



FOCUS

December 2023

Daleheightschurch.org

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A Message from Pastor Roger

Dale Heights Staff

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Reverend Roger Roberts

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Felipe Ruiz
and Lily Fabella

Grounds Keeper:

Rob Carpenter

Session Members

Moderator:

Reverend Roger Roberts

Clerk:

June Zeeh

Edi Chan (2023)

Bonnie Savonne (2023)

June Zeeh (2024)

Verena Straubhaar (2025)

Gerry Klump (2025)

Advent Season: Joy or Depression?

Years ago I read an article by a psychologist whose words seem even more convincing in these troubled times of national and world-wide turmoil. I quote a portion:

*We are told that Christmas, for Christians, should be the happiest time of year, an opportunity to be joyful and grateful with family, friends and colleagues. Yet, according to the National Institute of Health, Christmas is the time of year that people experience the highest incidence of **depression**. Hospitals and police forces report the highest incidences of **suicide** and attempted suicide. Psychiatrists, psychologists and other mental health professionals report a significant increase in patients complaining about depression. One North American survey reported that 45% of respondents dreaded the festive season.* (In Psychology Today, Ray Williams).

Williams then offers various explanations for holiday depression, such as unrealistic expectations, social and financial pressures, increased loneliness and grief based on memories of recent losses, and long, dark evenings with the beginning of wintertime. Let's be aware of friends, neighbors and possibly relatives who may actually be dreading Christmas, and who possibly desire the season to quickly come and go.

The remedy for holiday depression, we must all remember, is to focus on the real meaning and message of the Advent Season, a message that is too easily lost in the hustle and bustle of seasonal activities. You and I need to focus on the angel's announcement to the shepherds: "I am bringing you good news of **great joy** for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:10f).

As followers of Christ, our joy is a gift of God's goodness, and is more than the fragile and fleeting happiness that's based on holiday merriment and fickle emotions. Joy is the deeply rooted sense of the presence of a loving God, giving the will and strength to live each day with confidence in God's care for us and his delight in us as his children. The one who gives us joy is the one who freely gave us his only Son. Remember, when we celebrate the birth of Christ we celebrate the birth of one who suffered and died for us, the ultimate gift of God's love. Even when the darkness seems to overwhelm us, we can turn to our loving God with faith and assurance, asking him to give us renewed peace and joy *in him*. Joy *in him* results in joy in all of life, whatever our circumstances.

I pray that you and I, along with the entire Dale Heights family, will experience and share the joy that Christ gives, not only at Advent and Christmas, but throughout the New Year.

Pastor Roger



Breakfast

Once again, the Dale Heights breakfast group will be hosting the monthly breakfast on **Saturday, December 9, 2023**. Serving will begin at 8:00 am.

The suggested donation is \$ 4.

RSVP to Roy L. if you have not already done so.



Upcoming Christmas Concert:

A Sleigh ride with Madison Area Concert Handbells

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8TH | 7:00PM

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Verona Campus

7291 County Rd PD Verona, WI 53593

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9TH | 7:00PM

Christ Presbyterian Church

944 E Gorham St

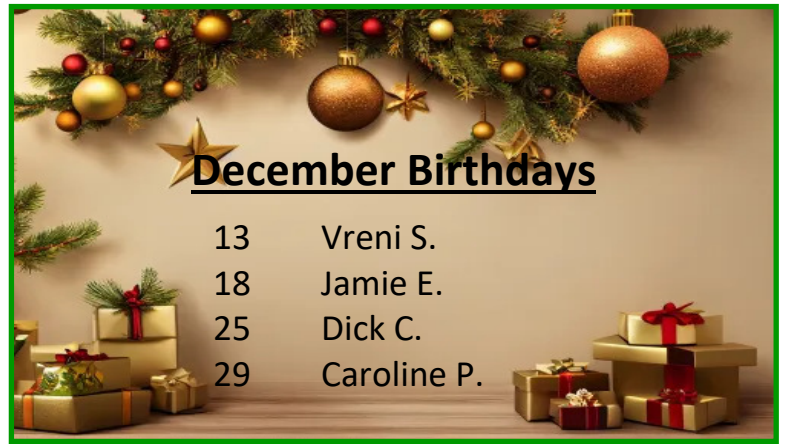
Madison, WI 53703

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH | 3:00PM

First Congregational United Church of Christ

1609 University Ave

Madison, WI 53726



thank you

Thanks to the following people who purchased poinsettias to beautify the Sanctuary in December: Edi Chan, Vreni Straubhaar, Otty Schaefer, Marcia Holman, Barb Fleishman, Elma Metzloff, Jamie Engebregtsen, Jennifer Jones, Gerry Klump, Bonnie Savonne, Roger & Jan Roberts, Wendy Weber & Philip Krause.

Still needed are people to arrange the poinsettias on December 16, & 23--or on Sunday if you arrive at church about 9 a.m. Sign-up sheet is in the Concourse.



The deadline for article submissions for the January issue of the FOCUS is December 21, 2023.



Presbyterian Special Offerings in December

Is it the **Christmas Joy Offering** or The **Presbyterian Gift Catalog**?

There is information about both in the Concourse. You choose!

Christmas Joy

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us with the generous support of church leaders among us – past, present or future – who have pointed us to God.

We honor and celebrate leaders like retired pastors, church workers and families who have faithfully guided and led us but who now find themselves in critical financial need.

We also honor and celebrate emerging leaders like students in schools and colleges equipping communities of color, who develop leadership skills as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the world God loves so much.

Note on your check or on your envelope that this is for the Christmas Joy Offering.

The Presbyterian Gifting Catalog is 10 Years Old!

The program and catalog offer real opportunities to unite with thousands of others giving to Presbyterian Mission to bring hope to communities around the world. Giving in unity increases everyone's impact.

Check out The Giving Catalog in the Gathering Space and see if there are gifts that represent a cause that's meaningful to you or make a gift in someone's honor and choose a ministry! Your gift will provide help, hope and relief to people, families and communities in need.

You may consider to choose and donate with someone. The catalog explains the programs available to truly help people and there are a dozen or so gifts ranging from \$10 to \$50 and you'll see some bigger opportunities as well. You may want to consider a \$10 gift toward farm tools or \$25 toward community sustainability that may assist a small women-owned bakery making a big impact in rural Malawi. Imagine what difference a sewing machine can make for \$50!



There is one more appropriate category at \$25 that is called:

"Most Immediate Need."

More information will be available during the Minutes for Mission for the Christmas Joy Offering and for The Giving Catalog during the month of December and you will have the opportunity to hear and choose.

It is after all the season of Advent and the Christmas Joy Offering. What better time to hear about how Presbyterians can think about how we relate to faith, assistance and peace in our world!

There are order forms and instructions in the Concourse!

OUTREACH



Top 10 Food Donations

- Mac and cheese
- Hamburger or tuna helper
- Canned chicken or tuna
- Basmati, jasmine or white rice
- Masa
- Noodles (any kind)
- Pasta (spaghetti) sauce
- Canned beans (all varieties)
- Canned fruit (all varieties)
- Condiments (any kind)

Everyone who comes to the pantry has a story that is uniquely their own — what they all share is the increased stability that comes from access to nutritious food. Together, we're providing food to more people than ever before in our 40-year history.

Demand has doubled in the last year due in part to pandemic-era food and rental assistance from the federal government coming to an end.

In addition, the cost of housing continues to rise at record levels – a recent national study found that Madison has the fastest-rising rent of any major city in the United States.

Reverse Advent Calendar

(Planning Ahead for Christmas!)



If you're looking for a great way to engage with your families this Christmas season by giving to others, you may want to use this Reverse Advent Calendar (nope, no little cute windows with chocolate behind them) as a guide instead for helping those who may need food assistance.

- This calendar is a shopping list for items needed at food pantries or simply use the WayForward most-requested list.
- How about taking your children or grandchildren to the grocery store each week and have them select the items on the list from the shelves? Or take yourself!
- There is no required item for a particular day, but it would be wonderful if you would pray for the unknown recipient as you put it in your collection box.
- At the end of Advent, take your food to a food pantry and know that your giving will be a blessing to many.
- There are copies of the Reverse Advent Calendar in the Gathering Space.





Leaders in Congress really do listen to their constituents.

BREAD
FOR THE WORLD

OFFERING of LETTERS

Today, we're working to inspire our leaders in Washington, D.C. to pass legislative victories that **reduce hunger** in the U.S. and around the world.

Every letter you write to your representatives on Capitol Hill is read and catalogued – and tells your representative which issues to prioritize.

[Click to Learn More](#)

CWU Quadrennial Priorities 2021-2024

Priority #1: [Health and Wellness](#)

Priority #2: [Climate Stewardship](#)

Priority #3: [Social Justice](#)

Priority #4: [Hunger and Poverty](#)

The Healthy and Faithful Climate Corner

Consider wrapping in fabric, dishtowels, paper bags or newspaper!

Have fun with it and maybe use twine, which like some ribbon can be used again.

Yes, tissue paper is recyclable, but not if it has glitter.

Both regular wrapping paper and glossy (think magazine texture!) wrapping paper is recyclable.

However, metallic, glitter, and foil wrapping paper is not! Instead of tossing it in your recycling bin, reuse it or place it in the trashcan.



Submitted by Wendy Weber

DALE HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

5501 University Ave.

Madison, Wisconsin 53705

DECEMBER CALENDAR

03	Sunday Worship/communion
09	Family Breakfast – 8:00 am
10	Sunday Worship
12	Property and Finance meeting 7:00 – 8:30 pm
17	Sunday worship
24	Sunday worship
31	Sunday worship

Liturgists

December 03	Marcia H.
December 10	Otty S.
December 17	Janice K.
December 24	Roy L.
December 31	Edi C.