PASTORAL PONDERINGS

“Church is not something you go to; it is a family you belong to.”

This month I thought I would try to offer an answer to a question from one of our Confirmation students. It may be a question you have wondered about, too. Here it is:

“Do you have to go to church to be a Christian and go to heaven?”

The example of my parents (and so many others of their generation) is that they do not attend church weekly because they “have to”, but because life just seems to ‘work’ better when it includes a rhythm of regular worship. There was with them never a sense that God is “up there” keeping track and deciding your eternal salvation based on whether or not you missed a few Sundays. No, they went for other reasons – to thank God for his blessings; to learn from God’s holy Word; to contribute to the well-being of the community; to connect with the church family and build those networks of mutual support, etc.

A person can certainly worship and thank God apart from attending Sunday worship, but it is in Sunday worship that the family of the church is blessed by your presence. You might be surprised how many people’s spirits are lifted because they saw you in worship that day.

I know that culturally there are a lot more things competing for those Sunday morning hours that have traditionally belonged to church. And I think the church is going to have to adapt and do its best to make opportunities for worship available to busy people. But I would encourage you to let the rhythm and routine of regular worship be the blessing in your life that God intended it to be.

See you in worship!

Pastor John
Lenten Wednesday Schedule

March 6 – Ash Wednesday
11:00am  Worship at Grace
4:30-6:45  Chili Soup Supper at Grace
7:00pm  Worship at Grace

March 13 –
11:00am  Worship at Grace
11:45am  Lunch at Grace
6:00pm  Supper at Crow River
7:00pm  Worship at Crow River

March 20 –
11:00am  Worship at Grace
11:45am  Lunch at Grace
6:00pm  Supper at Big Grove
7:00pm  Worship at Big Grove

March 27 –
11:00am  Worship at Grace
11:45am  Lunch at Grace
6:00pm  Supper at Crow River
7:00pm  Worship at Crow River

This year’s Lenten services will include a series on the Lord’s Prayer.
BIG GROVE CROW RIVER GRACE PARISH

MEN’S BREAKFAST
Saturday, March 9
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!

First Communion Sundays
The 5th Grade students of our congregations will
be receiving their First Communion on the following
Sundays:

- March 3 – Big Grove (10:30 service)
- March 10 – Grace (9:00 service)
- March 10 – Crow River (10:30 service)

We welcome our 5th grade youth to the table of the
Lord! May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus
feed you richly!

Grace Lutheran Chili/Soup Supper
Wednesday, March 6th
Serving from 4:30-7:00pm
Menu: Chili, chicken noodle soup,
Wisconsin cheese soup, egg salad
sandwiches, ham sandwiches, bars,
beverage
Free will offering.
Hope to see you there!!!
Sponsored by Grace Lutheran Church
Women
Thrivent Action Funds

WOMEN OF THE ELCA
The Lakeland Conference Women Spring
Gathering will be held on Saturday, April 6th at
Kerkhoven Lutheran Church at 9:00 a.m. The
theme is “Joy and Laughter”. Deadline for
registering is March 29th. There are sign-up sheets
at the churches to register. Cost is $10.00 please;
pay your treasurer of your WELCA. If you have any
questions contact your President of your WELCA.

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. Talk to Pastor

FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY
March 1 at Grace.
During Lent we will be unable to provide the Friday
Bible Studies. See you again after Easter.

LAKELAND
CONFERENCE GATHERING
2:00pm on Sunday, March 10
Vinje Lutheran Church, Willmar
Each congregation is allowed voting members at
the Conference business meeting. If you would like
to attend and represent your congregation, let your
pastors know.

MISSION OF THE MONTH
Each month, our Parish
will highlight a mission that
we can support with our
prayers and our donations.
This month we support…

The BBE Food Shelf
March is Minnesota Food Share month and is a
great time to support our local food shelf. Every
dollar given locally to our food shelf qualifies it for
percentage grants from other sources during this
month. So our gifts are multiplied. Be generous!

BIG GROVE LUTHERAN 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.

PAPER ARTS MINISTRY, we will meet at Big
Grove Lutheran Church on Saturday, March 2nd at
9:30a.m.

WE EXPRESS OUR SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS
for family and friends of Alma Baalson. Alma died
on Sunday, January 27th and her service will be
held at a later date. Blessed be the memory of
Alma Baalson.

WE EXPRESS OUR SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS
for family and friends of Norma Snelling. Norma
died on Sunday, February 3rd and her service was held on Thursday, February 7th at Zion Lutheran Church in Litchfield, MN. Blessed be the memory of Norma Snelling.

**CROW RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**CROW RIVER WORK DAY** on Monday, March 11th starting at 9:00 a.m. We will be working on quilts and weighted blankets. Please bring a dish to pass for noon meal.

**NOTE DAY CHANGE:** WELCA will be meeting on Thursday, March 7th at 7:00 p.m. Rescheduled because of Lenten Worship on Wednesday March 7th.

**WE EXPRESS OUR SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS**

for Kari and Paul Halvorson and family on the death of Kari’s sister, Crystal K. Sunell, of Grand Rapids. Crystal died on January 24 and her service was held at Reif Performing Arts Center of Grand Rapids. Blessed be the memory of Crystal K. Sunell.

**WE WELCOMED INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

Sig Everett Lautenschlager, son of Alex and Krista Lautenschlager. Welcome, Sig, to God’s Kingdom.

**WE CAN USE YOUR HELP:** WELCA installed a new stove and now we would like to replace the dark cabinets and generally upgrade the kitchen. We would like you input and donations. Vote on the project will be at the March WELCA meeting.

**WE EXPRESS OUR SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS**

for Inez Anderson and family on the death of Virgil Anderson. Virgil died on Wednesday, February 6th and his service was held on Tuesday, February 12th at Crow River Lutheran Church. Blessed be the memory of Virgil Anderson.

**WE EXPRESS OUR SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS**

for family and friends of Mabel Sandvig. Mabel died on Sunday, February 3rd and her service was held at Grace Lutheran Church. Blessed be the memory of Mabel Sandvig.

**WE EXPRESS OUR SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS**

for Sarah and Greg Oeltjenbruns and family on the death of Sarah’s grandmother, Florence Botten. Florence died on Friday, January 25th and her service was held on Saturday, February 2nd at South Lake Johanna Church. Blessed be the memory of Florence Botten.

**WE EXPRESS OUR SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS**

for Roxanne and Gary Oeltjenbruns on the death of Roxanne’s sister Caroll J. Ditmarson. Caroll died on Monday, January 28th and her service was held Friday, February 1st at Harbor Foursquare Gospel Church in Spicer. Blessed be the memory of Caroll J. Ditmarson.

**GLCW WILL BE COLLECTING FOR BASKETS OF PROMISE**

– We will be collecting items at Grace for Personal Care Kits during Lent for our “Baskets of Promise” project. Baskets for collecting the items will be set out in April. You may bring your items any week during Lent. Items needed are:

- One light-weight bath-size towel (maximum 52” X 27”), dark color recommended
- Two bath-size bars (4 to 5 oz.) of soap, any brand, in original wrapping
- One adult-size toothbrush in its original packaging*
- One sturdy comb, remove packaging
- One metal nail clipper (attached file optional), remove packaging

**** Toothbrush multi-packs may be used by sealing an individual toothbrush in a business size envelope (no plastic bags or wrap)

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**NOTICE: GRACE BROTHERHOOD OF MEN:**

There will be a brief meeting of our Brotherhood group on Sunday, March 24th following the worship service we will meet in the former Pastors office. We will meet to start planning for the breakfast. Please join us!
**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.*

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<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>Numb. 4:1 – 5:31</td>
<td>Mark 12:18-37</td>
<td>48:1-14</td>
<td>10:26</td>
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<td>March 27</td>
<td>Deut. 7:1 – 8:20</td>
<td>Luke 7:36 – 8:3</td>
<td>69:1-14</td>
<td>12:1</td>
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BGCRG PARISH
MEN’S FISHING TRIP 2019

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17 – FRIDAY, AUGUST 23
LAC SEUL / EAR FALLS, ONTARIO

If you love walleye fishing, you will love this adventure to one of Ontario’s finest walleye lakes!

Leaving early on the morning of Saturday, August 13 should get us there in time to wet a line in the evening. Then we will have full days of fishing Sunday – Thursday. Friday will be our return day.

Pastor John will serve as our devotion leader, cook, and guide.

We will rent a cabin at Cherob Resort, a drive-in resort on Goose Bay of Lac Seul. We are limited to a group of 9 – the first 9 to sign up and pay the deposit ($150 non-refundable) will get to go.

Prices will vary based on the total number of guys who go. Prices include lodging, dockage, minnows, boat gas, car gas, and food.

<table>
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<th>Number of Guys</th>
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Not included: One meal on the road (each way), tackle, and Ontario fishing license (about $60).

**Special Discount:**

*If you bring your own boat and drive, you will receive a $35 discount. (We will need two boats in addition to Pastor’s.)*

Do not delay! Sign up today with Pastor John. Let him know if you will be able to drive and bring your boat.

Deposit checks should be made out to: BGCRG PARISH.

NOTE: A passport or passport card is required to cross the border. We are asking for registrations early so that everyone will have time to get one.
**BIG GROVE CHURCH COUNCIL**
**HIGHLIGHTS: February**
(Complete minutes available in Parish Office)

Treasurer’s Report: (January)
Gen. Fund Balance  $ -(708.27)
  Income: $ 3,035.44
  Expenses: $ 6,180.65
Gen. Fund Balance:  $ - (3,853.48)

Approved welcoming new members Shawn and Joni Karger!

Appointed Tammie Strand to fill the Financial Secretary’s term.

Will look to see if some of our CD’s can be reinvested for better interest.

Put together a list of cleaning items for volunteers.

---

**CROW RIVER CHURCH COUNCIL**
**HIGHLIGHTS: February**
(Complete minutes available at parish office.)

Treasurer’s Report: (January)
Gen. Fund Begin Balance  $12,992.14
  Income $ 7,117.34
  Expenses $ 8,444.09
Gen. Fund End Balance  $11,665.39

Approved having a “Bring a Friend to Church” Sunday with a Potluck on March 24.

Heard updates on the Carpet project and the trees at the parsonage. Also, the trustees will look at the parsonage shower and kitchen flooring.

---

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

Treasurer’s Report: (January)
Gen. Fund Begin Balance  $50,538.67
  Income $10,477.52
  Expenses $13,237.53
Gen. Fund End Balance  $47,778.66

Expressed support for the local AA and will continue to let them use the building for their Thursday night meetings.

Discussed plans for keeping the sidewalks clear of snow.

---

**PARISH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS**
February
(Complete minutes available in Parish Office)

Treasurer’s Report: (January)
Beginning Balance  $7,762.70
  Income $19,753.96
  Expenses $20,092.34
Ending Balance  $7,424.32

No meeting in January.

---

**I Will Do More**

I will do more than belong – I will participate,
I will do more than care – I will help,
I will do more than believe – I will practice,
I will do more than be fair – I will be kind,
I will do more than forgive – I will love,
I will do more than teach – I will serve,
I will do more than live – I will grow.
FCA BREAKFASTS
Thursdays at 7:30 at Grace

If there is school on a Thursday, there is an FCA Breakfast at Grace. Start your day off with some good food, fellowship, and fun before school.

FREE SPIRITS BOARD
GAME NITE
Sunday, March 17
7:00pm at Grace
(7-12th grades)

Come, bring a friend, and have some fun with a variety of board games. Snacks, too.

7-12 GRADE YOUTH CHOIR
Wednesdays in Lent
-- Meet at 6:30pm (before the Lenten services)

LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS
Calling all youth to help!
We will be serving the soup suppers on the following Wednesday nights:

- March 13 – Crow River
- March 20 – Big Grove
- March 27 – Crow River
- 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.

NO CONFIRMATION IN MARCH
All youth should participate in our Lenten Worship Services.

Show up to help at 5:30pm.
We serve from 6:00-6:45pm.
2019 SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUTH!!

7-9th Grade Sioux Falls Overnight Trip – June 18-19 (Tues – Wed)
   This will be a quick, but fun trip across the border to Sioux Falls, SD. We will combine some service with some sightseeing and recreation. We’ll bunk out on the floor of a church and possibly visit the famous “Butterfly House.”
   Cost: $60 (You may use fundraising credit after paying the deposit)
   Register with a non-refundable deposit of $30 by 8:00pm on Wed., March 20.
   (Use form on backside of this page.)

9-12th Grade Grand Adventure Trip – July 9-18 (Tues – Thurs)
   This is an old favorite. We did this trip in 2016 and everyone loved it! On this trip, we venture to the southwestern states of Arizona and Utah. Yes, the van ride gets a little long, but it is well worth it! This trip combines service experiences and exploring some magnificent natural wonders. The highlights will include hiking in the Grand Canyon, swimming at Lake Powell, doing a night hike, and trekking up the narrows at Zion National Park. Along the way, we will be staying in churches, camping, and even sleeping under the stars on this trip.
   NOTE: This trip is limited to the first 12 students who sign up.
   Cost: $400 (You may use fundraising credit after paying the deposit)
   Register with a non-refundable deposit of $100 by 8:00pm on Wed., March 20.
   (Use form on backside of this page.)

2019 Canoe Trip – July 28-August 1 (Sun – Thurs)
   7-12th Grade students are welcome on this trip to the beautiful Elbow Lake area in the Superior National Forest. We will canoe and portage our way in to our base camp, from which we can do a number of day trips. Canoeing, swimming, fishing, relaxing are all part of this trip – perhaps even a “floating campfire” one night.
   NOTE: This trip is physically demanding and is a “no-frills” wilderness camping trip. In addition, this trip is limited to the first 7 students who sign up.
   Cost: $150 (You may use fundraising credit after paying the deposit)
   Register with a non-refundable deposit of $75 by 8:00pm on Wed., March 20.
   (Use form on backside of this page.)
**7-9th GRADE SIOUX FALLS OVERNIGHT TRIP REGISTRATION FORM**

Turn this form in to Pastor John, bring it or mail it to the church so that we get it by March 20.

Name: ________________________________       Phone __________________

___ Count me in on the “7-9th Grade Sioux Falls Overnight Trip”  June 18-19, 2019  
___ Enclosed is my non-refundable deposit of $30.  (Checks to “Free Spirits”)

I GIVE PERMISSION FOR MY SON/DAUGHTER TO ATTEND THIS TRIP:

Parent’s Signature: ________________________________   Date: __________________________

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**9-12th GRADE GRAND ADVENTURE TRIP REGISTRATION FORM**

Turn this form in to Pastor John, bring it or mail it to the church so that we get it by March 20.

Name: ________________________________       Phone __________________

___ Count me in on the “9-12th Grade Grand Adventure Trip”  July 9-18, 2019  
___ Enclosed is my non-refundable deposit of $100.  (Checks to “Free Spirits”)

I GIVE PERMISSION FOR MY SON/DAUGHTER TO ATTEND THIS TRIP:

Parent’s Signature: ________________________________   Date: __________________________

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**2019 CANOE TRIP REGISTRATION FORM**

Turn this form in to Pastor John, bring it or mail it to the church so that we get it by March 20.

Name: ________________________________       Phone __________________

___ Count me in on the “2019 Canoe Trip”  July 28-August 1, 2019  
___ Enclosed is my non-refundable deposit of $75.  (Checks to “Free Spirits”)

I GIVE PERMISSION FOR MY SON/DAUGHTER TO ATTEND THIS TRIP:

Parent’s Signature: ________________________________   Date: __________________________
The Lutheran Youth Organization of our Synod is inviting all 9-12th Grade students to the Senior High Youth Gathering in Alexandria. This year’s gathering theme is “Walk Humbly” and will feature a favorite: AGAPE (a Lutheran HipHop artist – he’s a ton of fun). There will also be a SWMN Synod Youth Band. Let’s put together a great group to attend this exciting event.

The total cost for the Gathering is $100 per person. Free Spirits is going to pay $50 of this for each youth who will go. Your cost will be just $50. *(NOTE: You can also use your fundraising credit to reduce your cost more. Check with Pastor John to see if you have credit to use.)*

If you would like to go, please fill out the following form and return it (with your $50) to one of your pastors or to the Parish Office no later than **Wed., March 13.**

*(Please talk to one of the pastors if you have need of some financial assistance; we want everyone to go regardless of cost.)*

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**REGISTRATION FORM:** SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GATHERING

April 5-6, 2019 / Alexandria / Deadline: March 13

Name: _______________________________ Grade ________

Address: __________________________________________________________________________________________

Phone: _____________________________ T-shirt size: S M L XL

Total cost -- $50 Credit used ________ Amount paid _________

Make checks payable to Free Spirits.

Parent’s Signature ______________________________

Parent: Would you be interested in going as a driver/chaperone? ___ yes ___ no
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<th>Sunday</th>
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<td>Spencer Lundberg</td>
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<td>4 Valarie Walstrom Diane Gerhardson Melissa Michels Jacob Raveling Rance &amp; Pete (Doreen) White</td>
<td>5 Melissa Heieie Richard Hanson Alyssa Tjosaas Krista Lautenschlager</td>
<td>6 Todd &amp; Melissa Jakobson Annika Heieie</td>
<td>7 Suzie Johnson Marci Schwinghammer Kaylee Olson</td>
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<td>12 Kathy Nelson Kari Wold</td>
<td>13 Mary Solbreken Sharlot Roeder Daniel Kirckof Johanna Thompson Arlen Anderson</td>
<td>14 Gary &amp; Barb Hanson Tessa Halvorson</td>
<td>15 Todd Anderson Tammy Quenemoen Jens Mueller</td>
<td>16 Megan Mohs</td>
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<td>17 Sonja Stavos Dianne Henjum Deb Norris Keith Kampsen</td>
<td>18 Barb Walstrom</td>
<td>19 Sierra Wohlman</td>
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<td>21 Rena Hermann Logan Schwinghammer</td>
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<td>24 Andy Schoumaker</td>
<td>25 Laura Johnson Travis &amp; Nichole Szczesniak</td>
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| Parish Office Hours  
Monday-Friday  
8:30am-1:30pm  
Phone 320-254-3249 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 3  
8:30a Worship-CR w H/C  
9:00a Worship-Grace w H/C  
9:30a S.S.-BG  
9:45am S.S.-CR  
10:15am- S.S  
10:30a Worship w/ 1st Communion-BG  
BG Potluck follows  
4:30p 9th Grade Confirmation | 6:30p Rachel Circle (G) | 9:30am Sarah Circle(G) | 11a Ash Wednesday Worship @ Grace  
4:30p GLCW  
Chili/Soup Supper @ Grace  
7pm Ash Wednesday Worship @ Grace  
8p Grace Council | 7  
7:30a FCA  
11:30a Ministerial Mtg.  
7p CR WELCA  
7p AA Open Mtg. @ Grace | 8 | 9  
7:30a Men’s Breakfast @ Grace |
| Daylight Saving Time begins | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 10  
8:30am Worship-BG  
9:00am Worship-Grace w/ 1st Communion  
9:30am S.S.-BG  
9:45am S.S.-CR  
10:15am- S.S - Grace  
10:30am Worship CR w/ 1st Communion  
2p Conference Assembly  
6:30p Big Grove Council @ church | 9a Work Day @ Crow River | 1p Parish Council  
7p CR Council | 11a Lenten Worship @ Grace  
6p Soup Supper @ Crow River  
7p Lenten Worship @ Crow River | 14  
7:30a FCA  
1p Unity Circle (CR)  
1p Faith Circle (CR)  
3p Pastor John @ BNH  
7p AA Open Mtg. @ Grace | 15  
NO BIBLE STUDY  
Newsletter Deadline | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 17  
8:30am Worship-CR  
9:00am Worship-Grace  
9:30am S.S.-BG  
9:45am S.S.-CR  
10:15am- S.S-G  
10:30am Worship- BG  
6p Free Spirits Leaders mtg.  
7p Free Spirit Board Night | 9am Do day at Grace | 11a Lenten Worship @ Grace  
6p Soup Supper @ Big Grove  
7p Lenten Worship @ Big Grove | 21  
7:30a FCA  
7p AA Open Mtg. @ Grace | 22  
NO BIBLE STUDY | 23 |
| 24  
8:30am Worship-BG  
9:00am Worship-Grace  
9:30am S.S.-BG  
9:45am S.S.-CR  
10:15am- S.S - Grace  
10:30am Worship- CR  
Potluck to follow @ CR | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 25  
8:30am Worship-CR  
9:00am Worship-Grace  
9:30am S.S.-BG  
9:45am S.S.-CR  
10:15am- S.S-G  
10:30am Worship- BG | 26 | 27  
11a Lenten Worship @ Grace  
6p Soup Supper @ Crow River  
7p Lenten Worship @ Crow River | 28  
7:30a FCA  
9a Newsletter Assembly  
3p Pastor Ann @ BNH  
7p AA Open Mtg. @ Grace | 29  
NO BIBLE STUDY | 30 | 31 | 8:30am Worship-CR  
9:00am Worship-Grace  
9:30am S.S.-BG  
9:45am S.S.-CR  
10:15am- S.S-G  
10:30am Worship- BG |
### Church and Parish Councils

**Big Grove**
- **President**: Kurt Kirckof
- **Vice President**: Lisa Pastian
- **Secretary**: Megan Imdieke
- **Treasurer**: Deanna Johnson
- **Financial Secretary**: Scott Stueckrath

**Crow River**
- **President**: Kayla Engen
- **Vice President**: Dave Clark
- **Secretary**: Kathy Swensen
- **Treasurer**: Travis Szczesniak
- **Financial Secretary**: Jerry Torgerson

**Grace**
- **President**: Dennis Braegelman
- **Vice President**: Sandra Westaby
- **Secretary**: Bruce Brunette
- **Treasurer**: Megan Klaphake
- **Financial Secretary**: Tom Madsen

**Big Grove Crow River Grace Parish (BGRG)**

**Council Members:**
- Ron Halvorson (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