

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Gathering in Grace, Growing in Faith, Serving in Love

NOVEMBER 2023

Pastor's Ponderings



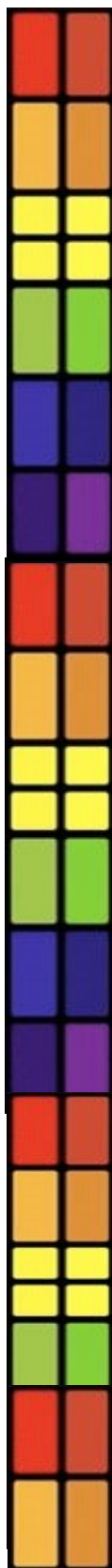
Over the summer, some of us read the book, "Braiding Sweetgrass," by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Dr. Kimmerer is a Native American who is a botany professor. She shares amazing things about how Indigenous people see and treat nature and the earth differently than most of us do. Rather than thinking about owning land and being entitled to what the land produces, indigenous peoples tend to think about everything as a gift – from wild strawberries to corn to sweetgrass. And when they receive gifts from the land, there's a strong call to give back, by giving to others and by caring for the earth. It's not about taking or buying, it's about relationship – receiving gifts given, and giving back in gratitude, sharing the blessing.

It struck me how similar this is to how we think about generosity in the church. God has given us so much that we are called to give back in gratitude. Our generosity may be in sharing the time we have, giving our hours to be helpful, to serve, to listen, to simply be present for others. Our generosity may include sharing our talents – maybe musical or artistic talents, maybe talents for fixing, baking, listening, sewing, reading, teaching, leading, planning, or any number of other abilities. Our generosity also includes sharing our treasures – the monetary and tangible items that can help support missions and ministries. Our treasures help spread out blessings so that we can give to others as God has given to us. All of life is a gift, given freely to us, so we're free to give as well.

Generosity should never be forced. Giving, sharing, being generous are all about being in relationship, being grateful, wanting to give back some of what we've been given. And as most of us have experienced, when we give and share from our blessings, we feel even more blessed. Where fear often causes us to hold tightly to what we have, generosity brings joy. On November 12, we'll be celebrating the incredible gifts God has given us – our time, our talents, and our treasures. Leading up to that day, I invite you to think about how God has been generous with you, and how you feel called to be generous with your time, your talents, and your treasures. You'll soon receive a mailing, and we encourage you to consider how you'd like to use your God-given gifts in this place in the year to come. There are so many opportunities to give, help, and serve, so many opportunities to give and receive joy and fulfillment. So on Nov. 12, we invite you to bring your Pledge Cards and your Time & Talent sheets on that day, to offer up as an offering to God for 2024.

And as a personal note – I'm having some more surgery on October 31, so I'll be recovering at home for a couple weeks after that. I'd welcome your prayers, and I hope this will be my last procedure for a LONG time.

In Christ,
+ *Pastor Jennifer*





All Saints' Sunday Healing Service

On All Saints' Sunday (Nov. 5), we'll remember those who have passed away in the last year and are now saints in God's kingdom. We'll have a slideshow with names and pictures of those who have died since last All Saints' Sunday. On that Sunday, we'll also have a Healing Service. All will have the opportunity to participate in multiple healing stations, including Lighting Memorial Candles, Prayers for Healing, Thanksgiving Wall, Prayers for the World, and the ever-popular Stress Shredder. Come join us as we pray for healing in our own lives, in the lives of others, and prayers for a broken world.



Community Café

Due to a scheduling conflict, the people of Grace will not be serving dinner at for the Community Café, on Thursday, November 2, as previously noted. We look forward to hosting again sometime in 2024.

bRinging Holiday Joy



Bell Crazy Community Handbell Ensemble will be presenting a concert at Grace Lutheran Church on December 9th at 2 pm. The ensemble is under the direction of Karen Johnson and includes a few members of the Grace Bell Choir. Admission to the concert is free and open to the public. Free-will offering/donations are accepted to support building the ensemble's music library, instrument maintenance and equipment.

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>



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

'The Chosen' Discussion



On Monday nights this month, we'll continue watching and discussing the popular TV series, "The Chosen," Season 2, at 7 pm. Some of the episodes are an hour long, so discussions may go to around 8:30. All are welcome!

Oct. 30 – Unlawful (45 min.)
Nov. 6 – Reckoning (43 min.)
Nov. 13 – Beyond Mountains (51 min.)
Nov. 19 – NO CLASS
Nov. 26 – Advent study

MAJM Fundraiser - Brat and Burger Cookout

On Saturday, October 21st, the Outreach and Social Justice Committee held a brat and burger fundraiser for Madison Area Jail Ministry. Thanks to your support, we raised over \$900 for this worthy cause!



Community in Action

Thank you to all participated in the *Little Dresses for Africa* workshop last month. Twenty sewers from Grace and throughout the community joined together to make over 100 dresses for young African girls!



NOVEMBER VOLUNTEERS



- Nov 5** - Ushers: Gary & Sharon Haberkorn Assisting Minister: Erik Olsen
Reader: April Mickelson
Communion April Mickelson & Rachel Drotzer
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Acolytes: Brady & Ashton Thayer
Coffee Hour Hosts: Marlene Hussey & Kelly Hausz
- Nov 12** - Ushers: Doug & Gail Tufte Assisting Minister: Kelly Witte
Reader: Jim Leser
Communion Servers: Shawn Whitman & Amy Simdon
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Acolytes: Paxton Koehler & Jack Johnson
Coffee Hour Hosts: Mary Behling & Cheryl Kilburg
- Nov 19** - Ushers: Bob & Janet Koepf Assisting Minister: Andrya Coutts
Reader: Ward Nottestad
Communion Servers: Shauna Thayer & Diane Russo
Communion Set Up: Ruth Circle
Acolytes: Rory & Griffin Sullivan
Coffee Hour Hosts: Mary Falk & Angie Williams
- Nov 26** - Ushers: Tim & Evy Jeffers Assisting Minister: Shawn Whitman
Reader: Tim Jeffers
Communion Servers: Servers - Brenda Lovick & Judy Heidebrecht
Communion Set Up: Geis Family
Acolytes: Gordie Grender & Will Gottschalk
Coffee Hour Hosts: Tatlock & Gafner

Altar Guild - Amy Simdon, Ann Adsit and Judy Heidebrecht



NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
29 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:10 am Sunday School 10:15 am Sanctuary Choir	30 9:30 am Quilters 7pm 'The Chosen' Study	31	1 9 am Ruth Circle 11am Outreach Committee 6:30 pm Confirmation & Pre- Confirmation	2	3	4
5 9 am Healing SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:10 am Sunday School 10:15 am Sanctuary Choir	6 9:30 am Quilters 7pm 'The Chosen' Study	7	8 9 am Lydia Circle 6:30 pm Confirmation & Pre- Confirmation	9 10 am Staff Mtg	10	141
12 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:10 am Sunday School 10:15am Sanctuary Choir	13 9:30 am Quilters 7pm 'The Chosen' Study	14 7 pm Grace Council Mtg	15 6:30 pm Confirmation & Pre- Confirmation Newsletter content due	16	27	28
19 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:10 am Sunday School 10:15 am Sanctuary Choir	20 9:30 am Quilters	21	22	23 Thanksgiv- ing Day	24	25
26 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9 am Worship SERVICE- Also on Cable Channel 987 & Facebook 10:10 am Sunday School 10:15 am Sanctuary Choir	27 9:30 am Quilters 7pm Advent Study	28	29 6:30 pm Confirmation	30	1	2

GROWING FAITH-FILLED KIDS

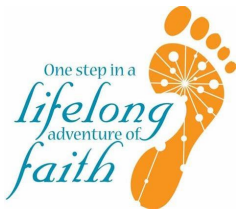


First Communion

Congratulations to Jack Johnson, Griffin Sullivan, and Ashton Thayer, who received their First Communion last month!

Thanks to Jill Jensen for once again teaching our First Communion Class. The kids loved decorating their chalices and making communion bread.

Confirmation Corner



This month, Mentor Night is on Nov. 1 at 6:30 p.m. There is no class on Nov. 22, due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

On Confirmation Sunday, October 22, four of our youth Affirmed their Baptism and were welcomed among us as Christian adults at Grace. Congratulations to:

Sammy Grender, Scarlett Jelinek, Malina Schneider, and Marissa Schneider!



ELCA Youth Gathering

Our youth are gearing up for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering, which will be held in New Orleans in July. We'll be taking 6 youth, and a few of our young adults will be going for the brand-new Young Adult Gathering, which is held in conjunction with the Youth Gathering. The theme for the Gathering is "Created to Be: Brave, Authentic, Free, Disruptive, Disciples." We'd welcome your prayers and support as we prepare for the gathering and raise money to help us get there.



Stewardship: We Are Called

Stewardship helps us realize the gifts we've received need to be shared. Everyone's response is unique and valuable. We have diverse spiritual and worldly gifts; that is what makes our church community strong. In October we heard people speak about personal stewardship viewpoints. Consider your own view when you respond to God's generosity and his call.



In early November you will receive a letter inviting you to participate in our stewardship activities. The mailing will include a pledge card and a Time & Talent sheet, which we ask you to prayerfully consider and complete. Stewardship Sunday is November 12, and we will have a processional offering to collect pledges of time, talent, and treasure.

The hymn "We Are Called" reminds us to be light for the kingdom and hope for the hopeless, to love tenderly and serve one another. Please help our Grace congregation share the light, the hope, and the love of God with others.

"We are called to act with justice
We are called to love tenderly
We are called to serve one another
To walk humbly with God"

Please Keep Our Less Fortunate Neighbors in Mind!



"God's work, our hands" in action.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

October 10, 2023, partially via zoom and partially at church

(Minutes below not approved until next Council meeting)

Call to Order. Meeting called to order by President Kelly Witte at 7:05 p.m.

Attendance. Present: Kelly Witte, Peggy Punsel, Connie Kreuser, Ann Engelstad, Mary Behling, April Mickelson, Bill Reay, Shawn Whitman, Amy Simdon, and Pastor Jennifer Jelinek **Absent:** Bill Becker and Bob Koepp.

Devotions. Ann Engelstad presented devotions.

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

Approval of Agenda. Connie Kreuser asked to have "Consideration of Environmental Initiatives" added to New Business. April Mickelson moved to approve the Agenda as amended, Ann Engelstad seconded the Motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Correspondence. Pastor Jennifer noted that she received an email Kerry Marren of the Cambridge Food Pantry advising that another group had asked to be on the schedule for the community meal in November, so we won't be sponsoring a meal this year.

Treasurer's Report. (a) Amy Simdon presented the September reports and her financial narrative for all to review. Highlights included that we had a net loss of about \$5,200 in September, so year-to-date net income is down just over \$5,300. As of September 30, the year-to-date General Giving is approximately \$4,000 less than this time last year and we are about \$14,000 below budget. Special Giving is about \$2,750 below last year's year-to-date figures and \$6,800 under budget for the year. Total year-to-date giving is approximately \$6,400 lower than last year and \$20,000 under budget. Total year-to-date expenses are \$4,500 more than last year as of September 30, but \$25,000 under budget. The end result through September 30 is that year-to-date net income is about \$11,000 less than 2022. Finally, the checking account balance is approximately \$5,500 less than at the end of August with most of that decrease in general funds. Amy noted in summary that while there is still a positive year-to-date income, that is mainly due to lower expenses than anticipated. The decrease in giving is not yet a problem, but the trend is a bit of a concern. Some of the decrease in net income can be attributed to the purchase of a used riding mower last month, but even without that, the net income was negative for September. Catherine has been asked to mention the availability of online giving in the next newsletter. **(b)** Amy noted that Diane Russo will be sending out budget sheets to each of the committee chairs shortly to be returned in November. Ann Engelstad moved to approve the treasurer's report and send it to audit, Bill Reay seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Pastor's Report. Pastor Jennifer reported that she will be contacting the nominating committee shortly to start working on nominations for next year's openings. Three boys will be receiving First Communion this coming Sunday and four youth will be confirmed on October 22. There will be a Dessert Night held the Wednesday before confirmation to celebrate and practice. She thanked Richard Scott for filling the pothole in the side parking lot area.

She also reported that she will be having some follow-up surgery on October 31 and will be out a couple of weeks. She plans to be back November 12 and then be gone again on November 19th. Brenda Lovick will lead service on the 19th. Finally, the Food Pantry is putting holiday baskets together again and Grace has been asked to donate pre-made pie crusts and mixes and pie fillings.

Committee Reports. April Mickelson (Outreach) reported that they are currently working with Bob Koepp on a cook-out fund raiser for the Madison Area Jail Ministry, to be held on October 21 at the Piggly Wiggly. Volunteers are needed. As Pastor noted, they are helping to complete 100 holiday baskets with pre-made pie crusts and mixes and pie fillings. Donations should be made in October as the baskets will be distributed Nov. 8 and 15th. They are discussing selling Good Gift merchandise in December for Advent. Connie Kreuser (Stewardship) reported that the annual stewardship activities will kick off on Oct. 15. The theme is "We are Called", based on the hymn of the same name and God's call throughout the Bible for ordinary people to share the gifts given to us. Various presentations are planned. She also noted that they are starting to discuss a possible environmental initiative, discussed further under New Business. Peggy Punsel (Hospitality) noted that they are just getting started for the year. Bill Reay (Property) noted that his report falls under Old Business this month. No other reports this month.

Old Business. (a) Front Door Opening Details. Bill Reay presented the bid he received for installing automatic door openers for the front doors in the amount of \$5,310. In addition, we would need an electrician to run the wiring. Discussion was then held regarding the possibility of renovating the entire front foyer area specifically because the current doors are old and not energy efficient as well as being non-ADA compliant. It was agreed to let the congregation know that we are working on this and will keep it on the agenda as we gather more information. Bill will look into the cost of new doors and/or complete remodeling and Connie Kreuser agreed to look into energy audits and ADA funding assistance possibilities, and they will bring information back to the council. **(b) Lawnmower.** Bill Reay also reported the purchase of a used mower last month, which is working well. One of our older mower still works okay and Dale Klemp will use the other one for parts unless a member wants it. It does still run. We agreed to table any further discussion of purchasing lawn care services for now.

New Business. Consideration of Environmental Initiatives. Connie Kreuser reported that she had attended an environmental initiative at Hartford Church last week and the stewardship committee will be talking about this and discussing whether to add this to their list of goals for the future. A number of people have expressed interest and have ideas. An energy audit for the foyer could also be extended to the entire church to give ideas. For now it's a work in progress.

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 November 14, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at Grace and via Zoom. Amy Simdon will lead devotions. The meeting was adjourned, followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Report submitted by Mary Behling, Council Secretary.



From the Treasurer

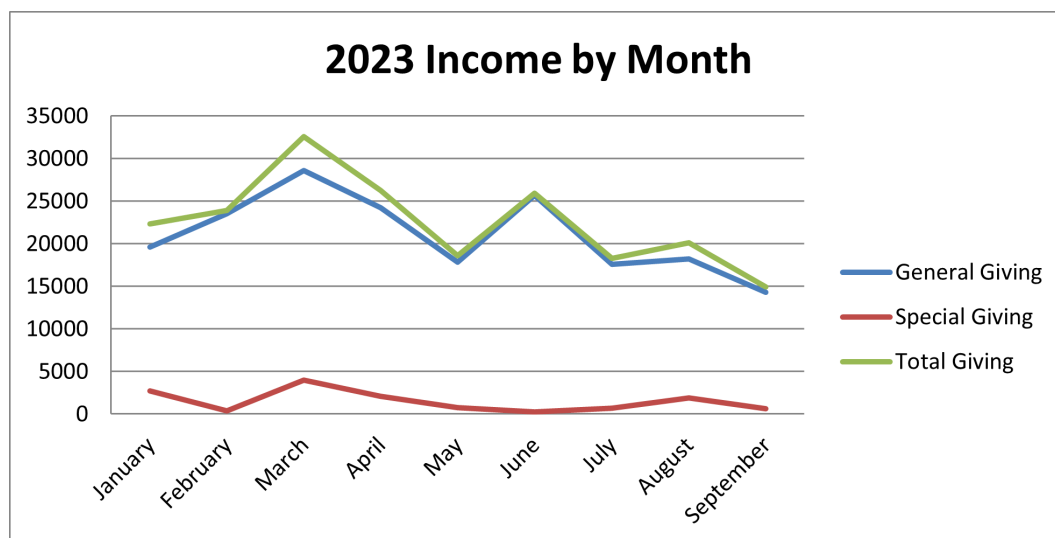
September 2023 Financial Snapshot

Income	Year-to-date September 2023 Actual	Year-to-date 2023 Monthly Budget	Over/(under) budget
General Giving	190,140	204,003	(13,863)
Special Giving	13,450	20,250	(6,800)
Misc Income	<u>2,709</u>	<u>2,283</u>	<u>426</u>
Total Income	206,299	226,536	(20,237)
Expenses			
Administrative	71,043	79,175	(8,132)
Mission	26,878	35,250	(8,372)
Pastoral	98,122	102,355	(4,233)
Program	4,918	9,405	(4,488)
Other	-	-	-
Total Expenses	200,961	226,185	(25,224)
Total Net Income (Loss)	5,338	351	4,987

Our general giving is down by approximately \$4,000 compared to last year. Please remember that even if you are unable to attend the Sunday service, you can give online through Vanco (<https://www.vancopayments.com/login>) or through Venmo, using the QR code:



venmo





Staff and Council



STAFF

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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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