What do you think if we didn’t have a Lord?

This was a question from one of our confirmation students. That’s a good question – What if we didn’t have a Lord, didn’t have God (in our lives)? How would our lives be different?

This is a complicated and complex question, and I only have a partial answer.

One part of the answer is based on the love God has for us, love enough for God to send Jesus to take away my sin. As John writes, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” (John 3:16-19) In other words, even though I am drowning in sin, and can never get the stink and stain of sin off of me, I am not destined to rot in hell for eternity (which I deserve), because I believe that God sent Jesus to save me from my sin by dying on the cross, and I will live forever in God’s presence in heaven.

Another reason is that if we didn’t have God, who would we trust, who would we count on, how could we make it through? I can only speak for myself, but I know that my life would be poorer if I didn’t have God in it. I have relied on God often when times are tough (loss of job, change of plans, death of my dad). I have rejoiced with and thanked God in good times (getting a job, when plans work out, births of family babies). I have ooh-ed and aah-ed over gorgeous sunsets and scenes of nature, awestruck at God’s creativity of a thing that lasts only minutes, never to be seen again. If God puts so much care into creating such moments, I can’t even begin to think of how much God cares for me, a much more complex and longer-lasting creation. As I receive this love of God, I trust that God cares about me and wants the best for me, that God rejoices with me in my joy and weeps with me in my sorrow. I sometimes wonder, if God wasn’t in my life, would I even be here? Or would the downs of life have overwhelmed me along the way? Without God, I don’t know how I would have coped with life. I know I can question, laugh, yell and scream, wonder, and just be myself with God, who will accept me and love me through it all. This is part of what makes my life as rich as it is.

How about you? How would your life be different if God wasn’t in it? Or how is/was your life different without God?

If you have questions that you would like Pastor John or me to take a stab at, we would welcome them! And you don’t have to be a confirmation student! Write your question down and put it in the pastor’s box at any of the churches (you don’t have to include your name), and we may try to answer it in a future newsletter.

Peace,
Pastor Ann
## Stewardship – 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big Grove - April</th>
<th>Crow River - April</th>
<th>Grace - April</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>USHERS:</strong> Eric Johnson, Jason Raveling</td>
<td><strong>USHERS:</strong> Dale Anderson, Al Braegelman, Jim Nelson, Randy Anderson, Brian Schreifels, Greg Martin, Glenn Otteson, Rick Gerhardson Trevor Miller; Confirmation Students April 28 Paige Prentice &amp; Nic Walstrom</td>
<td><strong>USHERS:</strong> 7 Alan &amp; Brenda Kaiser, 14 Open, 21 6:30a Fischer Family, 9a Open, 28 Confirmation Students April 28 Paige Klaphake &amp; Isabella Buckentine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28 Confirmation Students: Aaron Schulz &amp; Tayjah Marthaler</td>
<td><strong>READERS:</strong> 7 Nichole Szczesniak, 14 Open, 21, 7am Jerry or Cindy Torgerson, 10:30a Travis Szczesniak, 28 Karla Anderson</td>
<td><strong>READERS:</strong> 7 Les Thompson, 14 Mary Brenden, 21 6:30a Rich McCuskey, 9a Jesse Westaby, 28 John Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACOLYTES:</strong> 7 Emmit Kirckof, 14 Aiden Johnson, 21 Tanner Viessman, 28 Ethan Spanier</td>
<td><strong>ACOLYTES:</strong> 7 Ryan Jensen, 14 Braeden Michels, 21 7a Dakota Pelzer, 10:30a Brady Schwinghammer, 28 Dacia Szczesniak</td>
<td><strong>ACOLYTES:</strong> 7 Max Hansen, 14 Reegan Jones, 21 6:30a Brooke Mercado, 9a Taylor Oeltjenbruns, 28 Branton Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALTAR GUILD:</strong> Lisa Pastian &amp; Morgan Lewis</td>
<td><strong>CROSSBEARERS:</strong> 7 Michael Larson, 14 Avery Szczesniak, 21 7a Wyatt Engen, 10:30a Wyatt Lewis, 28 Tyler Jensen</td>
<td><strong>ALTAR GUILD:</strong> Shirley Anderson/ Judy Dickhoff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GLEE SETTINGS:</strong> Please take time to sign up, the sheet in on the bulletin board in the Social Hall.</td>
<td><strong>GREETERS:</strong> 7 Eric &amp; Amy Prentice, 14 Kent &amp; Cindy Bouwman, 21 Clay Walstrom Family, 28 Randy &amp; Karla Anderson Family</td>
<td>WE ARE IN NEED OF USHERS for the upcoming months, please take time to sign up, the sheet in on the bulletin board in the Social Hall.</td>
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**GLCW SPRING BRUNCH W BAKE SALE**
@ GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
APRIL 28, 2019
10:15AM-12:30PM

**MENU:**
- EGG BAKE
- FRENCH TOAST BAKE
- BISCUITS & GRAVY
- FRUIT
- MILK
- COFFEE

**FREE WILL OFFERING**
EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Funds go towards Bible Camp and Various Projects

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**EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP**
Sunday, April 21

**Big Grove**
8:30 am

**Crow**
7:00 am and

**Grace**
6:30 am and
(Breakfast following

**River**
10:30 am

Sunrise Service
9:00 am
6:30 service)
IF YOU ARE AWARE OF ANY CHURCH MEMBERS, who are hospitalized, please contact the Parish Office. Pastor John and Pastor Ann would like to know for prayers and visits. Hospitals are unable to notify us when someone is hospitalized.

WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

April 3 –
11:00am Worship at Grace
6:00pm Soup Supper at Grace
7:00pm Worship at Grace

April 10 –
11:00am Worship at Grace
6:00pm Supper at Big Grove
7:00pm Worship at Big Grove

This year’s Lenten services will include a series on the Lord’s Prayer.

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Maundy Thursday, April 18 --
6:00pm Supper at Crow River
7:00pm Worship at Crow River

Good Friday, April 19 --
1:00pm Worship at Grace
7:00pm Worship at Big Grove

Easter Sunday, April 21--
6:30am Worship at Grace
7:00am Worship at Crow River
8:30am Worship at Big Grove
9:00am Worship at Grace
10:30am Worship at Crow River

MEN’S BREAKFAST
Saturday, April 13 7:30am at Grace
Come and join us for breakfast.
Good food, good fellowship, and some good news from God’s Word.
A great way to start the day!

MISSION OF THE MONTH

This month we will have no formal Mission of the Month.

However, we have become aware of a need in our community that some of you may be able to address. Our local clinic is aware of many individuals who could use a ride to their appointments. They would love to put together a call list of volunteers who could help in this way. If you are interested, you contact the clinic.

THINK SUMMER!

Let’s Go Out to the Ball Game!
Twins vs Oakland A’s
Saturday, July 20, 2019, 6:10 pm start
Tickets are $22 each. Minimum of 20 people to go.
Registration form will be in next month’s newsletter.
Money due by June 23, 2019.
Talk to Pastor Ann if interested.

32ND SYNODICAL CONVENTION
FRIDAY MAY 3RD & SATURDAY MAY 4TH
First Lutheran Marshall MN
Theme: “Embraced by the Winds of Grace”
If you are interested in attending the Women’s Synodical Convention, please contact your WELCA President for more information.
If you would like a packet full of information, please contact Roxanne at Parish Office and she print a copy of the packet for you.

Convention registration is due by April 13, 2019.
BIG GROVE LUTHERAN CHURCH

JOIN US every Sunday at 9:30 for coffee, juice and treats in the back of church. Wanted: Volunteers to serve coffee and treats Sundays at 9:30 am. Please sign up in the back of church or see Julie Ball. List is of volunteers is posted in the back of church.

CASH RAFFLE TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE: 1st Annual Big Grove Lutheran Church Cash Raffle tickets are now available for purchase. To purchase the raffle tickets contact any church council member.

CROW RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH

CROW RIVER WORK DAY: There will be a work day on Monday, April 9th starting at 9:00 am and we will be quilting. Please bring a dish to pass for a noon lunch.

BRING A FRIEND TO CHURCH DAY/POTLUCK: We know the bible calls us to invite others to worship with us, so let’s take a Sunday to do that and enjoy a potluck & fellowship too! You are encouraged to invite someone else to attend worship with you on Sunday, April 7th. This can be a friend, a family member, a neighbor, someone who belongs to another church, someone who doesn’t belong to a church; Anybody! Then we will enjoy a potluck after service. (Guests don’t need to bring anything for the potluck). (The date in the newsletter has been changed from Sunday, March 24 to April 7th; there will be no potluck on Sunday, March 24th as printed on the calendar.)

WE EXPRESS OUR SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS for family and friends of Ramona Kay (Sordahl) Skornicka. Ramona died on Thursday, March 14 and her service was held on Friday, March 22 at Peterson Brothers Funeral Home in Willmar, MN. Blessed be the memory of Ramona Kay Skornicka.

FLOWERS FOR EASTER can now be ordered; forms are in your bulletins and please make checks payable to Crow River Altar Guild and give to Erin Commerford. Deadline to order flowers will be Sunday, April 7th. Please do not bring to Parish Office.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

THERE WILL BE AN EASTER BREAKFAST sponsored by the Grace Lutheran Brotherhood of Men on Sunday, April 21st following the Sunrise Service. Proceeds will go to various projects.

INFORMATION FOR GRACE BROTHERHOOD OF MEN: This is regarding the Easter Breakfast following the Easter Sunrise Service on Sunday April 21st. If you can help in any way it would be much appreciated, from set up, to preparing and clean up please contact Gary Oeltjenbruns @ 320-444-4868 or Ron Keller @ 320-894-8870.

GLCW MEMBERS: The SPRING BRUNCH will be held on Sunday, April 28th. If you are asked to bring or asked to work, please remember that GLCW does help with Bible Camp, Preschool Bibles, Food Shelf, BBE Post Prom, LWR by supplying quilts and kits and other various projects.

THANK YOU to Phyllis Kaiser and family for the floral arrangement by the baptismal font in memory of Adam Kaiser birthday on February 28th.

THANK YOU to everyone who donated, cooked, worked or participated in our Ash Wednesday Chili/Soup supper and to those who helped with busing tables and serving beverages. Thanks again.

FLOWERS FOR EASTER can now be ordered; forms are in your bulletins and please make checks payable to Grace Altar Guild and give to Sande Mathison. Deadline to order flowers will be Sunday, April 7th. Please do not bring to Parish Office.

WE ARE IN NEED OF USHERS for the upcoming months, please take time to sign up, the sheet in on the bulletin board in the Social Hall.

GRACE CONGREGATIONAL FUND

The Congregational Fund of Grace Lutheran Church is now accepting requests for grants and scholarships. Grants can be requested for ministries within our congregation, outreach in our community, missions of the ELCA, equipment and furnishings, or capital improvements to the church. To make a request, simply write a letter explaining how the grant money would be used. Requests for scholarships for Bible Camps or college should also be in written form.

All requests for grants and scholarships must be received by May 1. Requests and applications...
DAILY BIBLE READING

Martin Luther once said, “For some years now... I have read through the Bible twice every year. If you picture the Bible to be a mighty tree and every word a little branch, I have shaken every one of these branches because I wanted to know what it was and what it meant.”

Each month we will print a schedule that will help you shake the branches of this tree. Feel free to read as much or as little as works best for you. If you feel yourself getting bogged down in some difficult Old Testament readings, skip them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Testament</th>
<th>New Testament</th>
<th>Psalm</th>
<th>Proverbs</th>
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</table>
CROW RIVER CHURCH COUNCIL
HIGHLIGHTS: March
(Complete minutes available at parish office.)

Treasurer’s Report: (February)
Gen. Fund Begin Balance $11,665.39
  Income $7,428.00
  Expenses $21,525.73
Gen. Fund End Balance $- (2,432.34)

Carpet project was completed. Was paid with funds from Building Fund, Undesignated Memorials, and some savings – which we would like to pay back as donations come in.

Discussed needed repairs to the roof of the parsonage garage.

Approved paying for a sign language interpreter on First Communion Sunday.

Set the time of the early service on Easter Sunday as 7:00am.

GRACE CHURCH COUNCIL
HIGHLIGHTS: March
(Complete minutes available in Parish Office)

Treasurer’s Report: (February)
Gen. Fund Begin Balance $47,778.66
  Income $10,566.51
  Expenses $13,937.43
Gen. Fund End Balance $44,407.74

Grace will host the Baccalaureate Service on Sunday, May 19 at 7:00pm.

Trustees will look into new lighting in the fellowship hall. Estimates will be sought for new carpet in the front of the sanctuary.

In April, we will have Communion on the 1st Sunday and on Easter Sunday (April 21).

PARISH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS
March
(Complete minutes available in Parish Office)

Treasurer’s Report: (February)
Beginning Balance $7,424.32
  Income $19,388.60
  Expenses $19,092.02
Ending Balance $7,720.90

Elected officers: President – Bruce Wing; Vice-president – Eric Johnson; Secretary – Connie Wold.

Approved the purchase of a computer to replace the main server in the office. The others will be replaced in later months.

Approved Continuing Education and vacation requests from the pastors.
Discussed some proposed changes to our insurance policy.

Next meeting will be May 7 at 7:00pm

**BIG GROVE CHURCH COUNCIL**

**HIGHLIGHTS: March**

(Complete minutes available in Parish Office)

Treasurer’s Report: (February)
Gen. Fund Balance $ -(3,853.48)
   Income: $ 5,832.47
   Expenses: $ 7,169.13
Gen. Fund Balance: $ - (5,190.14)

March’s Meeting was cancelled due to weather.
# Birthdays and Anniversaries

## April 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
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<td>Sonja Bergeson, Jared Torgerson, Kyle &amp; Tammy Quenemoen</td>
<td>Larry Freese, Dalton Hanson</td>
<td>Mary JO Paulson</td>
<td>Ardyce Lundgren</td>
<td>Kenneth Otteson, Amanda Steffensen, Neal Heieie, Kim Trustheim, Emmit Kirckof</td>
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<td>Tammy Braegelman, Vicki Freese</td>
<td>Michelle Welte, Anna Halvorson, Wayne &amp; Patti Hagen, Tyler Jensen, Kiely Viessman</td>
<td>Donavan &amp; Mary Solbreken</td>
<td>Alex Roeder, Nathan Lindahl, Randy &amp; Karla Anderson</td>
<td>Hayden Otteson</td>
<td>Ryan Jensen, Madison Strom</td>
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<td>Tristan Nelson, Scott Mueller</td>
<td>Richard &amp; Cathy Prentice, Nicholas Benton, DeWayne Lien</td>
<td>Margaret Trustheim, Michele Thompson</td>
<td>Pastor John</td>
<td>Brian Anderson</td>
<td>Carol Steffensen</td>
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<td>Mark &amp; Lori Ziemer</td>
<td>Allen Anderson, Tom Wold</td>
<td>Cynthia Braegelman, Kyle Quenemoen</td>
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<td>Theresa Herding, Cathy Lester, Gary Hanson, Brian Ziemer, Michael Larson</td>
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FCA3 BREAKFASTS
Thursdays at 7:30am at Grace. All high school students are invited to come for breakfast. The “A” stands for athlete, artist, and academics.

SENIOR HIGH SYNOD YOUTH GATHERING
Friday, April 5 – Saturday, April 6
At the Lake Geneva Christian Center, Alexandria, MN. We will leave right after school (4:00pm) on Friday and return by 6:00pm, Saturday.

FIRST COMMUNION SUNDAY
Because of weather, some of our 5th grade students from Grace and Crow River will receive their First Communion on Sunday, April 7. We welcome our 5th grade youth to the table of the Lord! May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus feed you richly!

CONFIRMATION IN APRIL
April 17 and 24 at 6:00pm 9th Grade Students only!

CONFIRMATION GOOD FRIDAY TRIP
Friday, April 19
7th and 8th Grade Confirmation students will be going to an Experiential Good Friday Service at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi on Friday, April 19. We will leave from Grace at 8:30am and return around 4:00pm.

LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS
Calling all youth to help! We will be serving the soup suppers on the following Wednesday nights:
April 3 – Grace
April 10 – Big Grove
Youth are especially encouraged to help at the suppers in your congregation. But you can also pitch in at the other churches if that works for you. And remember -- all youth who help will receive fundraising credit that can be used for future youth activities, trips, etc. Show up to help at 5:30pm. We serve from 6:00-6:45pm.

MAUNDY THURSDAY SOUP SUPPER
April 18  Serving from 6 – 6:45pm
Youth who are going on the Grand Adventure 2019 this summer will serve the Soup Supper on Maundy Thursday, April 18 at Crow River. This will be a special fundraiser for the trip. Plan to help in the kitchen at 5:30pm. We serve from 6:00-6:45pm.

The Jelly Bean Meditation
Green is for the grass you made.
White is for the grace you gave.
Yellow is for the sun so bright.
Orange is for the edge of night.
Red is for the blood you shed.
Black is for the sins which fled.
Purple is for your hours of sorrow.
Pink is for our new tomorrow. Amen.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office Hours:</strong> Monday-Friday 8:30am-1:30pm</td>
<td><strong>Phone #</strong> 320-254-3249</td>
<td><strong>Please note deadline for newsletter is Tuesday, April 16th (No later)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>April</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>6:30p Sarah Circle (G)</td>
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<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>9:30a Sarah Circle</td>
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<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>11a Lenten Worship 6p Soup 7p Lenten Worship 7:45p Dinner</td>
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<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>11a FCA</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>4p SR. Youth Gathering leaves</td>
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<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>8:30a Lakeland Spring Gathering @ Kerkhoven Lutheran Church</td>
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<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>8:30a Worship-BG 9:00a Worship-Grace w/ HC 9:30am S.S.-BG 9:45a S.S.-CR 10:15a S.S – Grace 10:30am Worship CR w/ 1st Communion 6:30p BG Council</td>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>9a Crow River Workday 9a Readers Club Dist. Mtg.</td>
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<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td>7p Crow River Council</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td>11a Lenten Worship 6p Soup 7p Lenten Worship 7:45p Dinner</td>
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<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td>7:30a FCA 3p Pastor John @ BNH 5p Faith Circle @ Doris Grothem’s 6:30p GLCW Ex Board 7p AA Open Mtg. @ Grace 10:30a Worship-BG 10:15a GLCW Spring Brunch/Bake Sale @ Grace 6:30p Free Spirits Leaders’ Mtg.</td>
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### Church and Parish Councils

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Big Grove</strong></th>
<th><strong>Vice President</strong></th>
<th><strong>Treasurer</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>President</strong></td>
<td>Kurt Kirckof</td>
<td>Lisa Pastian</td>
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<td><strong>Secretary</strong></td>
<td>Megan Imdieke</td>
<td>Deanna Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Secretary</strong></td>
<td>Scott Stueckrath</td>
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<th></th>
<th><strong>Crow River</strong></th>
<th><strong>Vice President</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>President</strong></td>
<td>Kayla Engen</td>
<td>Ryan Halvorson</td>
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<td><strong>Secretary</strong></td>
<td>Kathy Swensen</td>
<td>Travis Szczesniak</td>
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<td><strong>Financial Secretary</strong></td>
<td>Jerry Torgerson</td>
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<th></th>
<th><strong>Grace</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>President</strong></td>
<td>Dennis Braegelman</td>
<td>Sandra Westaby</td>
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<td><strong>Secretary</strong></td>
<td>Bruce Brunette</td>
<td>Megan Klaphake</td>
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<td><strong>Financial Secretary</strong></td>
<td>Tom Madsen</td>
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<th><strong>Big Grove Crow River Grace Parish (BGCRG)</strong></th>
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**Council Members:**
- Brian Ziemer (Crow River), Jan Martin (Crow River)
- Allen Anderson (Big Grove), Eric Johnson (Big Grove)
- Connie Wold (Grace), Bruce Wing (Grace)

**Pastors:**
- Pastor John Dalen
- Pastor Ann Zastrow

**Parish Treasurer/Office Secretary**
- Roxanne Oeltjenbruns