

Big Grove Crow River Grace Parish
PO Box 10
Belgrade MN 56312

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Big Grove Crow River Grace Parish

December 2023



Christ
our Saviour
is Born 



Big Grove Crow River Grace Parish

417 Washburn Ave,
PO Box 10
Belgrade, MN 56312



From the desk of Deacon Brenda:

Are you ready for the upcoming holiday season? Just when I start to hyperventilate thinking about everything that needs to be done to prepare for all of the various events, I remember the old tune “Emmanuel”. The words go like this: “Emmanuel, Emmanuel, His name is called... Emmanuel. God with us, revealed in us...” There is more, but right there, I think “Why am I in a panic about my ‘to do’ list?” What is this all about again? God with us, revealed in us. It takes only one visit in a hospital ICU unit to remember how desperately we need God to be with us - in the middle of life and death.

As you prepare for all of the concerts, events, programs and worship services that you will attend, remember to stop, breathe and know that God so loved YOU that God entered the world as a human. Emmanuel - Jesus - God with us. And why? Love. The gospel of John uses poetry and imagery to proclaim the arrival of Jesus - he is the Word, the light and life:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:1-5

Light a candle during these dark days of December and pray for someone who needs your thoughts and intentional prayers. You will be changed. Praying makes you aware of the light in the darkness. It makes you aware of the presence of God - Emmanuel - God with us and revealed in the light we each carry. If we all carried Christ’s light into the dark corners of the world we live in, we will know firsthand the darkness will not overcome it.

God’s Peace,

Deacon Brenda

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

1	Deanna Johnson Mark Kirckof Aaron Kirckof	20	Macie Kirckof Erin Presler Lisa Pastian
2	Steven Sordahl		Samantha Cooper
3	David Hellickson Kaitlyn Quenemoen McCoy Detloff	21	Emily Knight Macey Roering
4	Tina Carlson Gary Steffensen Todd Trustheim Austin Trustheim Ashley Trustheim	24	Jacob Gerhardson Ann Marie Lundgren Linda Nelson Mona Jensen Brooke Mercado
7	Andy Larson	25	Brooke Deters
8	Nichole Szczesniak Jason Wander	26	Trish Thieschafer Tyler Walstrom Blake Oeltjenbruns
9	Aidan Johnson Shayla Wiechman	27	Tracy Lewis Robert Wold Mark & Mary Thompson
10	Gary Theis McKenzie Sordahl Morgan Knutson	28	Tyler Otteson Paul Lautenschlager Stryker Ampe
11	Gary & Mary Berndt	29	Josie Buckentine Presley Detloff Decker Detloff
13	Yvonne Kjeldahl Janice Holtberg Austin Klapfake	30	Ella Halvorson Pam Jones Steve Jones
14	Justin Anderson Julie Jensen Lyle Olson	31	Larry Thompson Betty Cole Tony Ampe
15	Jack Lundberg		
16	Michael Johnson		
17	Blake Lang Morgan Schwinghammer		
18	Jeff Gerhardson Doug Pastian Amber Heinen		

If you have any corrections or would like your name added to the Birthday/Anniversary list contact the church office at 254-3249

Church and Parish Councils

Big Grove

President: Scott Stueckrath Vice President: Mark Thompson
Secretary: Megan Imdieke Treasurer: Eric Johnson
Financial Secretary: Diane Hanson

Crow River

President: Doug Mohs Vice President: Patti Hagen
Secretary: Tammy Quenemoen Treasurer: Julie Jensen
Financial Secretary: Travis and Nichole Szczesniak

Grace

President: Les Thompson Vice President: Megan Klaphake
Secretary: Sue Jensen Treasurer: Brenda Thompson
Financial Secretary: Brenda Kaiser

Big Grove Crow River Grace Parish

Parish Council President: Darlene Barchenger (G)
Parish Council VP: Ryan Halvorson (CR)
Parish Council Secretary: Megan Imdieke (BG)
At large member: Laura Spanier (BG)
At large member: Clay Walstrom (CR)
At large member: John Anderson (G)

Lead Pastor: Pastor Lisa Meshke
Deacon: Brenda Handel-Johnson
Office Secretary: Sue Wiener
Parish Treasurer: Connie Wold

Annual Christmas Open House on Sunday, December 3rd at the BG/CR Parsonage

Stop by for a cup of cider, a cookie and a visit anytime between 1 and 4 pm. Featured musicians will be members of the St Cloud quartet "5th Voice" and musicians from our neighborhood. It is always good to visit with friends and neighbors and Andy may even play his banjo!

Bowling with the residents at the Belgrade Nursing Home on December 5th at 3 pm.

Christmas Caroling on December 11th: Calling Christmas carolers of all ages to meet at the Belgrade Nursing Home to sing carols with our favorite Belgrade residents. We will begin at 5:15 pm at the Dining Room and then we will go to Glen Oaks to sing after that. We will finish up with hot chocolate and treats at Grace at about 7 pm.

Light of the World Evening Prayer by Carol Meier at Bethesda on December 20 at 2 pm. Carol's Evening Prayer service will be shared at Bethesda Grand, Willmar in the chapel on Wednesday afternoon, December 20th at 2 pm. Come hear and sing this beautiful setting of Evening Prayer in the afternoon!

Special music throughout December at all churches. There will be guest musicians playing and singing throughout the month at each of the BGCRG churches to bring added depth and beauty to worship during the season of Advent. Check the worship schedule and if you want to provide music, talk to Deacon Brenda.

Families of all generations and ages needed for Advent wreath lighting. Each church needs one family each Sunday of Advent (November 26-December 24) to light the Advent wreath, lead the litany and read the prayer at the beginning of each service. Grandparents, grandchildren, friends, cousins, uncles and aunts are all welcome to take on this leadership role. Can your family do this? Call or send a note to Deacon Brenda.

Next Hymn Sing: December 31st The Christmas Hymn sing is slated for the last Sunday of 2023. That is a great way for us to send out the year! All will have an opportunity to tell us your favorite Christmas hymns in the weeks prior to December 31st.

Parish News:



All parish bible study meets on Thursdays at 10:00 am at Grace. All are welcome.

Upcoming Holiday Worship Services:

December 24th Christmas Eve Worship

3:00 pm - Crow River with Holy Communion and Livestream

5:00 pm - Big Grove with Holy Communion and Livestream

5:00 pm - Grace with Holy Communion and Livestream

December 25th Christmas Day Service

10:00 am - Grace with Holy Communion and Livestream



Equipping Congregations Day

Saturday, December 2, 2023, 8:30am - 3:00pm at Vinje Lutheran Church in Willmar. Come gather together as we enter the season of Advent with learning opportunities to equip congregations as we live the Word today.

Keynote Speaker: Rolf A. Jacobson, Luther Seminary Dean of the Faculty, Professor of Old Testament and The Alvin N. Rogness Chair of Scripture, Theology, and Ministry.

Workshops:

A finalized workshop list will be available online soon.

- The synod's e-newsletter will be highlighting workshop descriptions!
- Attend your choice of 2 out of 8 workshops.

Preview of Workshops Topics:

- Insights to Better Understand Farming Culture and Mental Health
- The Outcome/Impact of Storytelling
- Room at the Table for Everyone
- Fostering Accompaniment: 2023 SW MN Synod-ELCA-SED Visitor Exchange
- QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer — the 3 simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide.
- Loving Your Neighbor - Practical Things We Can All Do

ACOLYTE & CROSSBEARER SCHEDULE

Plan to be at church 20 minutes before service time on the day you are scheduled. If you are unable to be there, try to switch with someone else or find someone to fill in for you.

Date	BIG GROVE	CROW RIVER	GRACE
DEC 3	Elliot Spanier	A: McCoy Detloff C: Lauren Herding	Reid Dickhoff
DEC 10	Carter Heinen	A: Noah Jensen C: Jace Mueller	Kamie Fischer
DEC 17	Lydia Deters	A: Livia Szczesniak C: Aubrey Anderson	Jackson Kirckof
DEC 24	Elliot Spanier	A: Jaylee Jensen C: Macey Roering	Jennah Koenig
DEC 25	x	x	Aiden Mueller
DEC 31	Carter Heinen	A: Taya Hanson C: Owen Miller	Karlee Loe

Crow River Worship Duties

Ushers:

Dec. 3: Quentin Koll, Doug Mohs, Ricky Prentice & Gary Theis
Dec. 10: Patti Hagen, Linda Olson, Karen Theis & Roxanne Haugen
Dec. 17: Szczesniak family
Dec. 24: Larry Henjum, Dan Struthers, Brian Detloff & Rick Prentice
Dec. 31: Ron, Ryan, Jesi & Ella Halvorson

Lector/Readers:

Dec. 3: Barb Anderson
Dec. 10: Christmas Program
Dec. 17: Karla Anderson
Dec. 24: Joan Mohs
Dec. 31: Jan Martin

Greeters:

Dec. 3: Presley Detloff & Bree Thieschafer
Dec. 10: Aaron & Tami Swanson
Dec. 17: Kevin & Denise Dokken
Dec. 24: Alex & Krista Lautenschlager
Dec. 31: Shaun & Erin Commerford

Livestream:

Dec. 3:
Dec. 10:
Dec. 24:
Dec. 31:

*Thank
You!*

Parish Office Hours:

Monday through Thursday, 8 am to 1 pm

Crow River Lutheran will be starting new offering envelopes on January 1, 2024. The new envelopes will NOT have dates on them, so that they can be used at anytime. They will continue into the following years. Each individual will NOT have a membership number going forward. **You will need to Write Your Name On The Envelope.** The new envelopes will also be much easier to mail in if you choose to go that route. We will have extra envelopes at church which will come in bundles of 15, plus we will have individual envelopes in the Narthex if you forget to bring one. We have also made available an ACH Form if you would like to utilize automatic withdrawals going forward. There would be no more checks to write and you never have to worry about missing a Sunday or catching up what you intend to give. There is also the option of Venmo available which is **@CrowRiverLutheranChurch**. If you have any questions, please contact Travis Szczesniak at 320-429-4021 or Nichole Szczesniak at 320-295-1899. Thank you again for all you have done for Crow River Lutheran in 2023.

The Grace Lutheran Church Women will bring the musical singing group "Promise" to Grace Lutheran Church on Wednesday evening, December 13, 2023. The group comprised of two women and two men will present a concert of both sacred and secular Christmas music. The music will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the church sanctuary. The quartet has been singing together for 20 years and has appeared with the West Central Orchestra and other groups. Members of the group are Cheryl Schmidt, Marlyce Swenson, Brad Schmidt and Tim Ostby. They will be accompanied by Carol Parker.

This is Grace Lutheran Church Women's Christmas gift to the community, and everyone is welcome to come and get in the Christmas spirit. Refreshments will be served.

The VFW Auxiliary is collecting scarfs, hats, gloves, mittens and socks for veteran's and their families. If you wish to donate any of these items bring to Grace church and put in gray basket in entryway. This will only go thru **December 25th**.

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who worked and participated in the Free Spirit Turkey dinner. Your support and generosity are greatly appreciated. We raised \$2,964!

Council Meeting Dates: City Hall in Belgrade

Parish Council:

Tuesday, December 12, at 6:00 pm

Big Grove, Crow River, Grace Councils:

Tuesday, December 12, at 7:00 pm

Christmas Open House at the Parsonage: All

parishioners are invited to an open house at the BGCR parsonage on December 3rd, from 1:00pm - 4:00pm.

There is a sign-up sheet at each church if you are willing to donate a dozen Christmas cookies for refreshments.

Hope to see you there!



Baptism: Crow River: Addalyne Elaine Olson, daughter of Lyle Olson and Josie Knutson
Big Grove: Wrenley Rose Weller, daughter of Todd and Kasi Weller

Deaths: Big Grove: Johanna Thompson, October 12, 2023
Crow River: Sonja Bergerson, November 13, 2023

Funerals: Big Grove: Johanna Thompson, November 13, 2023
Crow River: Sonja Bergerson, November 20, 2023

Green Lake Dinner Theatre:

Join us for a delicious four course meal and an evening of theater and music with your loved ones at Green Lake Bible Camp. This tradition has become a special way for us to celebrate the Advent season, and we love sharing it with you! Tickets are \$80 per person. To make your reservation, call Green Lake Lutheran Ministries at 320-796-2181 or order online.

Showtimes: December 7th at 5:30 pm; December 8th at 5:30 pm; December 9th at 12:30 pm; December 9th at 5:30 pm; December 10th at 12:30 pm.

PARISH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS - November 2023
(Complete minutes available in Parish Office)

October Income: \$17,943.07
October Expenses: \$17,392.56
General Fund Balance: \$20,549.46

- Pastor's report: 7 youth will attend the Synod Youth Gathering. One student is interested in the National Youth Gathering, 7-8 are registered to attend Christikon Bible Camp in Montana the summer, BGCRG students receive a \$20 discount to Green Lake Bible Camp because Pastor Lisa attended GLBC 2024 Season Launch. Fall session of JAM ended Nov. 15th and next session will begin Jan. 17th.
- Additional ERTC funds have not been received due to government shutdown of the program.
- Council approved advertising Christmas worship schedule in the Peach.
- Council approved vacation days for Deacon Brenda from Nov 26-30.
- Council approved request from Pastor Lisa to carry over one week of vacation time into February 2024.

BIG GROVE COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS - November 2023

October Income: \$16,842.67
October Expenses: \$16,915.98
General Fund Balance: \$20,932.10
Profit/Loss for 2023 as of 10/31/23: (\$21,063.05)

- Due to lack of quorum, there was not an official meeting.
- Some discussion was held on the following: Tithe.ly Account; designated funds and investments; proceeds from Fall Auction; water testing; the sound system; snow removal; financial update; 2024 budget; and getting volunteers for church duties.

Big Grove Notes:

Big Grove has Venmo: @BigGroveLuth2022

Big Grove needs to replace the sound system at church in order to provide quality audio for livestreaming and services. The system will cost about \$9300. Any donations would be appreciated. Please designate your donation is for the sound system. Donations can be sent to the church office at PO Box 10, Belgrade, MN 56312. **Thank you to everyone who has donated!**

The Children's Christmas program will be on December 17th during worship with a potluck following church.

Crow River Notes:

Crow River will have Sunday School on December 3rd from 9:45-10:30 am. The children's Christmas program will be on December 10th with lunch following church.

Crow River WELCA has a Mission Project each month. The Mission for December is cookies for special friends.

We need help hemming quilts and sewing lullaby quilts. If you are able to help with quilts, they are in the small closet next to fabric room and lullaby kits are in a tub by the handicap door. Thank you!

The December WELCA meeting is a potluck. We will be packing cookies for special friends at 6:15 and the meeting will be at 7:00. We are asking each circle to decorate a table for Christmas and invite members to join their table. Also, we need each circle to bring 5 dozen homemade cookies for our special friends. Cookies should be there by 6:15. Pansy Circle is in charge of the program. If you would like to change circles in 2024, or have any changes to your contact information, please let Sharon Struthers or Jan Martin know.

Grace Notes:

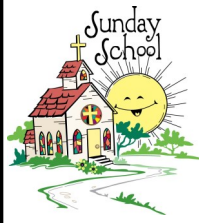
The Children's Christmas program will be on December 10th during worship.

Grace December Altar Guild:

Darlene Barchenger and Darlene Boie



YOUTH HAPPENINGS:



Big Grove Sunday School:

Sunday School will be held from 9:30 am -10:15 am on late worship Sundays.

Crow River Sunday School:

Sunday School will be held 9:45 am - 10:30 am every Sunday till December 10th.



FCS (Fellowship of Christian Students) Breakfast

Fridays, when school is in session,
7:30 am - 8:00 am at Grace Lutheran.
Grades 7-12 are all welcome.

FREE SPIRITS (Grades 7-12):

Christmas Shopping on Wednesday, December 6th during confirmation time. Students will meet at 6 pm at Grace Lutheran for supper and then we will go shopping in Sauk Centre for Christmas presents for kids who are in need in our local community. This event is open to all students in 7th through 12th grade. This event is optional for confirmation students but will count as one service hour.



Glacial Ridge Curling (Willmar Civic Center) - Saturday, January 13th. Leave Grace at 6:00pm return 9:30pm.

Bean Bag Tournament - Sunday, February 18th at Belgrade Municipal Hall from 6:00pm to 9:00pm.

Volunteer Appreciation Lunch and New Member Welcome at

Crow River: On December 10th, after the Sunday School Christmas Program, Crow River will have an appreciation lunch and a new member welcome. This lunch is in appreciation for all of the hard work that has been done at Crow River this past year, which includes those who helped with the fellowship hall renovation, cleaning up the downed trees, helping with fundraising, volunteering for student ministries (VBS, JAM, Sunday School, Confirmation), and all the monetary contributions to make this possible. We are also thankful for the spiritual leadership we have received from Pastor Lisa and Deacon Brenda. Please join us to welcome our new members and to celebrate all of the work done in the past year.

CROW RIVER COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS - November 2023 (Complete minutes available in Parish Office)

October Income: \$8,429.85
October Expenses: \$8,897.94
General Fund Balance: \$10,321.38
Profit/Loss for 2023 as of 10/31/23: (\$9,084.36)

- Cemetery/funeral processes were discussed, including accounting for fees and financials. Cemetery maps have been made and work is being done for digital version. Will discuss with cemetery board.
- Will try to get parsonage shingling/gutters done this fall if weather permits.
- Emma Hanson family is interested in updating crying room as a memorial to Richard Hanson.
- Church pillars in front of church will be worked on next year. Discussion about adding brick pillars in place of what currently is there.
- Trustees will look into USDA letter regarding church's farmland north of the church.

GRACE COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS - November 2023

October Income: \$13,854.46
October Expenses: \$10,544.73
General Fund Balance: \$69,655.20
Profit/Loss for 2023 as of 10/31/23: \$1,780.54

- A bid was received to repair hail damage on the church and parsonage. An outside faucet still needs to be fixed at the parsonage.
- We still need to get someone for snow removal.
- Trustees are reviewing our insurance policy and will make recommendations to the December council.
- Christmas program practice will be 11/29 and 12/6 after school. A letter will be sent to kids.
- Window laminate on windows behind altar will be installed.
- Brenda Thompson took pictures in 16 different church sanctuaries and shared with the council. The committee will present flooring ideas to the council. Thank you Brenda.
- Megan Klaphake and Darlene Boie have agreed to serve on the finance committee.
- Thanks to Nick Thompson for donating time to cut grass and the electrician who helped at the parsonage for no charge.

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
HC = Holy Communion LS = Live Stream SS = Sunday School					1 7:30 am FCS Pr. Lisa - Sabbath	2 8:30 am - 3:00 pm Synod Equipping Day
3 8:30 am CR w/HC & LS 9:00 am Grace w/HC 9:30 am BG SS 9:45 am CR SS 10:30 am BG w/HC & LS 1-4 pm Christmas Open House at BGCR Parsonage	4 1:30 pm Rachel Circle Deacon Brenda -Sabbath	5 10:00 am Sarah Circle Potluck at the church 3:00 pm Bowling at the Belgrade Nursing Home	6 6:00 pm Free Spirit Christmas Shopping 7:00 pm WELCA Christmas Potluck	7 10:00 am Bible Study at Grace 4:00 pm Naomi Circle	8 7:30 am FCS 1:00 pm Pansy Circle Pr. Lisa - Sabbath	9
10 8:30 am BG 9:00 am Grace w/HC & LS and Christmas Program 10:30 am CR w/HC & LS, Christmas Program & lunch	11 5:15 pm Christmas Caroling at Belgrade Nursing Home and Glen Oaks Deacon Brenda -Sabbath	12 6:00 pm Parish Council 7:00 pm Council Night	13 9:30 am Lily Circle 1:00 pm Rose Circle 6:00 pm 7-8th Grade Confirmation 7:00 pm GLCW program at Grace	14 10:00 am Bible Study at Grace 1:00 pm Daisy Circle	15 7:30 am FCS Pr. Lisa - Sabbath	16
17 8:30 am CR 9:00 am Grace w/LS 9:30 am BG SS 10:30 am BG w/LS, Children's Program and Potluck	18 Deacon Brenda -Sabbath	19	20 9:30 am Jaguar Coffee Club at Elementary Cafeteria	21 10:00 am Bible Study at Grace	22 Pr. Lisa - Sabbath	23
24 Christmas Eve 3:00 pm CR w/ HC & LS 5:00 pm Grace w/HC & LS 5:00 pm BG w/HC & LS	25 Christmas Day 10:00 am Grace with HC & LS	26	27	28 10:00 am Bible Study at Grace 3:00 pm Nursing Home	29 Pr. Lisa - Sabbath	30
31 8:30 am CR w/LS 9:00 am Grace 10:30 am BG w/LS						