



FOCUS

December 2024

Daleheightschurch.org

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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)

Trust in the Lord and Be Hopeful

For many, this past year has been one of challenges. And even for the most blessed of us, there have been lows that we did not expect. The year will soon be in our past, and for many, that will not come a moment too soon.

If you are struggling, if you feel you are walking a hopeless path during this Christmas season, have hope. Cast your gaze toward Jesus and put your trust in him.

Remember that God loves you and can bring hope into any situation.

The very essence of the Christmas season is one of hope and renewal. Jesus died on the cross for our sins, so that we may experience salvation.

That promise of salvation brings hope into even the direst of situations. God loved us so much that he gave us his only son. With the knowledge of that love comes hope.

During this season of celebration and reflection, remember Jeremiah 29:11: “ ‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord. **‘Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.’**”

As we celebrate this Christmas season, open your heart to the hope that Jesus Christ can give to your life.

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.

Psalm 62:5

December

Breakfast

The Dale Heights monthly breakfast will be held on:

Saturday
December 14, 2024.

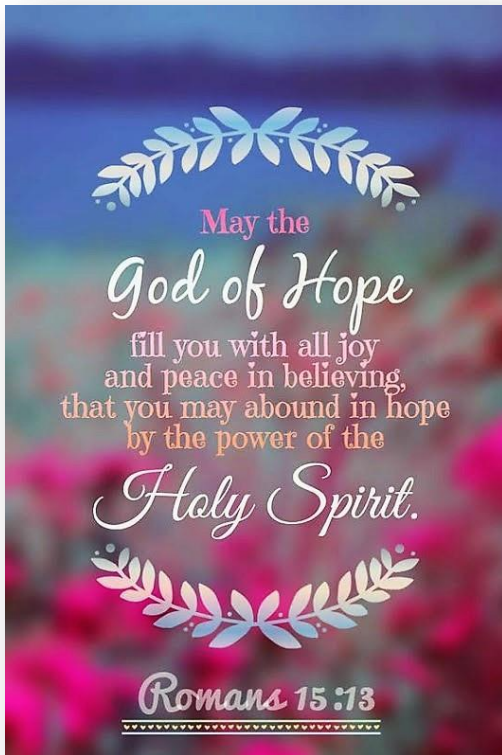
Serving will begin at 8:30 am.
The suggested donation is \$4.

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

December

Birthdays

- 13 Verena Straubhaar
- 18 Jamie Engebregtsen
- 25 Dick Corey
- 29 Alexander Brown
- 29 Caroline Pope



*The deadline for article submissions for the
January issue of the FOCUS is December 23, 2024.*

Church Office Hours:
9:30-1:30
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.



Spotlight on

Pulpit Supply Pastor Melissa Schmidt

Melissa Schmidt is a lifelong Presbyterian. She is a farmer's daughter, the oldest of five children, and originally from southwest Michigan. After she received her B.A. from Hope College, Holland, MI, she married her college sweetheart, JR. They both moved here to attend UW-Madison for graduate school and are both thankful to still call the Madison area home.

Melissa is an active lawyer mom of three energetic boys, Jacob, Andrew, and Noah. She is a non-partisan attorney for the State of Wisconsin. When she is not at work, she is supporting her boys in their swimming, scouting, band, orchestra, Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra (WYSO), theater, and any other activity that pops up that moment.

Melissa has been serving on pulpit supply since 2023 and is a candidate with the John Knox Presbytery for being a Commissioned Ruling Elder. She is a student at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (UDTS), pursuing her M.Div. She began her seminary journey through UDTS's Madison Learning Community initiative. She is a Sunday School teacher and is an active member at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Madison.

Melissa loves Jesus and preaches the Good News that he is still doing great things whenever and wherever she can.



Spotlight on

Pulpit Supply Pastor Mark Elsdon

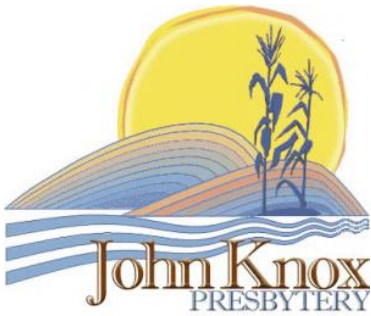
Mark is currently Temporary Co-Director and Outgoing Executive Director at Pres House where he has served as the Executive Director for the past 20 years. He is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

In addition to his role at Pres House, Mark is also Co-Founder & Lead Builder at RootedGood, which helps institutions and social entrepreneurs succeed by providing tools, training, and experiences that help create more good in the world.

Mark is the editor of *Gone for Good? Negotiating the Coming Wave of Church Property Transition* which offers inspiration and practical help for churches and municipalities responding to the national wave of sale and repurposing of church property; and the author of *We Aren't Broke: Uncovering Hidden Resources for Mission and Ministry*, about the use of faith-based property and investments for social enterprise and impact investing.

Mark has a B.A. in Psychology from UC Berkeley, a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, and an M.B.A. from the University of Wisconsin School of Business. Born in the Midwest to immigrants from England, Mark has also lived in the southern, western, and eastern parts of the United States.

Mark is an avid cyclist and considers it a good year when he rides more miles on his bike than he drives in his car. He is married to Rev. Erica Liu — they have two kids together.



Gathering & Thanksgiving – A Recap of November's Presbytery Meeting

The November 19 meeting of the John Knox Presbytery, graciously hosted by the Presbyterian Church of West Salem, was a day filled with gratitude, reflection, and fellowship. Here's a look at the many reasons we gave thanks during this special gathering:

Loving One Another

Breakout discussions during worship focused on the theme of loving one another, sparking meaningful conversations about how we live out this commandment in our shared ministry.

A Time for Worship and Remembrance

Worship included moments of profound thanksgiving and reflection as we celebrated the lives of those in the presbytery that have passed on through the Necrology. Their lives continue to inspire and guide our journey of faith.

Celebrating Dedication and Leadership

With hearts full of gratitude, we honored the retirement of Rev. Scott Anderson. His years of faithful service have left a lasting impact on the Presbytery and beyond.

Fellowship Over a Thanksgiving Feast

Volunteers from the Presbyterian Church of West Salem prepared a delicious Thanksgiving meal. This act of hospitality reminded us of the joy in coming together as a community.

Looking to the Future

In a spirit of collaboration and anticipation, we voted on amendments to the constitution and welcomed new committee members for 2025, expressing gratitude for those stepping into leadership roles.

The day was a beautiful blend of thanksgiving for the past, joy in the present, and hope for the future. As we move forward, may we continue to embrace gratitude for the ways God is at work among us.

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.

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!





Food and housing are the basic building blocks of stability. When we work together, we can build a strong community where everyone has food to eat and a warm place to sleep.

WayForward served over 13,000 people last year - twice as many as the year before and the most ever in our history.

Jenna had always ensured that she and her son had the basics covered - a safe place to sleep, enough food and funds to cover medical appointments, clothes and other essentials. Then last year, her apartment rent rose beyond what she could afford. The stability she had worked so hard to maintain disappeared and the little family suddenly found themselves homeless. "I was afraid, devastated, and demoralized," Jenna said. She temporarily moved back in with her parents, but the situation was not sustainable. Unsure how to move forward, she felt like she didn't have any options.

That's when Jenna learned about WayForward. She began visiting the food pantry, relieving the stress of knowing where their next meal would come from. She found free clothes for her son at the Clothing Center. Meanwhile, Jenna enrolled in one of WayForward's housing programs which provided rental assistance as well as case management to keep her and her son in stable housing and avoid a return to homelessness. "With my case manager's help, I was able to secure a two-bedroom apartment this year in a safe and beautiful part of town!" Jenna said. Jenna is also preparing for the future, "I have taken classes to help me budget wisely and learn to manage my money so when I have to pay rent alone next year, I will be able to do so with confidence," she said. Jenna is no longer afraid for the future. Instead, she sees a path forward filled with possibilities.

We are seeing more first-time visitors like Jenna. In fact, half of people who visited our food pantry last year were coming for the first time.

Our programs work.

98% of families who use our housing services are still stably housed one year later. On a busy day, nearly 1,000 people access food from our pantry.

A record number of families are struggling right now to access basic necessities. Community support makes successes like Jenna's possible.

Give today to build a strong community.

GIVE TODAY

SHOP AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

HOLIDAY art at FCI MARKET

Saturday, December 7: 10am to 5pm Sunday, December 8: 10am to 3pm

Popular Gift To-Go Boxes stocked with gift cards & goodies are back, along with many free door prizes, make and take gift tags, and the popular Plinko game

More than 50 vendors: pottery, jewelry, woodworking, artwork, upcycled products, chocolates, children's books, cooking & kitchen items ReMitts and much more

SHOP HERE:
Food Concepts Inc.
2551 Parmenter Street
Middleton

Proceeds help provide local food and housing programs.

WayForward resources wayforwardresources.org/events

Mark Your Calendars to Shop for a Cause

Join us at **Holiday Art Market** which will take place at Food Concepts, Inc, 2551 Parmenter Street in Middleton on **Saturday, December 7 from 10 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 8 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.** Here are some ways to have fun while making a difference:

- 1. Shop at over 50 local vendor booths** knowing that your purchases will help people in our community have enough food and stay in their homes this holiday season. **At least 20% of all sales are donated back to WayForward.**
- 2. Purchase one - or several - Gift-To-Go Boxes.** These fun boxes, sold exclusively at Holiday Art Market, are stuffed with gift cards, gadgets, gizmos, trinkets, and holiday treats.
- 3. Pick up a pair of ReMitts. 100% of sales of these colorful, warm mittens goes back to WayForward.**
- 4. Grab a snack.** Lots of delicious baked goods are for sale at the Holiday Cafe with **proceeds benefitting WayForward.**
- 5. Win a door prize.** We have lots of options available!
- 6. Visit Santa.** Santa and his elf will be in attendance on Saturday from 12-2:30 p.m.

The fun doesn't end there! There will also be a station to make gift tags, a free Plinko game with prizes and other holiday fun. Invite others to share the fun.



39th Annual Holiday Blood Drive

Tuesday, Dec. 24 | 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Exhibition Hall at the Alliant Energy Center
1919 Alliant Energy Center Way
Madison, WI 53713



Come chill with us! Donate blood Dec. 16-Jan. 3 for an exclusive American Red Cross long-sleeved T-shirt, while supplies last! Donors will also be treated to special snacks and refreshments, free parking and entertainment!*

Schedule your appointment today!

RedCrossBlood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS

Blood Donor App | Sponsor Code: **HBDMadison**



*Offer applicable to presenting donors only during the following dates: 12/16/2024-01/03/2025. Sizes are limited and while supplies last. Offer subject to availability of donation opportunities in presenting donor's area. No substitutions and not transferable by presenting donor. Not redeemable for cash. *Offer applicable to presenting donors only during the following date(s) 12/24/2024 and while supplies last. Offer subject to availability of donation opportunities in presenting donor's area. No substitutions and not transferable by presenting donor. Not redeemable for cash. © The American National Red Cross | 2024- APL-2692 | 200101-22-RW

Go Green for the Holidays

From chestnuts roasting over open fires (spewing fine particulate matter) and brightly wrapped presents (adorned with paper from virgin rainforest trees), holiday practices aren't always green.

4 Ways to Put an Eco-Twist on Tradition

1. **HOLIDAY LIGHTS** -- LED holiday lights use up to 80 percent less energy than incandescent lights, and they'll last longer, so they're worth the splurge.
2. **DECORATIONS** -- Rather than buying new decorations, scour thrift shops and garage sales, as well as places like Craigslist.com or Freecycle.org for used ornaments and holiday decor.
3. **CARDS** -- If you can, send e-cards to save resources and shipping impacts. Otherwise, send cards made from 100-percent post-consumer recycled content.
4. **GIFT WRAP** -- Much of the holiday waste we generate comes from gift wrap and ribbons, which are often made from virgin-pulp paper and are generally used only once. Even worse, plastic ribbons and shiny foil giftwrap are rarely recyclable. Save resources by choosing sustainable wrappings when you do buy presents, from reusable tins to used boxes wrapped in newspaper comics. Another option: reusable shopping bags—especially great for nudging friends and family who don't already take their own bags to the store.

May your celebrations be filled with love, laughter, and all things green.

Here's to less tinsel and more joy!



DALE HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

5501 University Ave.

Madison, Wisconsin 53705



DECEMBER CALENDAR

01	Sunday Worship
04	Choir practice 7:15pm
08	Sunday Worship
10	Property & Finance
11	Choir practice 7:15pm
14	Church breakfast 8:30am
15	Sunday Worship / Session Meeting
18	Choir practice 7:15pm
22	Sunday Worship
24	Christmas Eve Service
29	Sunday Worship



Liturgists / Advent Readers

December 1:	Marcia Holman / Gale Oakes
December 8:	Melanie Klump / Marcia Holman
December 15:	Janice Krall / Otty Schaefer
December 22:	Barb Fleishman for both
December 29:	Otty Schaefer