



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Gathering in Grace, Growing in Faith, Serving in Love

JANUARY 2024

Pastor's Ponderings



Happy New Year! How are you feeling, coming into 2024? Are you rested, energized, and ready? Or are you a little worn out – physically, emotionally, or spiritually? December can do that to us. There are so many exciting events, not to mention the personal responsibilities and family obligations that come with the season. It's enough to make you want to lie down for a long winter's nap.

We Americans aren't great at stopping and resting. We live in a 24/7 culture. Visitors from other countries often notice that Americans work too much and fill our free time with many commitments, leaving little time for rest, or as we call it in the Judeo-Christian tradition, Sabbath.

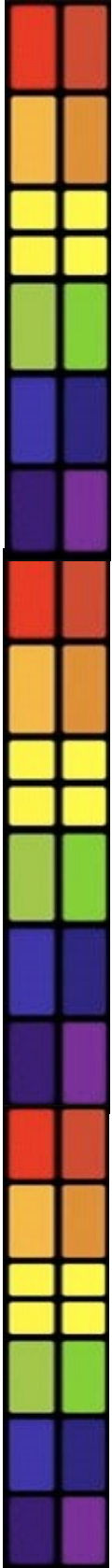
You know that sabbath, a day of rest, began on the 7th day of creation, when God rested. And God commanded us to observe the Sabbath every week, deliberately taking time to rest, to renew, and to reconnect with God and others. It's important to our faith, but it's also vital for our physical and emotional health, as well as for our relationships. Did you know that the Bible also talks about a Sabbath Year? In Leviticus 25, God commands a year of sabbath rest for the land and for those who work the land. For that year, no crops were planted or harvested. People could eat what the land produced, but it was to be a year of rest and renewal, both for the people and for the land itself. That year would help people slow down, relearn how to depend on God, and reconnect with God and one another.

This is where the concept of "Sabbatical" comes from. People in academia have observed sabbaticals for many years, and it's become more common for churches to offer their pastors sabbaticals every 7 years or so. It's a time to rest, to reflect, to reconnect with God, and to come back refreshed and ready to sow more seeds together.

And that's exactly what we'll be doing this year. In this case, my Sabbatical will be 3 months over the summer. But this Sabbatical is also a time of reflection and reconnection for the people of Grace as well. It'll be a wonderful time to discern how God is speaking to us now and how God is calling us to move into the next years together. Who are we as Grace Lutheran Church? How are we called to serve God and the world in the future? These exciting questions will be our focus this year.

I'm excited for all of us in 2024. God has blessed us with a wonderful congregation, and we've been blessed with a Sabbatical Grant to support this year's adventures, both together and apart. So I hope you'll be part of this year of reflection and renewal.

In Christ,
+ *Pastor Jennifer*





Enjoy the Snow?

We've been lucky so far, but it's coming! We are looking for volunteers to shovel walks after a snowstorm. If you can help, please sign up on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall.

December Bake Sale

Thanks to everyone who purchased goodies at the Youth Bake Sale on Dec. 17th. Our Youth raised over \$400 to support going to the ELCA Youth Gathering next summer. Your generosity is so appreciated!

Sheets and Fabric Needed

Grace Quilters are in great need of clean, stain-free, cotton sheets. Please consider donating sheets by bringing them to the church office.

Any sewers who have unused fabric around, quilters would appreciate that donation as well. Monetary donations are also always welcome. Donations can be dropped off at the church office.



Confirmation Corner

This month, Mentor Night is on Wed. Jan. 3 at 6:30 p.m. We'll be starting our study of the New Testament this semester, beginning on Jan. 10.

Grace Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting for Grace Lutheran Church will take place on Sunday, January 28, 2024 at 10:15 a.m. in the Sanctuary. All adult Grace members are invited to participate in this important meeting.

You are Appreciated!



A big thanks to our fantastic Grace Staff, who have worked hard and done an excellent job this year, particularly preparing for this holiday season. Thank you to Catherine, Breah, Kenneth, Diane, and Ann for being awesome! Thanks also to Shauna Thayer on all the work she's done to update and improve Grace's website. Awesome job, Shauna!

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>

Monday Night Bible Study

Our January Bible study on Monday nights will start with the Epiphany chapter of our "While We Wait" series. Then we'll get back to watching "The Chosen," Season 3. These episodes are all about an hour, so plan on the study going to about 8:30. Class starts at 7 pm. each week.

Jan. 8 – Epiphany study

Jan. 15 – "Homecoming"

Jan. 22 – "Two by Two"

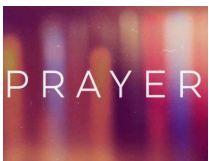
Jan. 29 – "Physician, Heal Yourself"

Welcome New Members!

On December 17th we rejoiced in welcoming these new members to our faith community: Emily, Justin, Annabel, and Max Fleck; Matt, Jennifer, Ethan, Alexander, and Nora Kuhnert; Justin, Kristine, Blake, and Avery Schutte; Wayne Machus; and Kenny and Debbie Zickert. If you haven't done so already, please say introduce yourself and say hello!

Jelinek Health Update

Many of you have asked for updates on Pastor Jennifer's husband Erik in his cancer journey. He completed radiation in December, and while he hoped to participate in a clinical trial of a new cancer med in Detroit, he doesn't qualify at this time. So he will be starting an already approved targeted therapy pill, and hopefully, it'll be effective.



Star Words

In this season when we celebrate the star that guided the magi to Jesus, we continue the tradition of Star Words here at Grace. On Jan. 7, you'll have the opportunity to receive a star with a word to help guide and focus you throughout this new year. If you'd like to receive a star virtually, you may go to this website: www.wordsatgrace.com



Funerals

Mary Gjermo - December 1, 2023

Office Hours

The Church Office is open from 9 am – noon, Monday through 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

JANUARY VOLUNTEERS



- Jan 7 -** Ushers: Gary & Sharon Haberkorn Assisting Minister: Diane Fronek
Reader: Tim Neuenschwander
Communion Servers: April Mickelson & Rachel Drotzer
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Acolytes: Jack Johnson & Gordie Grender
Coffee Hour Hosts: Jill Jensen & Watsons
- Jan 14 -** Ushers: Jim & Kari Jermain Assisting Minister: Jeff Gafner
Reader: Amy Simdon
Communion Servers: Amy Simdon & Judy Heidebrecht
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Acolytes: Rory & Griffin Sullivan
Coffee Hour Hosts: Wendy Lehr & Hermansons
- Jan 21 -** Ushers: Bob & Janet Koepp Assisting Minister: Shawn Koebke
Reader: Jim Leser
Communion Servers: Brenda Lovick & Shauna Thayer
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Acolytes: Will Gottschalk & Kinsley Stenjem
Coffee Hour Hosts: Marcia Sivesind & Jeanine Thurow
- Jan 28 -** Ushers: Jeanine Thurow & Donna Simdon Assisting Minister: Rich Fronek
Reader: Jean Scott
Communion Servers: Servers - Jean Scott & Mallorri Buonincontro
Communion Set Up: Geis Family
Acolytes: Cash & Crew Cunningham
Coffee Hour: YOUTH

Altar Guild - Alice Wolfgram, Donna Kelter & Diane Russo



JANUARY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
31 NEW YEAR'S EVE 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY OFFICE CLOSED	2	3 9 am Ruth Circle 11am Outreach Committee 6:30 pm Confirmation & Pre-Confirmation	4 10 am Staff Mtg	5	6
7 9 am Worship SERVICE - Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:10 am Sunday School 10:15 am Sanctuary Choir	8 9:30 am Quilters 7pm Study	9 7 pm Grace Council Mtg	10 9 am Lydia Circle 6:30 pm Confirmation	11	12	13
14 9 am Worship SERVICE - Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:10 am Sunday School 10:15am Sanctuary Choir	15 9:30 am Quilters 7pm Study Newsletter content due	16	17 6:30 pm Confirmation & Pre-Confirmation	18	19	20
21 9 am Worship SERVICE - Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:10 am Sunday School 10:15 am Sanctuary Choir	22 9:30 am Quilters 7pm Study	23	24 6:30 pm Confirmation & Pre-Confirmation	25	26	27
28 9 am Worship SERVICE - Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:10 am Sunday School 10:15 am ANNUAL MEETING	29 9:30 am Quilters 7pm Study	30	31	Feb. 1	2	3

GROWING FAITH-FILLED KIDS



Christmas Joy

Thank you to everyone who made the Children's Christmas Program, "The Nazareth Evening News" so awesome, especially Breah Klemp, Sunday School Teachers, the IT team, Kenneth Hoversten and Choir members.



Help fill our Blue Jay Backpacks!

Our local Food Pantry has reached out to area churches to help provide snacks for K-5 children in the Cambridge School District. We will be attempting to fill 30 “backpacks” with 16+ snacks in the month of January. This program aims to ensure that students who may be experiencing food insecurity have access to meals during weekends and holidays when school is closed. Food items that are GREAT for the Blue Jay Backpack Program include:

- Macaroni and Cheese or Easy Mac
- Pudding Cups (unrefrigerated)
- Microwave Meals (unrefrigerated)
- Fruit Cups (unrefrigerated)
- Peanut Butter (plastic container)
- Jelly (plastic container)
- Snack crackers
- Oatmeal packets
- Individual cereal boxes
- Granola/Fruit Bars
- Easy to open cans of soup
- Tuna or canned chicken
- Gummy Snacks

If you cannot get out and shop, we will do the shopping for you. Just write a check, make a Venmo or Vanco donation and we will do the rest. Please be sure to write Blue Jay Backpack in the memo line so it goes to the right place! We need all donations in by January 21.

If you have any questions, please contact April Mickelson, Outreach & Social Justice Committee, at 608-225-8955. Your help gathering these snacks is greatly appreciated!

Interested in doing more? Contact the food pantry for volunteer opportunities or perhaps donating wish list items.

There is a donation drop box outside of the food pantry for donated items. For large donations or monetary donations, please contact the food pantry at 608.423.8142 or foodpantry@cambridge.k12.wi.us

Cambridge Food Pantry Wish List



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

December 12, 2023, partially via zoom and partially at church

(Minutes below not approved until next Council meeting)

Call to Order. President Kelly Witte called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Attendance. Present: Peggy Punsel, Connie Kreuser, Mary Behling, April Mickelson, Bill Becker, Amy Simdon, Bob Koepp, Kelly Witte, Ann Engelstad, Bill Reay, Shawn Whitman, and Pastor Jennifer Jelinek. **Absent:** None.

Devotions. Peggy Punsel presented devotions.

Approval of November Minutes. Amy Simdon moved to approve the November minutes as written, Peggy Punsel seconded the motion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Approval of Agenda. Pastor Jennifer noted that she will address Final Committee Reports in her report so that could be removed as a separate Agenda item. Mary Behling moved to approve the Agenda with that item deleted, Bill Reay second the Motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Correspondence. Pastor Jennifer received a letter from CART asking that any year-end gifts be made shortly and she passed it on to the Endowment Committee.

Treasurer's Report. (a) Amy Simdon presented the November reports and her financial narrative for all to review. She noted that things had improved with some unexpected gifts coming in that improved the outlook substantially. We had a net gain of \$3,487 in November resulting in a year-to-date gain of \$2,260.56. As of November 30, year-to-date General Giving is almost the same as last year and we are about \$15,000 below budget. Special Giving is about \$1,300 below last year's year-to-date figures and \$7,800 under budget. Total year-to-date giving is approximately \$4,250 lower than last year and \$23,000 under budget. Total year-to-date expenses are \$5,700 more than the same date last year, but still \$24,000 under budget fortunately. The end result through November 30 is that year-to-date ordinary net income is about \$7,000 less than 2022. Finally, the checking account balance has increased from \$5,119 to \$9,443. Amy noted in summary that things look much better and we should be in good shape to meet all expenses and make all Endowment gifts by the end of the year. She noted that the last day for 2023 giving will be December 28 this year. Bob Koepp moved to approve the treasurer's report and send it to audit, Ann Engelstad seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Pastor's Report. Pastor Jennifer noted that the final committee reports for 2023 are due as soon as possible, but no later than December 31, so that Catherine can get them into the Annual Report. The children's Christmas program will be held December 17 and the Youth Group will have a bake sale that day to raise funds for the Youth Gathering next summer. We also will be welcoming five family units as new members that day. She noted that neither she nor Kenneth will be there that Sunday and the service will be lay-led as usual with Kelly Witte acting as assistant minister. In family news, Pastor reported that Erik's cancer has spread to his pelvis. After 5 rounds of radiation, he's now checking into a clinical trial of a new cancer drug in Detroit She will provide updates when more is known and thanked everyone for their continuing prayers for their family.

Committee Reports. April Mickelson (Outreach) reported that the Advent Fair Exchange and Good Gifts displays are up and in business. Good Gifts can still be purchased, however. Layettes and School Kits received donations directly to their special giving accounts and all expenses were covered by those. It appears they will not need to spend their annual budget. A display for the Blue Jay Backpack project through the Cambridge Food Pantry will be put together on December 18. They will need 30 bags with 16+ snacks by Jan. 21. Bags will be assembled that week and delivered prior to Jan. 30. Peggy Punsel (Hospitality) reported that they will be providing cake for the new members on Dec. 17th and helping with coffee hour on Dec. 31. Two new coffee pots have been purchased so there will be enough coffee to serve for larger events. Peggy will be asking for some new committee members. Ann Engelstad (Worship) reported that poinsettias will be delivered Friday, Dec. 22. Bob Koepp reported that he submitted an article to the Cambridge News and the Wisconsin State Journal regarding the Lilly Grant. Bill Reay (Property) reported that he is always looking for volunteers to sign up for snow shoveling. Bill also said he will be sending a thank you note to Jack Stockwell for his help in keeping the ditches mowed last summer. No other reports this month.

Old Business. (a) Front Door - Bill. Bill Reay reported that he had no new information as he wasn't sure how we wanted to proceed. Discussion was held and it was agreed that Bill should get some estimates for doors and for complete packages with doors and openers, including electrical costs, if possible, and we would present the matter for discussion at the Annual Meeting to find out how the congregation wants to proceed. There is some seed money for this project, but more would be needed to be raised and anything over \$10,000 has to be approved by the congregation regardless.

(b) Pollinator Garden. Connie Kreuser reported that a group is going to do a preliminary walk around the grounds this Friday, weather permitting.

(c) 2024 Budget. Amy Simdon presented the proposed budget with the changes suggested last month. The only additional item is that Catherine is probably going to need a new computer in 2024. Rather than revising the budget for that item, Amy suggested that we address that issue when it arises and see if we can't raise donations to pay for it then. Bob Koepp moved to accept the proposed budget as is and move it to the Annual Meeting. Bill Reay seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

New Business. Annual Meeting date. The Annual Meeting was set for January 28, 2024, following worship.

Adjournment. There being no further business, Bill Reay moved to adjourn the meeting, Amy Simdon seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

The next meeting date will be January 9, at 7:00 p.m. at Grace and via Zoom. The meeting was adjourned, followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Report submitted by Mary Behling, Council Secretary.



From the Treasurer

November 2023 Financial Snapshot

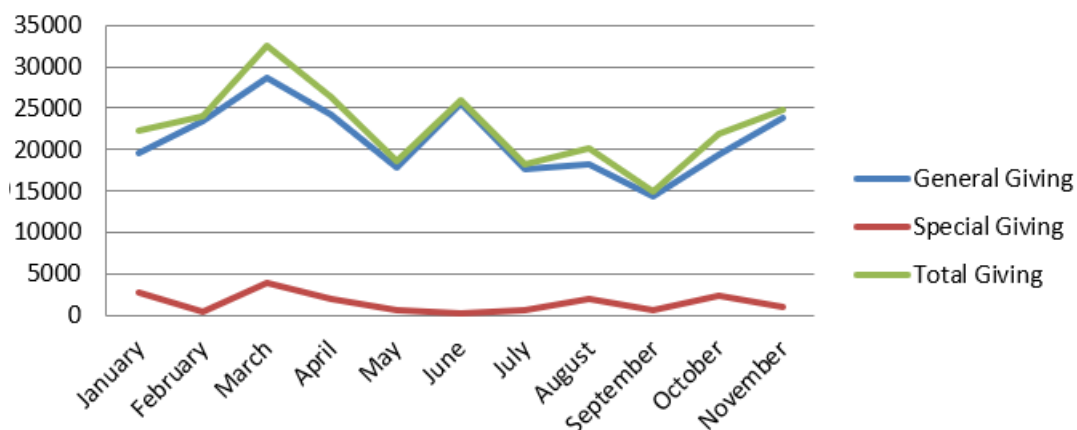
Income	Year-to-date November 2023 Actual	Year-to-date 2023 Monthly Budget	Over/(under) budget
General Giving	233,796	249,337	(15,541)
Special Giving	16,941	24,750	(7,809)
Misc Income	<u>3,188</u>	<u>2,790</u>	<u>398</u>
Total Income	253,925	276,877	(22,953)
Expenses			
Administrative	86,983	96,769	(9,786)
Mission	35,930	43,083	(7,153)
Pastoral	122,991	125,100	(2,110)
Program	5,760	11,495	(5,735)
Other	-	-	-
Total Expenses	251,664	276,448	(24,784)
Total Net Income (Loss)	2,261	429	1,831

In the last month our financial outlook has improved substantially. Thank you to everyone for your generosity, and for being good stewards of the financial gifts God has given you. Please remember that in addition to the Sunday service, you can give online through Vanco (<https://www.vancopayments.com/login>) or through Venmo, using the QR code.



venmo

2023 Income by Month





Staff and Council



STAFF

Pastor Jennifer Jelinek Home: 423-2329 Cell: (608) 295-7120 pastorjenniferglc@gmail.com

Admin Assistant Catherine Elliott (608) 423-3135 gracelutherancambridgewi@gmail.com

Christian Ed Coordinator Breah Klemp christianedu.glc@gmail.com

Volunteer Coordinator Cindy Hartman cindyh1029@msn.com

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

Organist Kenneth Hoversten kenneth.hoversten@gmail.com

Handbell Choir Director Ann Engelstad gaengelstad@charter.net

COUNCIL

President Kelly Witte

Vice President Bob Koepp

Secretary Mary Behling

Treasurer Amy Simdon

Outreach April Mickelson

Education Bill Becker

Stewardship Connie Kreuser

Hospitality Peggy Punsel

Evangelism Shawn Whitman

Worship Ann Engelstad

Property Bill Reay



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