

CHURCH OF PEACE MESSENGER

Greetings Sisters and Brothers,

December! Advent! Christmas! Snow! ... Snow? If you thinking that I love snow, I do...to a point. I love the beauty of a new fallen snow as its gives a luster of midday on a brightly moon lit night. I love the silence a fresh snowfall offers a peaceful escape from the background noises of the area. But what I love most about the first snow is that it signals us,

"Christmas is coming!" Even if that first snow was in October..EEK!

When I was a younger lad, I must admit that Christmas was by far my favorite day of the year. But was it because I was in two Christmas programs each year? Or maybe because I love to sing Joy to the World? Or maybe it was the presents I expected to get each year? Or maybe it was the special brown paper bag filled with an apple, orange, shell-on peanuts, a red and green popcorn ball and those special Christmas hard candies with the weird filling inside.

Well those were certainly part of Christmas for me, but what I remember most is that special feeling in my heart after the first snowfall. The feeling that made me want to shout out Luke chapter 2 to anyone that would listen because it was my favorite story in the Bible. "And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus..."

Now I must be transparent, that feeling following the first snowfall faded as I grew up, at least until I had children of my own. It was that event in my life, the birth of my first child that rekindled that joy and excitement. You see it is easy for us to get caught up in the things of this world that are only temporary. Toys, houses, cars, promotions, etc. are the things of this world that are shallow and meaningless when we compare them to the gift of life; and that is what we are reminded of on December 25th. That is what we are given by God on the day Jesus was born, a new life that begins with a child who would grow up and never look past the true purpose of our humanity, the true meanly of being created in the image of God. That purpose is to simply accept the loving relationship God offers to each and every human being and accept a loving relationship with each of God's people.

So, let's keep it simple this year; First, I want to see you all at of our Advent Worship Services as we prepare for the coming of God's only Son. Then let us celebrate the birth of Jesus by loving God and each other like Jesus Christ loves us. May we all have a wondrous Advent and Christmas as we remember the great gift of new life in the birth of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Steve





CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

IN OUR PRAYERS

Lucy Zahn	Janet Rymer	Bill Manka
Elise Sonnenberg	Del Weigel	Dave Borchert
Cindy Duffy	Janet & Eugene Willis	Joe Ule
Amy Jo	Doris Kastorff	Debra Rammer
Janelle Anderson	Les Abitz	Dorothy Gyr
Theresa Schultz	Kenny Steffen Jr	Wayne Katerski
Marilyn Peters	Diane Candlish	Edna Karl
Helen Oelke	Ruth Pedix	Donna Birkholz
Christine Weimer	Tyler Detweiler	Ron Rowe
Baby Archer	Tom Whittaker	Jan Whittaker
Elaine Miller	Ernest Oelke	Bailey Gehrt
Nicole Schendel	Jason & Jennifer	Nancy Schaefer
Donna Blaine	Shirley Bell-Elsinger	Marvin Oelke
Susan Snider	Carol Carlson	Ron Wilson
Deb Baker	Greg Baker	Amy Mitchell
Evelyn Yantz	Mary Fleischman	Norlene Haase
Jim & Kathy Stephany		
Siera Williams and baby Morgan	Heather Reader-Schubert	



FOOD PANTRY

We are very grateful to receive donations to our food pantry.

Food needs:

See the Reverse Advent Calendar at the end of this Messenger.

Birthday Card Shower !!!

We are asking members of our church to send birthday cards to members who are 90+ years young. Each month in the messenger and the bulletin insert, there will be names of members celebrating a special birthday. Please consider sending a card to these people. Let's shower them with cards and love.

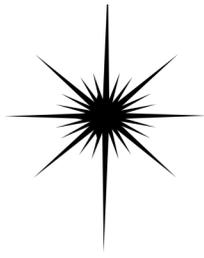
Update: We have received many positive comments and thanks from those who have received cards. Thank you, members, for sending cards.

December/Early January birthdays:

December 11: Curt Law P.O. Box 1135 Fond du Lac 54935

December 16: Jean O'Laire N4987 Cty. Trk. D Fond du Lac 54937

January 1: Harold Damaskie 540 Brookfield Blvd. 54935



Sunday School will meet on the following dates:

****December 10th & 17th**

***December 24th**:** Christmas Eve Program 5:00 pm

*January 14th & 21st:

*February 11th & 18th

March 10th & 17th

March 31st**:

 Easter Sunday (TBD)

April 14th & 21st

May 12th** & 19th

Heather Reader-Schubert

Supt. of Christian Education

Church of Peace UCC

SundaySchool@churchofpeaceuccfdl.org

(920) 979-4277



Church of Peace served 246 meals on Thanksgiving day. Thank you to everyone who helped make Thanksgiving special

Christmas Eve is Sunday, December 24, 2023.

After much discussion the Church Council has decided to hold 2 worship services on December 24th.

*The first worship service will be at 9:00 am and will represent the 4th Sunday of Advent.

*The second worship service will be at 5:00 pm and will be the celebration of Christmas Eve with Communion.

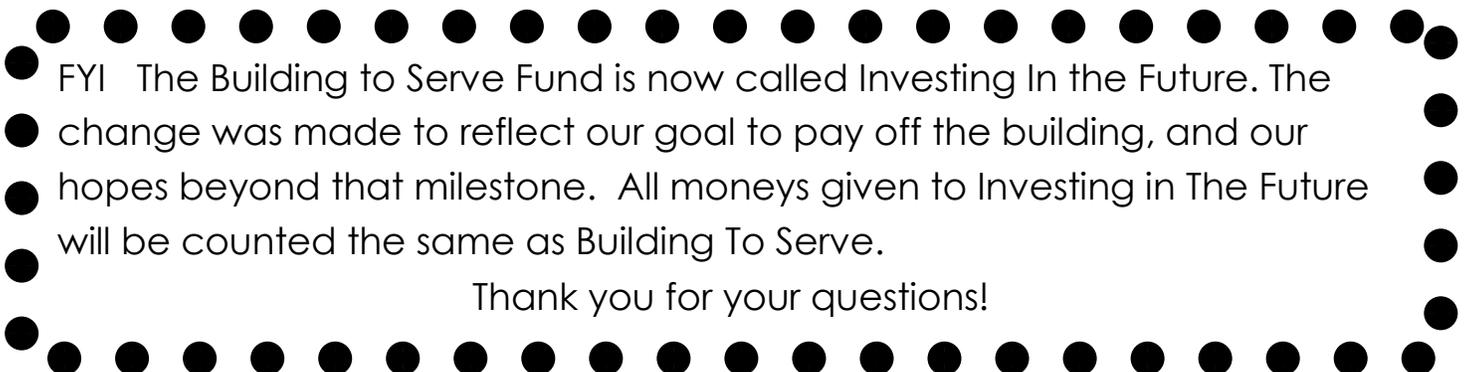
We know this is a change from our normal Christmas Eve 4:00 & 6:00 pm services, but we hope that by choosing the time in between that we will see all those who attended last year's services come together for one big Christmas Eve service. If we do that, we could see over 200 people in church on Christmas Eve. What a joy that would be!

Thank you everyone for adjusting your schedules this year to help bring us together as one in Christ Jesus.

Praise be to God!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Steve



FYI The Building to Serve Fund is now called Investing In the Future. The change was made to reflect our goal to pay off the building, and our hopes beyond that milestone. All moneys given to Investing in The Future will be counted the same as Building To Serve.

Thank you for your questions!

Church of Peace Council Meeting Minutes – November 14, 2023

Present: Pastor Stephen Stepp, Jerry Johnson, Victor Abitz, Nancy Pahnke, Matt Moore, Bobbi Thomma, Justin Poirer

Absent: Peter Peterson, Faye Smith, Mike Petersen

Call to Order: Victor called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.

Opening Prayer: Pastor Steve led the opening prayer.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was noted that in the Comments of the Pastor section in the October council meeting minutes the word "monthly" was missing and should be added to ensure there is no confusion. The statement would then read "... and a decline in monthly giving to the building loan fund." A motion was made by Justin and seconded by Matt to accept the October council meeting minutes with the one change noted. Motion carried.

Financial Report and Approval of Bills

The council agreed to bring someone in to conduct a financial audit. It was noted this should occur at some frequency. It was believed the last time this was done was 4 to 5 years ago. Victor agreed to contact Huberty to have someone come in to discuss scope of the audit and cost.

Justin noted the transfer of funds into the General Fund that was approved by the council at last month's meeting did not occur yet and still needs to be completed.

Bobbi noted the beginning balance on the Abbreviated Financial Report for 10/1/23 doesn't match the 9/30/23 ending balance. This still needs to be corrected.

Justin reported he will be working on a voicing over on a video presentation of the 3rd quarter Investing in the Future (formerly Building to Serve) numbers. He will involve council members as needed. He reported the remaining balance on the building loan was \$665,178.77 as of 10/25/23.

A motion was made by Justin and seconded by Jerry to pay the bills and table the financial report approval until the errors are corrected. Motion carried.

In the Life of Our Church

Worship

The Thanksgiving Eve service is scheduled for Wednesday 11/22

Advent begins on Sunday 12/3. The church will be decorated on Saturday 12/2. Council members are encouraged to help.

The council discussed Christmas Eve services as there has been feedback received from some congregation members. The council agreed to hold a 9 AM service then hold a second service at 5 PM. It was noted that coffee hour would be held after each service. The Sunday School program would be held during the 5 PM service. A motion was made by Bobbi and seconded by Nancy to approve these changes to the schedule of the Christmas Eve services. Motion carried.

Pastor Steve shared some statistics on worship attendance and current membership age groups.

Pastor Steve shared an idea to hold a church dinner & discussion following the Annual Meeting. There will be more to come on this.

Christian Education: Still have low numbers.

Activities Assistant: No updates.

Groups in the Church Family

Ladies of Peace: Discussed Church of Peace Rummage Sale and dinner outing.

Marthas: Meeting tonight, no update.

Golden Fellowship: Meeting this Thursday to talk about making jewelry.

Youth: No update.

Outreach

Loaves & Fishes: No update.

Food Pantry: 24 households were given food assistance and 4 rent/utility assistance. Bobbi reminded the council about the Reverse Advent Calendar. The calendar and list of food items is set.

Pastor Steve mentioned that we will send a thank you card to Salem UCC in Wayne, WI for donating a large quantity of winter apparel for our Winter Clothing Rack.

Stewardship Ministry Team: Pastor Steve mentioned he is working on a letter to send out with the 3rd quarter statements. The council agreed that Investing in the Future should be included as well.

(continued on next page)

Church Administration

The council discussed the Pastor's medical and dental coverage and are now aligned. This coverage is detailed in the Pastor's call agreement.

Pastor Steve reported he has decided to take vacation the week after Christmas from 12/26/23 to 1/2/24.

The council agreed to deny a request by Healing 4 the Nations to use the building for meetings. The council discussed and agreed that we need to look into utilizing a new software program for accounting and church records. The current process is not sustainable.

Buildings and Grounds

Pastor Steve and Victor reported that 2 of the 3 new cameras have been installed and are working. The third camera designated for the elevator door is not working due to wi-fi issues. It was noted that we can add up to 3 more cameras if needed. Justin suggested asking the presenter coming in from Homeland Security to see if he has recommendations for camera position.

Scholarship Pinkert Fund:

The council discussed the idea of having a grant and scholarship. It was decided to table until the next council meeting so it can be discussed further to clear up confusion and set amounts for each.

Constitution review has been scheduled to take place after worship service on 1/7/24.

Investing in the Future (formerly Building to Serve): It was noted we have two investment groups awaiting a decision. The council agreed to stay with Wells Fargo due to various reasons. Justin will call to decline the services from the other groups at the current time.

Comments of the Council President: None

Comments of the Pastor: None

Comments of the Council Members: None

Next council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 6:30 PM.

Adjournment and Closing Prayer

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 PM with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Matt Moore

Golden Fellowship Christmas Party



Thursday, December 14th at 11:00.

White Elephant Gift Exchange (\$5 value)

Chicken dinner, dessert & beverage

\$10 per person. RSVP by Monday, Dec. 11th.

Sign-up sheet on bulletin board or call

Faye Smith 920-266-6035

or Brenda Roehl 920-929-9084

All are invited.

Bazaar News

Dear Members of the Church of Peace, I would like to say thank you for trusting me the last 7 years to handle the Churches Bazaar, it's been interesting and challenging to see how I could improve it from year to year. This year was a huge success, with that said, it also was very stressful for me. With Much thought and prayer, I've decided to step down as Chairperson from the Bazaar. Therefore, we are looking for someone to take over the position of Chair. Please get a hold of me, if your interested in taking over the Challenge. I would be happy to advise. Nancy Pahnke



Merry Christmas --- Giving Tree

Would you like to make someone's Christmas a little brighter? Church of Peace will be helping 3 families this year. We will have a Giving Tree in the Narthex with bell and angel paper ornaments on it. The angels are the children and the parent(s) of each family. The bells will be for purchasing food, laundry, cleaning, toilet tissue, paper towels, hygiene items, etc. You can also make a cash donation for purchasing perishable items for a Christmas dinner. Make checks payable to Church of Peace and on the **memo** line please write **Christmas Food Basket** and return to church by Wednesday, December 13th.

The angel ornaments are for children's gifts. There will be two angels for each child, one for necessities/clothing and one for fun. We are suggesting up to \$50 maximum on gifts. There will be gift ideas on these also.

The ornaments will be available for taking on Sunday, December 3rd. Please sign your name and phone number on the sign-up form matching color. Each family has its own color grouping for the ornament and the sign-up form. **Return the gifts unwrapped**, with the angel ornament taped to the gift. Please return to the Church of Peace no later than **Sunday, December 17th**. Any questions, please ask Brenda Roehl or Jean Stepp. *Thank you for your generosity.*

Will you help bring some Christmas cheer?



Historical Corner Mary Strauss, Historian

2023- 12 Dec. Historical Corner

Mary Strauss, Historian

We will continue with Bazaar history for the decade of the 1980s:

- 1980 "A Decade of Christmas Sharing" with Frieda Jaber as chair, and the featured item was Quick Breads.
- 1981 "Circus World Missions" with Saloah Hageman and Ginny Boyke sharing the chairmanship. They both dressed in Circus garb and we again featured quick breads.
- 1982 "Bazaar of Holidays" had Grace Keuther and Marge Sharkey leading us wearing different holiday attire and candy was featured.
- 1983 "Sounds of Christmas" and again Grace & Marge led us wearing white choir robes with red bows with our Christmas booth in the forefront.
- 1984 "Old-Fashioned Christmas" was chaired by Dorothy Whittaker and Vi Kryzanowski wearing white blouses with red ties and white caps. We made Homemade noodles to feature.
- 1985 "Peace" was our theme and Dorothy and Vi led us with the feature of Christmas recipe cards and wore red/green vest. The women's group New Dimensions made Noodle Angel ornaments.
- 1986 "Country Christmas" was the theme chaired by Judie Behnke and Jeanette Hinn featuring jams and jellies and noodle Angels.
- 1987 "Winter Wonderland" filled the church and chairs Judie and Jeanette wore short white gowns w/ blue garland trim, while again featuring noodle Angels and selling a "Taste of Peace" cookbook.
- 1988 "Babes in Toyland", led by Norma Bacon and Yvonne Beltezore had them wearing striped red/white aprons, and featured a Toy store.
- 1989 "Victorian Christmas" had Norma and Yvonne in dark blouses with a lacy neck scarf and Mrs. Maki made rag rugs for sale from her loom.

MARTHA SOCIETY

Merry Christmas! Joy to you as we celebrate the season of Christmas. It's the most wonderful time of the year.

In December everyone is busy preparing for Christmas. The Martha's are busy shopping for "Thinking of you" bags, decorations for the bags and the courtyard, and snacks to fill the bags. We will be filling 40 "Thinking of you" bags on Saturday, December 2nd. We look forward to visiting and sharing the Christmas message and the "goodie" bags with some of the church members who have illnesses, surgeries, and other concerns. We may also add a few more from the "over 80" list. After the bags are filled, we will take time for fellowship and lunch at Ala Roma for our Christmas Party. We would like to extend a big "thank you" to the visitation ministers: Lois Abitz, Doris Kastorff, Bill and Gloria Guenther, Victor and Deb Abitz, Amy Mitchell, Linda Johnson, and Jeanette Hinn. We could not reach as many members as we do if they did not deliver the bags with their visits. We greatly appreciate their help!

Our next business meeting will be Tuesday, January 9th in the Fellowship Hall at 6pm.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Victor Abitz, President	abitzvictor@gmail.com	920-579-6008
Matt Moore, Secretary	mjmooreplus3@gmail.com	920-979-4309
Mike Petersen, Treasurer	michael.d.petersen@outlook.com	920-266-2036
Jerry Johnson	jjohnson@charter.net	920-238-9716
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Faye Smith	dzsm8445@gmail.com	920-266-6035
Bobbi Thomma	bthomma@charter.net	920-921-5544

FROM OUR COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Hello Members and Friends,

We as the church were very busy with the rummage sale which is now complete. Thank you to everyone for a job well done!

Next is Thanksgiving and then the season of Advent. Please be willing to help decorate the church for Christmas. We know this is the season of giving, so please consider a special gift to the church to support our daily operations. That is a wonderful way to give thanks for the many gifts God has given you. I hope that everyone will participate this year in the many activities and missions of Advent, especially our worship services. Please bring your smiles as we remember that baby in a manger who saved us all.

Merry Christmas and Blessing to All,

Victor Abitz

Thanksgiving Day Meal

We served 246 meals from our church on Thanksgiving. The combined total from Church of Peace UCC, Immanuel Trinity ELCA, the Katharine Drexel Shelter parking lot, Broken Bread Food Pantry and meals that were delivered to other shelters in Fond du Lac were approximately 800. Thank you to everyone who participated in making that day special for others.

Youth Group News

Three members of our Youth Group met to discuss redecorating the Upper Room, activities for the group and over all involvement. They will not have a meeting in December and will meet on the last Sunday of each month continuing in January 2024. Youth are invited to attend and be a part of the New Year!

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

November 21, 2023 6:30 pm

Present: Sammy Schmidkonz, Nancy Steffen, Pastor Steve Stepp, Matt Moore, Pat Hanke, Dave Borchardt

Absent: Brenda Klapperich, Ron Roehl

Meeting called to order at 6:36 PM. Pastor Steve led the opening prayer.

Minutes of the last meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Pat and seconded by Sammy to approve the October meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Old Business

- Trunk or Treat took place 10/29 from 3:30 - 5:00 PM
- o We had 6 trunks.
- o A low number of kids showed up this year.

May look into joining a city-wide Trunk or Treat next year while still doing our own and possibly holding it on Halloween.

New/Current Business

- Stewardship Drive
- o We reviewed and discussed the Stewardship letter. Minor changes/updates were made including adding information on e-giving. It was decided that the letter will be added to the Messenger.
- o 2024 Calendar of Events for Stewardship
- o Decided on dates for each event and added to the calendar
- o Christmas Giving Tree
- o We will help as needed
- o Christmas Eve fellowship between services
- o The cookies will be decorated on 12/17 after worship service (after Fellowship Hour)
- o Need to determine who will take care of the frosting and who will be here on 12/17 to help decorate.
- o Need help on 12/24 to pass cookies out after the 9 AM and 5 PM worship services. Stewardship Team hosts.
- o Fond du Lac Bears hockey game is scheduled for 1/13/2024 at 8 PM.

Need to post a sign up sheet in December so we can let the Blue Line Family Ice Center know how many tickets we need.

Next meeting date was changed to December 5, 2023 @ 6:30 pm so we can work on Christmas cards.

Adjourned at 7:40pm with a prayer by Pastor Steve.

Respectfully submitted,

Calling all bakers!

The Stewardship Committee is looking for donations of unfrosted cookies for after the Christmas Eve service.

If you're able to donate, we ask that we have the cookies to church by December 14th.

All are welcome to decorate them on December 17th!

2023 Reverse Advent Calendar

This year we are again inviting members and friends to create a “Reverse Advent Calendar” by setting aside a box for the food pantry at the beginning of Advent. Each day put the suggested item into the box. Please bring your filled box to the church during regular office hours, Monday through Thursday between 9 am – 12 noon or on Sunday morning. **THANK YOU!**

Sunday, Dec. 3	Can of Chunky soup
Monday, Dec. 4	Tuna Helper & can of tuna
Tuesday, Dec. 5	Mac `n Cheese – two boxes
Wednesday, Dec. 6	Pancake mix - “COMPLETE” type (just add water)
Thursday, Dec. 7	Pancake syrup
Friday, Dec. 8	Hamburger Helper & can of chicken
Saturday, Dec. 9	Dinty Moore Stew
Sunday, Dec. 10	Spaghetti Sauce & Pasta
Monday, Dec. 11	Can of chicken
Tuesday, Dec. 12	Box of cereal
Wednesday, Dec. 13	Peanut butter in a plastic jar
Thursday, Dec. 14	Jelly or jam in a plastic jar or squeeze bottle
Friday, Dec. 15	Tuna Helper & can of tuna
Saturday, Dec. 16	Box of brownie mix
Sunday, Dec. 17	Hamburger Helper & can of chicken
Monday, Dec. 18	Mac `n Cheese individual cups
Tuesday, Dec. 19	Can of Chunky soup
Wednesday, Dec. 20	Pancake mix
Thursday, Dec. 21	Pancake syrup
Friday, Dec. 22	2 cans of tomato or chicken noodle soup
Saturday, Dec. 23	Box of cereal
Sunday, Dec. 24	Mac `n Cheese – two boxes
Monday, Dec. 25	Have a MERRIER Christmas knowing that you’ve helped some people in Jesus’ name.



December 2023

Church of Peace
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
						9:00 am Decorate for Christmas
3 9:00 am WORSHIP SERVICE WITH COMMUNION SOCIAL HOUR: Martha Society	4 6:00 pm Thanksgiving meal follow up meeting @ Immanuel/Trinity	5 11:45 am Ladies of Peace 6:30 pm Stewardship Com	6 8:30 am Riverpark Mtg	7	8	9
10 9:00 am WORSHIP SERVICE SOCIAL HOUR: Church Council 10:00 Sunday School	11	12 6:30 pm Church Council	13 Church of Peace Serves Loaves and Fishes	14	15	16 9:30 am Ethics Committee 11:00 am Golden Fellowship
17 9:00 am WORSHIP SERVICE SOCIAL HOUR: Ladies of Peace 10:00 Sunday School	18 1:30 pm Bible Study	19	20	21	22	23
24 9:00 am WORSHIP SERVICE 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship Service Special Fellowship following Stewardship Committee	25 Merry Christmas!	26	27	28	29	30
31 9:00 am WORSHIP SERVICE SOCIAL HOUR: Hospitality	Jan 1 Happy New Year!	2	3	4	5	6

Christmas Eve Day Worship Services

9:00 am 4th Advent Service

5:00pm Christmas Eve Service

