

December 2023

GRACE NEWSLETTER

Ministers: All God's People!

Grace Mission Statement:

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.



Finish Strong

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.” - Hebrews 12:1-2a

We at Grace United Methodist Church are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses who founded this church, shared the good news of Jesus Christ and reached out to all of us over time. Just like them we are called to run the race with perseverance that they and Jesus Christ marked out for us. We are called to fix our eyes on Jesus.

I invite you to finish this year strong, to continue the work we have begun and to move into next year with the hope of Jesus Christ in our hearts.

For me this means to continue deeply in prayer for our church and our community, trusting in God's amazing grace. It means to keep inviting others to the joy we are experiencing in the rebirth of our church. It means to continue living deeply in grace as we reach out together and meet the needs of the children in our community, those who are food insecure, and those who have been marginalized in society and those who are in pain because of life experiences. It means to give our resources from our hearts to fulfill the ministries and mission of our church so that it has a strong foundation for the future.

I invite you to FINISH 2023 STRONG. Help us be on solid financial ground as we end 2023 and begin 2024. We are a stable church and we are paying all our bills because we have been very careful in what we spend. We do have hopes of expanding our ministries in 2024, of being a safe place where everyone can experience God's forgiving grace, where we all can grow deeper in our faith and go farther in our service of Jesus Christ and where we continue to live what we believe with our actions in mission.

Thank you for the honor of being your pastor, of praying for you and being a part of Grace reborn in Christ.

Pastor Barrie

“Unrelenting Grace” Advent Study hosted by Pastor Barrie and

led by Bishop Kennetha

Pastor Barrie will be hosting a group/class at the church to watch and discuss the Bishop’s Advent Study on Tuesdays November 28th, December 5th, December 12th, and December 19th. We will gather in the Fireside Room at 6:45 to be ready for the live online presentation from Bishop Kennetha at 7:00 PM. We will have our own discussion as a part of her presentation. We anticipate being finished each evening between 8:15 and 8:30 PM.

There will be people from across Iowa participating online. If you cannot attend, you can view it from your home by registering on the Conference website. We have copies of the book, Unrelenting Grace, by Bishop Ken Carter, available in the office.

Advent and Christmas at Grace

Numerous activities and experiences are offered to each of us as we prepare to receive the gift of Jesus on Christmas Day.

Advent includes the four Sundays prior to Christmas, starting on December 3rd. Each Sunday a candle will be lit, making the world brighter as Christmas nears.

On December 3rd, Grace Church will host singers from our community as they sing carols and share readings from the Scriptures at 3 PM. This is always a meaningful way to prepare for Christmas.

Our Christmas Eve service will be on Sunday, December 24th, at 4 PM. Come prepared to sing and participate in the traditional candle lighting. (Following the service, if you provided a poinsettia, you may take it home with you.)

December 31st is the fifth Sunday of the month which means we have a hymn sing prior to the worship time. That Sunday, come at 9 AM., ready to sing any Christmas songs that haven’t been done this season.

On New Year's Eve, the Chapel will be open from 4 PM to 6 PM for prayer, meditation, and contemplation. Light a candle for those in your prayers, those who are in need, and in thankfulness for the blessings you’ve received.



Following, there will be a movie night. The featured film will be *Polar Express*. All are invited. Bring appetizers and snacks to share.



CATCH THE SPIRIT

Catch the Spirit Broadcast on KICD costs \$70 per Sunday. Your donations to pay for our radio ministry are very much appreciated.



SMU AIRING

SMU airing of previous Sunday worship: Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM & Thursdays @ 10:00 AM



Menu

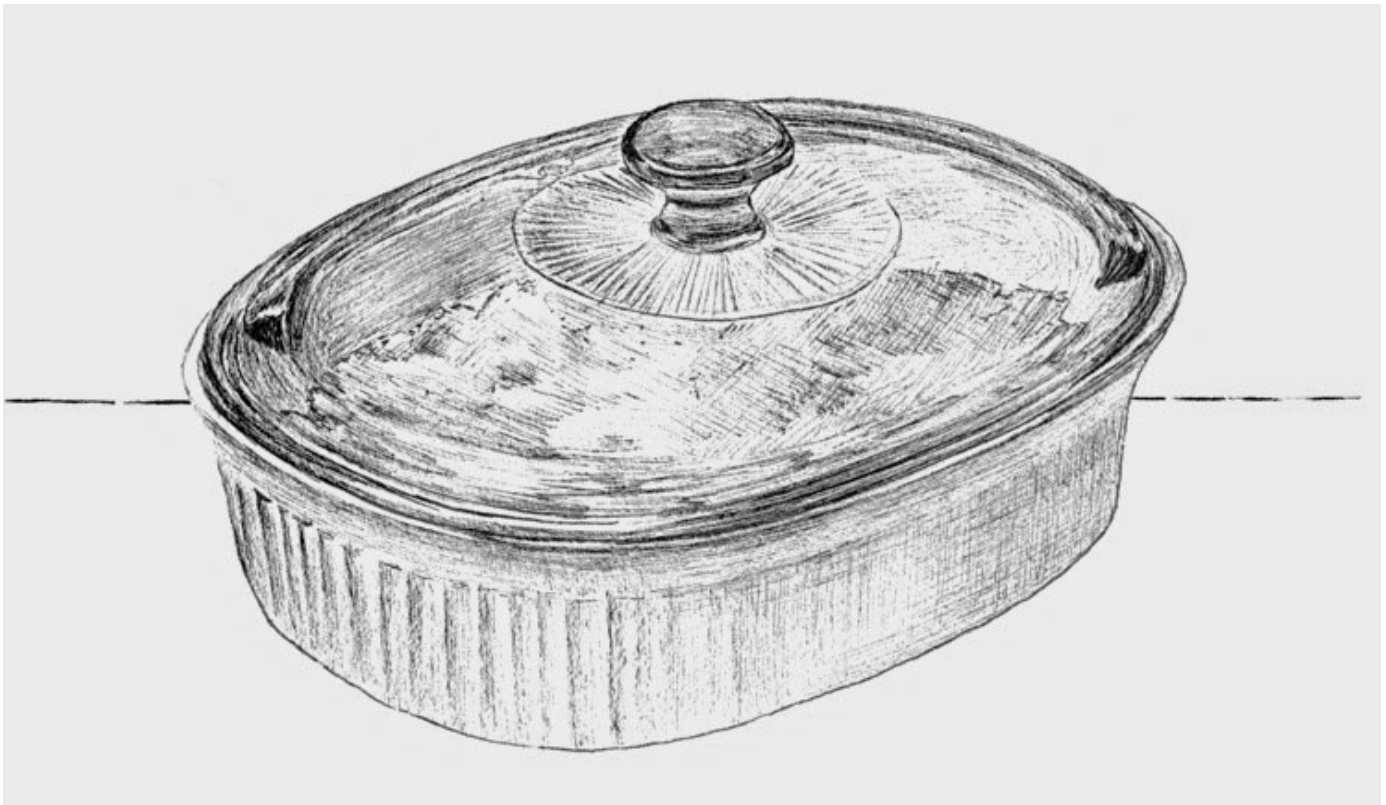
For Wednesday Nights @ GUMC

December 6-Chicken & Dressing Casserole, assorted salads, dessert (Grace Cares committee)

December 13-Baked potato bar or tacos, salad, dessert (United Methodist Men)

December 20-TBD (Alison Herman)

No meals December 27, 2023 or January 3, 2024)



CHICKEN-RICE CASSEROLE

FURNISHED BY SHIRLEY SPANGLER

2 cups cubed, cooked chicken breast

½ cups chopped celery

2 tablespoons chopped onion

2 tablespoons chopped green pepper

¼ cups slivered almonds

¾ cups mayonnaise

½ cups raw white rice

1 can cream of chicken soup

1 can water

1 can sliced water chestnuts

Mix all ingredients in a 2-quart casserole. Bake, covered, for ½ hour @ 350 degrees. Remove cover and bake until liquid has cooked down, about ½ hour. Cover top of casserole with buttered corn flake crumbs and bake 10 minutes.

To make crumbs, melt 1 or 2 tablespoons butter or margarine in a microwave safe dish. Add 1 cup of crumbs; stir and sprinkle on casserole.

Dear Grace UMC,

Your words of encouragement and gratitude through letters and cards, acts of service, balloons and treats, joining us for movie night and a hymn sing during October's Pastor and spouse appreciation month have been a tremendous testimony regarding the love you have for your church, each other, and us. It is a heart-warming and humbling experience to be here and to be in ministry with you. We truly have felt appreciated and loved.

"Every time we think of you, we thank God for you. Day and night you're in our prayers as we call to mind your work of faith, your labor of love, and your patience of hope in following our Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Thess. 1: 2-3 The Message

At the same time, we can't do what we do without you. It takes all of us together to make a difference in a hurting and broken world. Therefore, we give thanks to you for your willingness to step up when asked, to volunteer in love, for your hope and patience as we join God in what God is doing through Grace UMC and in the community of Spencer. We believe that God truly is doing a new thing as we Grow in Grace. Thank you again for all the love you have shown to us as well as for all that you do and are.

Blessings,

Pastor Barrie and Kae



Let the star of Bethlehem shine brightly in our hearts!
May the birth of baby Jesus bring us joy, love, hope and peace!

Merry Christmas!

December, 2023, UWFaith Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 12:4 (NIV) "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them."

Peterson UWFaith Invite: The United Women in Faith of the Peterson United Methodist Church at 103 East Third Street invite the ladies of our church to their Christmas Tea on Saturday, December 2nd. The program begins at 2:00 PM, and you can arrive early to view the beautifully decorated tables. Guests are welcome to bring a friend and even bring more friends! The invitation is on our UWFaith bulletin board near the church office door.

Spencer-Grace UWFaith Next Meeting: Guests are welcome! Our next meeting is Thursday, December 7th @ 1:30 PM in the BenTena Room which includes singing Christmas carols and enjoying some Christmas goodies along with some healthy finger food provided by our members. An item on our December agenda will be the disbursement of our 2023 gifts to selected missions. Our 2024 UWFaith programs will be distributed at the December 7th meeting as well. Here are the dates of our 2024 meetings. Please put these dates on your new 2024 calendar as you are reading this article. Our usual time to start is 1:30 PM in the BenTena Room.

February 1st, Thursday

April 4th, Thursday

June 6th, Thursday

August 1st, Thursday

October 3rd, Thursday

December 5th, Thursday

Prayer Shawl Ministry: The Decorating Committee placed six stickers randomly on the little candy baskets at each place setting for the luncheon at the Annual Camp Clear Lake District Officers Meeting. The six women with the stickers received a prayer shawl to take home. Below is a story how one prayer shawl made a difference. Julie Nelson, the UWFaith Iowa Conference Secretary and a member of the Ruthven UMC, was one winner who received a prayer shawl and delivered her prayer shawl to a UWFaith member. Julie sent our UWFaith unit an email with the following information:

UWF continued..

“Sharon is a member of our Ruthven UWFaith. She is fighting cancer and is pictured here at the Infusion Center, Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha. This is the prayer shawl I received when Grace hosted the Annual UWFaith Meeting in Spencer. Our unit wrapped the shawl around our beloved Sharon at a recent meeting. We read the prayer card that was attached to the shawl. Sharon was very appreciative to receive it, especially the prayers for recovery. What a wonderful ministry. Please share the photo with your unit, especially with the ladies working directly with the prayer shawls. Sharon asked me to forward it to you. Also note the head piece that Sharon is wearing. Beth Ford, a Ruthven UWFaith member, sews these head pieces for patients who lose their hair when taking chemotherapy. Blessings , Julie Nelson”

The picture that is referenced in this article is attached to the Grace Notes bulletin board.

Thank you to those making prayer shawls!

Trustees Committee Update

The Trustees seem to have experienced a quiet month recently. After a long wait with many hoops to jump through, we are now in the midst of remodeling the bathrooms at the west end of the building. At the time of this writing, the projected completion date remains two months from the start of demolition. As many of you are aware, the metal roof over Fellowship Hall has developed a leak. Dan, our maintenance guy, has been diligent about chasing it down. We think the problem is now under control, but won't be absolutely sure until the next rain. In conclusion, the lights work, the heat works, the piano works, the snow removal guy is hired, the remodeling is underway and the roof projects are done for now. Praise God!

-Gary Small, Trustees Chair

Weighted Works With Love

Weighted Works With Love has completed another successful year of making weighted items. We hope that the many recipients are experiencing the benefits weighted items can offer. The ladies are resting their machines during the month of December. They will resume sewing the 4th Tuesday of January. However, if you are in need of an item before that, please call. We are glad to check our inventory to see if we have an item that will fill your need. We also would be glad to take your order for next year and we can help you select fabrics in advance. Brownie Small (712) 262-7420 or Sue Hitchcock (712) 262-7604 look forward to hearing from you. See you in December!

-Brownie Small, WWWL

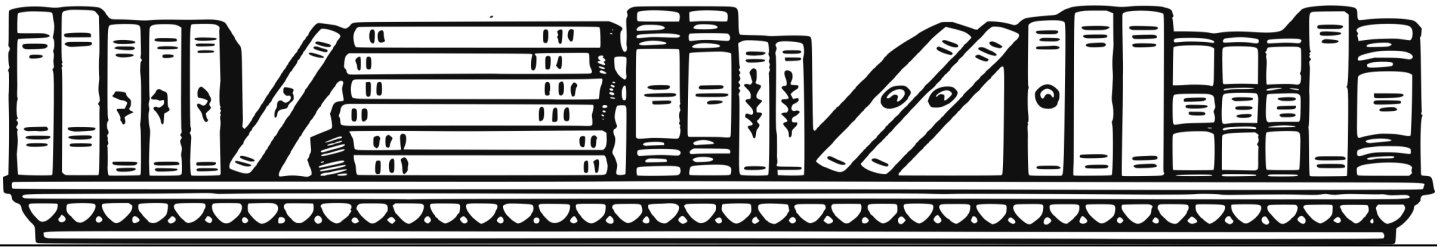
UNITED METHODIST MEN

The next meeting for United Methodist Men will be December 9th, 2023, at 8:00 AM.

The speaker, Rev. Dr. Barrie Tritle, will share the story of Christ's birth.

Everyone is invited to join us for breakfast at 8:00 AM in the BenTena room.

ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US.



LIBRARY

The winter season is a great time to curl up with a good book. Your church library has been recently sorted and organized with sections of Christian fiction, biographies, Bible resources, and many children's books. There is also a section of United Women in Faith recommended reading books that anyone can check out. Stop by and pick up a book or two to expand your knowledge or just enjoy.

RightNow Media

Every person in our church can access Biblically-based videos on topics like marriage, parenting, youth, recovery, leadership, finances and much more. These videos stream anytime and from anywhere. Text the code SGUMC to 49775. Download the FREE APP and get started.



The Grace Cares Team wishes the
Grace United Methodist Church family a
safe, warm, inspiring and blessed Christmas season.

Volunteer Missions Opportunities at Grace

The Shopping Cart for JumpStart was filled to the brim with paper products for the month of November. Jamie got us organized and the Wednesday coffee group made fast work of placing all the items in the bags and ready for delivery on November 16. We are going to collect soup for the month of December. A new grocery list is available at the cart and will be listed in the newsletter as well. Please drop off your purchases in the cart whenever you have them purchased. We will be packing the items for JumpStart on Wednesday, December 13th. Thank you for helping to serve the 120 Head Start families. Your generosity embraces the Matthew 25 ministry. Our December Grocery List includes Bear Creek Soup Mix, Peanut Butter (regular size), Saltines, and Canned Fruit (15 oz).

The Missions Committee applied for a Matthew 25 Grant for monies to assist with our JumpStart project. We are pleased to announce that we have received \$2726 to be used for this endeavor. Thank you Matthew 25 Grant Committee.

Volunteers Wanted; Johnson School has teachers interested in recruiting volunteers for about one hour a week to read to a student or to perhaps have lunch with them. The hours this service is needed vary. One teacher could use help any day 8:10 AM or 10-11 AM. One other could use help 8:30-10 AM, 10:30-11:15 AM, 12:45-2 PM and 2:45-3:15 PM. One more needs help certain days 11:55 AM-12:35 PM. Principal Mrs. McGuire indicates that the “teachers are willing to accommodate the volunteers and are excited to have this opportunity.” If any of these times would work for you, please call Brownie Small at (712) 262-7420 for more details.

Loom Project -Sleep Mats: Several people have enjoyed learning about weaving on the looms, how to flatten and fold the bags, how to cut the bags into strips and how to make “twofers or plarn”. So far there are 15 mats completed and two more in the works. We have many containers with cut strips waiting to be turned into twofers and several bags ready for cutting into strips. We plan to dispense the mats locally and send others back to Jefferson for distribution. Thank you to those who have taken the time to help with this on-going ministry. Any questions? Sue Hitchcock can be reached at (712) 262-7604.

Diaper Tree Project: The Missions Committee is looking to build a Diaper Tree of packages of disposable diapers. These diapers will be donated to Birthright who can provide diapers to families who need them, including families whose circumstances do not meet the income guidelines for UDMO. We'll need your help as we construct a diaper tree. So shop for a package of diapers and help us “grow” our tree in the month of December.

-Brownie Small, Missions Chair

The Tensions of Christmas

As we move into December, I have a sense that we, as Christians, may feel caught between what seems to be conflicting festivities: 1) a secular, commercial celebration full of material, tangible things appealing to our physical senses, and 2) one of intangible, relational, spiritual values that cherishes relationships and conveys a sense of meaning in life.

While it seems that these two images are in conflict, I think that most of us actually hold them in tension; trying to strike a healthy balance between them. Much of the unhealthy stress and conflict during the Christmas season comes from our expectations and perceptions regarding what we think Christmas should be like rather than what it really is. From the Advent hymn of Charles Wesley:

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free.

From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.

I sense that we really do want Jesus to be present with us, to be released from the fear of the unknown, to be forgiven of our mistakes and faults, and to become healed and whole. We want to rest in the arms of Jesus, loved and accepted for who we really are. Unfortunately, the world looks at the tangible, visible and material things to prove that we are loved and accepted.

This advent I invite you to intentionally look at the events and activities that you do.

- Do they add meaning and joy to the season?
- Is the activity something that is important to you?
- What happenings, people, and/or events make Christmas meaningful for you?
- What are the essentials of Christmas?

A survey by J. Robinson and J. Staeheli (Unplug the Christmas Machine) discovered that many of us really want our Christmas celebrations to reflect *a relaxed and loving time with family, with reasonable and realistic gifts, and reliable and meaningful family traditions*.

How might you alter your usual activities to reflect a celebration that is more healthful for you and your family? What might you do to counter-act the commercialism that seems to surround us? How might you focus on the intangible and relational aspects of our celebrations? There aren't any easy answers and you may not be able to change anything this year. I encourage you to wrestle with the possibilities and discuss changes with your family for this Christmas and/or for next year.

What has come into being in Him was Life and the Life was the Light of all people.

(John 1:3b-4 RSV)

I invite you to experience Jesus' hope, peace, joy, and love as you find more health-full ways to focus on the spiritual gifts of the season. May you have a blessed and meaningful Christmas as you gaze upon the Christ-child; Immanuel, God with us!

Kae Tritle, RN

Community Faith Nurse



Festival of Choirs will be performing at Grace United Methodist Church on Sunday, December 3, 2023, at 7:00 PM. Please come celebrate and support this joyous group of vocals.

December 8th, 2023

12 PM-2 PM

Spencer Hospital, 1200 1st Ave E. Spencer, IA

The Clay County Hunger Coalition, in partnership with the Iowa Hunger Coalition, Iowa Farmers Union, and Iowa Food System Coalition, will be hosting a community meal and roundtable discussion on hunger and food insecurity, specifically challenges in Northwest Iowa. This event is free to attend. Reimbursements for childcare (\$25/child) and compensation for time (\$25 individual/\$50 per family) are available for attendees. Please share with your networks and clients. It is important to invite those with lived experience to share their stories. Thank you!

RSVP by December 4 at bit.ly/spencerroundtable

Questions? iowahungercoalition@gmail.com



Join us for a Hymn Sing prior to the worship service every 5th Sunday of the month.

December 31, 2023

March 31, 2024

June 30, 2024



Thank you to all in our church family who have been doing so many kind and thoughtful things these past few years.

We are truly blessed,

Delores and Bob Barringer.



Kids Day Without Parents

Hey Parents! Spend your day finishing your shopping, have lunch with friends or take in a movie.

Kids ages 2 years, up to 5th grade

Main Event:

- * Inflatables
- * Gingerbread house making
- * Santa & Elves

December 9th, 2023

1:30-4:30/5 PM

Grace United Methodist Church

311 2nd Ave W.

Spencer, IA 51301

Register at (712) 262-5970

Special Hosts:

Spencer Sparks 4-H Club

Chancel Choir & Bell Choir Performances:

December 10-Chancel Choir

December 24 AM-Bells & Chancel Choir

December 24 PM-Bell Choir

December Liturgist Schedule

December 3-Kevin Tlam

December 10-Cyndi O'Hara

December 17-Larry Oswald

December 24-(AM) Crystal Handy

(PM) Bre Small

December 31-Lisa Elliott

Wednesday Night Schedule

5:30 PM Free Meal. (Open to the public)

6:00 PM Grace Kidz (4 years to 5th grade)

6:00 PM Confirmation with Pastor Barrie

-See schedule below

6:30 PM Chancel Choir Practice

7:30 PM Bell Choir Practice

Confirmation Schedule:

December 13

January 10, 31

February 21

March 6

March 21st if a make up day is needed

March 24-Confirmation Sunday

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
December 2023						
3 Worship 9:30 AM Fellowship 10:30 AM Advent Study 10:45 AM Fest. Of Choirs Dress -Rehearsal 1:00 PM Festival of Choirs 7:00 PM	4 Church Council Mtg 6:30 PM	5 Bishop Advent Study Zoom 7 PM Children's Ministry Mtg 6:30 PM	6 Coffee @ Grace 9:30AM Supper 5:30 PM Grace Kidz 6 PM Chancel Choir 6:30 PM Bell Choir 7:30 PM	7 Women In Faith Christmas Tea 1:30 PM	8 Office Closed	9 UMM @ 8 AM Kids Day 1:30-5 PM -FUN for all kids Dinner Church -Christmas Music —5:30 PM—
10 Worship 9:30 AM Fellowship 10:30 AM Advent Study 10:45 AM	11 Trustees Mtg. 6:30 PM	12 Bishop Advent Study Zoom 7 PM	13 Supper 5:30 PM Grace Kidz 6:00 PM Confirmation 6:00 PM Chancel Choir 6:30 PM Bell Choir 7:30 PM	14 Ruth Circle 1:30 PM	15 Office Closed	16 Newsletter Articles DUE to Bri
17 Worship 9:30 AM Fellowship 10:30 AM Advent Study 10:45 AM	18	19 Bishop Advent Study Zoom 7 PM	20 Coffee @ Grace 9:30 AM Supper 5:30 PM Grace Kidz 6:00 PM Chancel Choir 6:30 PM Bell Choir 7:30 PM	21	22 Office Closed	23
24 Worship 9:30 AM Fellowship 10:30 AM Worship 4:00 PM	25 Office closed	26	27	28	29 Office Closed	30
31 Worship 9:30 AM Fellowship 10:30 AM	Office closed Mission Mtg 5:30 PM					



Grace United Methodist Church

311 2nd Ave West • Spencer, Iowa 51301

(712) 262-5970 • www.spencergumc.com

office@spencergumc.com

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
SPENCER, IA 51301
PERMIT NO. 145

Worship:

Sunday 9:30 AM– Traditional

Return Service Requested

Pastor Barrie Tittle

barrie.tittle@gmail.com



Chair Person of Ministry Boards:

Ad Council: Judith Olson

Co-Lay Leaders: Sandy Heerdt, Ben Pullen

Lay Member to Ann. Conference: Lenny Heerdt, Jenn Ingledue, Bri Pullen

Treasurer: Sue Burdick

SPRC: Ric Guerrero

Trustee: Gary Small

Finance: Paul Kassel

Missions: Brownie Small

Memorial: Judi Calhoon

Grace Cares: Cyndi O'Hara

Worship: Jan Watson

Children's & Youth Ministry: Kristin Schwenneker

UWF: Jane Ingledue

UMM: Brad Johnson

Youth Rep: Riley Herman

Church Council Secretary: Joan Waller

Finance Secretary: Sandy Thomas

Director of Communications: Alison Herman

