



FOCUS

December 2025

Daleheightschurch.org

God With Us

Dale Heights Staff

Pastor:
Pulpit Supply

Treasurer:
Wendy Weber

Music Director
Dr. Alissa Freeman

Accounts Manager:
Dawn Westhoff

Office Manager:
Deb Hughes

Custodians:
Felipe Ruiz
& Lily Fabella

Grounds Keeper:
Jaime Bucholtz

Session Members

Acting Moderator:
Kristin Frederich

Clerk:
Gale Oakes

Verena Straubhaar (2025)

Gerry Klump (2025)

Edi Chan (2026)

Gale Oakes (2026)

Barb Fleishman (2027)

Wendy Weber (2027)

Although Christmas is a time of joy for many, it can also be a time of sorrow. Some people experience isolation and loneliness in the face of broken relationships or the painful absence of loved ones who have passed away. Others struggle with the financial demands they feel in this season.

Still, we find great joy at Christmastime when we consider its true meaning, **“God with us.”**

Throughout the Bible, God demonstrates love for all people. Jesus Christ’s birth, life, and death show humanity the true nature and depth of God’s love in sending Jesus to be **“God with us.”**

Jesus understands our hopes, joys, fears, pains, and struggles because he was born among us. While particular circumstances may seem cause for despair, Christmas reminds us that God loved us enough to send Jesus Christ to save us and that he is still present with us.

*Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel . . . **God with us.***

- Matthew 1:23 (KJV)



Adapted from an essay by Jonathan Emerson-Pierce for the Upper Room



Breakfast

The Dale Heights monthly breakfast will be held on:

Saturday
December 13, 2025.

Serving will begin at 8:30 am.
The suggested donation is \$5.

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

December

Birthdays

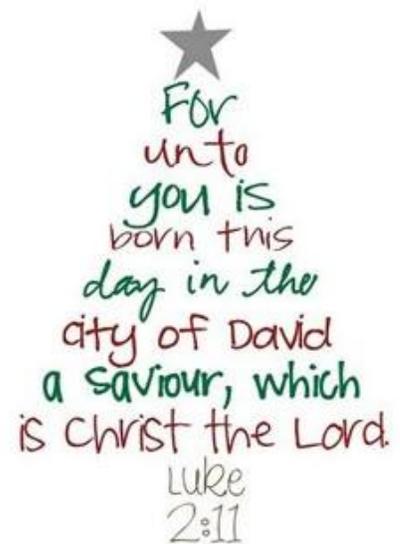
- 13 Verena Straubhaar
- 18 Jamie Engebregtsen
- 29 Alexzander Brown
- 29 Caroline Pope



The Westside Warblers will be warbling on **Saturday, December 20 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 January issue of the FOCUS is December 29, 2025.



Blue Christmas Service

Saturday, December 13 at 2 p.m.

For many, the holiday season is not only a time of joy but also a season that carries grief, loneliness, or longing. A **Blue** Christmas service offers sacred space for those who find the celebrations difficult—whether because of loss, illness, strained relationships, or the weight of the world’s sorrows.

In the quiet of Advent, we gather to acknowledge our pain before God, trusting the promise that Christ’s light shines even in the deepest night.

This **ecumenical service** brings together people from different traditions to share in prayer, scripture, and music that speak honestly of lament while holding fast to hope.

Candles are lit as signs of remembrance and resilience, and the community bears witness to one another’s burdens. Together, we proclaim that Emmanuel—God with us—comes not only for the merry and bright, but for all who yearn for healing and peace.

Blue Christmas is not about denying joy, but about widening the circle of compassion. It is a reminder that Jesus meets us in our vulnerability, offering comfort and strength. In this gathering, we honor both sorrow and faith, creating space for God’s tender presence to bring rest to weary hearts and light to those who walk in shadow.

December 2025

Outreach News and Information

Outreach Budget Disbursements

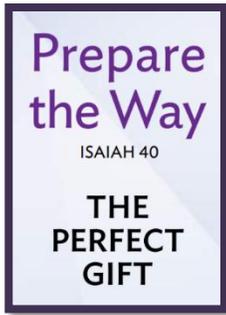
Our Outreach funds have not yet been dispersed, so there is still time for Dale Heights membership to suggest organizations or initiatives to receive Outreach funds to do their important work.

Please consider this request for input and contact any of our Outreach Committee members to offer your thoughts and suggestions:

- Edi Chan
- Jamie Engebregtsen
- Barbara Fleishman
- Gale Oakes
- Wendy Weber.

Thank you!





Christmas Joy Advent Offering 2025

November 30 – December 21

The prophet Isaiah gives those listening to him a very particular task to **prepare the way** for the coming Messiah, the person we know as Jesus. Isaiah proclaims that to prepare the way is to make highways easily navigable, fill in valleys, flatten hills, level the ground, make the earth smooth. Then, and only then, will God’s glory be revealed, and this will cause all humanity to see that God has spoken to us. Your gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering combine with gifts from thousands of congregations throughout our denomination to do our part to repair the world and to ensure our siblings have the tools they need to flourish. Your gifts **prepare the way** for the God we know in Jesus Christ, the child whose birth we celebrate.

THE PERFECT GIFT

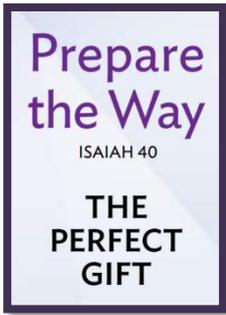
OUR GIFTS AT WORK:

SUPPORTING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE LEADERS

The Christmas Joy Offering honors the faithfulness of current and retired church workers and their families in need. Thanks in part to support from this Offering, church workers can receive critical financial assistance to support them through life’s challenging circumstances. These generous actions bear witness to our faithful response to God’s charge to love one another as Christ commanded.

- ♥ \$1.1 million of gifts from the 2024 Offering are being used to provide critical financial support and grants for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their times of need.
- ♥ Income supplements from the BOP helped nearly 261 individual recipients, assisting retired church workers and surviving spouses with the means to provide for themselves.
- ♥ Housing supplements from the BOP helped more than 1,366 individual recipients remain in their homes, afford assisted living, or long-term care.
- ♥ Emergency Assistance Grants from the BOP helped more than 199 individual recipients facing times of great financial need or uncertainty due to unforeseen circumstances.

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Christmas Joy Advent Offering 2025

PREPARING THE WAY FOR FUTURE LEADERS

The PC(USA), with its historic commitment to higher learning, has long promoted education and leadership development through the establishment and support of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Our future church leaders of color can receive much-needed assistance while they discover and pursue their professional goals at these schools and colleges. Your gifts allow these ministries to continue — sustaining a tradition Presbyterians have carried out for nearly 140 years.

More than \$800,000 of gifts from 2024 are being used to provide education and leadership development skills at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Many of the students attending Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color are the first in their families to enroll in higher education.

THE CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING SUPPORTS THESE INSTITUTIONS

Menaul School
Albuquerque, NM
menaulschool.com

- Most diverse private high school in the Albuquerque area. Students from 20-30 countries are represented each year and the majority of students self-report identifying with minority ethnicities.
- Ranked best Christian High School in New Mexico by *Niche* (niche.com)

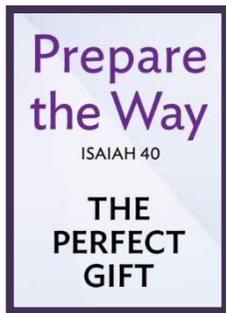
Presbyterian Pan American School, Kingsville, TX
ppas.org

- 100% of graduates are accepted into colleges and universities in their home countries or in the United States
- Welcomes a diverse international student body, with 26 countries represented in the last 25 years

Stillman College
Tuscaloosa, AL
stillman.edu

- Stillman has been selected a College of Distinction since 2019 for Christian Education, Teacher Education, Support of the Military and Veteran Students, Preparing Business Leaders, and Equity and Inclusion (collegesofdistinction.com/school/stillman-college).
- Stillman’s student population is 87% first generation in college.

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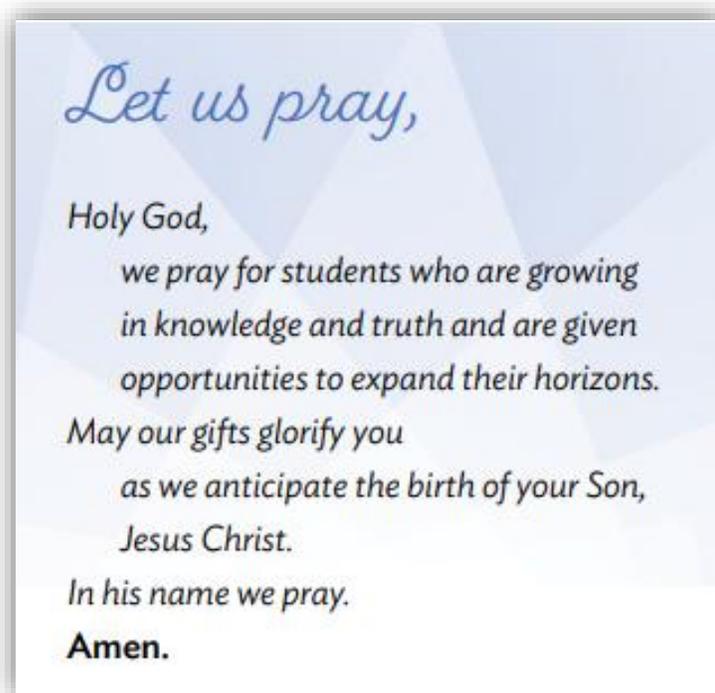
Christmas Joy Advent Offering 2025

What do our Christmas Joy gifts provide? The answer is simple, but very meaningful:

Yes, our gifts do support our past, present and future leaders, as well as prepare the way for future leaders through support for Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. But imagine the joy in those families where a young person and her or his family learn about the gift of the educational possibilities available through this special offering otherwise not available. What we give is money well spent and invaluable to the recipients.

Christmas Joy envelopes can be found in the pews.

Every gift may it be \$1 or more affects and makes a difference to someone.



Donations to Food Pantries

We as people of faith are concerned with food stability. To be food secure, a population, household or individual must have access to adequate and nutritious food at all times. We know that food stability may presently be of great concern for many (and that may include us at Dale Heights), Children, elderly people and those who lack the means to have basic needs met are at risk of losing access. We can help and it is beneficial to our society as a whole. Ensuring social equity regarding food satisfies human needs for children, the elderly and more, which benefits society.

With that said, here's another timely and well-received gift idea to promote sustainability...

With the holidays approaching you may once again hear, "Don't buy me anything!" or maybe, "I don't want a thing!" Now may be just the time to connect the need around food security and a desire to buy a gift or do something for someone!

Please consider giving a donation to one of the following or other organizations in memory of, or in honor of someone. This is a very timely and important gift to those who may now truly find themselves in need of assistance. It's easy and probably the most impactful gift you could give!

- ♥ WayForward in Middleton www.wayforwardresources.org
- ♥ The River Food Pantry www.riverfoodpantry.org
- ♥ Badger Prairie Needs Network www.bpnn.org
- ♥ Second Harvest www.secondharvestsw.org - This organization collects and distributes food more cheaply for and through a network of partner agencies like the above three pantries.
- ♥ Feeding America www.feedingamerica.org. Feeding America is a nonprofit network serving 200 food banks around the United States and Second Harvest is one of those food banks!

**And here's to you for your wonderful generosity!
May all be filled and food secure!**





Leon Bernido's December 2025 Mission Trip to The Philippines

What is there to know about where Leon Bernido is from and why does he go?

The Philippines is a country in Southeast Asia east of Vietnam and northeast of Malaysia and Indonesia. It has a population of about 6 million in an area of 300,000 mi.² As a comparison, Wisconsin is about 65,000 square miles with a population of 112 million.

We often hear about the Philippines in the news because it is highly disaster-prone with regular typhoons, floods, and earthquakes. Imagine life there - the necessary evacuations, destruction, and other effects.

When Leon goes home to the Philippines this time, he will most importantly take his mother's ashes. He will also put his social work, nursing and hospice background to work. Leon has been on many medical missions to his homeland and takes medical supplies, backpacks and toothbrushes. The backpacks are a godsend for children and those people working in the rice fields. The toothbrushes and toothpaste are very important because of the lack of good dental care.

If you would be interested in donating a tooth brush or a small tube of toothpaste you have on hand from the dentist, they would be much appreciated. Or maybe a buck or two toward a backpack or even a **gently** used backpack around the house or available to you is totally acceptable!

Our goal is three backpacks and 40 toothbrushes. One backpack and 15 toothbrushes have already been donated. Please give the items to Wendy and place cash or a check to Roy in an envelope marked with your name and note "for Leon."

Thank you for your consideration!

The Mission and Outreach Committee

SWEETEN THE SEASON

with Holiday Baking Baskets



Donate a basket, bag, or box of shelf-stable holiday baking essentials to the **WayForward** food pantry. Make it festive with wrapping, bows, and bonus items! Scan the QR code for details.



Drop off: Dec 8-Dec 12 (9 am-4 pm)

INGREDIENTS

(include all)

- brown sugar
- white sugar
- baking soda
- baking powder
- vanilla extract
- vegetable oil
- flour
- salt

CONTAINERS

(pick one)

- tote bags
- giftwrapped boxes
- baskets (wicker, wooden, plastic)
- reusable grocery bags

BONUS ITEMS

(optional)

- frosting
- sprinkles
- baking spices
- cookie sheet
- rolling pin
- and much more!

DROP OFF LOCATION
WayForward Resources
3502 Parmenter Street
Middleton, WI

QUESTIONS?
Contact: Jill Bradshaw
jill@wayforwardresources.org
(608) 836-2751





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 – Spices
- December 2 – Cereal
- December 3 – Flour
- December 4 – Sugar
- December 5 – Cooking Oil
- December 6 – Baking Soda
- December 7 – Baking Powder
- December 8 – Coffee
- December 9 – Tostada shells
- December 10 – Snack Items (fruit snacks, granola bars, etc.)
- December 11 – Quick/rolled oats
- December 12 – Condiments (any kind)
- December 13 – Menstrual products (pads)
- December 14 – Toilet paper
- December 15 – Hearty soups
- December 16 – Canned chicken
- December 17 – Canned tuna
- December 18 – Canned corn
- December 19 – Canned green beans
- December 20 – Canned tomatoes
- December 21 – Canned fruit
- December 22 – canned mixed vegetables
- December 23 – Spaghetti sauce
- 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

26 Totally Doable 2026 New Year's Resolutions

There is something so appealing about having a fresh, new year stretching out before you. It's a clean mental slate! An opportunity to get organized! A chance to better yourself with shiny, new goals! At least, that's how it feels on January 1, but by the time March rolls around (or sooner), our resolve can begin to fade. So, how do we set challenging and achievable New Year's resolutions? We keep it simple and powerful.

Here are four simple and powerful Christian New Year's resolutions.

1. Start your day with a [life-giving Bible verse](#).
2. Shop local when you can. It's an easy way to support your community.
3. As you leave the house each day, [ask God](#) to guide your thoughts, your words, and your steps.
4. Set a daily reminder on your phone to take a moment to pray for someone.

These are just a few options! You can find more at
<https://finds.life.church/2023-new-years-resolutions/>



DALE HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

5501 University Ave.

Madison, Wisconsin 53705

DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 04 Choir practice 12:30p
- 07 Worship – K. Owens – *Communion*
- 09 Property & Finance 7p
- 11 Choir practice 12:30p
- 13 Church Breakfast 8:30a
Blue Christmas 2p
- 14 Worship – M. Schmidt
Called Congregational Meeting
- 18 Choir practice 12:30p
- 20 Westside Warblers
- 21 Worship – K. Owens
Session
- 24 **7p: Christmas Eve service** – K. Owens
- 28 Lessons & Carols
- 30 Choir practice 12:30p

Liturgists

- December 7: Janice Krall
- December 14: Barb Fleishman
- December 21: Roy Lembcke
- December 28: Gerry Klump

