

Jacob's Ladder 4K/PRESCHOOL/DAYCARE



AMY NELSON
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Jacob's Ladder Preschool 2024-2025



Registration begins:
Monday, February 12th
.....at 9:00 AM.....

Open House

Wednesday, February 9th
9:30-10:30AM



3 1/2-5 Year Old Classes

(Must be 3 by 3/1/2024)

Monday-Wednesday-
Friday

9:00-11:30 AM or

Tuesday-Wednesday,-
Thursday

12:45-3:15PM

3 Year Old Class

(Age 2 years 10
months- Age 3)

Tuesday- Thursday

9:00-11:30AM



Ezekiel Lutheran Church, River Falls

#715-629-5427

anelson@ezekiellutheran.org

THE BOX SCORE

General Fund: November 2023

Revenue:	\$36,690
Expenses:	<u>\$35,701</u>
Difference:	\$ 988


General Fund Year to Date:

Revenue:	\$452,858
Expenses:	<u>\$470,801</u>
Difference:	-\$ 17,943

Keep the Light ON! 1 year Capital Campaign for Mortgage

Keep the Light ON! – Gifts thru Nov	\$121,762
Pledged over 1 year:	\$111,000

Ezekiel Mortgage Balance: \$360,783

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CONNECTIONS

January 2024

Vol. 5 Issue 1

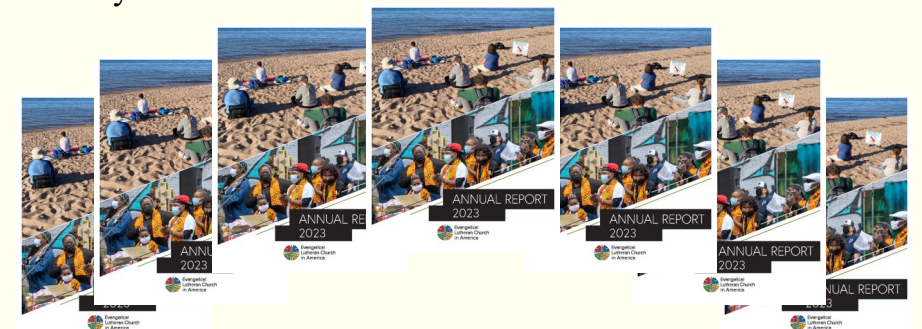
A PUBLICATION OF EZEKIEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, RIVER FALLS, WI
Pastor Steve Dow



On January 28 there will be one worship service at 9:30 a.m. The Annual Meeting will follow at 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. All members are encouraged to attend. There will be a lunch after the meeting.

Scot Simpson, Church Treasurer, will be in room 100, January 7 and 21, between services at 9:45 a.m. to review Ezekiel Lutheran Church finances and the 2024 budget. Questions regarding the budget must be presented at this meeting.

Copies of the annual report will be available in Fellowship Hall and outside the church office beginning January 21.



PASTOR



PASTOR STEVE DOW
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Each winter as the year grows older, we each grow older, too. The chill sets in a little colder; the verities we knew seem shaken and untrue.—ELW 252 (Read the rest of the verses before worship or from your hymnal if you have one at home.)

The poetry of the above hymn speaks to a reality that many of us recognize. Of course, we each get older every year. That's a fact of life. The "verities" are the truths of life and I think sometimes change gets harder as we get older because we see things change that from our perspective have always been and it can feel as if truth is changing. I think this happens most often when we place things at the center that really aren't the center. As God's people, our identity in Christ is central. Christ's saving grace in our life is central. Jesus the Christ is the center.

I've been your pastor now for a little more than a half of a year. I've made changes. You've sung some new hymns, you've experienced some changes in the shape of worship, and if you worship at the late service, the words of the Lord's Prayer have changed. (The "new" Lord's Prayer is older than me and was printed first for Lutherans in the LBW or Green Hymnal back in 1978. You can check on page 71 in the LBW and the "new" Lord's Prayer was printed as the first option.) But, despite these changes, the center hasn't moved. The verities of our faith haven't changed even if we are experiencing some of these verities in a new way.

As I reflect on these months, I do have one regret, and that is that I haven't made as many visits as I had hoped. I value spending time with you and getting to know you but I'm also learning the habits and history of Ezekiel and I simply haven't had as much time as I thought I would have in my schedule. I do believe it will get better some with time but I'm not there yet. People often ask me if I'm settled in and what I tell people is that I have to go through the whole cycle once. It takes a year to see everything that takes place and work through Christmas and Easter and all the other events along the way. Once you've done it once, it gets a little easier. Then it's not all new coming at me.

I give thanks for the way that you have accepted me as your pastor. I give thanks for the way that you have embraced and prayed for my family in this transition. I also give thanks for this congregation and the work that it has been doing in this community for so long. I give thanks for your generosity in giving of your time, talent, and treasure. I look forward to the day when the mortgage is paid off. I enjoy blessing those who receive the gifts that we collect as they are sent out. You are a generous people and your generosity comes when you live in response to what Christ has first done for you. When we keep Christ in the center, we can do amazing things. Let's do amazing things in the New Year.

Relational MINISTRY



SANDY TAUFERNER
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Sunday School/Children/Families MINISTRIES



MARCI NORUM
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The Intergenerational Christmas service was a megahit! Every Sunday School and 56 Club (5th & 6th graders) student with the exception of three (due to illness) participated along with multiple confirmation and high school students. Thank you to the readers and all who made this service a success!



Sunday School parents and students will be attending milestone classes beginning in February. Each class will gain knowledge of a specific milestone: Learning About Church, The Lord's Prayer, First Bible, and First Communion. As a congregation, please pray for each individual and their families during this important time in their faith journeys.



Teen and Young Adult MINISTRIES



ALLISON KLEIN
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With Advent and Christmas becoming a faint memory, we still have a busy schedule ahead of us this winter. In December, our Parent's Night Out fundraiser for the ELCA Youth Gathering was a hit! We had 12 kids come and made just shy of \$200. We followed the event with an overnight where students played games, snacked on popcorn, and watched movies together. Thanks to all the families who have supported our fundraising for the Youth Gathering! Looking ahead, Sunday, January 14 we will have another Beignet and Coffee Fundraiser held during coffee hour and following the second service. If you missed it the first time, make sure to get here early!

January 18-21, Marci and I are attending the ELCA Youth Ministry Network Conference in New Orleans. We are eager to attend this professional development weekend to learn more from ministry professionals and youth-workers how to best continue faith-formation and reimagine what this looks like for Ezekiel. The theme of the conference is "Dream: In a broken and hurting world, we are called to discern God's dreams and visions; as we seek to follow Jesus, we will be equipped by the Holy Spirit to make those dreams a reality for the children, youth and families we serve." With new pastoral leadership, we are in a unique position to dream what Ezekiel's future could look like, while honoring the history of our church. In July 2024, I will be guiding a group of young people and adults to the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. Over the course of the conference, there are multiple workshops, Q&A sessions, and tours to help leaders feel prepared for the Gathering, as well as developing age-appropriate children's messages, recruiting volunteers, and curating church libraries to be used by all.

Lastly, Confirmation students are on the lookout for Mentors to meet with them Wednesday evenings during Lent. Mentors are an invaluable part of a young person's Faith experience, often having lifelong relationships with the student and their family. We have 25 students who need mentors, if you feel the Spirit calling you to connect with a young person, please let me know.



Ezekiel will have their annual pool party at Klaas-Jonas Community Pool on February 3. The pool will be open from 5 PM - 7 PM. We ask each family to bring food to share, no glass or electrical outlets. Drinks will be provided. Bring a friend. All are welcome! Watch for the sign-up in January.