



# Granite Falls Lutheran News

## January 2021

### *A New Year, A New Calendar, A New Future*

Part of getting to know you and know this area involves driving around town, getting to know the businesses, wandering down gravel roads, talking with people (constantly asking “now, are you my parishioner?”), and finally, reading your church history, written in 1995 entitled “Built on The Rock.” It has been an invaluable resource, and I would recommend it to anyone who loves this congregation as much as I do, and who wants to learn more. We might want to throw our old calendars away (my wife doesn’t like to), but we can’t discard histories such as these.

It got me thinking about how blithely and quickly we throw away, then hang up, another yearly calendar. It got me thinking about how quickly the years pass. It got me thinking about the upcoming years as well as the ones past.

First: we’ve missed a few opportunities to celebrate our past. While the first Norwegian Church (which was to eventually become GFLC) was organized on November 9, 1876--and it might be a few years for that celebration--COVID-19 overwhelmed us last spring and we missed the 75th Anniversary of the organization of GFLC on March 19. Sometime shortly afterward the cornerstone was laid as well. However, the first worship service inside, and dedication of the new stone church, was Easter Sunday, March 25, 1951. I believe we need to celebrate this 75th Anniversary Day, if possible, this spring, on either March 28 (Palm Sunday) or April 4 (Easter Sunday).

Second: Granite Falls Lutheran Church has a fine history of raising up leaders in the church: John Mark Bjorge (with whom I attended seminary), Brad Thom, Mari Thorkelson, John Dalen (a colleague from northwestern Minnesota), and Karen and Peter Soli (whom I have known for many years), as well as others. However, fewer and fewer people are answering the call to congregational ministry, especially from and to small towns and rural areas. I believe that we have much to offer, and much to teach, as well as much to learn, from a relationship with the seminary training people for rural and small town ministry. I believe that by combining our resources with other congregations and with other parishes, we may create a learning situation for a seminary intern or person interested in rural and small-town ministry.

Third: I believe that along with celebrating our 75th Anniversary, over the course of the coming 12 months we need to consider creating a new church history book incorporating the last 25 years with the first 50 years, and undertake a new pictorial directory with a new format befitting our times. This will not only serve as a record of who we are now, but also serve as a guide for our congregation in years to come as it changes and grows.

We live in the midst of this history, all the time creating it as well. Let’s take a few moments to consider celebrating what is, and preparing for what is to come, by creating a record of it all.

Pastor M

# Worship in January



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

When we can worship in person, we will have additional Sunday services at 11:00am and also a weekday (shorter) service on Wednesday at 9:30am

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

**Sunday, January 3rd - Second Sunday of Christmas**

**Scripture: Luke 2:41-52**

**Sunday, January 10th - Baptism of Our Lord**

**Scripture: Mark 1:4-11**

**Sunday, January 17th - Second Sunday of Epiphany**

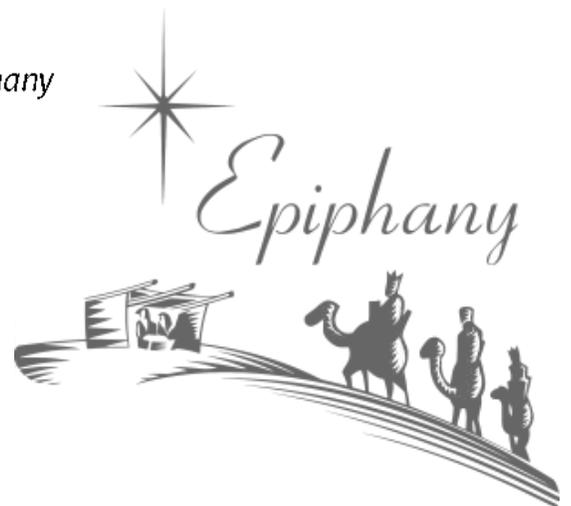
**Scripture: John 1:43-51**

**Sunday, January 24th - Third Sunday of Epiphany**

**Scripture: Mark 1:14-20**

**Sunday, January 31st - Fourth Sunday of Epiphany**

**Scripture: Mark 1:21-28**



## 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.

Our services also continue to be broadcast on KDMA Radio (93.9 FM & 1460 AM) on Sunday mornings at 7:40 AM as well as 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>

## In-person Worship

When possible GFLC will have in-person worship services.

**Please watch our website and/or Facebook page for weekly updates.**

**Sundays at 9:00 am - 11:00 am €**

**Wednesdays at 9:30 am**

\*Masks are required \*Social distancing \*Limited seating per service \*Temperature checks

## STUDENT AND MENTOR CLASSES SET FOR TENTH GRADE

Beginning Wednesday night, January 6, and continuing for the following three Wednesday nights (with room for one 'snow day'), the 10th grade Confirmation Students and their Mentors will meet at 7pm to explore Lutheran Traditions and share Faith Discussion Time. Classes will meet at 7pm Wednesday evenings, with the building room to be determined. There will be a book charge for students.

Be sure to contact Pastor M with the name and e-mail address of your mentor as soon as possible, so we can inform you all of any changes (due to school scheduling), and so we can deliver any meeting materials to you electronically. And remember: masks, distancing and health precautions as usual!

### Confirmation 7th-9th grade

The last month has been rather wonky for our 7th-9th grade confirmation class. Many of the struggles my teacher friends have been having are made apparent. It's hard to encourage participation over Zoom, and I can tell that many of the kiddos are sick of zoom as well. All that being said, we have tried our best to make our 'Zoomfirmation' engaging and exciting. A few weeks ago we acted out the story of Jacob, including the wrestling scene! That was perhaps more fun for me (Pastor Paul) than it was to watch.

As we're entering January, we're hoping to have more in-person confirmation classes. Please continue to watch your email inboxes for class information. We will continue to have classes separated by grades (7th, 8th, and 9th), so that if any individual is positive with COVID-19 their exposure to others is limited.

I've really been enjoying the worship notes that our confirmation students have been writing, and wanted to share the answers to two questions (from two separate students) you might find interesting.

**Q: What parts of the sermon did you find engaging/interesting?**

*Student:* 'I liked that he had the tree from Charlie Brown'

**Q: What parts of the sermon did you find boring? (be honest)**

*Student:* 'The tree part'

Pastor Mark and myself certainly encourage feedback, even when it comes from two different perspectives!

*Pastor Paul*

# Boundary Waters Canoe Area Opportunity

For current 8th graders and older.

Pastor Paul is going to lead a trip to the Boundary Waters this summer (*the land of a thousand sermon illustrations*). The trip would take up to a full week, (one day driving up, five days camping, one day driving back), and likely be the highlight of the summer for anyone who goes.

If you would be interested or want more information, please email Pastor Paul at [pastorpaul@granitefallslutheran.com](mailto:pastorpaul@granitefallslutheran.com)!



## 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.



## December Ministerial Acts

### Baptism:

*Sadie Jo Plaisance - December 20th*

### Deaths

*Bennett Rolla - December 4th*

*Pearl Trotter - December 4th*

*John Aeiķens - December 24th*

### Transfer Out

*Alyssa Hamann - Peace Lutheran, Brookings*

*The Outreach Committee would like to extend our thanks for your generous donations to The Giving Tree that was planted in the narthex. The donated winter warmth items will be shared with the Living at Home Block Nurse Program's "Blessing Baskets" project, the "Mitten Tree" that is available in the Yellow Medicine County Justice Center lobby, and to Yellow Medicine East School office. We appreciate your help in sharing winter warmth necessities to others in our community. Thank you for making a difference!*

# Resuming In-Person Worship

We have gone back and forth between worshipping in-person and worshipping remotely for the last few months. We are going to start worshipping in-person this Sunday (January 3rd, 2021), and I wanted to take a moment to explain why we've been going back and forth, and why we have made the decision to worship in-person now.

A few months ago, we decided as a council to base our in-person/remote decision on what the school was doing. This became increasingly difficult as the school started doing a hybrid model, where certain grades were meeting in person, and certain grades were meeting remotely. Due to this, we decided to tie our meeting in person/remotely decision to whatever the Middle School was doing. The Middle School is going to resume some sort of in-person schooling, and so we are (according to our own policies) going to resume some sort of in-person worship. I sent out an email with a few thoughts to council, and thought I would share said thoughts here with a few additions.

1. I generally think it is 'safe-ish' to resume in person worship of a limited kind. It would have been risky to have a significant gathering in-person over Christmas (given the pressure of attending Christmas worship, the number of people coming from out of town, and it being our first worship for a while), but I think the first two factors go away post-Christmas.

2. It is still not really fully 'safe' to attend worship. Safety is a somewhat funny thing, any time we drive a car there is a chance of us hitting something, or someone hitting us, but we still considering driving 'safe.' However, just like we may cancel worship due to snowstorms (for fear the increased risk might cause a member to get hurt), we have to examine the risk of having in-person worship. Until we get a good percentage of our local population vaccinated, we will never be 'safe' from COVID-19. Our decision as a council therefore is based in what is an acceptable level of risk to expose our members to. Based on this calculator (<https://covid19risk.biosci.gatech.edu/>), if there are 100 people in attendance, there's an 18% chance of one person who is COVID positive attending. If there are 50, that drops to 13.5%. These numbers are based on Yellow Medicine County, and are current as of 12/29/2020. Also, they are based only on population, not on behavior.

Obviously we're hoping that anyone who is ill stays away, but many people are contagious before they know they're COVID positive. There's still some risk involved.

3. Masks have been shown to cause a significant decrease in COVID-19 transmission, and we will continue to require masks at all in-person events (including worship). A side note, gaiters and bandanas are not effective at preventing inhalation or exhalation of COVID-19 aerosols.

4. We are going to refrain from communal singing for now. I hope we are able to resume some sort of communal singing within the next few weeks, but that depends on how our first few weeks of in-person worship go.

5. We will continue to livestream our worship every Sunday at 9:00am, and make it available on YouTube later that Sunday. We will also continue to air worship on the local access channel, and have a shortened message on the radio Sunday morning. If you are more comfortable worshipping remotely, we certainly encourage that!

If you have any questions or comments, please email me at [pastor paul@granitefalls lutheran.com](mailto:pastor paul@granitefalls lutheran.com). Thanks for reading this far! I know it's quite a long article, but I want to be as transparent as possible.

*Pastor Paul*

## *Stewardship is Education, Not Just Information*

What if stewardship became less of the "fear of asking" and more of the "joy of telling"? In our Constitution By-Laws, the section describing the responsibilities of the committee states, "The Stewardship Finance Committee shall have special responsibility for marshalling the resources within the congregation to provide for the financial needs of the congregation as well as the commitment of time and talents necessary to carry on the programs of the church. It shall...organize and conduct, in accordance with Christian principles, stewardship drives, and develop an ongoing program of stewardship education within the congregation..."

As we think about energizing our stewardship resources at Granite Falls Lutheran Church, I have stressed that stewardship is about our relationship with Jesus Christ, and how we use everything that flows out of that relationship, including everything we have and everything we are. Stewardship is less about what I "have" and more about who I "am" in Jesus Christ. Stewardship is Christian preaching and Christian education, first, and method and process second.

While the Committee has a number of responsibilities, including working with the Financial Secretary, it seems to me that their primary job is to preach and teach the Good News of how the things we have can be used to deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ and each other. In nearly every church I have served, it's been hard to recruit people to serve on the stewardship committee because they mostly equate it with asking people for money when we are short, or uncomfortable discussions about limited resources.

Even Granite Falls Lutheran has struggled with this at times; in reading the church history we had quite a debate in the 1960's about printing people's yearly giving in the annual report. But I think if we see this not merely as a 'responsibility' toward financial matters, but an 'opportunity' to preach and teach, to hear joyful Good News and share it with others in an educational setting, then our Stewardship and Finance Committee will be a group people WANT to be with, and serve with. When we root ourselves in the Good News of Jesus, our committee work can be something we look forward to with joy. And when we receive that joy through the Holy Spirit, we can only share it by telling others, and educating our church.

Come join our stewardship work as we begin 2021, by hearing the story of Jesus, and thinking about your own story. Come join with us in joyfully telling it: God is good in things great and small.

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!

## ***GF LUTHERAN OUTREACH COMMITTEE UPDATE:***

The Outreach Committee has been searching for new ways to spread and support the ministry of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, and has chosen to sponsor a seminary student this year for our Global Outreach Project.

The goal of this outreach is to offer support to a seminary student, not only financially, but also in prayer. We were given some names of students by the SW MN ELCA Synod and selected Mollie Varpness. Mollie was born and raised in Montevideo, MN and her home congregation is Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Monte. She is the youngest of four children in her family and recently graduated from Augustana University in Sioux Falls, SD, with majors in Communication Studies and Religion, with Minors in Philosophy and Classics. In September she moved to St. Paul to start her education at Luther Seminary for a Master of Divinity in Word and Sacrament to hopefully become a Pastor for the ELCA.

She describes her call to God's ministry in this way:

"My call to the ministry started as gradual stepping stones because many different parts of my life have created my call. As a kid, I LOVED camp and that is where the seed was planted that began my faith. From there, I have been part of the Lutheran Youth Board for the SWMN synod, attended multiple camps, became a camp counselor myself, participated in campus ministry at Augie, worked at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD, and continued to seek out opportunities to learn from others. "

Our hope is to have Mollie join us at worship in the future and that we would be able to have a noisy offering for her. Until that time, please join the Outreach Committee in uplifting Mollie in prayer as she works toward her goal of becoming an ordained Minister of the ELCA church.

If you would like to make a monetary donation at this time, please send to the church office with a note that your donation is for Outreach to Seminary Student.

*So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. - Galatians 6:10*

### **Want to Sign Up for Electronic Giving?**

Check out the Granite Falls Lutheran Website. ([www.granitefallslutheran.com](http://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](#)

*Blessings*  
COUNT THEM ONE BY ONE



**Use this QR code  
to give an online  
donation.**

## January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 <b>New Year's Day</b> Office Closed	2
3 9:00 AM <i>Worship Service</i> 10:00 AM Take Down Christmas Decorations 11:00 AM <i>Worship Service</i>	4 <b>PASTOR MANNING OUT</b>	5 5:30 PM Executive Committee Meeting	6 6:00 PM 7th Grade Confirmation 6:45 PM 8th Grade Confirmation 7:00 PM 10th Grade mentor Class 7:30 PM 9th Grade Confirmation	7 6:30 PM Education Committee Mtg	8 Office Closed <b>PASTOR PAUL OUT</b>	9
10 9:00 AM <i>Worship Service</i> 11:00 AM <i>Worship Service</i>	11 <b>PASTOR MANNING OUT</b>	12 6:30 PM Outreach Committee Mtg 6:30 PM Property & Grounds Meeting 6:30 PM Worship/Music Committee Mtg via Zoom 7:30 PM Council Meeting	13 6:00 PM 7th Grade Confirmation 6:45 PM 8th Grade Confirmation 7:00 PM 10th Grade mentor Class 7:30 PM 9th Grade Confirmation	14 2:30 PM <u>Espresso Time</u>	15 Office Closed <b>PASTOR PAUL OUT</b>	16
17 9:00 AM <i>Worship Service</i> 11:00 AM <i>Worship Service</i>	18 <b>PASTOR MANNING OUT</b>	19	20 6:00 PM 7th Grade Confirmation 6:45 PM 8th Grade Confirmation 7:00 PM 10th Grade mentor Class 7:30 PM 9th Grade Confirmation	21  Newsletter Deadline	22 Office Closed <b>PASTOR PAUL OUT</b>	23
24 9:00 AM <i>Worship Service</i> 11:00 AM <i>Worship Service</i>	25 <b>PASTOR MANNING OUT</b>	26 1:00 PM Sewing Day	27 1:00 PM Sewing Day 7:00 PM 10th Grade mentor Class	28 2:30 PM <u>Espresso Time</u>	29 Office Closed <b>PASTOR PAUL OUT</b>	30
31 9:00 AM <i>Worship Service</i> 11:00 AM <i>Worship Service</i>						

# January Birthdays

<b>1 Chad Christianson</b>	<b>9 Patricia Massmann</b>	<b>22 Mary Behr</b>
<b>1 Donna Olson</b>	<b>11 Gregory Vos</b>	<b>22 Jerry Lemcke</b>
<b>2 Addison Fagen</b>	<b>12 Jackie Torvik</b>	<b>24 Elaine Halverson</b>
<b>2 David Springer</b>	<b>12 Karli Santjer</b>	<b>24 Norman Opdahl</b>
<b>2 Jerry Paulson</b>	<b>12 Corey Johnson</b>	<b>25 Scott Santjer</b>
<b>3 Evelyn Olson</b>	<b>13 Carol Nordaune</b>	<b>26 Kian Christianson</b>
<b>3 Michael Ellgen</b>	<b>13 Valerie Hoffman</b>	<b>26 Robert Balfany</b>
<b>4 Adelyn Lewison</b>	<b>14 Audrey Borning</b>	<b>27 Katherine Zempel</b>
<b>4 Benjamin Stuhr</b>	<b>14 Kaitlin Wohlman</b>	<b>27 Mason Enstad</b>
<b>5 Hannah Stark</b>	<b>15 Bradlee Burgeson</b>	<b>27 Shawna Richter</b>
<b>5 Jeff Wilke</b>	<b>15 Jeanette Anderson</b>	<b>28 Debra Waller</b>
<b>5 Jesse Eisenbacher</b>	<b>16 Katy Lundell-Stuhr</b>	<b>28 Jodi May</b>
<b>5 Pam Redetzke</b>	<b>17 Samantha Paulson</b>	<b>28 Loreen Fagen</b>
<b>5 Tanya Friese</b>	<b>18 Amber Schuler</b>	<b>29 Carolyn Olson</b>
<b>6 Abby Kvendru</b>	<b>18 Jeanne Berends</b>	<b>29 Jeffrey Lewis</b>
<b>7 Amanda McKay</b>	<b>18 Owen Rude</b>	<b>29 Patrice Monson</b>
<b>7 Roger Thorstad</b>	<b>21 Alida Flynn</b>	<b>30 Steven Halvorson</b>
<b>7 Peggy Heglund</b>	<b>21 Bradley Hempel</b>	<b>31 David Velde</b>
<b>7 Tamie Martin</b>	<b>21 David Cole</b>	<b>31 Violet Anderson</b>
<b>8 Bobbi Enstad</b>		

# WELCA

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6*

## 2021!!

A new year with new opportunities! As it is written in Proverbs, let God guide our paths and with Him, we can do much! We look back at 2020 as a 'year of change' and ahead to 2021 with a renewed hope that we might gather together safely.

The 2021 WELCA Handbook is available at church. There are no names on them again this year so please take as you need – More booklets will be printed as needed.

## Quilting:

January 26 & 27, 9 – noon; Group 1 bringing treats for the morning coffee.

Thank you to those who have shared their extra fabric and to those who have created beautiful quilt tops. Our needs now are for backing and fillers. If you have new or used sheets or thin blankets that you and your family no longer need, twin size or larger, we would welcome your donation.

Blessings to each of you as we begin a new year with renewed hope.  
Kathy Hendrickson



## HELP WANTED

**part-time  
receptionist/office asst.**

Please contact the church office for more information.

**MONTHLY COMMUNITY DINNER**  
The monthly community meals are cancelled until further notice due to Covid-19.

**Sunday School  
Classes  
are cancelled until  
further notice.**

**Mark Manning**

*Lead Pastor*

[pastormark@granitefallslutheran.com](mailto:pastormark@granitefallslutheran.com)

## Granite Falls Lutheran Church

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