

JANUARY 2024

# GRACE NOTES

No.01 [pekingrace.org](http://pekingrace.org)



## highlights

JANUARY 2024

### PASTOR'S CORNER

Page 2

### CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Page 3-4

### YOUTH MINISTRY

Pages 5-6

### CHURCH NEWS

Pages 7-11

### BIRTHDAYS

Page 12

### PRAYER CONCERNS

Pages 13



# Thank you for using your gifts this year!

*He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. His purpose was to equip God's people for the work of serving and building up the body of Christ until we all reach the unity of faith and knowledge of God's Son. God's goal is for us to become mature adults—to be fully grown, measured by the standard of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13*

# PASTOR'S CORNER

*Thoughts, dreams, and ramblings of someone who just wants to connect you to Jesus*



I cannot start a new year without thinking, and more importantly, thanking everyone for their hard work and dedication. This year was an amazing year for Grace. I know that many of us felt that in the Christmas Season that we celebrated together. Some of the celebration is the continuation of our generosity with the Angel Tree program. Some of our celebration is the women's tea and the service of our youth. Another celebration is the return of Santa's Prayer Breakfast. It also wouldn't be Christmas without music, and the Cantata and Evening By the Fire were both amazing.

Each of these events took a host of volunteers who worked hard both in the foreground and background to make sure that those who came could feel the presence of Jesus in their midst. The hard work also paid off.... In the US, the Sunday before Christmas is now the second or third largest weekend for churches as a rule and we had nearly 500 unique people come into Grace as a part of those events. The historic events all saw increases over 2022 and with our continuing innovations, we saw less repeat attendance and increases through new persons. As we seek to offer the message of Jesus to the world, it's those unique people that we reach who will in time become the church of tomorrow.

So, on behalf of the church, said to the church, THANK YOU! Your service and dedication were some of our best gifts this Christmas.

January is a fresh start for many people. One of the best things that we could do now, is to take the energy of the Christmas season and roll that into the work of January. As many people are making their fresh starts, we can offer to walk along side of them in that journey. We can offer to journey with them into these spaces and in time offer then to journey into a relationship with Jesus and the mission of the Church.

To help us in that work, this January we will work through one of the early church books as our sermon series will look at the Book of Romans. "When in Romans" is the title, and we will learn about the direction Paul tried to guide people then and us today.

When Saul met Jesus, it transformed Paul's life. His mission changed and began spreading the message of Jesus to everyone. His message to the Romans was unity under Christ. No matter Jew or Gentile, Jesus is for all and that message applies today. The idea behind this series is to show that a NEW way of life was here. The old covenant has been fulfilled and the love of Jesus is for everyone. Paul was spreading it like wildfire.

So, let's continue the invitations and let's be transformed like Saul to Paul as we begin 2024.

# UNITEKIDS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

**Emmy Thies**  
Director of Children & Family Ministry

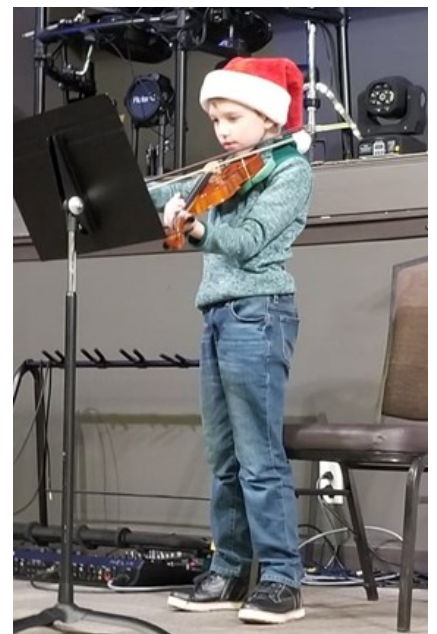
## IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

Monday Bible Buddies Resumes January 8  
Wednesday Bible Buddies Resumes January 3rd  
Wednesday UNITEkids Resumes January 3rd  
**Monday January 15 No Bible Buddies either time**



Santa's Prayer Breakfast was full of joy! In addition to a delicious breakfast, UNITEkids sang and played instruments, and Santa made a visit. Twenty-six families enjoyed the morning and heard a simple message - we all received love through the birth of Jesus and we should share that love out to the people around us!

THANK YOU to all the volunteers and donors that helped the breakfast come together!



# UNITEKIDS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

*Emmy Thies*  
Director of Children & Family Ministry



We Are Diving Into 2024....



# **RADICAL YOUTH**

# **JANUARY 2024**

**Wednesday's 6-7:30, Mason Building**

**NOTE:** Instead of meeting on January 24 we will be meeting on Thursday, January 25 at 3:30 p.m. for our Chicken Dinner Fund-Raiser! More info to come.

Food, Faith & Friendship was found at our 1st Youth Group Ladies Christmas Dinner! The evening was a beautiful way to celebrate the birth of our Lord & Savior Jesus. It was much more than a fundraiser, and we are so grateful for everyone that made it such a success. The youth & parents enjoyed serving and did a wonderful job! We are looking forward to doing this again next year.



## **WinterXtreme**

**January 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>**  
**Leaving the church**  
**at 4:15pm**

**Amazing worship opportunities and different challenges to strengthen our relationship with Jesus!**

Reach out to Brionna or Jill with any questions or concerns. Please fill out the health and emergency contact form if not completed.

# RADICAL YOUTH MINISTRY

**Jill Stoner-Crouch and Brionna Goodin**  
Co-Director's of Youth Ministries



## Schedule of events

- Time to look over and admire table decorations. Each table had a hostess who took care of the needs of the attendees and decorated her own table. Each table was unique and different.
- Christmas Caroling
- Background music and dinner
- Speaker: It only takes a SPARK! Given by Heather Robertson stressing that each of us has a God-given spark that we can use to light the way for others
- Lighting of candles signifying passing along the spark

## Giving and Envelopes

Grace Church survives and runs off of the generosity of its members. We thank each of you who have given contributions this past year. Together, the donations have helped to spread the love of Christ. We encourage you to save time by electronically transferring your monthly gift to Grace United Methodist Church. Your gift will appear on your bank statement and Grace United Methodist Church will e-mail you quarterly giving statements. If you prefer the act of giving in person, we do offer privacy envelopes. 2024 giving envelopes are available to be picked up. This will save us some postage. If you weren't able to pick up your envelopes by the end of the year, please call the office and we will mail yours to you. Pick up the envelopes with your name at the counter top of the hospitality area. If you do not currently get giving envelopes, please call Nanette in the office. If you would like to sign up for the ACH giving, please go to, <https://pekingrace.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Financial-Form.pdf>, print the form, fill out the information, and give to the office. The ACH giving is taken out once a month.

## Pantry Dates for 2024

Volunteers Mark your Calendars!

January	13	27
February	10	24
March	9	30
April	13	27
May	11	25
June	8	29
July	13	27
August	10	31
September	14	28
October	12	26
November	9	30
December	14	28

Food is given out from 11:00a.m. –12:00 p.m. Church volunteers should arrive by 9:30 a.m.

## Thank You

To the Grace United Methodist Church Congregation and Food Pantry-

We want to thank you for the gift cards to purchase meat for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Also, for all the wonderful food items all year. It has been extremely helpful for our family and we appreciate it very much!

Thank you and Merry Christmas!

From the Nagel-Smith Family

Thank you so much for the Christmas Card and other cards you have sent me throughout the year. I really appreciate them and your thoughtfulness. Merry Christmas to all!

Pat McMullin

## Grace has a brand new Team!

A Community Outreach Event Team is being created, and you're invited to get involved! The team will focus on providing events that reach out to the community. The team's main goal will be connecting the Grace UMC community to new people. Annual events will include a Trunk-or-Treat and the Santa Prayer Breakfast. Other creative ideas for events may be discussed and implemented throughout the year. If you enjoy planning fun, festive, food-filled faith events, join us by reaching out to Emmy at [ethies@pekingrace.org](mailto:ethies@pekingrace.org).

Team Leader: Melanie Tennell

Team Members: Shannon Dault,  
Brionna Goodin, Emmy Thies

## Leadership Board 2024

The new members of the Leadership Board begin their terms this month. The members of the board are: Michelle Hunt, Brian Garman, Alisha Dault, Dale Golden, Marj Oesch, Mason Tennell, Todd Tennell, Chris Onken and Rachel Doan. These are the people you can go to if you have questions, concerns, or would like to be updated on the issues before them. We would like to take time to thank them for their service and ask you to pray for them to hear God's leading and guidance during this upcoming year.

### Angel Tree-Thank You

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thank you for your gifts to our Angel Tree children this year.

In all, Grace UMC provided gifts to over 90 students from Pekin Public Schools. A few children's names were not on the tree, but a gift from The GUMC Men's Group made it possible to give gifts to those children as well. Thank you, dear brothers, for giving financially. In this case it meant not turning away 9 children.

Thank you to Sally Morris for your help typing labels, and for making the beautiful family tags. Thank you to the delivery teams. Without all of you, the Angel Tree program would be much more of a challenge than it has become. Thank you, all.

The following are just a few thank yous that were meant for all of you. These were emailed to me on the church's behalf....

Dear Grace Church,

Thank You!!!! Thank you so much for my daughter's bike. We appreciate it so much!  
SC

Thank you. We are having a rough time around the holidays. Due to my cancer, I am not working. We appreciate the gifts from the church. GR

Please thank the church from my family. It is wonderful - what Grace does for the people in Pekin. Thank you. JW

Once again, I give thanks for Grace United Methodist church. Thank you for your gifts to needy children in Pekin.



Lynne Johnson  
Parent Liaison  
Pekin School District 108

### Nelson's Chicken Dinner Radical Fundraiser

Order with the office, order with the youth, or sign-up at the info center. Cost is \$12.00 per meal. Tickets must be prepaid before January 16th. Only meals paid in full will be ordered. Meal includes: 1/2 baked chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, and a dinner roll. This meal will come in a to-go container. Money from the fundraiser will go to the youth and their activities. Make plans to pick up your order Thursday, January 25, 2024 from 4:00 p.m. -5:30 p.m.

### Win, Win Outreach

Over the course of the last couple of years, we have seen ever increasing requests from groups who are not officially a part of the church to use our facilities. As much as possible we try and say yes, so long as those programs don't have a negative impact on our church programming.

Of the many examples, the Pekin Union Mission is likely the most noticeable. They have had major structural issues in their historic building and that has caused them to look for some new spaces to provide their long-running basketball program. Since Upward basketball did not return to Grace with the loss of the other participating churches, the approval for the Union Mission made sense. We will be partnering with them again this year. Now, we have families who come through Grace and get to see a basic connection that is a positive one. We do not charge them much, but what we do charge them covers utilities, consumables, and the extra is able to help us do things like repairing the floor in the Family Life Center, where age and water under the foundation have caused bubbles.

We wanted to give you this update to how we intend to partner with programs that will enable those programs to thrive, while helping us continue to make connections and support the ongoing facilities demands/updates that will always be with us. It is a Win, Win, when we can do this and if you know of more programming that we could partner with, please reach out to them and to the office.



### Cancellations

Grace United Methodist Church doesn't often cancel Sunday meetings. We like to leave attendance up to your own discretion. In the event that we do cancel church on Sunday, we will send out an email with the information and make a post to social media. This is the same email list used for the email blast. Please let the office know if you would like to be included on this list and make sure your email is still current.

Weekly activity/group cancellations will follow the 108 school schedule. If school activities or school itself is canceled, the church activities will not take place.

### United Women in Faith- Pecan Sales

The women still have some pecans left! Hurry before they are all gone. You can get the pecan halves and/or the cinnamon glazed. A reminder all the proceeds go to benefit women and children. To order contact: Carol Booth 309-256-0075

### UNITEkids Winter Crafting Night

Everyone is welcome to our January Family Crafting Night on January 19 from 6:00 p.m.– 7:00p.m. ! We will work on making snowflake and snowman creations to take home. Snacks and drinks will be provided. *RSVP to Emmy at [ethies@pekingrace.org](mailto:ethies@pekingrace.org)*. We hope to see all generations of the church family there!

### Bible Presentation

Thank you Grace Church for supporting the ministries of Grace! Thanks to you and your financial support another young person who did not have a bible at home was presented with one from Grace. Thank you for supporting the ministries of Grace with your presence, your prayers, your service and your financial offerings. Continue to be in prayer for the youth that have



### Saturday Servants

The next Saturday Servants will meet January 13 from 9 a.m. - noon. All are welcome to come help. Pastor Eric will have various projects around the church. This ministry will continue through the winter months on the second Saturday of the month.

### Book Club

Book club meets at 10 a.m. on the second Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be January 9 in the library of Pekin Estates. All are welcome! If you need more information, have questions or want to know what book they are reading, please call Sandy Isenburg at 309-241-1411.

### New Member

Brionna Goodin our Co-Youth director, joined the church on December 17! We welcome her and pray for her personal relationship with God as well as her ministry and influence on the youth of Grace!



### Volunteers

We are **always** looking for volunteers for the children's programs and the youth programs. We understand that you may not want to help forever. Please consider signing up to help for the school year or the summer, or a season spring/fall. If you could sign-up to help for a season, every bit helps. Our tech program is also in need. Please let the office know if you are interested in helping with these programs. **We will** get you connected!!!

# Welcome New Little Ones!

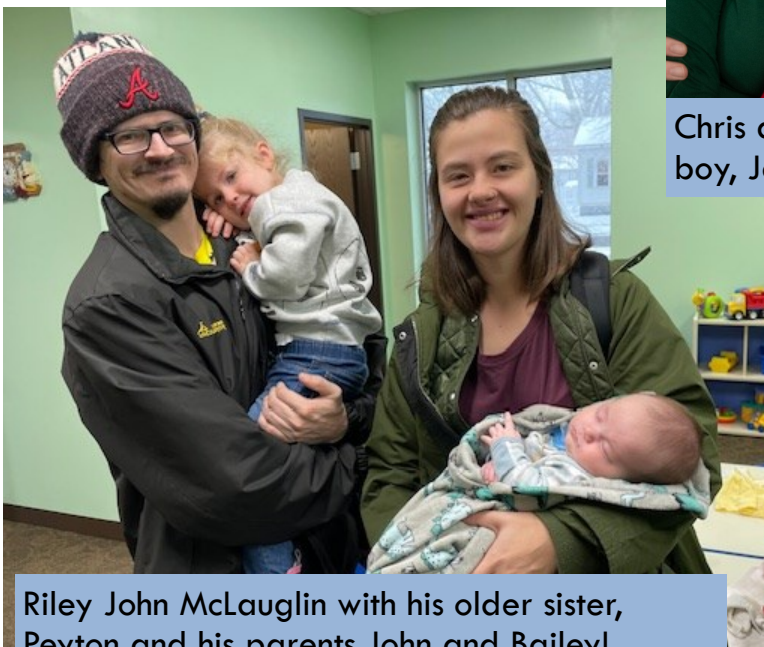
Please take time to pray over these families and the new lives that God has entrusted to them. We as a church feel blessed to be able to see the beauty of new life. God's word says, *Train children in the way they should go; when they grow old, they won't depart from it. Proverbs 22:6*



Cooper William Black and his older brother, Shane Black



Chris and Elizabeth Louton with their little boy, Jacob Matthew Louton.



Riley John McLaughlin with his older sister, Peyton and his parents John and Bailey!

Our prayers are with these families as they nurture these children, the future of God's kingdom!

# Christmas Offerings of Worship

## Church News



Sanctuary Choir Christmas Cantata: Heaven's Child - If you missed this wonderful presentation you can find it on all our online places and the Grace app.



Evening by the Fire - This was a wonderful and fun event. If you missed it, you will have to make plans to come next year!



## December Birthdays

<b>Dee Horton</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Aidan Sandoval</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Haley McClain</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Toni Evans</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Maggie Miller</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Jim Rimington</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Jo Trombini</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chris Poole</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Jim McKenzie</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Janine Culp</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Fran Stroemer</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Rachel Gianessi</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Jeff Marsden</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Madalyn O'Shaughnessy</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Sandy Graber</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Cindy Bergstrand</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Alex Hannan</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Ed Graber</b>	<b>19</b>

<b>Cindy Fitzanko</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Stan Haxton</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Jim Stranz</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Arlen Booth</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Ken Johnson</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Brian Behrends</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Winnette Klopfenstein</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Peggy Russell</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Melissa Berkley</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Deven Ries</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Beverly Potts</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Lois Shields</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>George Melloy</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Mark DeSchepper</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Grant Golden</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Dawn Miller</b>	<b>31</b>

# Connect!

601 N. 4th St.  
Pekin, IL  
309-347-7131  
secretary@pekingrace.org  
pekingrace.org

**Worship Times**  
**Saturdays 5:30pm**  
**Sundays 9:00am & 11:00am**

**Office Hours**  
**M-TH 8:30am-4:30pm**  
*Closed 12pm-1pm*

## Prayer Concerns

For the family of

Calvin Taylor on his passing

Charlie Dietrich

Dean Albertson

Les Seman

For the family of

Margarete Hall on her passing

Ron Garman

*Names are kept on the prayer list for four weeks. If you would like to be kept on longer please call the office, 309-347-7131.*

### January 3

UNITEkids Resumes regular schedule  
Bible Buddies Resumes  
Radical Resumes Regular Schedule

### January 5 through January 7

Winter Xtreme for Radical

### January 8

Union Mission begins Basketball Schedule  
Handbells resume regular practices

### January 10

Sanctuary Choir Resumes

### January 13

Saturday Servants 9:00a.m. -12:00p.m.  
Grace Drive-Thru Pantry, 11:00 a.m.

### January 15

Office Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
Bible Buddies cancelled both times

### January 24

Communion, Pekin Estates, 2:00 p.m.  
Radical Cancelled tonight come tomorrow

### January 25

Nelson's Chicken Dinner, Hospitality Area, 4 p.m.

### January 27

Grace Drive-Thru Pantry, 11:00 a.m.