



FOCUS

January 2024

Daleheightschurch.org

A Message from Pastor Roger

Dale Heights Staff

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Reverend Roger Roberts

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Custodians:

Felipe Ruiz
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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)

Praying in 2024

As we wrap up the 2023 Holiday Season and begin to think about the New Year, I want to ask you to join me in a church-wide resolution to increase our corporate prayer life.

Our American Christianity, particularly in my pietistic, evangelical tradition, has been too individualistic. And that's certainly reflected in our New Year's resolutions. We make resolutions regarding overcoming negative behavior and habits, dropping a few pounds of weight, and adding some new disciplines that will strengthen our spiritual lives. When we make these resolutions we rarely consider or involve others.

In light of the distressing situations that have plagued our nation and world in 2023, I think we do well as the people of God, to resolve as a church family to increase our praying for God's kingdom to come more fully and his will be done more completely, in earth as in heaven. We've seen too much violence, destruction, injustice, political rancor, and increasing damage to our environment, locally and worldwide.

Certainly as we read and hear daily news reports, we're likely to despair that anything can be done to halt the apparently increasing threat of terrorism and gun violence. We're also distressed to read about corruption in national government, and wonder what can be done to increase accountability that will result in greater justice for all. We're also aware, that even though many of us are blessed beyond measure when compared to the majority nationally and worldwide who live below the poverty line and in many cases, are literally starving to death. The horrible events and devastating warfare in Israel and Gaza and Ukraine seem without resolution and termination.

In light of all of this, what can we do in 2024? I'm reminded, as I read Scripture about God's miraculous deliverance of his people, all the way through to Jesus' triumph over death on the cross through his resurrection, that the way forward for God's people is to trust, obey and pray, realizing that our God is able to transform and heal a broken world, even as he does individual lives. We'll never have enough influence to turn society around through political channels and mass protests, even though there are times for us to join with others in making our convictions known. (continued)

The most powerful force, I still believe, is God's working through the prayers of his people. And we are people who rely, not on our numbers or political influence, but rather on the 'weak power of the cross.' We're called to be God's salt and light in the world, letting his power work through us, through our earnest praying, as we hear God's promise in 2 Chronicles 7:14: *"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

Pastor Roger

hello
2024

January

The annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 14, 2024, following worship.

Committee reports should be sent to the Church office **by January 9.**

Breakfast

The Dale Heights breakfast group will be hosting the monthly breakfast on Saturday, January 13, 2024. Serving will begin at 8:00 am.

The suggested donation is \$4.

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

Birthdays

- 5 Vicki Klump
- 11 Jim Lundgren
- 12 Keith Chan
Michelle Shannon
- 18 Colleen Shannon Longua
- 27 Theo Engebregtsen

Anniversaries

- 1 Bill & Lenore Mercer
- 17 Edi & Keith Chan



We invite all who are interested to participate in the choir. Rehearsals are held on **Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.**

January 10, 17, and 24

February 7, 14, and 21

March 6, 13, and 20

April 3, 10, and 17

The deadline for article submissions for the February issue of the FOCUS is January 25, 2024.

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)

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.

Madison food pantries see ‘record demand’

BY ERIC MURPHY FOR THE ISTHMUS

Inflation, end of COVID funding exacerbates problem

Madison food pantries are seeing a steep increase in visitors this year as rent increases, inflation, and the expiration of federal COVID assistance programs push more Madisonians to the brink of financial instability.

“For us it’s record demand, more than any time in our 40-year history,” says Leslie Huber, engagement director of WayForward Resources, which provides food and housing assistance on Madison’s west side. “The past year we have

seen a very significant increase in need for both food and housing assistance.”

Huber says visits to WayForward were up more than 230% this November compared to January 2022. She says the expiration of COVID-era assistance programs has contributed to the increase: The Dane County CORE rental assistance program ran out of federal funds in May, and an expansion of SNAP food assistance benefits expired in February.

Huber says the need for housing assistance has risen steadily since 2019. And Madison’s highest-in-the-nation rent increases are also pushing some to need help with food too, as Huber says some seeking assistance report \$100 to \$200 increases as their lease renews. “That hundred or two hundred is a game changer,” she says. “When people are putting more and more income into staying in their home, there’s very little left for food.”

Helen Osborn-Senatus of The River Food Pantry says the pantry has served 15,000 unique visitors to date this year, up from 11,000 at this time last year. The pantry provided Thanksgiving meals to 1,500 people, up from about 1,000 people last year.

Osborn-Senatus adds that the high price and low availability of childcare is also driving more pantry visits, as parents who can’t leave children home alone are prevented from working full time.

The pantry has hired new staffers, streamlined some of their processes, and asked for more volunteers to manage the increase in visitors they don’t expect to decline anytime soon. “While our staff has increased by a few, our volunteers we’ve had to increase a lot,” says Osborn-Senatus.

A bit of help could be on the way from Dane County. Dane County Board supervisors and County Executive Joe Parisi announced this month they were backing a resolution to add \$1.7 million to the Farm to Foodbank program. "Right now there's so much need for help with food for so many families," Parisi said in a Nov. 15 news release announcing the resolution.

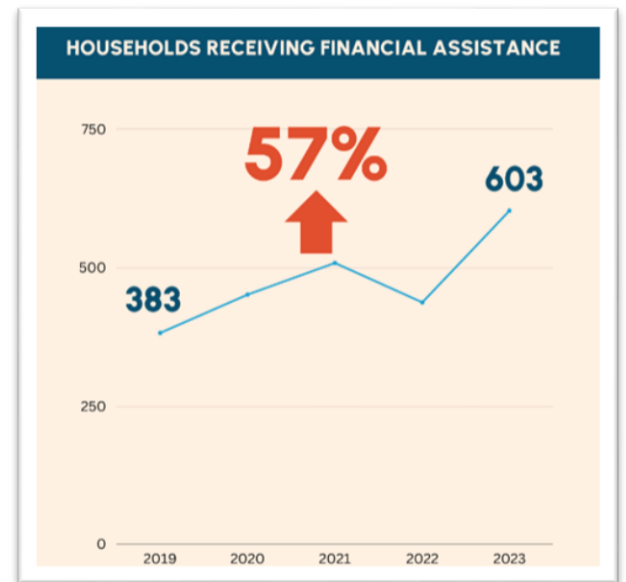
"That funding really will impact us," says Osborn-Senatus. "It means that we can stretch our budget further."

Huber says that WayForward has had to place some soft limits on what visitors can take. "We have never turned anyone away for food. We have a come as you need model," she says. But lately, for certain high-protein foods at the pantry, visitors are restricted to one option per visit.

Jenny Price, communications manager for WayForward, tells *Isthmus* in an email that 10% of children in Dane County are food insecure, citing data from the Wisconsin Food Security Project (foodsecurity.wisc.edu/) at UW-Madison. "That means that on average nearly three kids in every elementary school class don't have reliable access to food," says Price.

November and December are the busiest months for the pantries, but Huber and Osborn-Senatus don't expect the need to die down after the holidays. Huber says organizing community food drives can help increase the variety of food at pantries, and Osborn-Senatus says volunteers have already logged 34,000 hours at The River Food Pantry to date this year.

Says Osborn-Senatus: "Once we're past the holiday, remember that people are still facing hunger."



When everyone has access to key building blocks for stability, we can transform our community into the kind of place we want it to be.



UPPER HOUSE

Gone for Good? Negotiating the Coming Wave of Church Property Transition (Book Launch)

Wed 01.17.24 @ 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM CST



By 2030, as many as 100,000 church buildings and billions of dollars of church-owned property are expected to be sold or repurposed throughout the U.S. — representing the loss of gathering places and even social

services in communities nationwide.

According to Mark Elsdon, author and editor of *Gone for Good: Negotiating the*

Coming Wave of Church Property

Transition (Eerdmans, 2024), the transfer of

church property is both a critical issue and

opportunity for church and community

leaders seeking to serve the common good.

How do we face the issues and opportunities head-on and mission-minded?

Join us for a book launch and

conversation at Upper House

with *Mark Elsdon*, Executive Director of **Pres**

House and Co-Founder and Lead Builder

of **Rooted Good**, who will address the various ways that church properties have been creatively redeployed to serve the common good. Also joining us will be book contributors—

- *Kurt Paulsen* (appearing in person), professor of urban planning in the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture at UW-Madison
- *Joseph Daniels, Jr.* (live via Zoom), lead pastor of the Emory Fellowship in Washington D.C.
- *Coté Soerens* (live via Zoom), social innovator at the Center for Transformative Neighborhoods at Trinity Christian College

If you are a Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor, Facilities Manager for a church, a CFO/Treasurer, or city planning staff, you might be especially interested in this event.

Evening Schedule

- 5:30 PM | Appetizers and Desserts / Doors Open
- 6:00 PM | Program Begins
- 7:30 PM | Program Concludes

In addition to the in-person gathering, we are providing a virtual option. Our hope is that you can be with us for the book launch at Upper House, but if you live out of town or cannot attend in person, you may register for the online option. The live stream will begin at 6:00 PM central time.

Register for this free event at www.upperhouse.org/events

GILDAGRAM



Happy Holidays! We hope that you are having a restorative and joyous holiday season.

Things have stayed busy at Gilda's Club, including at our recent Young Adult Game Night. 57 young adults touched by cancer joined from around the country to spend time with special celebrity guest Melissa Joan Hart.

There is even more rockin' in the new year. We'd love to see you in 2024 at one or more of the events below.

Happy New Year!

Lannia Stenz
Executive Director/CEO

Lindsey Dalton
Development Director

Upcoming Programs- Open to the Public!

We would love for you to join us at these upcoming public events. There is no cost to attend:

- *Jan 9, 2024 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM- Frankly Speaking about Cancer: What Do I Tell the Kids?:* People impacted by cancer and their loved ones are invited to join us as we learn what kids know about this condition at different ages, how to talk about cancer, tips for answering common questions, ways to help children, and additional resources. To register, visit gildasclubmadison.org.
- *Jan 10, 2024 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM- How to Eat for Wellness Without Deprivation:* In this webinar, we will explore the art of mindful eating, learn how to honor hunger and fullness, and create FUN strategies that include meal planning for optimal health. To register, visit gildasclubmadison.org

INVESTING FOR IMPACT IN GUATEMALA

We are pleased to announce that a significant portion of the **Pres House** investment portfolio is now helping provide microfinance funding for the working poor in Latin America, and **the income from that investment is sending students on a service-learning trip to Guatemala in January 2024.**

For many years, **Pres House** has engaged in ESG (environmental, social, and governance) screening on our investment portfolio. Using guidance from the Presbyterian Church, USA Mission Responsibility Through Investment team we have screened out investments in companies that are inconsistent with the values we promote at **Pres House**. In 2023 we have taken this a step further. After a year-long review of our investment policy and financial services partners, the **Pres House** board approved a new investment policy that balances the long-term sustainability of **Pres House** with funding for program growth while being even more intentional about the impact of our investment decisions in the world around us.

As part of this process we moved approximately 12% of our invested assets, or \$300,000, into an active impact investment with Working Capital for Community Needs (WCCN), a Madison-based microfinance fund that supports more than 22,000 families throughout Latin America. WCCN was started 35 years ago by church-affiliated individuals in the Madison area who were interested in supporting the people of Nicaragua. Since then WCCN has grown to work with individuals and families in 10 countries in Latin America. Investment funds from **Pres House** and more than 500 other investors and donors provide life-changing loans for people who have limited access to credit. These borrowers, two thirds of whom are women, use their financing to start and grow small businesses. As they pay back their loans, investors like **Pres House** receive our funds back with a small amount of interest income.

We will be using this income to help fund a Break with a Purpose trip to Guatemala for 10 college students in January 2024. During this immersive trip, students will learn first-hand how microfinance can empower people and families to transform their lives through small business generation and see **Pres House** investment funds directly at work; gain an appreciation of Mayan culture; learn about the educational system; and have conversations about wealth and poverty, impact investing, migration, and religion.



PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR AND
PLAN TO BRING A FRIEND AND JOIN US!

**CHURCH WOMEN UNITED
HUMAN RIGHTS DAY CELEBRATION
2024**

**Friday, January 5, 2024, 9:30 a.m.
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
2019 Fisher Street
Madison WI 53713**

**Enjoy a morning of fellowship with
other women from
Madison-area congregations,
including prayer, song,
and a short program.**

**This year's theme is
ACT JUSTLY
*Matthew 5:9***

**Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God. (NIV)**

**Human Rights Day focuses on the
theme "*all human beings are born free
and equal in dignity and rights.*"**

All are welcome and there is no fee.

The Healthy and Faithful Climate Corner



Responsible Salt Use

Winter Salting

As temperatures drop and ice starts to form on sidewalks and parking lots, learn how to use salt responsibly with tips from Wisconsin Salt Wise (wisaltwise.com). It only takes one teaspoon of salt to pollute up to 5 gallons of water. Minimize this impact with proper salt usage.

Considerations and strategies for treatment of ice:

- Shovel before the snow turns to ice.
The more snow that's removed, less salt is needed.
- If you determine that salt is required, consider limiting the amount used. Just a coffee mug of salt is enough to treat a 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares.
- Sweep excess salt from walkways and parking lots once ice is melted to reduce salt going into the storm drains and waterways.
- If the temperature is under 15 degrees, salt won't work; consider switching to sand for traction.
- Hire a snow/ice removal contractor that is certified through the City of Madison's Winter Salt Certification Program or ask your current contractor to consider getting certified.

It only takes **1 teaspoon of salt** to pollute 5 gallons of water to a level that is toxic for freshwater ecosystems. We can all work together to use the **right amount** of salt!

Winter allows us time to envision what we may want to consider regarding our gardens and lawns and plan ahead. Here's a start!

HOMEGROWN NATIONAL PARK

<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>

In the past, we have asked one thing of our gardens: that they be pretty. Now they have to support life, sequester carbon, feed pollinators and manage water. ~ Doug Tallamy, co-founder of Homegrown National Park (HNP)

Our birds, butterflies, bugs and other species require our consideration and HNP can move us in the right direction. Select plant, tree and shrub species can have a very positive impact in our yards and gardens by being host plants.

What's good to know about Homegrown National Park?

- HNP is an initiative of Dave Tallamy (*Nature's Best Hope, The Nature of Oaks, Bringing Nature Home*)
- HNP informs us about restoring biodiversity and natural habitats in OUR own backyards and helping spread the awareness of this grassroots project to contribute to a solution to the biodiversity issue.
- We join people in the US and Canada who plant native species and document the plants on a map to create the Homegrown National Park!
- By doing the simple act of planting natives in the ground or in a container, we regenerate biodiversity one plant and person at a time.

<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/keystone-container-gardening/>

HNP focuses on **Keystone Plants**, which are good choices for biodiversity and provide a critical source of food and/or shelter for a large number of other species. One study found that 90% of all caterpillar diversity is centered around just 14% of plant species. While the main contributors are tree species, shrubs and wildflowers can also play an important role with their sheer numbers and variety. The five heavy-lifters among trees are the oaks, willows, cherries (and other prunus species), pines, and poplars. Here in the Midwest, goldenrods and wild sunflowers are important keystone plants that together support caterpillars of over well over 100 different species of butterflies and moths.

https://hgnp.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/HNP-CONTAINER-GDN-L.2_8.2s.pdf

The same can be said for **Keystone Trees and Shrubs**.

Keystone trees and shrubs are the cornerstones of a thriving ecosystem! Planting one oak tree is an investment that provides habitat and sustenance for thousands of species for hundreds of years. A PDF of each list is linked beneath the map of the corresponding ecoregion. Please remember to log your container plants on the HNP Biodiversity MAP. Every square foot counts! Follow the link and then click on the map for more trees and shrubs.

<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/keystone-trees-and-shrubs/>

Prairie Nursery in Westfield (<https://www.prairienursery.com/>) and Two Ferns (<https://www.twofernsmadison.com/>) here in Madison are excellent sources for plants and information.

Submitted by Wendy Weber

DALE HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

5501 University Ave.

Madison, Wisconsin 53705

JANUARY CALENDAR

- 07 Sunday Worship/communion
- 09 Property and Finance meeting 7:00 – 8:30 pm
- 10 Choir rehearsal 7:30 pm
- 13 Family Breakfast – 8:00 am
- 14 Sunday Worship / Congregational meeting
- 21 Sunday worship
- 28 Sunday worship

Liturgists

- January 07 Wendy Weber
- January 14 Verena Straubhaar
- January 21 Melanie Klump
- January 28 Carey Fleischmann