



# GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

## DECEMBER 2024 Newsletter

### *Pastor's Ponderings*



How are you doing? Really – how are you doing? Despite the warmer weather this fall, for so many it's been a long, busy fall filled with stress, busyness, and all sorts of emotions. The election added heightened emotions – joy and victory for some, fear and frustration for others. Some are dealing with strained relationships and uncertainty. And when you add to that the seasonal colds and illnesses many have had, it can be a LOT. So how are you doing?

And now you're likely adding the busyness and expectations of the holiday season. There's so much joy to be found in decorating, baking, shopping, wrapping, hosting, visiting, traveling, and gathering. But all those things can also add a lot of stress to your already-busy lives. So again, I ask, how are you doing?

In times like these, it's important to care for ourselves, as well as others. What do you do when you start to feel stressed? I highly recommend breathing. (all the time, of course). When you're stressed, close your eyes and take some deep breaths. Breathe in hope and peace, and breathe out your stress and worries. Maybe take a step back from the craziness and think about or read about Jesus' birth, the original reason for the season.

During December, our culture is rushing and running and expecting superhuman feats of us. But the Advent season encourages us to focus more on words like waiting and hoping and peace. As your faith community, your spiritual family, we care about how you're doing, and we want to give you opportunities to find peace, joy, and healing through our God who sent Jesus to bring us all of that and more. Join us for worship on Sundays to get some of that peace and hope amid your busy lives. Let the Holy Spirit refill and refuel you to be sent back into the world. And find some peace at our Evening of Prayer and Meditation this month. Stop by Grace on Wednesday, December 18 anytime from 3:00 - 8:00 pm to find some peace, to offer prayers, to experience various prayer stations, or to talk to someone willing to listen. All are welcome.

May God bless your Advent with peace and hope, as you await the love and joy of Christmas.

**Evening of Prayer and Meditation – Wed. December 18 from 3 – 8 pm**

In Christ,

+ *Pastor Jennifer*





### **Scandinavian Bake Sale!**



Just in time for Christmas, Ruth Circle, with help from our Youth, will be offering delicious Scandinavian goodies for sale on Sunday, December 15th. Available for purchase will be krumkake, rosettes, sandbakkels, and more, including lefse and julekake. Proceeds will go to Lutheran World Relief to aid those affected by hurricanes Helene and Milton. All donations will be matched by LWR.

### **Hear the Story From Mary**

Mark your calendar for this year's Children's Christmas program, during worship on December 15th!



### **Poinsettias for the Altar**



If you would like to order a Christmas Poinsettia in Memory or Honor of a loved one, please complete an order form (found outside the church office) or call the office no later than December 11th. Poinsettias will adorn the altar and can be picked up following the Christmas Day 10am service.



### **Christmas Services**

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

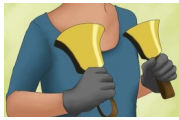
CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP - 10am, Wednesday, December 25

LESSONS & CAROLS - 9am, Sunday, December 29

### **Want to worship from home? Here's how!**

You may have noticed that there have been broadcast issues on Spectrum cable channel 987 lately. 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>

## Holiday Handbell Concert



You are invited to come listen to the Bell Crazy Handbell Ensemble at Grace on Sunday, December 8th at 2pm. The concert, **Bringing** Holiday Joy, is free to all and open to the public.

## The Bethlehem Experience

Willerup Church in Cambridge is once again offering "the Bethlehem Experience" from 7-9 pm on December 20, and from 2-6 pm December 21-22. Come and experience the sights and sounds of what it might have been like in Bethlehem on the night of Christ's birth. This event is open to the community; all are welcome: [Bethlehem Experience 2024](#)

## Christmas Cookie Sharing

Join us for worship on Sunday, December 29 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.

**Monday Advent Study**

This Advent, we'll spend time exploring the Scripture passages we'll hear the following Sunday in worship. How do Joel, Isaiah, and Mary's messages speak to us during this season of waiting and watching? Join us these Monday evenings at 7pm to explore these interesting passages:

Dec. 2 – Joel 2:12-13, 28-29  
Dec. 9 – Isaiah 61:1-11  
Dec. 16 – Luke 1:26-56

## Diner's Delight December Dinner

On Friday, Dec. 13, Diner's Delight will hold a December Dinner at Grace at 6:00 p.m. All are welcome to be a part of this dinner (even if you're not in Diner's Delight). Simply sign up in the Fellowship Hall with your name and what course you plan on bringing to the dinner. Join us for a night of food, friends, and fun!

## Grace Office Hours

The Church Office is open from 9 am – noon, Monday - Friday. Variable additional hours are available; please contact us if you'd like to make an appointment (608)423-3135 or via email at [gracelutherancambridgwi@gmail.com](mailto:gracelutherancambridgwi@gmail.com)



# DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS



- Dec 1** - Ushers: Leadholm & Neuenschwander  
Reader: Rory Sullivan  
Communion Servers: Kenny Zickert & Sharon Erb  
Communion Set Up: Lydia Circle  
Acolytes: Henry Albrecht & Blake Schutte  
Coffee Hour Hosts: Jeffers & Kuhnert  
Assisting Minister: Rich Fronek
- Dec 8** - Ushers: Jim & Kari Jermain  
Reader: Lori Jensen  
Communion Servers: Jean Scott & Angie Williams  
Communion Set Up: Lydia Circle  
Acolytes: Jackson Rue & Peter Mabie  
Coffee Hour Hosts: Punsel, Peggy & Donna  
Assisting Minister: Kelly Witte
- Dec 15** - Ushers: Tim & Evy Jeffers  
Reader: Tim Jeffers  
Communion Servers: Bill & Betty Reay  
Communion Set Up: Lydia Circle  
Acolytes: George Albrecht & Griffin Sullivan  
Coffee Hour: Stenjem, Brooke & Karen  
Assisting Minister: Shawn Whitman
- Dec 22** - Ushers: Felix & Jan Egli  
Reader: Shawn Whitman  
Communion Servers: Tom & Chris Watson  
Communion Set Up: Geis Family  
Acolytes: Annabel Fleck & William Gottschalk  
Coffee Hour: Hall & Machus  
Assisting Minister: Diane Fronek
- Dec 24** - Ushers: Dale & Marcia Klemp  
3pm Reader: Mandi Buonincontro  
Communion Servers: Tony & Mandi Buonincontro  
Communion Set Up: Lydia Circle  
Acolytes: Jack Johnson & Kinsley Stenjem  
Assisting Minister: Shawn Whitman
- Dec 24** - Ushers: Kris Tobias Family  
5pm Reader: Char Luchterhand  
Communion Servers: Randy Luchterhand & Felix Egli  
Communion Set Up: Lydia Circle  
Acolytes: Cael & Corbin Klemp  
Assisting Minister: Erik Olsen
- Dec 25** - Ushers: Wendy Lehr & Cindy Hartman  
Reader: Wendy Lehr  
Communion Servers: Scarlett & Sierra Jelinek  
Communion Set Up: Lydia Circle  
Acolytes: Crew Cunningham & Haven Lovick-Gill  
Assisting Minister: Jeff Gafner
- Dec 29** - Ushers: Al & Pat Northey & Key Family  
Reader: April Mickelson  
Communion Servers: Kelly Witte & Tami Collin  
Communion Set Up: Pat Northey  
Acolytes: Cael & Corbin Klemp  
Coffee Hour: Hospitality - Christmas Cookies  
Assisting Minister: Rich Fronek

**Altar Guild** - Amy Simdon, Judy Heidebrecht and Ann Adsit

# DECEMBER AT GRACE

Sunday	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 9 am <b>Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 &amp; Facebook</b> 10:10 am <b>Sunday School</b> 10:15 am <b>Choir Rehearsal</b>	<b>2</b> 9:30 am <b>Quilters</b> 7 pm <b>Adult Study</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 9 am <b>Ruth Circle</b> 11am <b>Outreach Committee</b> 6:30 pm <b>Confirmation</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 9 am <b>Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 &amp; Facebook</b> 10:10 am <b>Sunday School</b> 10:15 am <b>Choir Rehearsal</b> 2 pm <b>Bell Crazy Concert</b>	<b>9</b> 9:30 am <b>Quilters</b> 7 pm <b>Adult Study</b>	<b>10</b> 7pm <b>Council Mtg</b>	<b>11</b> 9 am <b>Lydia Circle</b> 6:30 pm <b>Confirmation</b>	<b>12</b> 10 am <b>Staff Mtg</b>	<b>13</b> 6pm <b>Diner's Delight Dinner</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> <b>CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM</b> 9 am <b>Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 &amp; Facebook</b> 10:10 am <b>Sunday School</b> 10:15 am <b>Choir Rehearsal</b>	<b>16</b> <b>Newsletter content deadline</b> 9:30 am <b>Quilters</b> 7 pm <b>Adult Study</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 6:30 pm <b>Confirmation</b> 3-8pm <b>Evening of Prayer &amp; Reflection</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 9 am <b>Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 &amp; Facebook</b> 10:15 am <b>Choir Rehearsal</b>	<b>23</b> 9:30 am <b>Quilters</b>	<b>24</b> <b>Christmas Eve Worship:</b> 3pm 5pm	<b>25</b> 10 am <b>Christmas Day Worship</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> <b>LESSONS &amp; CAROLS</b> 9 am <b>Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 &amp; Facebook</b>	<b>30</b> 9:30 am <b>Quilters</b>	<b>31</b> New Year's Eve	1 New Year's Day OFFICE CLOSED	2	3	4



## GROWING FAITH-FILLED KIDS



### Children's Christmas Program — Sunday, December 15th



This year's Sunday School Christmas program, "Mary Remembers" invites us to experience the Christmas story through the eyes of Mary herself. In this heartfelt performance, Mary reflects on the miraculous events leading up to the birth of Jesus, sharing her thoughts, feelings, and memories of that holy night. The Sunday School students will bring this story to life with vibrant songs, skits, and scenes, and we are thrilled to welcome a special guest from our congregation who will portray Mary, adding a personal and meaningful touch to the performance. Join us as we celebrate the true spirit of Christmas and remember the birth of our Savior through Mary's eyes.

Don't miss another endearing performance on December 15th, during the service.

### Sunday School

As a reminder, there is no Sunday School from December 22 - January 5th. Classes will resume again January 12th for the spring semester.

### Confirmation Corner



This month, we'll finish up our study of the Ten Commandments and what they mean in our lives today. Mentorship night is December 4 at 6:30 p.m. Students are welcome to come before Confirmation on December 11 to bake goodies for the church bake sale. The baking will be from 3:30-6:30. Come for any part of that time. Anyone interested should talk to Pastor Jennifer.

### Congrats on Your First Communion!

We lift up these 5th graders, who in October celebrated their first communion:

Henry Albrecht  
Corbin Klemp  
Emmett Koehler  
Easton Bernhardt  
Billy Becker  
Annabel Fleck



## Congratulations Confirmands!



Rylan Tobias  
Cash Cunningham  
Mason Neuenschwander  
Gordon Grender  
Marissa Kilburg  
Aurora Sullivan



Same group - First Communion 2020

A special thank you to our supportive mentors.

## Outreach and Social Justice

We're ready to help with gift giving ideas! Beginning the first Sunday in Advent, Dec. 1st, *Equal Exchange Fairly Traded* products and our *Good Gifts Tree* will be available in Fellowship Hall.

We'll have a limited selection of tea, hot chocolate, and the ever popular chocolate bars. This is not a fundraiser, but rather an opportunity for you to help support small farmers who are part of fair trade organizations. Items make great gifts, stocking stuffers, or just a special treat for yourself.

And, for that "hard to shop for" person, check out our *Good Gifts Tree* or catalog and make a purchase of chicks, pigs, goats, honeybees, water filters, microloans, etc. in someone's honor that will in turn help someone else.

## Stewardship: Advent Giving Ideas

With the Advent season fast approaching, the Stewardship committee would like to provide some reminders about how we can help our neighbors in need:

- The large basket just inside the west entrance of church is there for food pantry donations. Items needed include canned goods, bags of beans, rice, etc. Paper items, and feminine products are always appreciated as well.
- If you shop at the Cambridge Piggly Wiggly, be sure to ask for your receipt. The receipts can be placed in the drawer of the table also inside the west entrance of church, and Grace can redeem the "pig points".
- Once again this year, look for the handouts available at church providing meaningful ideas that you and your family members can do throughout the Advent season.

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
November 12, 2024**

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

**Call to Order.** President Kelly Witte called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

**Attendance. Present:** Pr. Jennifer Jelinek, Bob Koepp, Connie Kreuser, Charlene Luchterhand, April Mickelson, Kristin Rue, Richard Scott, Amy Simdon, Shawn Whitman, Kelly Witte.

**Absent:** Sandi Aston Hall, John Jensen, Peggy Punsel.

**Devotions.** Char shared devotions.

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

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

**Correspondence.** We received a letter inviting us to apply for a grant from our synod's Endowment Fund. The purpose of the fund is to "foster innovation that leads to creative, financially sustainable ministries that enhance God's mission" in our area.

**Treasurer's Report.** (Amy) Both giving and expenses were higher, with three payrolls this month. We had a net loss of \$8,668.58 in October and a net loss of \$13,103.85 for the year. Our year-to-date (YTD) General Giving at the end of October was \$15,652 higher than 2023 and \$4,378 under the YTD budget. YTD Special Giving was \$9,504 more than last year and \$8,724 more than budget. Our YTD expenses were \$75,427 more than last year. If we didn't include our one-time expenses of the sabbatical, Youth Gathering and the door project our expenses would be \$5,800 more than last year. We are \$30,492 over our budget due to those same one-time expenses. The checking balance was \$678 less than at the end of September with the general fund balance approximately \$9,174 less. Historically our congregation has been generous at the end of the year. We are optimistic this trend will continue. At this time there is no need to do anything more regarding church finances. Char moved to approve this treasurer's report and send it to audit. Richard seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

**Pastor's Report.** Thanks to the Property Committee for installing motion-sensored lights in the lower level. Despite Pr. Jennifer's urging, an ecumenical Thanksgiving service will not be held. Possibly a summer ecumenical event will be held this summer at Lake Ripley Park. Willerup Church is again offering the Bethlehem Experience December 21 and 22. Our congregation is invited to help with this immersive experience. Peggy Punsel is our church's liaison. One of our confirmation students will be baptized the night before Thanksgiving. About a dozen people came to the church on election day. This prompted a discussion about opening the church building at other times of the year for prayer and meditation.

**Baptism**

August Emmett Ciha – 11/27/25



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

**Education.** (Kristin) Committee is identifying meaningful options for the use of children's Sunday School offerings. Children's Christmas program will be Sunday December 15 during church service. Some confirmation students and mentors will help finish painting downstairs for their confirmation service projects. Workdays are November 16 and 17.

**Outreach & Social Justice.** (April) Our congregation donated over 200 cans of green beans for the Food Pantry Thanksgiving dinners and is currently collecting cream of mushroom soup for the Food Pantry holiday dinners. Any additional funds donated will be used to purchase paper items needed by the Food Pantry.

**Stewardship.** (Connie) After three consecutive weeks of "temple talks", the pledge drive wrapped up on November 10, with the congregation bringing in pledge cards and time/talent sheets. Ideas to promote during Advent to help Cambridge area residents: 1) Donating dish and laundry soaps, canned goods, pasta and rice as well as paper products to the Food Pantry; 2) Asking for Piggly Wiggly receipts when shopping; 3) Providing a handout for family activities during Advent season.

**Sabbatical Team Report.** (Bob) Bob handed out a list of questions to solicit council feedback for the congregational portion of the report to Lilly Endowment Inc, the foundation that supported Pastor's sabbatical. The goal is to complete the report by the end of 2024.

### **Old Business.**

**Doors.** Fund-raising closure. \$10,713, more than anticipated, was donated for the front door project. We will close fund-raising and thank members for their generosity.

**2025 Budget.** Amy handed out a draft 2025 budget proposal. Details were reviewed and discussed. She will obtain the cost of Pastor's health insurance and continue to tweak the budget. We will review the revised version at our December meeting.

### **New Business.**

**Communion Rail Cushions.** Char suggested we consider purchasing kneeling cushions for around the communion rail. This would be easier on knees and Pastor's back as she would not need to bend down so far. There was general agreement. We will explore possible sources and costs and discuss further when we have more information.

**Church Bell.** The church bell has been sounding "off." Karen Johnson found a crack in it. A new one would cost a minimum of \$600. Richard moved that we authorize Karen to find a new bell and let us know the cost. April seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. We plan to use memorial funds to purchase it.

**Sunday School Offerings.** Brainstormed options for the use of Sunday School offerings that would have meaning to the students.

**Adjournment.** Richard moved to adjourn the meeting. Amy seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM. We ended with the Lord's Prayer.

**Next Meeting.** Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 10 at 7:00 PM. John and Richard are scheduled to present devotions.

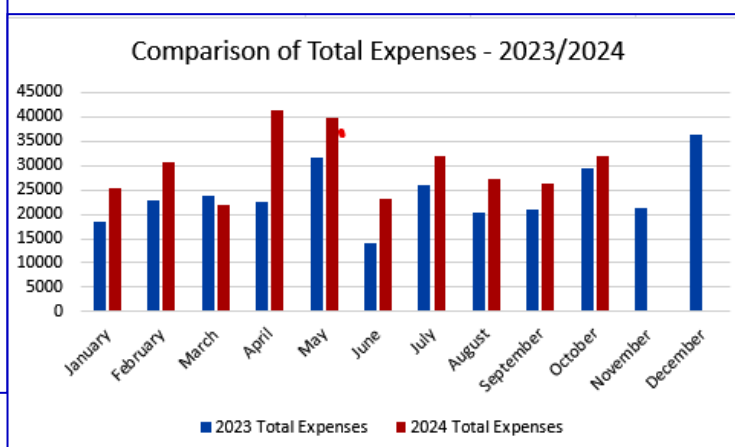
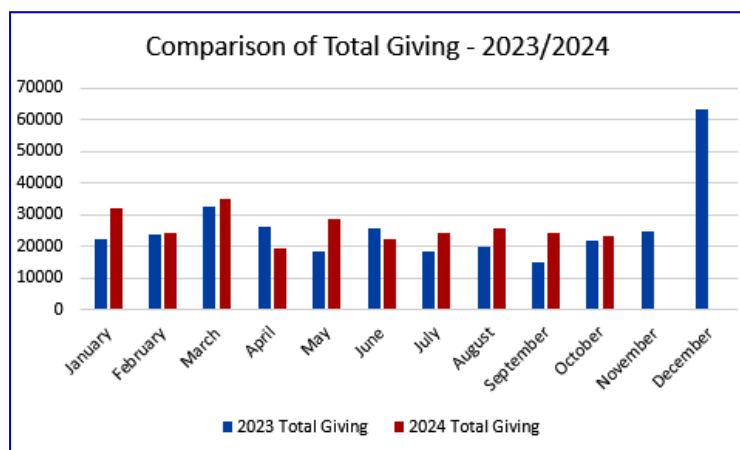
Submitted by Charlene Luchterhand, Council Secretary

## From the Treasurer

### October 2024 Financial Snapshot

Income	Year-to-date October 2024 Actual	Year-to-date 2024 Monthly Budget	Over/(under) budget
General Giving	225,622	230,000	(4,378)
Special Giving	25,391	16,667	8,724
Sabbatical Giving	37,983	30,950	7,033
Misc Income	3,599	2,750	849
Total Income	292,595	280,367	12,228
<b>Expenses</b>			
Administrative	99,900	89,473	10,428
Mission	43,527	35,833	7,694
Pastoral	155,340	141,218	14,122
Program	6,931	8,683	(1,753)
Other	-	-	-
Total Expenses	305,698	275,208	30,491
<b>Total Net Income (Loss)</b>	(13,104)	5,159	(18,263)

Thank you for your generous giving. Please remember that in addition to the Sunday service, you can give online through Vanco at <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-YYN7> or through Venmo, using the QR code.





# Staff and Council

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## STAFF

**Pastor** Jennifer Jelinek Home: 423-2329 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** Bob Koepp

**Secretary** Char Luchterhand

**Treasurer** Amy Simdon

**Outreach** April Mickelson

**Education** Kristin Rue

**Stewardship** Connie Kreuser

**Hospitality** Peggy Punsel

**Evangelism** Shawn Whitman

**Worship** Sandi Aston Hall

**Property** John Jensen &

Richard Scott



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