

Jacob’s Ladder

4K/PRESCHOOL/DAYCARE



AMY NELSON

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After the mildest winter in my lifetime and lots of patience, the new playground has come to life. Many hands went into making this happen, and all of us at Jacob’s Ladder (staff, parents, and children) are so grateful for those who helped as each little step mattered. The grants I apply for monthly from Child Care Counts has made this all possible; a dream that felt so out of reach for years. Now onto the best part, making memories in God’s creation for years to come. Stop by and play sometime!



THE BOX SCORE

<b>General Fund: March 2024</b>	
Revenue:	\$ 47,881
Expenses:	\$ 43,318
Difference:	\$ 4,562
<b>General Fund Year to Date:</b>	
Revenue:	\$164,538
Expenses:	\$138,787
Difference:	\$ 25,751
<b>Mortgage, Mission, &amp; Ministry Appeal (MMM)</b>	
<b>1 year Capital Campaign for MMM</b>	
Keep the Light ON! – Gifts thru Feb.	\$ 59,152
Pledged over one year:	\$126,804
Amount Needed for Goal	\$140,000
<b>Ezekiel Mortgage Balance:</b>	<b>\$322,820</b>



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



CONNECTIONS

May 2024

Vol. 5 Issue 5

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

Please join us in  
celebrating  
Sandy Tauferner  
& Barb Kuss



RETIREMENT CELEBRATION  
MAY 19  
DURING COFFEE HOUR

CONGRATULATIONS TO  
EZEKIEL’S 2024  
GRADUATING SENIORS

Evelyn Ashbach  
William Benedict  
Hayden Bottolfson  
Emalee DeLong  
Jake Evans  
Anneliese Farnier  
Grace Fitzsimons  
Kalli Hastings  
Isaac Hinshaw  
Michael Ireland  
Margaret Johnson

Lyla Kohel  
Peyton Lodge  
Aiden Mitchell  
Megan Odegard  
Kathryn Olson  
Jackson Range  
Jacob Range  
Mya Ross  
Jordan Schwantz  
Henry Whipkey

Join us Sunday, May 19 at 10:30 to celebrate our Seniors with  
a blessing, blanket gifting, and cake reception.

EZEKIEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Summer Blended Services

BEGINNING SUNDAY, MAY 26  
SERVICE AT 9:30 AM  
COFFEE HOUR TO FOLLOW



## PASTOR



PASTOR STEVE DOW  
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### THE HOLY COMMUNION IS CELEBRATED WEEKLY

**Principle 35** *According to the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Lutheran congregations celebrate the Holy Communion every Sunday and festival. This confession remains the norm for our practice.*

**Background 35A** *The Church celebrates the Holy Communion frequently because the Church needs the sacrament, the means by which the Church's fellowship is established and its mission as the baptized people of God is nourished and sustained.' This practice was reaffirmed in 1989 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We continue to need "consistent pastoral encouragement and instruction relating to Holy Communion. . . pointing up Christ's command, his promise, and our deep need. For a variety of historical reasons, Lutherans in various places moved away from the weekly celebration of the sacrament .*

**Application 35B** *All of our congregations are encouraged to celebrate the Lord 's Supper weekly, but not every service need be a Eucharist .*

**Application 35C** *Participation in the sacramental meal is by invitation, not demand. The members of this church are encouraged to make the sacrament a frequent rather than an occasional part of their lives.—from The Use of the Means of Grace, Principle 35*

You may be wondering why we have been celebrating Holy Communion weekly at both of our Sunday services. Our Lutheran heritage has always carried weekly communion as a central part of our practice. As stated above, there were many reasons why Lutherans moved away from this practice. In the Season of Easter, we are reminded that Christ is made known when the bread is broken. We are in need of Christ's presence in our lives and it isn't just Christ's presence but it is also the grace that is given in this moment. The words, "For you, for the forgiveness of sin" should ring in your ears when you receive this meal. We are also drawn to this meal by Christ's invitation through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Again, from **The Use of the Means of Grace**: Principle 54 As a means of grace Holy Communion is that messianic banquet at which God bestows mercy and forgiveness, creates and strengthens faith for our daily work and ministry in the world, draws us to long for the day of God's manifest justice in all the world, and provides a sure and certain hope of the coming resurrection to eternal life.

This meal we share is central to who we are and central to whose we are. May God's grace strengthen us through this meal so that we can serve the Lord wherever the Holy Spirit may lead us.

## Sunday School/Children/Families MINISTRIES



MARCI NORUM  
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We've had a great turnout for our Milestone classes! The 3 year olds—Kindergarten students and parents took a tour of Ezekiel. We learned that the flags outside and paraments inside change with the church season. We went into the sacristy where a lot of "behind the scenes" happen. Each student received a book on learning about church to take home and read with their family.

The 1st & 2nd graders and parents discussed the Lord's Prayer and what some of the "BIG" words mean. We learned that praying can be done anytime and anywhere! We don't have to pray big words, just talk to God. We also discussed the Bible and that there's 66 books inside! We worked on looking up scripture as well. We enjoyed playing Books of the Bible Hopscotch and putting together The Lord's Prayer Puzzle.

EVERYONE is invited to our Pizza & Bunco Event happening on June 12 at 5:30 PM. Mark your calendars now and watch for a sign-up coming soon!

Lastly, in a recent staff meeting the devotion was on serving and how we all have different strengths in serving others. Some of us love to greet people, while others make a great pot of coffee! Others share their gifts through music, or by making the outside of our church look inviting. I believe there are some members who are the nurturers, ones that want others to feel accepted and valued. Nurturers, if you see someone having a difficult time, I invite you to ask if they need anything (prayer, support, etc.). If you see a parent struggling in church, ask them if you can be of assistance. Whether that is holding a child, leading a child up for a blessing, or coloring with them. Help that person or parent struggling to understand that we're glad they made it to church today.

## Relational MINISTRY



SANDY TAUFERNER  
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## Teen and Young Adult MINISTRIES



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*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6*

"One of my favorite passages in the New Testament is 1 Corinthians 12, which discusses spiritual gifts. Paul's letter to the Corinthian church emphasizes love, a theme often seen in passages read at weddings.

In a recent Confirmation lesson, students took the "True Colors" personality test to learn more about our gifts and we discussed how these are gifted from God to be used for God's glory. I couldn't help but giggle as I had students circle up with their peers who received similar results and had them talk about what they noticed looking around at their circle. We talked about the benefit of having a variety of gifts present when working on a group project in school and how this mirrors how we should share our gifts within the church. If on a Sunday morning there are many readers and musicians, the worship may be great, but who is making the coffee and greeting visitors? A benefit of living in Christian community is getting to share our gifts in loving ways that serve the entire body of Christ.

Living in Christian community allows us to share our gifts in ways that benefit everyone. Let's consider how we can use our gifts to serve the church and each other.

### Announcement to Ezekiel Congregation

April 21, 2024

For the past few months, Council has been grappling with Ezekiel's staffing configuration, trying to determine how to best meet the needs of all our members. Lots of conversation has brought forth many ideas.

Earlier, at Synod's request, our congregation created a Transition Task Force to analyze our congregation's Mission, organizational structure, and staffing needs. The Task Force report recommended that Ezekiel call one pastor to lead our congregation, and, when feasible, add a Visitation Pastor to staff.

Council spent Saturday, April 13, on retreat, trying to determine our priorities and how best to proceed. As we revisited the situation at last Tuesday's Council meeting, it seemed important at this moment to address the current situation with a temporary fix. It was decided to hire an Interim Visitation Pastor, who is to be responsible for meeting the needs of our homebound members, those who can no longer join us in person. This position will be for 10-15 hours per week, up to 6 months. This both fill an immediate need in our congregation and gives Council time to further explore exactly how we might want this position to look going forward.

We are pleased to announce that Pastor Sarah Schaffner has agreed to take this position. She will begin working with us in the very near future. We are very happy to share this news with all of you. This decision is an example of our congregation living out our Stewardship theme, "Moving Forward in Faith."

Ezekiel Church Council