



## Jacob's Ladder 4K/PRESCHOOL/DAYCARE



AMY NELSON

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Jacob's Ladder had just over 100 children participate in our annual Trick or Treat Parade. A big thanks to Ezekiel members, employees, and Jacob's Ladder families for coming out to partake in the fun and a little extra sugar to go along with the excitement of Halloween.



### THE BOX SCORE

#### General Fund: Oct 2023

Revenue:	\$ 40,170
Expenses:	\$ 27,602
Difference:	\$ 12,567

#### General Fund Year to Date:

Revenue:	\$416,169
Expenses:	\$439,491
Difference:	-\$ 23,322

#### Keep the Light ON! 1 year Capital Campaign for Mortgage

Keep the Light ON! – Gifts thru June	\$115,325
Pledged over 1 year:	\$111,000

Ezekiel Mortgage Balance: \$369,652

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River Falls, WI  
Permit No. 43  
Non-Profit



202 South Second Street  
River Falls, WI 54022

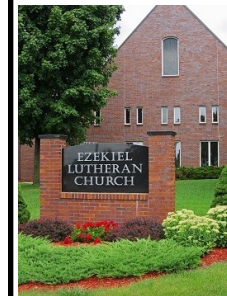
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



# CONNECTIONS

December 2023

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A PUBLICATION OF EZEKIEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, RIVER FALLS, WI  
Pastor Steve Dow

## Advent 2023:

### "How Does a Weary World Rejoice?"

Join us Wednesday, December 6 and 13 for Advent services. A special, "Liturgy for the Weary" service will be held December 20 to provide a space for prayer, reflection, and remembrance for those experiencing loss or grief during the holiday season.

## The ABCs of Christmas

An intergenerational Christmas service.

Sunday, December 17  
9:30 a.m.  
Ezekiel's Sanctuary

December 24, one service at 9:30 a.m.

Celebrate the birth of our Savior.

### Christmas Eve - Candlelight Service

4 p.m.—Contemporary with Holy Communion

6 p.m.—Traditional Service with Holy Communion

### Christmas Day

9:30 a.m.—Worship with Holy Communion



## PASTOR



PASTOR STEVE DOW  
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The darkness this time of year is real! It is a reminder to us of the Season of Advent and the days that lead up to Christmas. This year, our services will focus on the theme, “How does a weary world rejoice?” I think we are truly tired and in the midst of feeling tired and weary, it’s hard to find the joy of the season. It doesn’t help that our schedules are often filled this time of year. And the holidays have a way of reminding us of the loved ones we have lost. So whether you feel weary or not, whether you feel like you are ready to rejoice or not, you are invited to enter into this season knowing that together, we enter this time together. The following is a poem from the series:

### The Last Time I Saw God

The last time I saw God face to face	that tucked us all in.
I was looking at a bed of tulips.	And in between these small gifts
God was every color of red.	there were
I was merely a mortal,	newborn babies,
in awe of it all.	and sapling trees,
The time before that,	homemade bread,
we were tying back the curtains,	the sound of a church
looking for stars.	singing on Sunday.
God was the deepest purple	...
and the brightest light.	Why, yes, we are lucky.
The time before that,	We are more than lucky
the city was soft with snow.	for the moments when
God was the quiet	delight and awe
	unzip the weight
	we carry around

Prayer by Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

God’s Peace,  
Pastor Steve

## Sunday School/Children/Families MINISTRIES



MARCI NORUM  
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It’s been two years since Ezekiel handed out the *Red Plate of Blessings*. I’ve heard from many of you about how special this plate has become to your family. For those of you who aren’t familiar with the red plate, let me explain.



A young 10 year old girl came to the dinner table one night to find her family’s special red plate at her usual seat. She smiled wide. This young girl had told her parents when she got home that she had received her first “B” in math, a subject with which she struggled. Her mom saw her grin and affirmed what she was thinking: “We are so proud of your hard work in math. Your persistence is paying off!” The young girl doesn’t remember what they ate for dinner that night, but does remember eating off the special red plate to celebrate. This tradition continues in this family’s household. Whenever someone receives a pay raise or special recognition, has a birthday, or they approach such milestones as confirmation or graduation, the family pulls out the red plate.

Through this simple tradition, we celebrate the gifts within each of us that can often get overlooked. Taking a moment during these busy times in our lives and recognizing how important every day events are can make a difference!

As Christ followers, we understand every breath as a gift, every moment of love, tenderness, and compassion as worth celebrating. Let’s look for all the ways we can “love on” one another as faithful families. Perhaps it’s with special dishes or a favorite meal for them. It’s the ordinary where God shows up to do the extraordinary!

If your family is newer to Ezekiel and hasn’t received a red plate, please let me know and I’ll be sure to get one to you!

### Scandinavian Bake Sale



#### and Christmas Tea

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2nd  
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

EZEKIEL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
202 SOUTH SECOND ST  
RIVER FALLS, WI

Christmas Breads, Cookies, Lefse, Sandbakkels,  
Rosettes, Spritz, Krumkake, Fattigman,  
& Fellowship.

Bring a friend! We will be glad to see you at the complimentary tea.

### PARENT’S NIGHT OUT

Ezekiel Youth are providing families with a Parent’s Night Out on Friday, December 15 from 5:30-8:30. Children toilet trained and up are invited for an evening of faith, crafts, and fun. Free will donations accepted to support the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering.

#### Evening Includes:

- Children’s worship
- Craft time
- Nutritious snack
- Indoor play



To sign up or receive more information, contact  
aklein@ezekiellutheran.org

## Teen and Young Adult MINISTRIES



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Throughout December, Sunday School, the 56 Club, and Confirmation students will be collecting various items for the River Falls Backpack Program, found on Ezekiel’s 2nd floor. This program assists 142 River Falls students, and we are thrilled to partner with them again this year. If you are interested in contributing, please place the following items in the cardboard box outside the Chapel.

- Small jars of peanut butter
- Boxes of Hamburger Helper
- Cans of tuna or chicken

Students attending the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering had a great first fundraiser, offering beignets and chicory coffee for free-will donations, making over \$1000! We are grateful for all the generous donations and individuals willing to try something new. Our next fundraiser, "Parent’s Night Out" on December 15, is a babysitting event where parents can drop off their potty-trained and older kids for a few hours. We are excited to supply a night for Ezekiel families to enjoy a date night, complete some holiday shopping, or have a peaceful night in without their kids running around.

### Relational MINISTRY



SANDY TAUFERNER  
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**Advent**  
**CONTEMPLATION**  
Contemplative prayer is an ancient practice of mindful silence, meant to tune the faithful toward the voice of our Creator. During Advent join us to learn about contemplative prayer, practice as a group, and reflect together on our experience.  
Dec. 3 and 10 between services at 9:40 a.m.  
Dec. 17 and 24 before the services at 9:00 a.m.  
Meeting in the Chapel