



FOCUS

November 2024

Daleheightschurch.org

....

Dale Heights Staff

Pastor:
(vacant)

Treasurer:
Wendy Weber

Music Director
Alissa Freeman

Accounts Manager:
Dawn Westhoff

Office Manager:
Deb Hughes

Custodians:
Felipe Ruiz
& Lily Fabella

Grounds Keeper:
Brian Lorey

Session Members

Acting Moderator:
Kristin Frederich

Clerk:
June Zeeh

June Zeeh (2024)
Wendy Weber (2024)
Verena Straubhaar (2025)
Gerry Klump (2025)
Edi Chan (2026)
Gale Oakes (2026)

Happiness and thankfulness

Happiness is not found in acquiring “more,” but in being more thankful for what we’ve already been given.

Life is full of ups and downs, and all are susceptible to these checkered experiences. In whatever circumstances of life we find ourselves, we must show gratitude to God for his benevolence.

God exhorts us to give thanks in all circumstances, not because he needs to hear “thank you,” but because God knows that thankfulness changes the trajectory of our hearts. However, the human tendency is to look at everything we don’t have and demand “more” to be happy – when, ironically, happiness is not found in acquiring *more* but in being *more* thankful for what we’ve already been given.

We can set a good example for others by saying “thank you” sincerely and often. There are countless opportunities every day to express gratitude – thanking the restaurant server, the grocery store cashier, the bank teller.

Finally let us understand that thankfulness is not a weed that grows on its own; it’s more like a plant that must be cultivated... and God will bless our efforts.

“In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Excerpted from an essay by Emmanuel O. Afolabi in the Presbyterian Outlook



Breakfast

The Dale Heights monthly breakfast will be held on:

Saturday
November 9, 2024.

Serving will begin at 8:30 am.
The suggested donation is \$4.

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

NOVEMBER

Birthdays

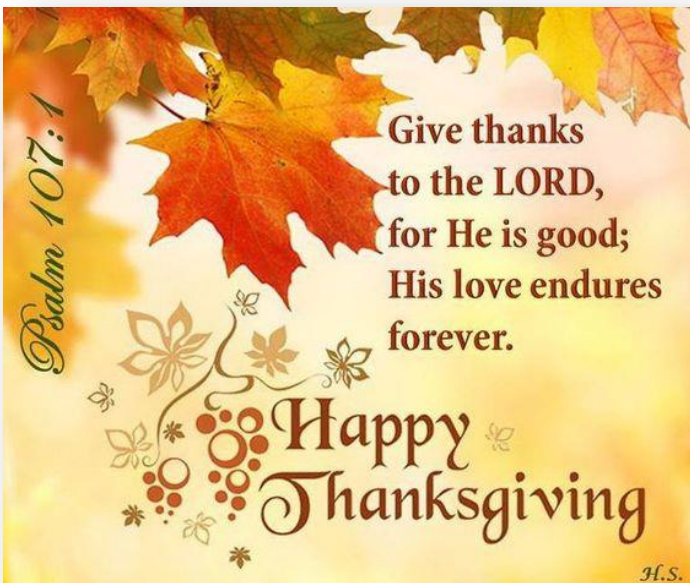
- 15 Brad Harris
- 16 Ian Rogers
- 30 Abigail Rogers



The Westside Warblers will be warbling on **Saturday, November 16 at 11 a.m. in the lounge.** All are welcome!

Church Office Hours:

9:30 am -1:30 pm
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.



The deadline for article submissions for the December issue of the FOCUS is November 25.



Several sign-up sheets are available on the table in the concourse!

- Sunday morning Coffee Hour
- Poinsettias for the Sanctuary
- Advent Readers Needed

Thanks for your consideration!

JOHN KNOX PRESBYTERY MEETING *Zoom & In-Person*



John Knox Presbytery is a community of communities: centered in Jesus Christ, linked to one another, and boldly responding to the Spirit's call to join God's mission.

Presbyterian Church of West Salem
625 W. Franklin St., West Salem, WI 54669

NOVEMBER | 19TH | 2024

www.jknox.org

Meeting Call

In accordance with the Form of Government, G-3.0304, and the Presbytery Bylaws I.F.1., the Stated Clerk issues a call for the Stated Meeting of John Knox Presbytery to be held on **Tuesday, 19 November 2024**, beginning at 9:30 a.m., held by Zoom and at:

**Presbyterian Church of West Salem
625 W. Franklin St.
West Salem, WI 54669
608-786-0910**

This is a hybrid meeting. Advance registration is required, even for those attending in person or requesting to be noted as absent with notice. For those attending by Zoom, registration is required to receive the invitation to the meeting.

[View the Full Meeting Call Here](#)

Project Regeneration

An overview of **PROJECT REGENERATION** was discussed at a meeting following worship services on Sunday, September 15. The **reasons** for undertaking this process and an **outline** of the steps involved were discussed.

Our **timeline** was reviewed as follows:

2023:

- May 2 Received brochure. Distributed information.
- May 13 Session meeting discussion of interest. Asked to get more info.
- June 29 Phone call with Rev. Kyle Nolan.
- July 1 Session meeting discussion and decision to pursue.
- July 6 Contact with Rev. Kyle Nolan, Ministry Relations Officer with Presbyterian Foundation Project Regeneration. Told we would like to participate.
- July 10 Contact with Paul Grier, Vice President of Project Regeneration. Fiscal Reviewer and Analyst.
- August 1 Meeting with Kyle Nolan, Paul Grier, Pastor Roberts and Gerry Klump. Materials to be completed for analysis received and information gathering begins.
- August 7 Requested materials and information sent to Paul.
- September 15 Preliminary report from Paul sent to Pastor Roberts and Gerry.
- October 25 Meeting with Kyle Nolan.
- November 22 Zoom meeting with Kyle, Paul, Pastor Roberts and Gerry.
- November 24 Final assessment report received and distributed to Committee.

2024:

- February 27 Meeting with Committee and Kyle of God's calling.
- April 3 Zoom meeting with Kyle and Committee. Paul Grier gave formal presentation of final report.
- April 3 We were assigned "The Sailboat Church" book for 40 days of contemplation.
- May 28 Meeting with Kyle and Committee. Discussion of the 40 days for any discernment. Review of potential options.
- July 7 Zoom meeting with Committee and Dave King from Presbytery Small Church Task force.

Project Regeneration

Materials and information to be compiled included:

- Church organizational structure and leadership.
- Church financial statements for 3 years for Profit and Loss, Balance Sheet of Assets and Liabilities, and Budgets. Any changes over last 5 years.
- Demographics of age of members.
- What was church's peak membership and what was the year.
- Church attendance records.
- Anonymous giving records for 2022 by individuals by age.
- Results of last large Capital Campaigns. Ex. Parking lot and central space.
- Membership history.
- Giving and spending assessments. Any changes in last 5 years.
- How are Stewardship Campaigns run.
- Who has access to giving information.
- Is tithing encouraged?
- Age and square footage of church building and property. Developed and undeveloped.
- Building usage detail by organizations.
- How many worship spaces.
- Any zoning or restrictive covenants.
- Estimated cost of deferred maintenance.
- Audits and financial reviews copies.
- Did the church receive any COVID-19 related funds. Amounts? Forgiveness?
- COVID-19 dates of in-person worship suspension and date of restart.
- Was any remote worship done during suspension and if so what and how.

We reviewed a report from the Presbyterian Foundation called **Summary Analysis of Giving and Spending for 2022**. Report results included:

- Average age of Presbyterians is 68.
- PCUSA Church membership is down 50% in last 15 years , but only 11% of churches closed or merged.
- Our 20 year track record shows a 50% reduction in size. This makes it difficult to recover successfully.
- Clean Financials.
- Faculty and staff from University are city economic drivers. We don't have much membership from there.

Project Regeneration

- Deficit is concerning.
- Worship ratio is good. (Attendance vs, membership)
- 90% of members and attendees are giving, **but** over half are giving at low levels. Median giving is \$516. That is under a healthy median of \$750.
- Our campus cost is \$4,500 per month and we are receiving \$1,500 per month.
- Programming expense is very low. **Average for growth is 15%. We are at 6%.**

Options were discussed:

#1-Age in Place

- Do nothing significantly different. Extend life until funds run out.
- Cut expenses as much as possible. Put off expenses like maintenance until no choice but to do repairs.
- Use pulpit supply or lay preachers instead of hiring pastor.
- Share a pastor if available for small cost reduction.
- Significant increase in contribution from Sah Lang or new renter.

#2-Reinvention of Ministry

- Target new congregational audience and revised ministry. (Can require lots of energy and financial resources)

#3-Share Campus

- Similar to what we are doing with Sah Lang. Can be other congregation or charitable organizations. (Can require energy and financial resources. May require giving up dominance.)

#4-Sell Campus

- Can sell and become renter in our current space.
- Can sell and relocate using proceeds for smaller space elsewhere.
- Can sell and use proceeds to fund outreach and other missions while congregation members find new churches. **Dissolution.**
(We own the building and property but Presbytery has to give approval for any sale or mortgaging of the property.)

#5-Merger

- Join with 2 or more congregations to become a new congregation. (High energy needed and challenging. Can be PC(USA) or other.)

Project Regeneration

#6-Congregational Death and Restart

-Go dark for a period of time to reassess leadership, format, ministry approach, etc..
Reopen as something new and different. (High energy and high financial resources.)

#7-Sell part of property and retain current building.

-Is really just a stopgap for Option #1 that frees up cash for longer life.

#8-Go all in with Fulltime Pastor

-Money would run out much faster (3-4 years) but hope that it would lead to new energy, revitalization and member increases to pay for itself and cover current deficit.

What's Next

- **Read *The Sailboat Church* and do 40 days of prayer - 15 minutes a day asking what God is calling Dale Heights Church to be.**
- **Do the 40 days of prayer questions on own timeframe and ask same question.**
- **Think of the information provided and consider options and thoughts you have.**
- **Write down thoughts, ideas and questions for the membership to all consider.**
- **Meet again as members and discuss the thoughts and options we have.**
- **Help make that decision of what Dale Heights Church is to be in the future.**

Click [here](#) to review the full presentation with additional details.



Spotlight on

Pulpit Supply Pastor Brenda Moten

I was raised in the Baptist tradition and have been active in church all my life. As an adult, my faith journey has been across and through various denominations. I am passionate about biblical studies and theology and have devoted my life to studying and serving in these areas.

I started my educational journey of biblical studies as can be expected at home and in church, Sunday school, vacation bible school, summer bible camp, and competitive bible games with my siblings. Because of my quest to “know” more, I continued my studies through correspondence courses (Back to the Bible, Moody Bible Institute, and various others). Although I am an auto-didactic learner, I sometimes need a directed and organized approach to learning (to keep me focused and not follow breadcrumbs and get lost along a rabbit trail). That is how I received my Th.D. from North Central Theological Seminary in 2016.

My studies continue as I am currently enrolled in Dubuque Theological Seminary with my cohorts in Madison Learning Center. Not sure what God has in store for me NEXT, but whatever it is, God continues to prepare me.

I worked for 35 years in corporate for various business units, from engineering to accounting, at Caterpillar Inc. in Peoria, IL. My educational background in mathematics (BA- Grambling State University), organizational management (MA- UoP), project management, information security and management for the 21st century, and psychology (Bradley University) all helped me along my professional journey at Caterpillar.

I joined Covenant in 2016 and have had the honor of serving as a ruling elder and member of Adult Education. A widow for almost 15 years, I enjoy talks with my two teenage grandchildren, learning boundaries with my two adult children, long walks with my two dogs, yoga, jazz music, reading, and community service. Today my focus as a Christ-follower is on social justice.

An update on our Winter Wishes program



New ways to share JOY this holiday season

We recently made a difficult decision that we want to share with you because you have been such a strong supporter of Winter Wishes — **we will not be offering our Winter Wishes holiday gift card program this year.**

With the large increase in demand for food and housing in our community, **we need to focus our financial and staff resources on making sure families can stay in their homes and have enough to eat.** As you likely know, visits to our food pantry have tripled over the last two years, as has the amount of money we have to spend on food to keep up with the demand. The number of households that receive financial assistance each year from WayForward has increased by 90% since 2019. **We still need your help** — so please consider directing any support that would normally go to Winter Wishes toward our other programs.

We still have opportunities for you to engage your members in meaningful ways and also share joy this holiday season. This year the opportunities will be focused on food.

HOLIDAY BAKING BASKETS

Put together a basket or box of **shelf-stable and non-perishable essentials** for holiday baking.



All baskets should contain: **flour, white sugar, brown sugar, powdered sugar, baking soda, baking powder, salt, vanilla, and vegetable oil.** Consider personalizing your baking basket with a couple of add-ons such as: decorating sugars or sprinkles in a variety of colors, spices like cinnamon and nutmeg, cocoa powder, baking mixes, canned frosting, food coloring, packets of instant yeast, cookie cutters, oven mitts, spatula, a cookie sheet, or a rolling pin. Have fun and make it festive!

(continued on next page)

*You can also help families have the food they need at the holidays by **making a financial donation** so our food pantry can purchase enough butter, milk, eggs and other perishable items needed for holiday baking and meals.*

HOLIDAY RECIPES

We'll share favorite recipes and stories from both pantry guests and volunteers leading up to the holiday season, along with ways you can donate the ingredients needed to make them. We'll include items on our Amazon Wish List and update you via our email newsletter and social media.

More details to come on how you can help us build community and share traditions and joy with one another!

If you have questions or want to learn more about how you can get involved, contact Community Engagement Manager Jill Bradshaw, jill@wayforwardresources.org or (608) 836-2751.

Thank you for your continued support of our mission!





FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Each day add an item to a box.

After the holidays, donate the items to WayForward Resources to help start the New Year off right for local families.

- December 1 – cereal**
- December 2 – peanut butter**
- December 3 – shampoo**
- December 4 – mac & cheese**
- December 5 – canned fruit**
- December 6 – toothbrushes**
- December 7 – canned tomatoes**
- December 8 – canned chicken**
- December 9 – canned tuna**
- December 10 – squeeze jelly**
- December 11 – canned green beans**
- December 12 – toothpaste**
- December 13 – oatmeal**
- December 14 – pasta**
- December 15 – deodorant**
- December 16 – spaghetti sauce**
- December 17 – rice**
- December 18 – hair brush**
- December 19 – canned corn**
- December 20 – chicken noodle soup**
- December 21 – baby wipes**
- December 22 – canned mixed vegetables**
- December 23 – baby shampoo**
- December 24 – box of crackers**

<https://www.wayforwardresources.org/>

Donations accepted Mon-Fri between 9 am and 4 pm

***Gracious God, please bless the lives and bodies of those receiving these gifts.
May they be nourished by the food and by your love and presence. AMEN***



Can Ancient Christians Teach Us Anything About the Bible?

There is a long-unquestioned assumption that to understand biblical texts, one must first understand the original historical contexts. However, early Christian Bible readers didn't share this assumption and often interpreted biblical texts allegorically. Does this mean that interpretations of the Bible from before the Enlightenment are irrelevant today? In this lecture, Devin will examine how Biblical Scholars are, for the first time in two hundred years, reexamining the "original historical context" assumption, often in conjunction with ancient Christian Bible readers. He'll show, for example, how reading ancient interpretations of Romans solves problems that have eluded modern readers for centuries. Finally, he'll conclude by offering some suggestions for how you, as non-specialists, can read and benefit from ancient Christian exegesis.

This event is NOT at Upper House! Due to a UW-Madison men's Home Basketball Game, we have moved this event to Geneva Campus Church (401 N Blackhawk Ave, Madison, WI 53705).

ABOUT OUR SPEAKER:

Dr. Devin White is a Fellow in Biblical Studies at the Lumen Center. He is also the Associate Pastor of Christian Education at High Point Church in Madison.

[Free Admission](#)

REGISTER

New Host Family Needed for Exchange Student



Hello Dale Heights,

I'm the local coordinator for **Aurel Sopulatu**, a high school exchange student from Indonesia who has been attending Sunday worship at **Dale Heights** since she arrived in the United States in August.

Aurel is in need of a new host family due to a change of circumstances that makes her previous host family unable to continue hosting.

Thank you SO MUCH in advance for any help or ideas, and please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions!

Aurel is a 16-year-old exchange student from Indonesia who is studying at Middleton High School this year. She is the recipient of the [Youth Exchange and Study \(YES\) scholarship](#), a Department of State-sponsored grant for exceptional high school students from countries with a significant Muslim population.

Due to changes in her previous host family's circumstances, Aurel needs to move to a new host family who is able to host her from November until she returns home in June. Because she will continue attending Middleton High School for the remainder of the year, her new host family needs to live in the Middleton attendance area (so that Aurel can take the bus) or be able to provide transportation to school.

Aurel is a cheerful, outgoing, musical, and very helpful person. She is able to live in a home with or without host siblings. She has no dietary restrictions and can live with pets, and she loves children. Aurel attends church at Dale Heights, participates in Madison Youth Choirs and photography club, and is deeply involved in volunteer work in the community.

Host families are volunteers. They provide meals, a bedroom, and a supportive home environment. Families do not need to have high schoolers or even any children living at home in order to host. Exchange students come with health insurance and funds to cover personal expenses including clothes, entertainment, and any school-related fees.

Aurel needs to be in a new placement by mid-November. Please reach out to Parthy if you are interested in hosting Aurel or know someone who might be. Many thanks!!!

Parthy Schachter

Community Representative - Madison, Wisconsin

Direct: 651-235-4504

www.ayusa.org

As people of faith and conscience, we believe elections are a referendum on the values that will shape our future. Voting is how we create a society based on our shared values. That's why *Interfaith Power & Light* updates its multi-issue, nonpartisan Faithful Voter Reflection Guide each election season.



Protecting Our Sacred Earth

Two out of three Americans are worried about climate change, according to a 2023 survey. Our elected leaders have a moral responsibility to take care of our Sacred Earth and respond to the climate crisis.

Protecting our Democracy and Voting Rights

Every American should have the right to cast their vote without barriers and have their voice heard. Any obstacle to voting is a violation of our most sacred values and weakens our democracy.

Loving Our Immigrant Neighbors

Our holy texts repeatedly make clear that immigrants must be treated with dignity. Our challenge as Christians lies in how we welcome the stranger among us, and see Christ in everyone seeking a safe life here.

Building an Economy of Inclusion

Our economic systems should work for all Americans, not just the wealthy. This is a matter of justice and human dignity. Our leaders must promote policies that honor the dignity of work through fair compensation and paid time to care for family, protect social safety nets, and create a just tax system.

Pursuing Restorative, Racial, and Environment Justice: We must hold accountable our elected officials who choose to look away from the racial bias leading to harm to communities of color and communities on the frontlines of racism, poverty, and pollution.

Respecting the Dignity of LGBTQ+ People: Our elected leaders should ensure LGBTQ+ people are protected from all forms of discrimination.

Creating a More Peaceful and Just World: If we want peace, we must also work for justice here and around the world. However, many leaders have stoked fear that leads to misplaced priorities and disproportionate funding for the US military budget.

The full guide is available [here](https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org).

[Interfaithpowerandlight.org](https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org)

4 reasons to hold off on fall garden cleanup

There is still an annual debate about when you should clean up your garden and the answer is that you should do what's best for you. But there are **some compelling reasons** to sit tight until spring to clean up your garden.

1. SUPPORT FOR YOUR GARDEN'S ECOSYSTEM

Letting plants stand for winter provides a host of benefits for the critters that you share your garden with (whether you realize they are there or not). Birds forage from seed-heads, mammals find shelter, and insects hole up in nooks and crannies, or hollow stems. A thriving ecosystem is a boon for any garden, not to mention the environment in general.



Allium 'Millennium' holds up all winter with golden yellow, hollow stems that are friendly to overwintering insects.

2. BEAUTIFUL WINTER INTEREST

"Dead" plants can be beautiful. Shades of yellow and brown that catch the sun just so accent textures that rise above dull, dormant lawns or snow. Snow sits on seed heads like adorable little caps. OK, maybe that's all a little romantic, but if you've ever toiled through a long, bleak winter, you know that anything that makes the gray outdoors a little bit more interesting is a good thing. Your plants are up for the job.



Those same alliums look even better with a bit of frosting-like snow.

3. YOUR PLANTS WILL THANK YOU

Snow is an excellent insulator, and anytime there is a big shift in temperatures in winter, plants fare much better with a blanket of snow protecting them from those extremes.

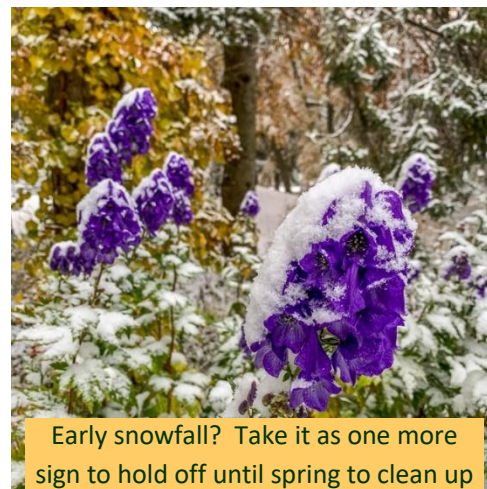
Standing plant material helps snow collect around the crown of a plant—the most delicate part—and adds extra protection on the root zone. And when temperatures start warming, that snow melts and provides a nice drink for plants.



Ornamental grasses like this Calamagrostis 'Karl Foerster' offer all the benefit of other plants left to stand over winter, with the addition of movement.

4. IT'S EASIER

Embrace your inner lazy gardener and take the easy way out by cleaning up in spring. There's less plant material to clean up in spring as some has been dealt with by animals or already broken down into a state that doesn't need cleaning up. The plant material that is left tends to be light, crispy and brittle so it can simply be broken off and should it need to be moved, it's much lighter than it was in spring. You can leave the wheelbarrow parked behind the garage if you employ the "chop and drop" method in which you simply chop the standing material up into pieces and let it lie where it lands.



Early snowfall? Take it as one more sign to hold off until spring to clean up the garden.

From a functional standpoint, it's a perfect mulch, returning nutrients right back to where they came from, covering the soil around plants. It lacks a bit in the aesthetics department, but since it breaks down quickly it doesn't take long for the garden to look perfectly tidy again, especially as new foliage covers the worst bits.

There's no law that says you have to choose the same strategy for your entire garden. You can do a thorough cleanup on any parts of the garden that immediately border a walkway or patio that will need to be shoveled when the snow flies. If there are plants that have flopped over in an unappealing fashion, go ahead and give them the chop in fall.

So plant some bulbs, pick some apples or carve some pumpkins. Enjoy autumn without stressing over having to clean up the garden.



A gardener, writer and video creator, Erin Schanen is the fairly impatient person behind The Impatient Gardener, a trusted source of information and inspiration for hundreds of thousands of gardeners. Erin's down-to-earth approach, in which she shares successes and failures along with a healthy dose of inspiration and a bit of humor through videos, blog posts and social media, is a hit with gardeners. <https://www.theimpatientgardener.com/>

DALE HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

5501 University Ave.

Madison, Wisconsin 53705

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

- 03 Sunday Worship
- 05 Election Day
- 06 Choir practice 7:15pm
- 09 Church breakfast 8:30 am
- 10 Sunday Worship
- 11 Veterans Day
- 12 Property & Finance
- 13 Choir practice 7:15pm
- 16 Westside Warblers 11am
- 17 Sunday Worship
- 20 Choir practice 7:15pm
- 24 Sunday Worship
- 28 Thanksgiving Day



Liturgists

- November 3: Jim Fleischmann
- November 10: Edi Chan
- November 17: Barb Fleishman
- November 24: Carey Fleischmann