

# GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Gathering in Grace, Growing in Faith, Serving in Love*

## DECEMBER 2025 Newsletter

### Pastor's Ponderings



Charles Dickens said it well, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." The pre-Christmas season and Christmas itself can bring out both the best and the worst in us. On the one hand, there's nothing like the scents of the season – pine trees, Christmas cookies, eggnog. The beautiful lights on our trees, homes, and yards give us a warm and festive feeling. Our beloved holiday family traditions dwell deep in our hearts for our whole lives. And all you have to do is turn on your radio to hear some of your favorite Christmas songs that bring back fond memories. Christmas is a blessed time that many of us look forward to each year.

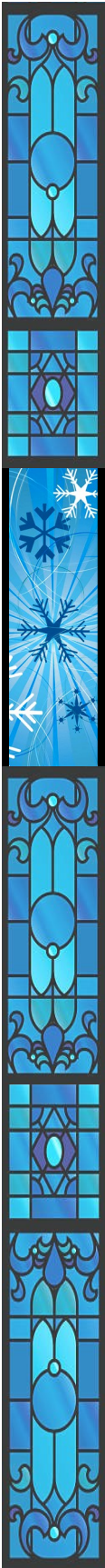
But on the other hand...the Christmas season can be painful and burdensome as well. There's so much to do that sometimes it's hard to find time to enjoy it. There are so many demands on our time and our bank accounts that we can find ourselves exhausted and bitter come December 25. And though time with our families can be a blessing, it can also be stressful and a reminder that even Christmas doesn't wipe away our conflicts. It can be incredibly difficult to endure the cheerfulness of the season after suffering the loss of a loved one, a divorce, a serious illness, or financial difficulties. This season of joy can be anything but joyful at times.

But no matter if the celebration of Christmas is wonderful or difficult for you, know this: Jesus was born for you. Jesus was born for children who count not only the days but the hours until Christmas. Jesus was born for people who see Christmas lights through teary eyes and heavy hearts. Jesus was born for people whose homes are decorated, warm, and full of life throughout the season. And Jesus was born for people whose homes feel empty, cold, and still this time of year, for any number of reasons. The way we keep Christmas traditions has little to do with the reason Christ came for us.

Jesus was born in a humble place in a humble manner for humble people like us. He came to bring hope for the hopeless, strength for the weary, grace and love to all of us. He came so that no matter if our days feel joyful or sorrowful, our future is filled with nothing but hope, joy, and new life. The life of Jesus means life for all of us. Whether this is the best or worst of times for you, Christ was born as the best gift we could ever receive, a gift full of forgiveness, comfort, hope, and joy. O come, let us adore him.

In Christ,

+ *Pastor Jennifer*





## Scandinavian Bake Sale is Back



Just in time for Christmas, Ruth Circle will again be offering delicious Scandinavian goodies on Sunday, December 7th. Available for purchase are krumkake, rosettes, sandbakkels, and more, including lefse and julekake. Proceeds will go to Cambridge Food Shelf to support those in need due to the government shut down and high food prices. Join us to take home some treats for the holidays.

## Hear the Story from the Animals!

You won't want to miss this year's Children's Christmas program, *A Stable Surprise" The Animals' Christmas Story*, during worship on December 14th.



## Christmas Services

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP - 3pm & 5pm, Wednesday, December 24

CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP - 10am, Thursday, December 25

LESSONS & CAROLS - 9am, Sunday, December 28

THIS GIVING TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, CONSIDER A DONATION TO THE CAMBRIDGE FOOD PANTRY. EACH DONATION WILL BE MATCHED BY OUR SPONSORS.

Cambridge Community Activities Program Food Pantry

**Giving Tuesday Challenge**

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

December 2, 2025

## Diner's Delight December Dinner



All are invited for a festive Diner's Delight dinner at Grace on Friday, December 12. Simply sign up for whatever course you'd like to bring, and join us at 6 pm for a wonderful night of food, fellowship, and festive fun.

## Monday Night Advent Study

This month in Bible study, we're doing a study called "Not a Silent Night", traveling with Mary as she reflects back on the events of her life, from the end to the beginning. We'll meet the first 4 Mondays this month at 7 pm.

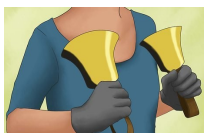
All are welcome!

## Christmas Cookie Sharing

Join us for worship on Sunday, December 28 for a Service of Lessons and Carols, and bring those extra Christmas treats you've got sitting around your house. We'll share a sweet potluck of Christmas goodies after worship.



## Holiday Handbell Concert



You are invited to come listen to the Bell Crazy Handbell Ensemble at Grace on Sunday, December 7th at 2 pm. The concert, *Bringing Holiday Joy*, is open to the public and free to all. You can also pick up some Scandinavian treats while you're here!

## Want to Worship from Home? Here's How!

Grace's Sunday services continue to be broadcast on Spectrum cable channel 987 Sundays at 9am. Sunday services are also livestreamed on Grace's Facebook page. Just looking for sermons? Check out our

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdWxSntOyuupFnyLgxSU8aw>



### Funeral

Sue Bakken - 11/1/25

### Baptism

Kinsley Ann Franzen – 11/16/25

# DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS

- Dec 7** - Ushers: Tim & Evy Jeffers      Assisting Minister: Erik Olsen  
Reader: Tim Jeffers  
Communion Servers: Shauna Thayer & Marcia Klemp  
Acolytes: William Gottschalk & Griffin Sullivan  
Communion Set Up: Lydia Circle  
Coffee Hour Hosts: Punsel & Tobias
- Dec 14** - Ushers: Felix & Jan Egli      Assisting Minister: Kelly Witte  
Reader: Tim Neuenschwander  
Communion Servers: Tom & Chris Watson  
Acolytes: August Ciha & Kinsley Stenjem  
Communion Set Up: Lydia Circle  
Coffee Hour: Karen & Brook Stenjem
- Dec 21** - Ushers: Bill Becker Family      Assisting Minister: Shawn Koebke  
Reader: Rory Sullivan  
Communion Servers: Kelly Witte & Tami Collin  
Communion Set Up: Lydia Circle  
Acolytes: George & Henry Albrecht  
Coffee Hour Hosts: Koebke & Jason Schulz
- Dec 24** - Ushers: Dale & Marcia Klemp      Assisting Minister: Jeff Gafner  
**3 pm** Reader: Mandi Buonincontro  
Communion Servers: Mandi Buonincontro & Jean Scott  
Communion Set Up: Lydia Circle  
Acolytes: Annabel Fleck & Ashton Thayer
- Dec 24** - Ushers: Kris Tobias Family      Assisting Minister: Shawn Whitman  
**5 pm** Reader: Ann Engelstad  
Communion Servers: Shawn Whitman & Angie Bauer Williams  
Communion Set Up: Lydia Circle  
Acolytes: Elliott Bernhardt & Haven Lovick-Gill
- Dec 25** - Ushers: Wendy Lehr & Cindy Hartman      Assisting Minister: Erik Olsen  
**10 am** Reader: April Mickelson  
Communion Servers: April Mickelson & Sierra Jelinek  
Communion Set Up: Lydia Circle  
Acolytes: Jackson & Josephine Rue
- Dec 28** - Ushers: Richard & Jean Scott      Assisting Minister: Diane Fronck  
Reader: Bill Reay  
Communion Servers: Bill & Betty Reay  
Acolytes: Jackson & Josephine Rue  
Communion Set Up: Geis Family  
Coffee Hour Hosts: Hospitality-Christmas Cookies

# DECEMBER AT GRACE

Sunday	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
30 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Face- book 10:15 Sunday School 10:15 Choir Rehearsal	1 9:30 am Quilters 7 pm Adult Study	2	3 9 am <b>Ruth Circle</b> 11am <b>Outreach Committee</b> 6:30 pm <b>Confirmation</b>	4	5	6
7 9 am <b>Worship SERVICE</b> - Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 <b>Sunday School</b> 10:15 <b>Choir Rehearsal</b> 2 pm <b>Bell Crazy Concert</b>	8 9:30 am <b>Quilters</b> 7 pm <b>Adult Study</b>	9 7 pm <b>Council Meeting</b>	10 9 am <b>Lydia Circle</b> 6:30 pm <b>Confirmation</b>	11 2 pm <b>Staff Mtg</b>	12 6pm <b>Diners' Delight Dinner</b>	13
14 <b>RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS CHRISTMAS PROGRAM</b> 9 am <b>Worship SERVICE</b> - Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 <b>Choir Rehearsal</b> 10:15 <b>New Member Gathering</b>	15 9:30 am <b>Quilters</b> 7 pm <b>Adult Study</b> <b>Newsletter content due</b>	16	17 6:30 pm <b>Confirmation</b>	18	19	20
21 9 am <b>Worship SERVICE</b> - Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:15 <b>Choir Rehearsal</b>	22 9:30 am <b>Quilters</b> 7 pm <b>Adult Study</b>	23	24 <b>Christmas Eve</b> 3 pm <b>Worship</b> 5 pm <b>Worship</b>	25 <b>Christmas Day</b> 10am <b>Worship</b>	26 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	27
28 9 am <b>Worship SERVICE</b> - Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook NO Sunday School	29 9:30 am <b>Quilters</b>	30	31	Jan 1 New Year's Day	2	3



**Altar Guild** - Pat Hall, Pat Northey & Sharon Erb





## GROWING FAITH-FILLED KIDS



### Children's Christmas Program: December 14th



This year's Christmas program tells the Nativity story through the eyes of the stable animals who were there the night Jesus was born. Join our children as they bring warmth, laughter, and joy to this retelling of the greatest story ever told!

You'll meet a curious donkey, gentle cows, playful sheep, and even a few clucking chickens — all eager to welcome the newborn King. With favorite

Christmas songs, sweet surprises, and plenty of smiles, this program is sure to fill your heart with Christmas cheer and remind us all of God's love born in a manger.

All are welcome to celebrate the season with us at Grace Lutheran Church during our 9am worship service on December 14.

### Holiday Break

Sunday School will take a break over the holidays, with no classes from December 14th through January 11th. We will return to regularly scheduled classes from 10:15-11am each week starting Sunday, January 18th! Holiday blessings to all our GLC Children's Ministry families!

### Bible Blessing: January 11th, 2026

Join us for our Bible Blessing during worship on Sunday, January 11 at 9:00 AM! This favored tradition celebrates our older Sunday School students as they are presented with their very own Bibles by their families, then blessed together by our congregation. Following worship, Pastor Jennifer will lead a short Bible class for each recipient and at least one adult, helping families explore their new Bibles and begin using them at home. All are welcome to support our students, and rejoice in God's Word!



### Confirmation Corner



Our 7th-8th grade Confirmation class will finish studying the Old Testament this month. Mentor Night this month will be on Wednesday, December 3 at 6:30 pm. Pre-Confirmation will meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, so this month our 6th graders will meet December 3 and 17 at 6:30 pm.

## Thanksgiving Basket and Food Pantry Donations are Abundant

Well done! Our congregation stepped up again donating 102 gravy packets/jars and 111 boxes of stuffing! Don't forget, if you missed the deadline, we always have a large food pantry donation basket in the vestibule just inside the west entry of the church. All food donations are welcome. Items often needed include canned goods, bags of beans, rice, paper items, and feminine products. We often publish items the food pantry currently needs, so please watch for that list.



## Giving Tuesday is December 2!



Monetary donations for our food pantry will be matched by area businesses through December 2nd. Yes, that means there is still time to help our local food pantry. Any funds collected for the pantry through our church will be added to the \$80+ donated to our gravy/stuffing drive will be matched! Please be sure to make a "Food Pantry" note in your Venmo or check memo and we will get it

to the pantry by December 2. If your business or employer matches food pantry donations, please let April Mickelson know, (608) 225-8955, or call Kerry Marren, (608) 423-8142, so your employer can be involved in the Giving Tuesday event.

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## Outreach During Advent

The Outreach Committee has some special things planned for the Advent season: We will once again be selling Equal Exchange Fairly Traded chocolate, coffee, and tea in support of small farmers. This is a great opportunity to buy stocking stuffers, or a special treat for yourself.

We will also have our tree of Good Gifts with items ranging from chicks and goats to water filters and school uniforms. These will be given to people in faraway lands who need them.

And lastly, the ELCA has printed an interactive Advent calendar "A Stable Lamp is Light-ed". It includes a prayer, hymn, or Scripture as well as a coloring activity for children to decorate a stable and add a character each day in December.

All of these things will be available in Fellowship Hall beginning November 30th.

## Women of the Church for 2025

Pastor Jennifer, Pat Hall, Jean Scott and Cindy Hartman met recently to discuss the donations from Women of the Church for 2025. It was decided to increase the majority of our donations as follows: Lutherdale \$250, LWR Postage - \$500, Madison Jail Ministry - \$300, Cambodian Students - \$200, CART - \$1,000, Food Pantry - \$1,000, Abused Women - \$300, Salvation Army - \$200, Youth Gathering - \$400, Everyone Eats Program - \$400, and School Back Pack - \$200, for a total of \$4750.

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**November 11, 2025**

*(Minutes will be reviewed & approved at next Council meeting)*

**Call to Order.** President Kelly Witte called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

**Attendance. Present:** Steve Bielefeldt, Pr. Jennifer Jelinek, John Jensen, Marcia Klemp, Connie Kreuser, Charlene Luchterhand, April Mickelson, Peggy Punsel, Kristin Rue, Richard Scott, Amy Simdon, Kelly Witte. **Absent:** Sandi Aston Hall.

**Devotions.** Marcia shared his faith journey and led us in prayer.

**Approval of Minutes.** John moved to approve the October meeting minutes. Peggy seconded the motion. Unanimously approved by those who attended the October meeting.

**Approval of Agenda.** John moved to approve the agenda. Amy seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

**Correspondence.** None.

**Treasurer's Report.** (Amy) We had a net loss of \$4,769 in October, giving us a total loss of \$8,724 for the year. Our General Giving through October was \$197 less than 2024 and \$14,159 less than the 2025 budget. The Special Giving through October was \$6,757 less than last year and \$6,366 less than budget. If the sabbatical and Youth Gathering expenses are not included, the expenses through October were \$2,623 more than last year and we were \$12,149 under budget. The checking balance was \$9,067 less than the beginning of 2025 with the general fund balance approximately \$16,533 less. April moved to approve the treasurer's report and send it to audit. John seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

**Pastor's Report.** We will be participating in the Community Thanksgiving Eve Service at 6:30 PM on Wednesday, November 26, at the Deerfield Lutheran Church. Worship will be followed by pie and fellowship. All are welcome. New congregation members will be received early in December. Committees are encouraged to start working on their annual reports, which need to be sent to Catherine by December 31.

**Committee Reports.** (Provided in writing and/or discussed in the meeting as needed.)

- **Education.** (Kristin) Still having issues with Wi-Fi in the basement. Back and side entrance doors are locked between 10:15 AM—11:00 AM during Sunday School hours.



- **Outreach & Social Justice.** (April) Clothing collection for the Madison Area Jail Ministry will begin immediately; collection deadline is November 23. 111 boxes of stuffing, 100 gravy packets and 2 jars of gravy have been donated for the food pantry. We may have a Fair Trade coffee/chocolate sale again. If so, an announcement will be made in the newsletter. Good Gifts catalogs are available near the mailboxes. Stewardship Committee has offered help wherever they are needed.
- **Stewardship.** (Connie) We are wrapping up the annual Stewardship appeal. Once the Time & Talent forms are returned, council members will be notified of anyone who has expressed an interest in their committee. Likewise, monetary commitments pledged will be reported for budget purposes.

#### **Old Business.**

- **Church Property.** (John & Richard) ) Bank First has donated a table and filing cabinet for the conference room. They will donate 2 desks in the future. The heat (lack of) has now been fixed in the sanctuary. A bird's nest was removed from the exhaust fan. Tree trimmer has not come yet. Seeking bids for a different electrician to work on the lights in the parking lot.

#### **New Business.**

- **Council Review of Committee Roles.** Noted that the Operations Manual is from 2016 and in need of revision. Catherine will send an electronic version to all council members, who will suggest edits for their respective areas. In December, we will determine in what order we will review them for 2026.
- **Lutheran Campus Ministry at UW-Madison.** Received a request for financial support. Support in the amount of \$750 is already in our budget.
- **Use of Memorials.** Two outdoor benches are being considered for spring. We are also in need of a different basin for the baptismal font. The current basin is a prototype and not fully functional.
- **Budget.** Reviewed the 2026 draft budget that Amy prepared. Will look at it again for December's meeting.
- **Annual Meeting.** John moved that we hold our annual meeting on Sunday, January 25, 2026, after the worship service. Marcia seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.
- **Bake Sale.** (Connie) Ruth Circle will hold a Norwegian bake sale on December 7 before and after the worship service and before and after the Bell Crazy Handbell Performance. Proceeds will benefit the food pantry.

**Adjournment.** Amy moved to adjourn the meeting. Arilp seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned 8:01 PM. We ended with the Lord's Prayer.

**Next Meeting.** Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 9, at 7:00 PM. Peggy is scheduled to present devotions.

Submitted by Charlene Luchterhand, Council Secretary

## From the Treasurer

### October 2025 Financial Snapshot

Income	Year-to-date October 2025 Actual	Year-to-date 2025 Monthly Budget	Over/(under) budget
General Giving	225,424	239,583	(14,159)
Special Giving	18,634	25,000	(6,366)
Misc Income	<u>2,261</u>	<u>2,929</u>	<u>(669)</u>
Total Income	246,319	267,512	(21,193)
<b>Expenses</b>			
Administrative	90,587	94,049	(3,462)
Mission	36,118	43,333	(7,215)
Pastoral	121,862	120,961	902
Program	6,476	8,850	(2,374)
Other	-	-	-
Total Expenses	255,044	267,193	(12,149)
<b>Total Net Income (Loss)</b>	(8,724)	320	(9,044)

A gentle reminder to everyone of the importance of staying financially faithful. Your generosity fuels everything we do—from ministry to outreach—and every gift, big or small, makes a difference.

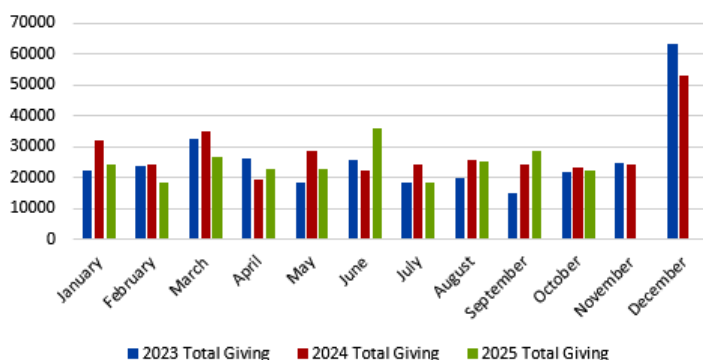
Let's continue trusting God together and giving with grateful hearts.

Thank you for being such a generous community!

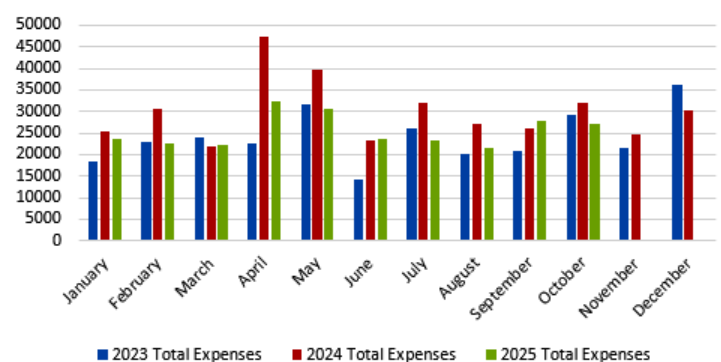


**venmo**

Comparison of Total Giving - 2023/2024/2025



Comparison of Total Expenses - 2023/2024/2025





# Staff and Council

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## STAFF

**Pastor** Jennifer Jelinek Cell: (608) 295-7120 [pastorjenniferglc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjenniferglc@gmail.com)

**Admin Assistant** Catherine Elliott (608) 423-3135 [gracelutherancambridgewi@gmail.com](mailto:gracelutherancambridgewi@gmail.com)

**Christian Ed Coordinator** Breah Klemp [christianedu.glc@gmail.com](mailto:christianedu.glc@gmail.com)

**Volunteer Coordinator** Cindy Hartman [cindyh1029@msn.com](mailto:cindyh1029@msn.com)

**Financial Secretary** Diane Russo Cell: (847) 826-0131 [gracelutheranfinance@gmail.com](mailto:gracelutheranfinance@gmail.com)

**Organist** Kenneth Hoversten [kenneth.hoversten@gmail.com](mailto:kenneth.hoversten@gmail.com)

**Handbell Choir Director** Ann Engelstad [gaengelstad@charter.net](mailto:gaengelstad@charter.net)

## COUNCIL

**President** Kelly Witte

**Vice President** Steve Bielefeldt

**Secretary** Char Luchterhand

**Treasurer** Amy Simdon

**Outreach** April Mickelson

**Education** Kristin Rue

**Stewardship** Connie Kreuser

**Hospitality** Peggy Punsel

**Evangelism** Marcia Klemp

**Worship** Sandi Aston Hall

**Property** John Jensen

**Property** Richard Scott



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