



GRACE UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH
PO BOX 67
624 ELM AVE.
STORY CITY, IA 50248

Contact Information

**Pastor Jonathan
Cooney Ph.D.**
jonathan.cooney07
@gmail.com

Shannon Koppes
Administrative
Assistant
office@grace-umc.com
515-733-4712

www.grace-umc.com

"Like" us on
Facebook—Story City
Grace

Office Hours:
Monday — Friday
8:30 AM — 12:30 PM

The Visitor is a
monthly publication of
Grace UMC, Story City.
If you would like to add,
change or remove your
name from our mailing
or e-mailing list

*correct your address
*submit news to be
published in
The Visitor...

Mail us the information
Grace UMC;
624 Elm Ave.
P.O. Box 67
OR call us
(515) 733-4712
OR email us:
office@grace-umc.com

The Grace Church Visitor

VOL. 75 NO. 8

FEBRUARY 2024



What's Inside

- Page 2 – February Birthdays, February Lectionary, From Our Pastor
- Page 3 – G.R.A.C.E. Teams, Scouting Sunday, Volunteers, District Town Halls
- Page 4 – Prayers, Gifts, Presence, Witness, Service, Mission Brunch, 'Souper' Bowl Sunday, Thank you!, Thank you!
- Page 5 – Lenten Services, Ash Wednesday, Adult Class Lenten Study, Inclement Weather, UWF News
- Page 6 – January 14 Service, Mission Brunch Donation, New District Superintendent
- Page 7 – Burst Pipe
- Page 8 – March Mat Marathon
- Page 9 – Grace UMC Council Minutes
- Page 10 – February Calendar of Events

Grace = God's Riches At Christ's Expense

February Birthdays

Bill Mardock	2/1
Alexandra Franco	2/2
Lorijo Lounsberry	2/4
Velda Frette	2/5
Val Gregori	2/12
Judy Brekke	2/14
Cora Hermanson	2/16
Cathy Cooney	2/17
David Barclay	2/18
Tanner Blue	2/20
Mindy Kardell	2/20
Jerry Spencer	2/20
Brian Jensen	2/26
Ruby Matheason	2/27

If we're missing a birthday please accept our apologies and let us know so we can update our records!



February Lectionary

February 4

Isa 40:21-31; Ps 147:1-11, 20c;
1 Cor 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

February 11

2 Kings 2:1-12; Ps 50:1-6;
2 Cor 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

February 14 Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Ps 51:1-17;
2 Cor 5:20b-6:10; Matt 6:1-6, 16-21

February 18

Gen 9:8-17; Ps 25:1-10;
1 Pet 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

February 25

Gen 17:1-7, 15-16; Ps 22:23-31;
Rom 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

Deadline for submitting *Visitor* information is the 20th of each month. Information for the weekly bulletin and *This Week at Grace* is due in the office by noon on Wednesdays.

From Our Pastor

Beloveds,

Change is usually accompanied by a certain amount of pain. I mean, some of the happiest moments in life—things we look forward to—are major stressors. Out of one hundred points on a scale of stressors, marriage scores 50, retirement 45, pregnancy 40, vacation 13, and Christmas 12 points! As we plunge into the season of Lent (the 40 days before Easter not counting Sundays) we trip over the story of the Transfiguration when Jesus is changed and his disciples see him in his glory. From there on their little troupe makes their way to Jerusalem and Jesus' showdown with evil and death. Things change. Each year we are called to change, to prepare, and to offer ourselves to Christ. This prayer, "Lord of the Mountaintop," is a prayer for Transfiguration Sunday (February 11) from our United Methodist Discipleship Ministries:

Lord of the mountaintop, God of dazzling clothes,
Be with us when we come down from the height of worship
To face a world
That didn't see what we just saw in you,
Show us what to do.

When demons rage through elementary schools
Let it not be said that your disciples could not cast the devil out.

When violence threatens to engulf our communities
Let it not be said that your disciples cowered in fear
Or walked on the other side of the road.

When there is peril or fire or flood,
Let it not be said that your disciples cleared the unwanted
junk from their garages
And called it charity...

Lord of the Mountaintop experience, God of dazzling clothes
Show us how to be.

Change us; transfigure us
So that this world might see what we have just seen, and
worship you.

Amen.

Your Servant for Christ's Sake,
Jonathan

Don't Stop Me If You've Heard This One Dept.

On a cold, snowy, January Sunday, only the pastor and one farmer arrived at the country church.

"Well, I guess we won't have a service today," the pastor said. To which the farmer replied, "If only one cow shows up at feeding time, I still feed it!" [As much as it needs!—JC]

G.R.A.C.E Team "M"

Mindy Kardell - chr

Mark & Joan Barrett
Jerrilyn Bouman
Melissa Brown
Kurt & Denise Carlson
Jan Feil
Chris & Kate Feil
Alex & Amy Franco
Val Gregori
Andrea Jensen
Craig Jensen
Mike & Patsy Jensen
LeRoy & Priscilla Johnson
Brent & Jody Larson
Emma Larson
Blake Larson
Riley Larson
Kevin & Linda Larson
Duane & Sharon Matson
Claudia Pauk
Louis & Tep Reeder
Elizabeth Rickerl
Gloria Sampson
Sam & Becky Senti
Dan & Marilyn Webster

Scout Sunday

Scout Sunday is Sunday, February 11. If you have a scout who would like to participate in the service that day and you have not already talked to her, contact Valerie Hubert.

February Volunteers

Sunday, February 4

Liturgist: Lauren Crawford
Tech: Chris or Kate Feil
Ushers: Gloria Sampson, Craig Jensen

Sunday, February 11 (Scouting Sunday)

Liturgist: Owen Hubert
Tech: Kurt Carlson
Ushers: Louis Reeder
Scouts—Lena Feil, Alexandria Franco

Sunday, February 18

Liturgist: Kurt Carlson
Tech: Riker Warwick
Ushers: Linda Larson, Jan Feil

Sunday, February 25

Liturgist: George Janvrin
Tech: Chris Feil
Ushers: Mindy Kardell, Helen and Donyel Caruth

District Town Halls

This winter and spring, you are invited to one of five district town halls as we continue to claim our identity as United Methodists.

The focus of our gatherings will be on our mission, vision, and core values at the Iowa Annual Conference. Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai will be present at each of these five gatherings for a time of teaching, and together, we will share stories about what it means to be engaged and connected with one another.

Each district will also have a virtual option for joining, which will take place on Sunday afternoons from 2-4 p.m. More details will be coming soon, but save the date for the gathering in YOUR district:

Sunday February 11th

2:00pm - 4:00pm at Pella - 1414 University St, Pella, IA
(Virtual Available)

Keep an eye on the link below for upcoming details.

[Town Hall Save the Date](#)

*Love
never fails*



Our Prayers

Dorothy Carbaugh; Donyel Caruth—sister Tawnya has cancer; Shirley Harreld; Cathy Hermanson—Cancer; Loretta Parker; Carlos Remis—health; Noah Remis—travel; Paula Sampson—Cancer; Gene and Erma Schaeffer—family member, Kurt, has cancer; The Taylors; Marilyn Webster; Beckey Whitthun—Nephew's newborn twins health issues

Our Gifts

Offering Jan. 7—Jan. 28:
\$9,733.00

Our Presence

Attendance Jan. 7—Jan. 28 (3 services)
Worship: 206 Total/ 69 Avg.

Our Witness

We appreciate our January liturgists: Angie Schnurstein, Kurt Carlson, and Becky Barclay
Thank you to our tech team who ran the Power Point in January: Louis Reeder, Chris Feil, and Kurt Carlson

Our Service

Thank you to everyone who helped take down the Christmas decorations. It is always great to have many helpers when we need them.
Thank you to Cheryl Semler who took care of our poinsettias through Epiphany Sunday. They looked beautiful!

Mission Brunch

On Sunday, January 28, we had our monthly mission brunch. They raised \$680 that will be given to the Roland-Story Middle School Food Pantry. Thank you for your generous contributions for our mission. We hope you join us next month on February 25. Money raised will go to help with the deductible for the insurance claim from the damage caused by the burst pipe in January.

"Souper Bowl" Sunday



On February 11, the church is going to have a food drive for Loaves and Fishes. The congregation is being asked to bring a can of soup (or other canned item) and crackers.

There will be a table for each Super Bowl team playing that day and you can put your donation on the table for the team you're rooting for. We'll have a friendly competition to see which team gets the most support. The winning team will be Loaves and Fishes in the end with all the wonderful donations to help keep families warm and fed this winter.

Thank you!

Just a note to thank you for your on-going support of Midwest Mission here in Jefferson. It matters.
Happy Weaving—stay warm.

Blessing and see you soon.
Alaire Willits

Thank you!

Grace United Methodist

Thank you so much for the kind donation to Loaves and Fishes. We appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Loaves and Fishes
Leigh Sheahan—Treasurer

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
- John 3:16*



Lenten Services



On Wednesday evenings, from February 21 through March 20, Grace will join several Lutheran churches from around the area in a series of midweek Lenten devotional meetings. Our worship will begin at 6:30 p.m. Similar to what we did last year, these short meetings will feature a different preacher each week. These pastors represent St. Paul in Hampton, First Lutheran in Dows, Bethany in Iowa Falls, Bethesda in Jewell, Bergen in Roland, and St. Petri in Story City. Jonathan will be traveling to one of the other churches each Wednesday, so it will be necessary to recruit some liturgists for each evening. Please take some time out of your busy schedule to prepare your hearts and minds for Holy Week.

The schedule for Grace is as follows:

February 21 – Jonathan will preach on the topic “In Community with those who suffer” from Mark 5:21-43

Liturgist: Jonathan Cooney

February 28 – Nikoli Falenschek from St. Paul in Hampton will preach on the topic “In Community with Creation” from Mark 4:35-41

Liturgist: Gloria Sampson

March 6 – Maureen Howard from Bethany in Iowa Falls will preach on the topic “In Community with all the saints” from Mark 9:2-8

Liturgist: Gloria Sampson

March 13 – Joy Edeker from Bethesda in Jewell will preach on the topic “In Community with our neighbor” from Mark 2:1-12

Liturgist: Claudia Pauk

March 20 – John Sheahan from Bergen in Roland will preach on the topic “In community with those on the margins” Mark 5:1-20

Liturgist: Terry Gustason

Ash Wednesday



Ash Wednesday is February 14 this year. Grace will hold a service at 6:30 p.m. that evening for Ash Wednesday.

Adult Class Lenten Study

“In our Christian journey, part of trusting God comes as a result of knowing that God is consistent in both character and love. In a world where it’s hard for us to trust in anything, perhaps taking time to examine how God’s steady hand has guided our human experience back to God despite our mistakes is the comforting reassurance that we need to trust him with our lives and our eternity. In this Lenten experience, we will explore God’s words and guidance in the Psalms and find the presence of Jesus as we journey toward the cross.” Author, Barb Roose

I invite all adults to join the Adult class as we examine Jesus in the Psalms during this Lenten season through a lesson book, DVD presentation for each session and class discussion.

We will begin this 6 session study after Jonathan completes his study on “Unrelenting Grace.”

Please join other adults as we prepare ourselves for Easter’s promise of eternal life.

If you have questions or to request a lesson book, just ask Rhonda Hampton.

Inclement Weather

When there is a weather related early out at Roland-Story schools, all church activities for that day will also be cancelled. As a general rule, worship services will NOT be cancelled in the case of inclement weather. But, if authorities are advising no travel in the cases of heavy Saturday night snow and severely low temperatures, we will adhere to their advice. In that case, tune into KCCI TV, check your email or consult Facebook as we will post the information there by as early as 7:00 on the Sunday morning in question. You are urged to use your own good judgment as to if you are able to attend the service when the weather is nasty.

UWF News

UWF was not able to meet in January due to the winter weather. They will meet again on February 14 at 1:30 p.m.

January 14 Church Service

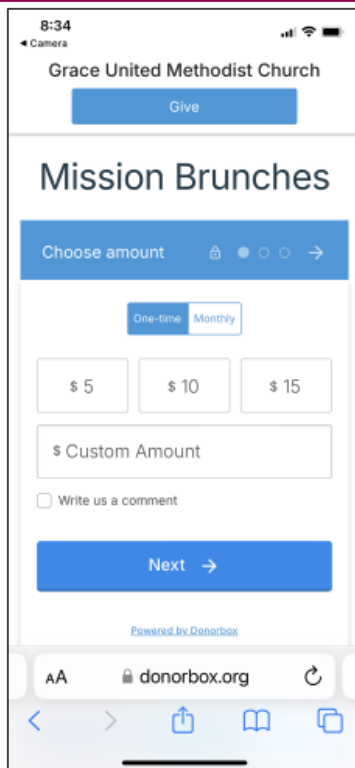


On January 14, we unfortunately had to cancel our church service due to the inclement weather. While it was cold and snowy outside, Jonathan delivered his sermon online for people. Technology is a great thing, even when weather doesn't cooperate, we can still hear the word of God on Sunday Morning.

Cash Alternative for Mission Brunches

The Finance committee has teamed up with Donor Box to create an alternative to cash for Mission Brunch Sundays. There will now be a QR code by the donation basket for people to scan to donate. When using the QR code the first time, you may have some initial set-up, but after that, it should be a simple scan. There is a small fee that you can choose to pay or it can come out of your donation. Out of town on Sunday, you can scan the QR code that will be in the TWAG the Sunday leading up to Mission Brunch Sunday.

* Please note: At this time, we are only using this for donating to Mission Brunches and NOT for regular offering.



New District Superintendent

Rev. Dr. Lilian Seagren appointed as the new Riverview Park District Superintendent beginning July 2024

Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai has announced that Rev. Ron Carlson will be the new Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (IAUMC) Treasurer beginning June 1, 2024. The Iowa Conference on Finance and Administration (CFA) approved Carlson on an interim basis until he can be elected by the 2024 Iowa Annual Conference. Carlson is replacing Emily Graber whose final day was Friday, January 12.

As a consequence, the Bishop has appointed Rev. Dr. Lilian Seagren to the Appointive Cabinet beginning on July 1, 2024, as the Riverview Park District Superintendent. She will be serving a three-year term before her retirement.

Seagren has served at New Hope United Methodist Church since July 1, 2019. Before that, she served seven years as the District Superintendent of the Southeast District.

Seagren transferred to the Iowa Conference from Northeast Philippines in 1999; she has served communities of faith in Hamburg, Guthrie Center-Bowman Chapel, Waterloo, and Kimball Avenue.

Loaves and Fishes

Saturday, February 17 will be our next opportunity to volunteer at Loaves and Fishes. If you are interested in volunteering let Jan Feil (319-350-9157) or Louis Reeder (402-641-6722) know. We will start at 9:30 a.m. and finish at noon. We look forward to having a great team.

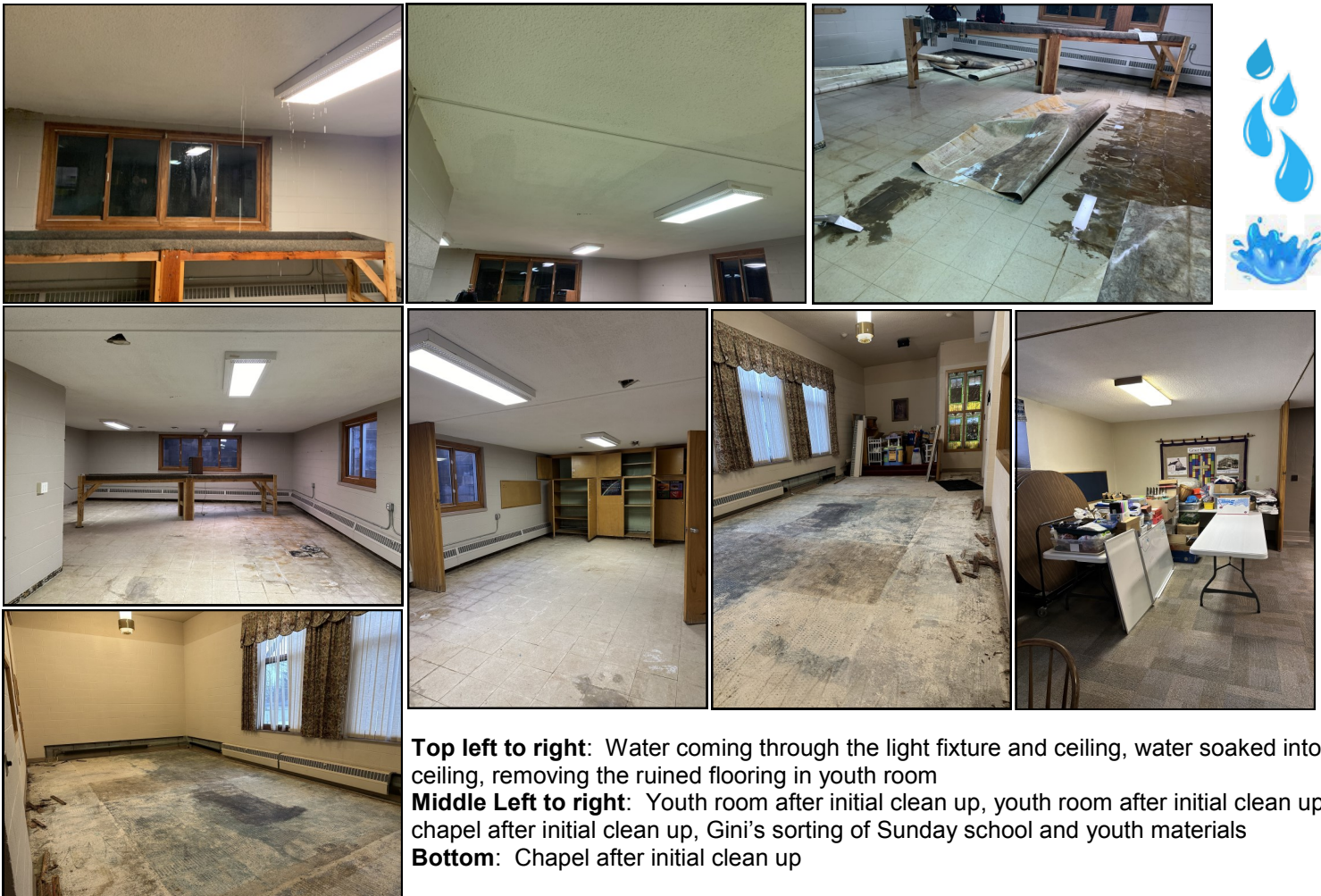
If you are willing to provide items for the Loaves and Fishes food bank, we have a cart in the narthex where you can leave your items. Watch the newsletter and TWAG for updates of items that they are looking for. Or you can donate items of food or personal car that you have available. Checks or cash can also be donated.



Love ♥

Burst Pipe

The week of January 16 had some unusually cold temperatures. Actual temperatures were well below 0 for an extended period of time. Unfortunately for the church, as a result of the extreme temperatures, a pipe burst in the chapel. It was discovered Tuesday morning, January 16. Water soaked the chapel carpet and poured down through the ceiling and light fixtures into the youth rooms. The trustees acted quickly. Within 30 minutes of the leak being discovered, trustees were in the building, the heating guy was there to repair it and Mustang was there to begin assessing how to clean up the building. We are extremely grateful to everyone acting quickly to fix the problem. As a result of everyone's quick actions, the pipe was fixed quickly, the boiler and radiators were all repaired as needed. The ceiling in the youth rooms was able to be dried out and saved. The carpet and other flooring in all rooms had to be tossed out. Trustees have consistently been in the building since this happened ensuring everything is properly cleaned up and ascertaining the best course of action to take. Mustang has been an amazing company to work with. They acted swiftly to help us minimize the damage done to the rooms. Jim O'Conner has been by multiple times working on getting the heat completely working in the building. We cannot thank everyone enough for all their help through all this. Looking at the positives, this gave us the opportunity to go through items and clean house a bit in those rooms. Gini Michel spent a lot of time sorting through all the stuff down in the youth area, saving what was able to be saved and tossing what was damaged or not needed anymore. Dave Doolittle went above and beyond his custodial duties in helping take out a lot of garbage and clean up rooms to get the church back to usable condition as quickly as possible. I'm sure I'm missing people who pitched in and helped—we are grateful to everyone even if I didn't mention you by name. We still have work to do but in a week, amazing progress was made. We are grateful to all who have helped make the process of cleaning up go as smoothly as possible.



Top left to right: Water coming through the light fixture and ceiling, water soaked into ceiling, removing the ruined flooring in youth room

Middle Left to right: Youth room after initial clean up, youth room after initial clean up, chapel after initial clean up, Gini's sorting of Sunday school and youth materials

Bottom: Chapel after initial clean up

March Mat Marathon

As the church looks forward, we want and must weave ourselves together. Midwest Mission's Sleeping Mat Project is a perfect way. We are all too aware of many unhoused people, not only here in Iowa but also all around the globe — together, we can help create a more comfortable and restful (and dry) space for sleep. Sleeping Mats, woven from plastic grocery bags, can make a tangible and intangible difference, giving hope and empowerment to those who receive them.

Weaving them is easy, and all ages can help! The first step is to open, flatten, and cut the bags into strips. Then, using the loom, almost anyone can weave and weave and weave. Children, youth, families, grandmas and grandpas, neighbors, friends from other churches — anyone and everyone can be a part of this.

Genuine joy and love weave into something we'll give to another. *In the cold and snow of winter, there's a spring that waits to be!* Weaving sleeping mats is a beautiful way to be God's hands; to top it off, it's good stewardship. Bag trimmings are recycled into beautiful benches by Trex.

We already have looms at over 50 locations in Iowa. Additional looms have already been constructed and are available for pickup at Midwest Mission Iowa in Jefferson. Contact alaire@midwestmission.org for additional information or to schedule a time to come to Jefferson and learn exactly how you can be part of weaving us all together and connecting us to our world.

Participate in the March Mat Marathon!

First United Methodist Church in Cedar Falls, IA, is hosting a Mat Marathon on Saturday, March 2, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to participate by making sleeping mats for people in need. No skills are necessary; they will have people ready to teach you what you need to know. There is also a training video online for you to watch if you like at <https://www.midwestmission.org/loom>

If you have your own loom, bring it! If you don't, there will be looms provided. If your group decides they would like to purchase a loom, they may be bought for a \$100 contribution to Midwest Mission.

Can't drive to Cedar Falls, but would still like to participate? Your church can host your own Mat Marathon during March! Invite people to your church and have looms available. We want to encourage as many churches as possible to participate in a Mat Marathon, either by hosting or by joining with others. These plastic mats will be donated to Midwest Mission, which will be distributed to people sleeping on the ground both locally and abroad.

If you would like to participate at Cedar Falls, RSVP to Rus DeBonis at ruselle.debonis@allencollege.edu or text 319-231-3545. She will need to know the size of the group and if you have a loom. If you would like to replicate this at your location, get in touch with Alaire Willits at alaire@midwestmission.org or Rus DeBonis, and they can help you plan your event!

Learn more about the Sleeping Mat Project at [midwestmission.org/loom](https://www.midwestmission.org/loom).



Grace UMC Council
Unofficial Minutes from January 22, 2024 Meeting

Present: Gloria Sampson (Chair, Missions), Becky Barclay (Finance), Jim Hassebrock (Trustees), Louis Reeder (Trustees), Pastor Jonathan, Cheryl Semler (Worship), Krystle Ness (SPRC), Patsy Jensen (UWF), Gini Michel (Christian Education), Jan Feil (Missions)

Jonathan offered prayer and Gloria opened the meeting.

Gini/Cheryl Moved the November minutes be accepted as written. Motion carried.

Finance: Becky reported the end of year giving accounted for 88% of the budget and expenses were 95% of the budget in 2023. An account is setup with 'Donor Box' to enable electronic giving by scanning a QR code for mission breakfasts or coffee hour. This will be available starting Sunday, January 28th. At this time giving via Donor Box will not be included on family giving summaries.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Jonathan reported appreciation for the service carrying on without him on Christmas Eve. A new District Superintendent has been appointed for the Riverview Park District, Dr. Lillian Seagren, she will be starting in this position in July 2024.

Committee Reports: Ministry Area

Worship: Cheryl reported satisfaction with the Christmas Eve service and the decision for the choir to remain in the choir loft throughout the service. On January 8th, three pianos were tuned for \$449 and are all sounding great now. The committee has begun planning for graduation in May, Grace will have 4 graduates this year.

Christian Education: Gini reported appreciation for all that helped clear out the Jr High and High School classrooms after the pipes burst in the chapel, flooding both. For the time being, Chrissy's classroom has moved to the classroom on the South side of the fellowship hall and the Jr High class has moved to the confirmation room.

Missions: Jan reported in December Loaves and Fishes had 17 volunteers. In 2023, 34 individuals for a total of 166.5 volunteer hours served 104 families. Thank you for all that volunteered in 2023. Grace will serve again at Loaves and Fishes on February 17th. In February there will also be a donation collection on super bowl Sunday for Loaves and Fishes – details will be available in TWAG. On January 31st the Compass youth group will be volunteering at Loaves and Fishes. Mission brunch donations in January will go towards the Roland-Story Food Pantry and February donations will go towards the chapel flooding cleanup.

UWF: Patsy reported the December plans for visiting church members in the nursing homes was cancelled due to increased COVID numbers, they were able to visit 11 church members at their homes. The committee did not meet in January due to weather, the next meeting will be February 14th. Instructions and information sheets are printed and available with the weaving loom.

Committee Reports: Administrative Area

SPRC: Krystle reported no change since the last council meeting. The SPRC will have their first meeting for the year on February 12th.

Trustees: Louis & Jim reported the radiator pipes burst in the chapel on Tuesday, January 16th. Thank you for the trustees members, volunteers and everyone that helped to clean up on short notice. Mustang Disaster Services finished monitoring the moisture levels and removed the fans on Monday. Anti-microbial was sprayed in the ceiling of the high school classroom to prevent mold growth. A claim has been filed with the insurance agent. The linoleum was removed from the high school classroom where mold was observed, exposing old tile. The mastic used to secure the tile was suspected to have asbestos and a sample was submitted for testing and came back positive and quotes are underway for the abatement process. After abatement is complete an epoxy finish will be applied to the concrete. The Carpeting in the chapel was also discarded and will be replaced by Luxury Vinyl Flooring. Jim reported ongoing problems with the boiler and additional resources with knowledge of commercial boiler systems are being called in. The Trustees committee is finalizing plans for a 3 year fundraising campaign for \$225,000 for capital building improvements including the parking lot, sanctuary roof, HVAC for the church and parsonage, and Handi-cap doors for the southwest entrance. The church council will vote on the final fundraising campaign at the February council meeting.

Gloria adjourned meeting at 7:22

Next meeting will be **Monday, February 26 at 6:30 pm.** Respectfully submitted, Krystle Ness, SPRC



February 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 9:15 Worship Communion 10:15 Fellowship 10:30 Sunday School	5	6	7 5:00 Children's Bells 6:00 Compass 7:00 Choir 8:00 Bells	8	9	10
11 9:15 Worship Scouting Sunday Fellowship 10:15 Sunday School 2-4 District Town Hall Meeting	12 5:30 Worship Comm. 6:30 SPRC	13	14 1:30 UWF 6:30 Ash Wednesday Service	15	16	17 9:30-12:00 Loaves and Fishes
18 8:00 Trustees 9:15 Worship 10:15 Fellowship 10:30 Sunday School	19	20	21 6:30 Lenten Service 7:00 Choir	22	23	24
25 9:15 Worship 10:15 Mission Brunch 10:30 Sunday School	26 5:45 Finance 6:30 Council	27	28 6:30 Lenten Service 7:00 Choir	29		