 14 10:30 AM Staff Meeting 6:00 PM Worship/Music Committee Mtg 6:30 PM Outreach Committee Meeting 7:30 PM Council Meeting | 15 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:00 PM Confirmation Class | 16 6:30 PM Stewardship Committee Mtg | 17 Pastor Paul Out | 18 7:00 AM Men's Bible Study |
| 19 9:00 AM Worship with Holy Communion 10:00 AM Adult Faith Formation Class No Sunday School | 20 Pastor Manning Out Newsletter Deadline | 21 10:30 AM Staff Meeting | 22 7:00 PM Choir Practice | 23 2:30 PM Espresso Time | 24 Christmas Eve Services 2:00pm 4:00pm 7:00pm | 25 7:00 AM Men's Bible Study Christmas Day |
| 26 9:00 AM Lessons & Carols Worship No Sunday School | 27 Pastor Manning Out | 28 10:30 AM Staff Meeting | 29 7:00 PM Choir Practice | 30 | 31 Pastor Paul Out | |

December Birthdays

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 David Dahl | 7 Wanda Josephson | 19 Jada Erickson | 23 Vivian Minsaas |
| 1 Kathleen Hendrickson | 7 Tara Mickels | 19 Barry Peterson | 24 Kurt Johnson |
| 1 Rebecca Lewison | 8 Donald Lecy | 19 Brian Waller | 24 Grace Stuhr |
| 2 Merald Buchholz | 8 Ronald Lecy | 19 Mariah Norell | 26 Jodi Peterson |
| 2 Hunter Gullickson | 8 Etta Mensink | 20 Kylah Ims | 26 Jeffrey Williams |
| 2 Roger Nielsen | 8 Sophia Poff | 20 Sylvia Skjefte | 27 Velma Olson |
| 2 Sharon Sannerud | 9 Saralee Kietzmann | 20 Michael Richter | 28 Maddox Anderson |
| 2 Sue Tollefson | 10 Renae Hamre | 20 Vanessa Ochoa | 28 Joan Lundell |
| 3 Peter Linden | 10 Rebecca Hamre | 20 Angela Winter | 28 Josie Pederson |
| 3 Lorraine Tebben | 10 Doreen Miller | 21 Noel Eggebraaten | 29 Terri Dinesen |
| 3 Megan Timm | 10 Taylor Wieland | 21 Brianna Hempel | 29 Terry Lecy |
| 4 Cora Erickson | 12 Rita Christianson | 21 Amelia Johnson | 29 Angela Paulson |
| 4 Karen Haroldson | 12 William Stark | 21 Eldon Nordang | 30 Maureen Aakre |
| 4 Mattea Hempel | 14 Peter Frahm | 21 Patrick Ohliger | 30 Julia Knudson |
| 4 Caleb Jans | 14 Roger Hamre | 21 Lynn Ullrich | 30 Betty Opdahl |
| 5 Darlene Erickson | 15 Julie Bredeson | 22 Brooke Olson | 30 Tony Paulson |
| 5 Angela Midthun | 16 Robbin Bendel | 22 Gretchen Opdahl | 30 Austin Thorstad |
| 5 Joanelle Sannerud | 16 Scott Heglund | 22 Timothy Opdahl | 30 Ian Zempel |
| 6 Lois Roth | 17 Sue Bones | 23 Leona Aeikens | 31 Brenda Lantz |
| 6 Laney Santjer | 18 Dawn Petersen | 23 Tenley Anderson | 31 Jodi Petersen |
| 7 Kathy Anderson | 18 Michael Schaffran | 23 Kristin Foy | 31 Kyle TeBeest |

December Worship Leaders

| | 12/5/2021 | 12/12/2021 | 12/19/2021 | 12/24/2021 | 12/24/2021 | 12/24/2021 | 12/26/2021 |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---------------|
| | | | | 2:00 PM | 4:00 PM | 7:00 PM | |
| Usher Team | Doug Peterson | Mark Jensen | Jeff Koepke | Scott Bjorndal | Stan Santjer | Keith Knudson | Scott Santjer |
| Reader | Dana Baldry | X | Mark Sannerud | Karla Bjorndal | Darlene Santjer | Kathy Hendrickson | Scott Jans |
| Communion Assistant | Dana Baldry Gail Aus* Dick Jepson Dar Hanson | Val Hoffman Mike Ohliger Sally Ohliger Shawnn Martin | Joanelle Sannerud Mark Sannerud Connie Peterson Doug Peterson | Val Santjer Karla Bjorndal | Di Lalim Ali Mensink Mike Ohliger Sally Ohliger | Kathy Hendrickson Roger Abel | X |

Year End Contribution deadline is December 30th, at 3:00pm

Want to Sign Up for Electronic Giving?

Go to the Granite Falls Lutheran Website. (www.granitefallslutheran.com) On the home page you will see a link titled "Give Online" towards the upper right part of your screen. From there you will be able to complete the easy sign-up. This is a simple way to pre-arrange offerings to the church.



Direct link to Simply Giving sign up: click [here](#)



"For a child has been born for us, a son has been given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace." Isaiah 9:6-7a

May God continue to guide us as we work and pray for peace in our families, communities, country and the world during this Advent season.

Thank you to each of the WELCA members who helped with the Thankoffering service. Your contributions were amazing!! Thank you also to those who purchased quilts. The monies will be used for mission projects and to purchase quilting materials as needed.

Thank you to all who contributed time and materials for quilts and lap robes, sewing kits, wheel chair bags, and child care kits. The finished products have been distributed to, Avera Health, Turn-about, YMC Family Services, Food Shelf, GFL graduates, LWR and local families with emergency needs.

2022 WELCA calendar books will be printed in January. They'll be available at church and as in previous years, we will not put names on them or deliver them.

December Dates to remember:

Executive Board meeting: December 13, 9:00 (at church)

Dinner at your Door: December 20 -23 – Group 4

God's peace be with you.
Kathy Hendrickson



Mark Manning

Lead Pastor

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