



Annual Congregational Meeting and Potluck Sunday, January 28, 12:15pm

The primary purposes of this meeting are to report highlights of 2023 and to elect new members to the Council and various standing committees.

We will also have a potluck that day. Please bring a dish according to your last name: **A-G bring a dessert, H-P bring a main course, and Q-Z bring a salad.** The meal will start at 12:15pm, and the meeting will begin after people are served.

Please plan to attend; at least 85 voting members are needed to make the meeting official (also, you will be missed if you're not there!). God blessed us richly in 2023, and 2024 promises exciting new opportunities. A celebration is in order!



OUR REDEEMER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH THE VOICE

January 2024



I'm writing this the week before Christmas, and it's been a little humbuggy around our house. I got sick, the tree never got up, we missed three holiday parties we'd been looking forward to.

However, one bright spot was the congregation's unanimous approval of the 2024 Ministry Plan (budget) on Sunday. It is a plan that reflects the growth in ministry we've been experiencing the past couple of years and our trust that God will continue to use us to reach out to our neighbors in 2024. It

is a plan that shows both faith and courage. And now, we get to live into it, which means we all must evaluate what our giving will look like in 2024.

I wish you could see the things I see each week, the ways in which your gifts to Our Redeemer's are spreading hope, healing, and joy.

There are two youth who moved to Helena this year who have become regulars at our Wednesday night meal and worship. I can't imagine how hard it is to break into a new place at the end of middle school or the beginning of high school, but both have certainly found a safe and encouraging place with new friends at Our Redeemer's.

You fund these meals and the staff who create this time for youth to gather.

Our Wednesday morning Men's Fellowship group and other volunteers joined together to light the trees and put up the manger scene this year, and we've had neighbors stopping by the office to thank us for this annual gift.

Your time and energy provide this outreach to our neighbors.

I've recently gotten two messages from parents of young adults who are part of Our Redeemer's. Both were so grateful for the welcome their kids had received, calling us "an answer to prayer." One even gave a substantial gift in thanksgiving for those who remember their daughter's name each week and have helped her get involved.

Your love of Jesus comes out in welcome and makes a difference to individuals.

Recently, we had a woman visit the day after her partner of a dozen years had died. Hearing of our Caregivers and Grief Support groups, she exclaimed that surely God had led her to this place in her time of distress.

Your offering of your professional gifts where we need them and your support of one another in difficult times are ways we are Christ to one another.

Well, what do you know...I'm not feeling quite as humbuggy as when I started writing. Thank you, people of Our Redeemer's, for all the ways you bring in the Kingdom of God in our little corner of the world. Here's to 2024 and the wonderful ministry we will do together. Pastor Trina

MEETING JESUS AT THE TABLE Lenten Bible Study

Although we likely will have several cold weeks and nasty storms between now and then, the Lenten season begins early in 2024, with Ash Wednesday occurring on February 14, Valentine's Day.

The Hunger Team will be sponsoring a church-wide discussion of a Lenten devotional book entitled *Meeting Jesus at the Table*. The devotions center around eight New Testament episodes when Jesus breaks bread with others and, in doing so, teaches others about loving, serving, and welcoming. The Hunger Team engaged in an abbreviated study of the book during Lent in 2023 and came away saying, "We need more time to discuss this book, with more input from the entire congregation." With that in mind, the entire congregation is invited to join in small group discussions about this book throughout the Lenten season. Study sessions will begin the week of February 18 and conclude the week of March 17.

Stay tuned for more details about when and where these groups will convene. Various times and locations will be provided, hoping to meet the needs of the entire congregation. Books will be available by mid-February.

U.S. Postage
PAID
Non-Profit
Organization
Permit No. 96
Helena, Montana

OUR REDEEMER'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH
3580 North Benton
Helena, MT 59602
406-442-7842



KidTime and Sunday School will resume on January 7.

Have a wonderful break!

SAVE the DATE!

Vacation Bible School

June 10-14, 2024



More info. and registration coming soon

Contact Liz with questions:
liz@ourredeemerlives.org

January Schedule

- 7 Sunday School—Prodigal Son
- 14 Sunday School—Prodigal Son
- 17 Ice Skating Night—Memorial Park @6:30pm
- 21 Sunday School—Prodigal Son
- 24 Communion Bread Service Proj. @6:30 pm
- 28 Sunday School—Prodigal Son



Like our Children's Ministry Facebook page to stay in the loop!



Ice-Skating Night

All kids PK-5th grade are invited to come ice-skating on Wednesday, January 17 @ 6:30pm at Memorial Park

Skate rentals are **FREE** and ORLC will pay your admission fee!! All are welcome to join. Bring a friend! See you there!



The Children's Christmas Event was a success! Thank you to all who volunteered their time and talents to this event. Please enjoy some pictures of this joyous time with the youth and families from our church community!!

The Voice is published monthly as an update on the ministry and mission of

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church

3580 N Benton Ave
Helena, MT 59602
406.442.7842
www.ourredeemerlives.org

Ministry Team

Ministers: **All the People of God**

Pastor Trina Johnsten, Lead Pastor
Trina@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Lori Walter, Administrative Assistant
LoriW@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Sarah Magee, Director of Finance
Sarah@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Jason Callon, Director of Worship and Music
Jason@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Steph Richardson, Interim Director of Youth Ministry
Steph@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Liz Swenson, Director of Children and Family Ministry
Liz@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Linda Keim, Organist

David McHaley, Custodian

Carol Will, Deacon

Lori Bigwood-Pecarina, Lay Pastoral Associate

Jan Martin, Lay Pastoral Associate

Jeff Martin, Lay Pastoral Associate

Kevin Mathews, Lay Pastoral Associate

Lisa Williams-Mathews, Lay Pastoral Associate

Kristine Thatcher, Interim Preschool Director
Kris@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Wendy Vukonich, Preschool Teacher
Wendy@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Alenna Maw, Preschool Teacher
Alenna@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Marie Grissom, Preschool Teacher
Marie@OurRedeemerLives.Org

A congregation of the
Montana Synod of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America

Our Redeemer's Church Council

If you have questions or concerns and would like to visit with a council member, please feel free to contact any of us at the following email or phone:

Kevin Mathews, President
president@ourredeemerlives.org
406-465-1839

Ingrid Childress, First Vice President
ichildress@bresnan.net
406-431-3344

Tracy Moseman, Second Vice President
mtmoseman@hotmail.com
406-431-4350

Tracey Tintinger, Treasurer
tvting@bresnan.net
406-459-8478

Linda Nelson, Secretary
ralinelson@yahoo.com
406-422-3751

Lynn Voss, Past President
lynn.voss@thrivent.com
406-459-3939

Cody Salo, Member at Large
Salo3730@gmail.com
406-465-4833

Julie Penner, Member at Large
julianne.penner@gmail.com
406-227-7096

Ed Johnson, Member at Large
edwardmartinjohnson62@gmail.com
406-492-6177

Jennifer Colegrove, Member at Large
colegrove@bresnan.net
406-465-3453

Sarah Sampson, Member at Large
sarahmarieirvin@hotmail.com
406-460-0133

Voice articles due on the 15th of each month

Monday, January 15 at 5:00pm
LoriW@OurRedeemerLives.Org

Long Term Prayer Concerns

Help us update our Long Term Prayer Concerns list by calling the church office.

Our Members

Phyllis Bauer	Linda Huso	Dale Mickus	Ron Paulson	Laurie Simms
Richard Carey	Pr. Trina Johnsten	Nikki MacMillan	Jim Poore	Ruth Straley
Roberta Carey	Carol Kimble	Lorna Meyer	Vicki Poore	Thea Swenson
Jim Haubein	Mark Langdorf	Julie Mehl	Jenny Santy	

Our Family and Friends

Ken Acord (Linda Coty)	Janessa and Maryssa Martin and Cheyene Bade (Roberta Carey's great nieces)
Zachary Ark	Ricki McDanold (Denise Richards)
Victor Bachmier	Ruth Naegele
Julie Bliss (Nadine Sim)	Chris O'Connor (Cheri Goosen's cousin)
Steve Boyter	Laura Oleson (Debbie Hurni's sister-in-law)
Diane Brown (Susan Sielbach)	Evelyn Sabo (Janet Erickson's mother)
Peggy Campbell	Linda Sorensen (Ryan & Abigail McLane)
Cody Carey (Richard & Roberta's great grandson)	Brandy Spaid (Shannon Bartole)
Tom Carter	Dorothy Tangen (Craig Erickson's aunt)
JLD (Gary and Joy Novota)	Jory Van Antwerp
Karen Elliot (Chas Elliot's mom)	Doug Williams (Leona Williams' son)
Brandon Erickson	Families of suicide victims
Stormy Flinders	Olivia
Pat Graham	Sefra
Tom Hammond (Sue Hill's dad)	Sue
Donna Hurni (Neal Hurni)	
Larry Kuntz (Dave & Lori Swenson)	
Adeline Lagerquist (Joy Novota's mom)	
Jared Larsen (Ruth Reed's grandson)	

Our Family and Friends Serving in the Military

Brandon Bach	Adam Guay	Colton Johnson	Courtney Rath
Kyle Begger	Ryan Girard	Chance McDowell	Tanner Reddig
Lonnie Cook	Austin Grieve	Kent McGowan	Cody Stipcich
Erin DenHerder	Travis Gronley	Dean McLain	Darrell Stipcich
Kellan Elder	Charlie Heidbreder	Sawyer Linke	Victoria Stipcich
Travis Elder	Roger Henschel	Erin Mills	Tait Strom
Micah Emmons	Paul Horst	Brian Neal	Andrew Zimmer
Jessilyn Emmons	Anela Hemry	Keith Nordquist	
Joe Fischer	Wade Hemry	Chris Oelkers	
Grant Gagnon	Cody Johnson	Scott Pocha	

Our Seminarrians

Baird Linke
Shawn, Sara, Addie & Kaden Juers

middle school. Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church

Middle School Ski Day

When: Monday, January 22 (No School Day)

Where: Meet at Great Divide in the lodge between 9:30 and 10:00am. Pick up in the lodge at 4:00pm.

Who: Middle Schoolers and adults who would like to help! *Talk to Steph if you can lend a helping hand on the slopes.*

Cost: If you have gear and a season pass, bring that and the day is free. If you need a lift ticket and/or rentals, bring \$20 to help cover costs. The church will cover the rest. Do not let \$\$ stand in your way. Talk to Pastor Trina or Steph if cost is preventing you from coming.

What to bring: Bring a lunch. Wear snow gear. Dress accordingly.

Sign up no later than Sunday, January 14.



high school. Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church

Carroll College Concessions
Thursday, February 15, 5:00-9:00pm
Email Steph@OurRedeemerLives.org
to sign up.

-Save the Date-
6-12th Grade Retreat
Feb. 17-19

Schedule for January

January 3: Food Pack Builds from 7:00-8:00pm. Pick up/Drop off at Helena Food Share. Dinner will not be provided.

January 7: Confirmation youth will be hanging out with Dennis, discussing some fun topics.

January 10/14: Come make ceramic pinch pots. January 10, 6:30-8:00pm. January 14, 9:45-10:45am. They will be fired and glazed by Steph before they are returned. These will be used to make ashes for Ash Wednesday next month. Dinner will be served on Wednesday night.

January 17: Ice Skating Night from 6:30-8:00pm. Pick up/Drop off at Memorial Ice Rink. Snacks and warm beverages will be provided. The whole family is invited. Bring a friend!

January 21: Confirmation youth will be hanging out with Dennis, discussing some fun topics.

January 24/28: We will be making communion bread to be used during worship services. January 24, 6:30-8:00pm. January 28, 9:45-10:45am. We will be making it from scratch and taste testing them as well. Dinner will be served on Wednesday night.

January 31/ February 4: Let's get crafty. Come and enjoy a relaxing atmosphere where we get to use our hands to make something fun. January 31, 6:30-8:00pm. February 4, 9:45-10:45am. Dinner will be served on Wednesday night.



As we continue to search for an Associate Pastor, we are reminded of what is written in Philippians 4:6.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God.

Individually and as a committee we are actively seeking God's guidance in this process and know that even now the Holy Spirit is preparing one who will join us in ministry here at Our Redeemer's. Please continue to hold the Call Committee and this as yet unknown one in your prayers. Together as a congregation let us call on the Holy Spirit to influence and guide the process. Thank you and God Bless.

Thank you from Helena Camp of Gideons International

Dear Our Redeemer's,

Your generous offering of \$537.00 on November 12, 2023, will be used by Gideons International to print and transport Bibles that will be given to people all over the world. We are in over 200 countries and print Bibles in 95 languages. It costs \$6.50 per Motel Bible, OR \$1.85 per pocket size New Testament and Psalms and Proverbs Bible. This covers the cost of printing and shipping to the areas where they are being distributed. Organizational overhead is paid for by the members and membership dues. That means 100% of your donations goes to the mission. So, again thank you for helping us provide 82 Motel Bibles or 290 PWT's that will be distributed someplace on the globe. This is spreading the word of God to people who are unaware of Jesus and his love and saving grace for all who believe.

Bonner J. Armstrong



Merry Christmas from Preschool!

We've had a great holiday season! November was filled with learning about fall, sharing and giving, and pilgrims. Our Preschool donated an average of three food items per child to Our Redeemer's Helena Food Share drive. The children had fun carrying the food into the sanctuary, and we shared a little message about how their generosity will help others who are having hard times and need a little help. In December, we are enjoying the fun festivities of Christmas, practicing for their Christmas programs, and keeping the focus on Jesus.

A big, BIG THANK YOU to Prestige Automotive (Tracy and Mark Moseman) and all those who supported their November fundraiser for our Preschool! Prestige generously donated 2% of their November sales to our Preschool; we received a check for \$1,500!! THANK YOU!!

We are all looking forward to Christmas and the new year. We pray that you will be able to reminisce with family and friends as you make new memories and celebrate the hope and blessings the new year brings.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



January BIRTHDAYS

(Remember our friends in Christ with a Birthday prayer!)

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Irene Thamke | 9 Claudia Morley | 19 Cheri Goosen | Tracie Reddig |
| 2 Craig Erickson | 10 Anna Marie Bartole | 20 Mary Adams | Sam Tintinger |
| Sharon Amor | Cody Stipcich | Tyler Cook | 26 Susan Day |
| Haylee Tripp | Carl Tanberg | Ashlyn Lamping | Charlene Mayala |
| Tyler Trip | 12 Tamara Crowder | Dugan Ward | Bridger Voss |
| 3 Leah Baranek | Brian Heuser | 21 Sheri Howell | 27 Lori Bigwood-Pecarina |
| Jaxen Peck | Tim Meldrum | Kalley May | Juni Penner |
| Joanna Thamke | Bonnie Richmond | Jerry Mayala | 28 Mandy Connolly |
| 4 Tevin Wetzal | Susan Sielbach | Lance Wetzal | Mary Robertson |
| 5 Joe Fischer | 13 Julie Mehl | 23 Treven Maharg | 29 Kileigh Bartole |
| Addy Peck | Cody Salo | Brad Ulgenes | 30 Melissa Haab |
| 6 Denise Richards | Laura Trapp | 24 Logan MacIntyre | Marcy McLean |
| 7 Delmar Schubring | 14 Mike Lindner | Celia Senrud | Zaiden Salas |
| 8 Anna Ebert | 16 Shauna Helfert | 25 FayeAnn Cummings | 31 Alice Begger |
| Norm Rognlie | 18 Tyler Sharkey | Nolan Harris | |



January Anniversaries
Celebrate with those married
40 years or more this month!

1/17/1981	Ron Pecarina & Lori Bigwood-Pecarina	43 years
1/19/1973	Jerry & Judy Hoover	51 years
1/29/1956	Jim & Joan Haubein	68 years

90+ years old

Let's celebrate our friends who have turned 90 years or older this month by sending them a birthday card.

Norman Rognlie (age 93)
2215 Lockey Avenue
Helena, MT 59601-4825



Deaths

Come to The Water

Baptism Class at Our Redeemer's



Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters!

Interested in baptism? Please let Pastor Trina know! We offer a one-hour session during which we discuss what Lutherans believe about baptism and go through what happens in the baptismal rite. These sessions are scheduled at a mutually agreeable time. Pastor Trina can be reached at trina@ourredeemerlives.org or 406-442-7842.

Did You Know?

Did you know that Annette Wakefield has been a member of Our Redeemer's Lutheran for almost 50 years? And she attended several years before becoming a member!

She's the sort of person whose faith shines through even in her toughest days. She's had a difficult couple of years recently and says that her faith is what's carried her through all the trials and turmoil.

Annette was born in Miles City to the Custer County Sheriff and his wife. She was baptized as an infant in Miles City. The family later moved to Helena, and she attended schools here, then went to what is now the University of Montana but was Montana State University at that time (Bozeman was Montana State College). She landed a job with the Social Security Administration in Helena and worked for the agency for 32 years, although not always in Montana, retiring in 1992. She completed specialized training in Kansas City, and in 1960 moved to Milwaukee WI. While living in Milwaukee she was confirmed. Also, that's where she met the love of her life, Lynn Wakefield, who lived in Michigan, on a blind date at a wedding! They were married in 1964 and lived in Michigan until 1966 when they moved to Helena, with their baby Tom, and she began her association with our congregation. She's been here ever since! And she has blessed us in so many ways!

She sat behind Pastor Lowell Anderson one Sunday at worship, and he heard her voice. That prompted him to suggest that she join the choir! She did and sang in our choir until just a few years ago, when she became less able to move around and negotiate the choir loft. She volunteered in the church office when it was on Stuart Street and has done so off and on and is presently doing it again. She also became an integral part of the crafting and sewing for WELCA's annual fundraiser bazaar and introduced many creative projects that sold well. She feels badly that she has only sewed one quilt top in the last couple of years but prior to that she sewed several quilt tops for WELCA for the drawings. This Sew in Love group produces quilts and so much more for the guests at the Friendship Center. Those ladies also sell things at the bazaar to raise funds to buy batting and other quilting supplies so that they can continue to bless others. In fact, this week, (12/14/2023), they filled 16 of their pillowcases with health and beauty products, towels, mugs filled with candy and beautiful Christmas décor that they made or purchased to be taken to the Friendship Center. She has cooked and baked for many years for the bazaar but now is unable to stand and work very long. She is still providing rides for others and helping wherever she can. She led a Bible study group for the *Forty Days of Purpose* congregation-wide study many years ago and has participated in studies through the intervening years since. Another study she thought was outstanding was *The Divine Drama* written by Harry Wendt and lead by Pastor Martin Russell. Those of us who spend time with her know she has helped many, and she has a big serving heart.

She considers herself blessed to have been able to "pound a few nails and help to feed the Mission Builders" during construction of our current facility in 2011-2012 and is still supporting it to this day. She says, "I love this church! I always feel so peaceful when I'm here and I love the community."

She lost her beloved husband last year, but has a son Tom and a daughter Lynnette here in town, and is adjusting to her new and different life... "with His help". We are SO privileged to have her shining example of faith and trust and service in our midst!



2023 National Youth Summit

Once a year, the ELCA holds a National Youth Summit. The purpose of this summit is to strengthen the leadership skills and abilities of youth who are leaders in their setting. Two youth and one adult from each synod were invited to attend. This year, the theme was "Called On the Way" and the focus was on Advocacy. This seemed like a surprising theme, and I wondered how this would apply to developing the leadership skills of those who attended.

The way in which the leaders of the summit talked of advocacy and dealt with the topics discussed helped the youth understand that advocacy has many options and sizes. They learned that any way they care for those who are in need or who are marginalized is advocacy. They came away with eyes better opened to see options around them and with language skills so that what might be controversial can be talked about in ways that allow themselves and others to live in a space of discomfort. They learned that it is OK to be uncomfortable while still loving those they are helping, knowing we are all children of God.

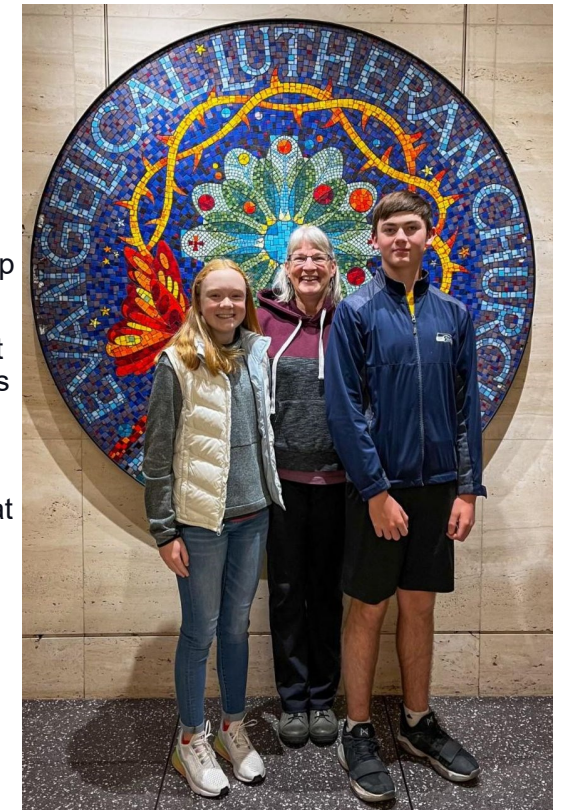
The youth from Montana that attended were Morgan May of Our Redeemer's Lutheran in Helena and Kian Ryan of Bethel Lutheran in Great Falls. Here is what they had to say afterward:

Morgan: This year's Youth Summit was a huge opportunity and experience I will never forget. The people I met and the new friends I made are people I will always remember—especially the other representative from the Montana Synod, Kian Ryan.

Kian: The experience was amazing, the games and singing well connected (me to) others. It was very welcoming and kind. I made friends in those three days, but it felt like I've known them forever. When we left for departure to home, it was a horrible dejection. I miss my new best friends like Morgan May, who is part of the Montana Synod and changed my life forever. I'm so glad we met. We continue to stay connected with other friends. We were "Called On the Way."

It was an honor to spend four days with these two youth and with youth from all over the US as we learned together what it means to care in big and small ways for the needs we see around us. We are Church, Better Together!

Pastor Brenda Frelsi



The Young Adult Fellowship Tuesday, January 2 at 6:30pm Lewis & Clark Brewing

Young adults meet us at Lewis and Clark's Brewing (1535 Dodge Ave) at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, January 2. For more information, contact Baird Linke at 406-465-9532 or bairdlinke16@gmail.com.

HUNGER TEAM NEWS

THANK YOU - 2023 The Hunger Team is an extension of you.

THANK YOU to everyone at Our Redeemer's. This community continues to shower its neighbors with blessings every single day. We give special thanks to the following:

- ◆ **The Lutheran World Relief Quilters** for their generous donations of awesome quilts for God's Love.
- ◆ **The Sew in Love Crew** for the numerous creative travel bags donated to God's Love and Family Promise, as well as the many quilts donated for Family Promise.
- ◆ **Family Promise volunteers** for the village of helpers who assist every quarter Our Redeemer's hosts Family Promise. These volunteers buy groceries for the Day Center for the week, purchase evening snacks and treats for the families at our church, and provide daily dinner meals from Sunday to Thursday of each week. Two additional volunteers also serve as overnight hosts each night. The quiet helpers set up and tear down the rooms for our guests and do mountains of laundry at the end of that week.
- ◆ **Contributors to the Summer Milk Campaign** who made it possible to reach our \$22,000 goal for purchasing milk for the Kid Packs for the entire school year. Special thanks to Town Pump and the Our Redeemer's Perpetual Fund. Without all of you, the goal would not have been met. We count this as a miracle.
- ◆ **Kid Packs Volunteers** who meet the first three Tuesdays of each month, October-April, to assemble Kid Packs. During the 2022-23 school year, they donated 510 hours of their time to assemble 25,592 bags, filling 3,199 crates! Approximately 44,000 Kid Packs were distributed for the entire school year.
- ◆ **Community Garden Volunteers** who show up to plant, weed, harvest, water, and keep our garden producing. We are also grateful to the Carroll College students for planting in the spring, our Vacation Bible School kids for planting in June, the Boy Scouts for their service and choosing our garden as a way to earn badges, and the Master Gardeners earning credit. All of you helped to donate over 2000 lbs. of fresh vegetables to Helena Food Share this summer/fall. And thanks to all who donate grass and leaves each year to put the garden to rest. It was a bountiful, grateful harvest!
- ◆ **Kendra Wilde Hunger Endowment Fund Donations**-The funds this year were given to Helena Area Community Foundation (\$589.60 to assist displaced Iron Front renters) and to God's Love (\$294.80).
- ◆ **Thrivent Grant Writers.** The grants written by various Hunger Team members helped us achieve our goals.

In addition to all this, you kindly donate monthly for **Helena Food Share, God's Love**, and anything else that pops up. You keep on giving and giving and giving.

And, a special thank you and shout out to the **men's group** that comes to the rescue whenever asked. It seems they might be a group of octopuses, as they have more arms and helping hands than anyone we know.

It takes a village to accomplish all we do. It can't be done without caring and sharing all your gifts, talents, and kind hearts. Through you, we continue to grow our outreach programs.

Kid Pack Requests for January

Helena Food Share is requesting individual packages of fruit snacks for the month of January. These sweet snacks are a very special addition to each weekly Kid Pack and are greatly appreciated.

From the Stewardship Committee

ESTATE PLANNING

Early in 2023, the Stewardship Committee sponsored financial literacy and planning sessions.

The Stewardship Committee is excited to sponsor a Charitable Estate Planning Seminar and discussion in the Community Room on January 14, 2024, at 9:45am and 12:15pm. Grace Schroeder Scott, a Senior Development Consultant serving Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp, and Doug Scott, an experienced Development and Planned Giving Officer assisting FLBC as a volunteer, will lead the seminar and provide helpful information and inspiration on charitable estate planning.

Our friends at New Life Lutheran and St. John's Lutheran have been invited to join us.

GIVING WITH TAX BENEFITS

Required Minimum Distributions (RMD)

Individuals aged 73 or greater who have a **traditional IRA, SIMPLE IRA, SEP IRA, 401(k), 403(b), or 457 (b)** may be required to take Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) from these assets annually. Owners may make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) to transfer up to \$100,000 to a non-profit organization (ORLC) annually counting as some or all the owner's RMD and the amount will be excluded from the owner's adjusted gross income. Contact your investment account provider to request a QCD transfer and consult your tax advisor for any questions.

Appreciated Stock Donation

Individuals holding common stock, mutual funds, or exchange traded funds that have appreciated in value may gift these securities to a non-profit organization (ORLC) and receive an itemized deduction for the full amount of the securities value on the day of transfer avoiding paying capital gain taxes. This donation does not qualify as a tax deduction if the taxpayer takes the standard deduction but it does avoid potential capital gains taxes. Consult your tax advisor for any questions.

Individuals making these gifts should contact Lori at the church office (442-7842) to designate where to credit the gift.

The Light Shines in the Darkness...

Many thanks to the enthusiastic group of people who ensured that the tradition of the outdoor lighted nativity continued to illuminate our hearts and the neighborhood with the message of Christ's coming this holiday season. During the early difficult days of the Covid outbreak, Jacqui Bartz envisioned and secured funding for the arrangement in 2020. She and the Our Redeemer's high school youth created the simple and meaningful display.

Blessings to all who ensured its presence this year: Judy McMaster, Jane Peachey, Kevin Mathews, Bruce McMaster, Carol Olmstead, Ron Pecarina, Ken Kolb, Tom Nagele, Phyllis Michelson, Tim Cail, David Hanson, Jerry Hoover, Tom Johnson, and Lori Bigwood-Pecarina.

Council Meeting Summary December 12, 2023



December Council Summary

There was no Council meeting during the month of December. The Council designated the Executive Council to make decisions for this month. They did so on December 12.

Financial Report

The Executive Council agreed to pay the August-September building fund obligations of \$12,802.86 but decided to withhold payment for benevolence and dedicated funds until after the first of the year.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 28, following the 11:00 worship service.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee continues to work on securing individuals to join the Council for 2024. If you are contacted, they ask for prayerful consideration of these positions.

Linda Nelson
Secretary

Summary of December 17 proposed Ministry Plan Meeting

A special Congregational Meeting was held on Sunday, December 17, to consider the proposed Ministry Plan for 2024. A quorum was reached, with an attendance of 89 members.

Treasurer Tracey Tintinger outlined the Ministry Plan, explaining the need for the 5.2% increase over last year's budget. However, since the congregation is not on track to meet the entire amount budgeted for this year, meeting the 2024 budget will require a 25% increase in giving. The largest segment of the budget is for salaries and benefits in anticipation of hiring a full-time associate pastor, according to Synod salary guidelines. Tracey also reminded the congregation that the Building Fund is a separate account and was not part of the proposed budget. The mortgage balance presently sits at \$1,182,455.

Craig Erickson spoke on behalf of the Stewardship Committee, thanking the congregation for their incredible Benevolence Contributions to many community organizations and Lutheran World Relief. He also noted the need for technology upgrades and additional support for Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. Craig reminded those present that Our Redeemer's is bucking the trend by increasing both membership and involvement. He also urged all members to increase their giving in 2024.

Numerous comments and questions were covered at the meeting. Others spoke words of encouragement for the budget, including reminders to everyone present to share the need for increased giving in the upcoming year.

The budget was unanimously approved.

Linda Nelson
Council Secretary

CAREGIVER'S SUPPORT GROUP

DATE CHANGE

A small group of individuals sharing the role of providing support for loved ones meets monthly at Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church in the Conference Room. We will meet on January 21 at 12:10pm, after the second worship service. The date change is to allow members to attend the annual meeting on January 28.



If you wish to speak to one of the leaders during the week or have any questions, please contact us at the following numbers:

Lori Bigwood-Pecarina 406-672-2470 or
Jane Peachey 234-567-1461

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP



The grief group will meet on January 14 between services. Grief is not an easy journey and has no magic steps. Walking beside others who are finding their way can be helpful. Hearing others' stories can sometimes encourage you or help you realize you are progressing.

For others, the stories give hope of getting through the journey. Wherever you are, feel free to join us or invite others.

If you have questions or need to talk, feel free to call Lori Bigwood-Pecarina 406-672-2470 or Jane Peachey 234-567-1461

Touchmark Worship Service

Our Redeemer's Church members provide a worship and communion service monthly at Touchmark Retirement Community. We will meet Tuesday, January 16 at 10:00am in the Forum. Lori Bigwood-Pecarina and Sharlene Kolb will provide leadership. If you would like to worship with them and our member residents at Touchmark, you are welcome to attend. Touchmark is located at 915 Saddle Drive.

DON'T BE LEFT OUT!

The Our Redeemer's Member Directory won't be complete without you!

Be sure to complete the sign-up/information form (on the next page) and turn it in to the church office. We will take photos in the Great Room after the 11:00am service on January 7 and after the 8:30am service on January 14. The information in the directory will be available digitally once you sign up. But, by the end of January, once everyone's information has been added, we plan to publish a hard-copy version for distribution, too.

We need you to be included!

You can view the directory online today at members.InstantChurchDirectory.com. Follow the prompts under "Sign In" to "Create a login now." Please remember that you must confirm your email address before signing in.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Julie Penner - 406-227-7096 or

Dee Dee Fischer-406-439-9839

Get your photos taken in the Great Room:

January 7, 2024 – 12:00pm

January 14, 2024 – 9:30am

**Members and friends of
the congregation
welcome!**



Merry Christmas!

"Wait," you might say. "I seem to remember already having celebrated Christmas." True, we celebrated Christmas *day*, but our liturgical calendar has us in the season of Christmas through January 6. So, assuming you're reading this close to its publication, it's still "the season to be jolly!"

Well, then, how are you doing with that jolliness? Most of you have probably been fairly successful at being jolly leading up to, and following, Christmas. Our Redeemer's members are generally a pretty jolly lot. It's understandable, though, if you're struggling a bit more than usual given some massive storm clouds on the horizon and routine displays of humankind's seemingly unlimited capacity for inhumanity.

But this is a Christmas message. And Christmas means, above everything else *HOPE*. You know this, but it's always good to be reminded. Christmas is about God reconnecting with God's creatures by becoming one of them (us). It's a celebration of deliverance from ourselves. Each Sunday we confess that "we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves." Christmas reminds us that, when God looked down at our extreme intransigence, God didn't threaten: "Don't make me come down there!" Instead, God came down here, in the most humble and loving of ways, to break loose the chains of fear that blind and bind us.

In the beginning was the Word [aka, Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... All things were made through him... In him was life, and the life was the light of all. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ... For God so loved the world, that he gave the only Son [aka, Jesus], that whoever believes should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (See John, chapters 1 and 3.)

Christmas hope is supported by promise: God's promise of God's never-ending love for each of us, a promise wrapped in a body like ours, for eternity (including this moment, right now), fulfilled but not yet finally consummated.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (God offering hope to the defeated and exiled people of Israel through the prophet Isaiah; see Isaiah, chapter 11.)

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (Jesus offering hope to his closest disciples just before his execution; see John, chapter 14.)

Behold, the dwelling place of God is with humans. God will dwell with them, and they will be God's people, and God himself will be with them as their God. God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. (God giving us all a glimpse of a promised eternity in God's presence; see Revelation, chapter 21.)

That obviously doesn't mean we won't suffer in the meantime; we most certainly will. But there's a certain freedom in knowing that. There's freedom in knowing that deliverance will not come from the Democrats or the Republicans or the U.N. or even the Church. When people inevitably fail us, the disappointment is reduced by knowing people were never going to save us anyway. Knowing where to, and where not to, invest our hope allows us to engage more wisely and compassionately with others. It also frees us to work with God toward renewal and healing—aware that our best will never be enough but that God is ultimately capable and in charge. This understanding of our limits and God's limitlessness allows us to look for and receive God's peace and comfort in this life, in the midst of trial and hardship.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth...I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ... Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. (Jesus offering more hope to his closest disciples just before his execution; see John, chapter 14.)

So here's hoping that you and yours experienced hope anew this Christmas, and continue to experience God's loving, intimate presence. Here's hoping that encountering God's presence infuses you with a peace that transcends logic. May you carry that peace with you into the new year and share it with a world in dire need of a little peace. And as you journey, consider adding to your soundtrack that chart-topper from the first century band, Harold and the Angels: "Glory to the newborn King; Peace on earth, and mercy mild – God and sinners reconciled!"

Kevin Mathews
Council President

Sew
In
Love



There is a group of members and non-members at Our Redeemer's called Sew-in-Love, or SNL for short, whose mission is to support the women of domestic abuse at the Friendship Center. Each week, a member calls the Friendship Center to determine if they have any new residents and whether they have any children. We then deliver a bag filled with personal care items: a quilt for each individual and their children, soft toys and a book for each child, a knitted hat in winter, stationary with a stamped envelope, and coffee mugs.

For Christmas, we fill pillowcases we have created and decorated with fresh pine boughs with an assortment of gifts we have each purchased. We have recently expanded our mission to women at the YWCA who have been incarcerated or experienced drug addiction. We have contributed over a dozen new quilts in our support of Family Promise. We participate in the WELCA Christmas bazaar in early December to raise money for our supplies, so we are self-supporting. We are a joy-filled group who laugh, have fun, and support each other through difficult times in our lives. We are a busy group and would love to include you in our ministry. Any quilters, knitters, crocheters, craftspeople, or those who want to learn what we do or assist us are invited. All are welcome! Come and enjoy our time together! We meet every Thursday from 9:30-11:30am except on holidays.

*Shuffle to the left!
Shuffle to the right!*



*Folk
Dancing
Christikon-
style!*



*The kids
seem to be
getting it!!*



*Pastor Mark
Donald says:
"One more time
from the top!"*

I want to be included in the ORLC Member Directory!

Family Last Name (s) _____

Adults	Birthdate	Phone	Email
Wedding anniversary	Month_____	Day_____	Year_____

Children <small>specify if last name is different</small>	Birthdate	Phone	Email

Address	Private?	Y / N
Street		
City	State	Zip

Once your information has been added to the system, you can log in with your email address and create an account at instantchurchdirectory.com. Also, once you are able to log in, *you* will be able to edit anything you wish for your family, as well as submit your own family photo.

January 2024

AD = Administrative Wing
CR = Classrooms
PS = Preschool

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
	1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2 9:00am - Quilting for Lutheran World Relief –CR#5-6 11:00am - Knitters for Peace
7 8:30am - Worship + KidTime 9:45am - Sunday School (ages 3—5th grade) 9:45am - Confirmation Class with Dennis 11:00am - Worship + KidTime 12:00pm - Photos taken in Great Room	8 10:00am - Staff Meeting 5:30pm - Stewardship Meeting 6:00pm - Preschool Board Meeting - Conference Room 7:00pm - Bell Choir - Sanctuary	9 9:00am - Quilting for Lutheran World Relief –CR#5-6 11:00am - Knitters for Peace 6:30pm - Executive Committee meeting - Conference Rm
14 8:30am - Worship + KidTime 9:45am - Grief Support Group - Conference Rm 9:45am - Charitable Estate Planning Seminar - Comm. Rm 9:45am - Sunday School (ages 3—5th grade) 9:45am - Confirmation Class - Pinch Pots 11:00am - Worship + KidTime	15 Voice Articles Due Martin Luther King Day Office Closed	16 9:00am - Quilting for Lutheran World Relief –CR#5-6 10:00am - Touchmark Worship and Communion 11:00am - Knitters for Peace 5:30pm - Council Meeting - Community Room
21 8:30am - Worship + KidTime 9:45am - Sunday School (ages 3—5th grade) 9:45am - Confirmation Class with Dennis 11:00am - Worship + KidTime 12:10pm - Caregiver's Support Group - Conference Room	22 9:30am - Middle School Ski Day 10:00am - Staff Meeting 7:00pm - Bell Choir - Sanctuary	23 9:00am - Quilting for Lutheran World Relief –CR#5-6 11:00am - Knitters for Peace 6:00pm - Helena Symphony Rehearsal - Great Room 6:30pm - Hunger Team - Conference Room
28 8:30am - Worship + KidTime 9:45am - Sunday School (ages 3—5th grade) 9:45am - Confirmation Class - Communion Bread 11:00am - Worship + KidTime 12:00pm - Annual Meeting and Potluck!	29 10:00am - Staff Meeting 7:00pm - Bell Choir - Sanctuary	30 9:00am - Quilting for Lutheran World Relief –CR#5-6 11:00am - Knitters for Peace

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 9:00am - Men's Group - Conference Rm. 6:30pm - Confirmation Class 6:30pm - Youth Group - Kid Pack Build	4 9:30am - Sew In Love - CR5-6	5	6
10 9:00am - Men's Group - Conference Rm. 11:30am - Women's Bible Study-Conf. Rm. 6:30pm - Confirmation Class - Pinch Pots 6:30pm - Youth Group - Pinch Pots	11 9:30am - Sew In Love - CR5-6 5:30pm - Long-range planning committee	12	13
17 9:00am - Men's Group - Conference Rm. 1:00pm - WELCA Bible Study - Great Rm 6:30pm - Grade PK - 12 - Ice Skating - Memorial Park	18 9:30am - Sew In Love - CR5-6	19	20
24 9:00am - Men's Group - Conference Rm. 11:30am - Women's Bible Study - Conf. Rm. 6:30pm - Confirmation Class - Communion Bread 6:30pm - Youth Group - Communion Bread	25 9:30am - Sew In Love - CR5-6 5:30pm - Long-range planning committee	26	27
31 9:00am - Men's Group - Conference Rm. 6:30pm - Confirmation Class - Crafting 6:30pm - Youth Group - Crafting			