

Jacob's Ladder

4K/PRESCHOOL/DAYCARE



AMY NELSON

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It's a busy time of year with spring break behind us, and we are now looking ahead to the remainder of the year, while also beginning preparations for the next school year. Registration is in full swing for our preschool program. Space is still available in our Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 3 ½ year old class that meets from 12:45-3:15pm. Spread the word!

4K online registration begins on Monday, April 8th. Check out the district website: School District of River Falls - Preschool Screening (rfsd.k12.wi.us) for more information regarding required screening.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions, I am more than happy to help you navigate the process.



NOISY OFFERING

April 7

Children will be collecting loose change for Ezekiel's Relay for Life Team during the offering on the date above. Please remember to bring your loose change (and bills)!



MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE!



FLOWERS LUMINARIA



BUTTERFLIES

\$5 each



Will be sold between services on April 7 in Fellowship Hall.



Team Ezekiel is preparing a Gift Card Tree for the silent auction at the April 12 Relay for Life event.

We are asking for donations of gift cards of any amount for River Falls area merchants. Purchasing gift cards from E3 is an option. Bring the gift cards to the Relay for Life table on April 7 or drop them off in the church office.

In addition, anyone may create their own basket for the silent auction.



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



CONNECTIONS

April 2024

Vol. 5 Issue 4

A PUBLICATION OF EZEKIEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, RIVER FALLS, WI
Pastor Steve Dow



Celebrating 10 Years...

Matthew Mitchell joined the staff at Ezekiel in 2014 as the Contemporary Worship Director. He has encouraged our youth to be part of the team to lead worship. In addition, he has given several messages and led Sunday services over the years. Matthew shares his faith through the gift of music.

Retiring at the end of April...

Barb Kuss became the custodian here in May of 2021. She does a great job of keeping the church nice and clean. Her bright smile and friendly disposition make it a joy to be around her. When asked about her time as an employee here, she said, "It's so wonderful to be part of the team."



Retiring at the end of May...

Sandy Tauferner, our Relational Ministry Coordinator, joined Ezekiel's staff on August 28, 2017. "The Holy Spirit brought me to this job, and it is a gift and a joy to work at Ezekiel." Sandy has been instrumental in welcoming people to our congregation, promoting caring for God's creation, and working to help people make connections with each other.



Just Sing

Presented by
The Pierce County Ecumenical Choir

Ezekiel Lutheran Church
Sunday, April 28 at 3:00 PM

Refreshments following concert.

Free Will Offering

A portion of the proceeds will be donated to local charities.

PASTOR



PASTOR STEVE DOW

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Jesus Christ is the living and abiding Word of God. By the power of the Spirit, this very Word of God, which is Jesus Christ, is read in the Scriptures, proclaimed in preaching, announced in the forgiveness of sins, eaten and drunk in the Holy Communion, and encountered in the bodily presence of the Christian community. By the power of the Spirit active in Holy Baptism, this Word washes a people to be Christ's own Body in the world. We have called this gift of Word and Sacrament by the name "the means of grace." The living heart of all these means is the presence of Jesus Christ through the power of the Spirit as the gift of God.

—from **The Use of the Means of Grace**, Principle 1

During the Lenten season, a group of us has been studying the document, *The Use of the Means of Grace*. I believe that those gathered had been enriched by the study and enriched by the conversation and questions that are asked during the sessions. Even though Lent is over, we will still have a couple more sessions in April to finish the document. You are welcome to join us for these final sessions and you can watch each session on Ezekiel's YouTube channel.

In worship, God promises to meet us through the means of grace. As you reflect on the paragraph from the document, notice how everything we do in worship is meant to help us experience God's grace not only in that moment but in our lives as well.

You've heard me talk about community and relationship and when we participate in the means of grace, we build and strengthen our relationship with God and one another. This strengthening of relationship builds our community as well. It is, if you will, weightbearing exercise for the body of Christ. Like weightbearing exercise, worship is meant to improve our balance, strengthen our stride, deepen our breathing, and tone our body for service in this world.

This is why we call liturgy the "work of the people." When we gather for worship, there is work to do and amid this work God not only promises to meet us, but God promises to lavish on us God's grace. I do believe that the people who have joined in the class will approach worship in a new way. I invite you to be open to the ways God is reaching out to you in worship and the ways that God is working to build up this body that we call Ezekiel.

THE BOX SCORE

General Fund: February 2024	
Revenue:	\$ 54,706
Expenses:	\$ 40,542
Difference:	\$ 14,164
General Fund Year to Date:	
Revenue:	\$115,662
Expenses:	\$ 87,605
Difference:	\$ 28,057
MMM Appeal	
1 year Capital Campaign for Mortgage, Mission, & Ministry	
Keep the Light ON! – Gifts thru Feb	\$ 53,216
Pledged over 1 year:	\$126,804
Amount Needed for Goal	\$140,000
Ezekiel Mortgage Balance:	\$331,792

Sunday School/Children/Families MINISTRIES



MARCI NORUM

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Ezekiel had 18 youth plus their guardians take part in the First Communion class with Pastor Steve. They met again to make chalices which they used on Maundy



Thursday to receive their First Communion. Thank you to Patti Graf-Rudesill for supplying the materials, guiding us, and firing our chalices.

First Communion is only one faith milestone for Ezekiel's youth. A faith milestone is similar to a map of faith development or a rite of passage. The first is when we are baptized. As our youth get older, we continue their faith development with different milestones: Introduction to Church, Table Prayers, Bible, Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments, etc. Our youth continues their faith journey throughout middle and high school.

Thank you to Dot Seebach for making beautiful cushions for our bench that we use in our playroom (a.k.a. nursery). We appreciate her service and dedication to Ezekiel.



Lastly, thank you to the members of Ezekiel who take time to encourage, pray, and visit with our youth. It truly helps our youth feel a part of this church community.

Relational MINISTRY



SANDY TAUFERNER

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EARTH FEST 2024

SATURDAY, APRIL 20
UW-RIVER FALLS UNIVERSITY CENTER

12-4
PM

ALL ARE WELCOME
FREE!
Family-Friendly

Activities
Entertainment
Sustainability Fair
Giveaways
Food Sampling
Electric Vehicles, Tools, & Rebates

Teen and Young Adult MINISTRIES



ALLISON KLEIN

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I was recently asked the question, 'What do I tell my young person when they ask why they need to go to church on Sundays or Wednesdays?' Luckily, this came in an email, so I had some time to reflect on my response. My suggestion to the adult was to share what brings them to church throughout the week. Personally, I know my grandma attends church for the music, my mother for community, and my father for the message of Christ's resurrection.

Opening a dialogue about why we are here can help young people understand why their trusted adults go to a place that many deem 'uncool' or 'too traditional.' Now, I'm not saying we need to invest in a light show and smoke machine because these will make young people feel at home, but having a conversation about why you as an adult attend is important.

We should not have higher expectations of our young people simply because 'it's something you need to do.' Often, we think that young people need to acolyte because 'that's the way things have always been,' and although this may be true in recent history, I fear that is not enough of a response for our young people. We have raised younger generations to be critical thinkers and evaluate the purpose of where they spend their time. What if we shared with young people our 'why' and had a conversation about where they see themselves fitting in (or possibly even growing and transforming our space to reflect the unique needs of our changing population)?

There are a variety of reasons why we gather in this space, many of which are rooted in scripture. Psalm 102:22 calls us to corporate worship. Acts 2:46 speaks to the reasons to gather and break bread together. Psalms 33:3 calls us to gather to praise God with instruments, new songs, and loud shouts. Instead of expressing frustration when young people question us, I encourage *us* to reflect on what brings us to church.

Help Wanted: Full Time Custodian

Ezekiel Lutheran Church in River Falls, WI is seeking a full-time custodian (30-35 hours per week). Work hours are flexible and vary depending facility use and seasons. Work performed would include general cleaning of our church facility, our preschool classrooms and restrooms, and child care area, along with some light maintenance. High school diploma or equivalent required. Candidate must have knowledge of standard cleaning procedures, chemicals, cleaning products, and equipment. Must be able to stand, climb, walk, bend, and operate medium weight equipment. Must pass background check. Must be able to read and understand labels and instructions, particularly on the use and application of cleaning chemicals and products. The right candidate must be able to interact positively with all staff, church members, and the community. Some prorated benefits may be available.

Please contact Steve Devine-Jelinski, Business Administrator for application or more information. sjelinski@ezekiellutheran.org Phone: 715-629-5431