

DECEMBER 2024

GRACE NOTES

No. 12 pekingrace.org



highlights

DECEMBER 2024

PASTOR'S CORNER

Page 2

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Page 4

YOUTH MINISTRY

Page 5-6

CHURCH NEWS

Page 6-9B

BIRTHDAYS

Page 10

PRAYER CONCERNS

Page 11



PASTOR'S CORNER

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



In the Christmas story there is a moment where the skies open and a Heavenly Choir proclaims the birth of Jesus to the people of the Earth. Can you picture that? You're one of the shepherds who are out, just doing your normal thing, when the skies fill with such a powerful proclamation that you would then willingly leave your responsibilities to go and see what they were proclaiming. It would have truly been an overwhelming invitation that would leave you forever changed.

In the life of the church, we have the opportunity to join in that Heavenly Choir. Not by singing but by proclaiming that Jesus is here and that you will forever be changed by His presence in your life.

Christmas is the perfect time to join in sharing that message because Christmas is the season when most of the population is receptive to the good news of Jesus. Though we have done a lot of work secularizing the Christmas season in America, we still trace the roots of the season to our Gospel hope. Because Christmas will always be grounded in that hope, the messages will always resonate that we value love, generosity, and the saving of all people. Even those who don't fully understand what they are hearing have this hope.

Consider the poor shepherds for just a moment. They were likely awestruck by the moment, but did they fully understand who Jesus was in the moment? Did they fully understand who Jesus was after they went and saw the baby? Not likely on both accounts. It is very likely that they had hope. They hoped that God's power and love would be felt and known in their lives. They didn't become Jesus' first disciples on that day of his birth, but they knew that what was behind that moment and that encounter was important, so they leaned into the moment and were changed by it.

At Christmas we hope that the moments we take as proclaimers of the Gospel of Jesus can have that same impact. We know that there is a world that is hungry for a message of real life. We know that the lights, tinsel, etc, are temporary (even that choir was temporary) but we know that what it represents is something worth searching for.

So, this Christmas season. Be bold! Raise your voice and invite anyone you know who is just going through this life, doing their normal routine, and ask them to drop what they are doing to find a true way of living.

Peace & Grace,
Pastor Eric

Eric Swanson

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

December 3 Ladies Christmas Dinner, 5:30-8 p.m.

December 7 Breakfast with Santa, Hospitality Area 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

December 11 UMW General Meeting, Hospitality Area, 1 p.m.

December 15 Christmas Cantata at Grace, Sanctuary, 11:00 a.m.

December 24 Christmas Eve Services

- GFFLC, 4:00 p.m.
- Sanctuary, 11:00 p.m.

UNITEKIDS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Emmy Thies
Director of Children & Family Ministry



The kids started off November with an evening of art taught by Stacey Nannen. They were able to create artwork to give as Christmas gifts. The paintings were of greenery – wreaths and trees. We discussed how the evergreen signifies the everlasting life we have in Jesus. Jesus is alive always, bringing freshness and health to our lives even in the dead of winter. Then, the kids started practicing music to perform at Santa's Prayer Breakfast!

Please quickly send any last minute emails to register your family for Santa's Prayer Breakfast!!
Watch for pictures of the event in the January edition of Grace Notes.

Just a reminder:
There will be no children's programs on:
Tuesday, December 24 and 31
Wednesday, December 25 and January 1.

Santa's Prayer Breakfast

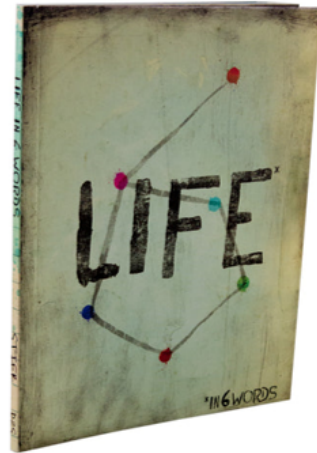
Saturday, Dec 7
9:30-10:30 AM
Grace UMC, 601 N. 4th



Registration Required - email Emmy at ethies@pekingrace.org to register your family!

Youth are learning about the Gospel. Check out the video link below.
[Life in 6 Words Dare to Share Ministry](#)

- Ask your youth about life in 6 words- GOSPEL
 - **God** created us to be with him.
 - **Our** sins separate us from God.
 - **Sins** cannot be removed by deeds.
 - **Paying** the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again.
 - **Everyone** who trusts in Him alone has eternal life.
 - **Life** with Jesus starts now and lasts forever.



UNITEyouth enjoying
smores, hot dogs, and
worship around the fire



- **12/1** No Youth Group
- **12/3** Ladies Christmas Dinner fundraiser- **YOUTH NEEDED**
- **12/8** Regular Youth Group
JH 5pm-6:30pm, HS 6:30pm-8pm @Grace
- **12/15** Northwoods Christmas Concert.
Meet at Grace at 1:15pm, departing at 1:30pm
- **12/22** Youth Sunday, 9am service at Grace or 10am service at First. Enjoy donuts and hot cocoa after the service. Youth, bring your parents.
- **12/29** No Youth Group
- **1/3-1/5** WinterXtreme Weekend
Departing at 3pm from Grace
- **1/5** No Youth Group



The youth are still in need of someone to drive the van and pick them up for youth group and various activities. The amount of youth the program could reach by adding this would almost double participation. Let Jill or Brionna if you are interested.

Youth Volleyball

Mondays at 5:30 p.m.

**No youth volleyball on 12-2
Youth volleyball 12-9 and 12-16**

**No volleyball 12-23 thru 1-6
Resume weekly meetings 1-13**



Margaret Kelly
President of United Women in Faith

Executive meeting

The meeting will be December 5 at 1PM in the hospitality area.



General Meeting

We, the United Women of Faith request your presence to help us celebrate the Christmas Holiday Season. Above you will see some pictures from last year's meeting. Hope you can come.

General Meeting, Dec 11, 1 p.m.

Pastor Eric will tell us the story of Christmas. Afterward, Sue Crowell will lead us in singing Christmas carols. Come and enjoy the Story, caroling and Christmas cookies with all of us. We will have an installation ceremony for the officers of United Women in Faith. Come and support these dedicated women.



Pecan Fundraiser

There are lots of pecans left this year, but only one assorted tin. If you are interested in purchasing more pecans, please see Carol Booth or call the office, 309-347-7131. This is the last year that the UWF will be selling pecans. The pecans freeze very well and will stay fresh. If you want to have some for next year, you should purchase them now.

Thank you for your support.

This is Christmas

CELEBRATING THE *Heart* OF CHRISTMAS

Mary McDonald



Christmas Cantata

December 15, Sanctuary of Grace, 11 a.m.

Just hearing the word “Christmas” brings thoughts of joy to mind; family gatherings; exchanging gifts; enjoying meals with relatives, friends and co-workers; filling the home with lights, trees, candles, and greenery; and listening to seasonal music both at home and at church. Christmas is the season of joy, and, for those who celebrate the birth of Christ, Christmas is the season of love coming to earth. Christmas is about a Child—Jesus! THIS is Christmas.

The sole intent of this work is to draw attention to that child, that King, sent to earth to redeem the world, for THIS is the heart of Christmas!

—Mary McDonald (Composer)

Co-Rec Volleyball Resumes

Co-Rec volleyball has resumed. They will meet Mondays at 6:30 p.m. Contact the office or Rod Teaney if you would like more information. Pre-registration is not required. Just show up when you are able.

Book Club

Book Club will meet on Tuesday, December 10 at 10 a.m. in the library at Pekin Estates. This month, each member will read a book or article of their choice and will share it with us at the meeting. Think of it as an old-fashioned book report. Any questions, please call Sandy Isenburg at 309-241-1411.

Giving Envelopes Available

Please pick up your 2025 privacy giving envelopes located on the countertop in the hospitality area. If you aren't available to pick yours up, please contact the office and we will mail your envelopes.

Note: Some envelope numbers change from year to year. Because of this, **please do not use leftover giving envelopes from previous years as your number may be different in 2025.**

If you currently do not have envelopes and would like some, please let Nanette in the office know.

An option available is to give a monthly offering through ACH giving. Please go to, <https://pekingrace.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Finacial-Form.pdf>, print the form, fill out the information, and submit to the office. We also have forms in the office.

Another option is giving through our Pekin Grace app. You can set up your giving to be automatic or a one-time gift.

Thanks for your generous donations which allow Grace Church to manage everyday operations, in addition to reaching out to others through our mission work.

Angel Tree

Grace is again doing the Angel Tree. On the tree are children's names who come from families that need a little extra help during the holidays. Please pick a name off of the tree and provide them with some items for their families to put under the tree. Wrapped gifts need to be returned by December 8. The gifts will be delivered to the families on December 15. If you are interested in helping deliver the gifts, contact Jill Crouch. We still have a few angels left on the tree. Thank you for supporting the community in this way.

Office Closed

The church office will be closed over the Christmas holiday, Wednesday, December 25 and Thursday, December 26. The office will be open December 30 and 31. Then the office will close January 1 and 2.

Call the office and leave a message if you need something as the messages will be monitored. January Grace Notes will be published late due to the holiday.

Men's Tuesday Group

All men are welcome to join this group, which meets every Tuesday from 8 - 9 a.m. Come for God's life lessons, laughs, and little-known facts served up with coffee & donuts. This group offers fellowship for men who want to share their Christian life stories.

Ladies Christmas Dinner

December 3, GFFLC, Doors Open 5:30 p.m. The Ladies will be having a Christmas Dinner where they will be celebrating the birth of Jesus through music, food and fellowship. All proceeds go to the Youth Group's Mission trip. Tickets are \$15 per person.

Santa's Prayer Breakfast

Saturday, December 7, at Grace in the GFFLC. The breakfast starts at 9 a.m. Pre-register your family by emailing Emmy Thies at ethies@pekingrace.org.

December Birthdays

Theresa Wicker	1	Jodi Trombini	23
Jerry Potts	1	Tom Booth	24
Marianne Oltmann	1	Jill Powell	24
Linda Garman	2	Kathy Brush	24
Connie Disney	2	Francine Ghitalla	25
Randy McDaniels	2	Norma Hebner	26
Edgar Sandoval	2	Ory Patterson	27
Jack Wyman	3	Janet Ray	27
Karen Hohimer	5	Carla Jacobson	29
Morgan McDaniels	7	Barbara Faichney	29
Sarah Hunter	8	Shirley Purkel	30
Kelly Orrick	13	Mike Burks	31
Kenny Wiggins	14	Christina Lenox	31
Chris Booher	16		
Mike Williamson	16		
Jerry Dunbar	18		
Patrick Burks	18		
Mason Tennell	18		
Patricia Knight	19		
David Myrick	19		
Mark Werner	20		
Gary Heiser	22		



Connect!

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

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

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

Prayer Concerns

Austin

Camille Hunter

Dave & Janet Johnson

Gaylord Buss

June Parr

Mandi S.

Marnie Golden

Nanette Mulvey

Shannon Sandoval

Tammie Buss

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.

December 1
No Youth Activities

December 3
Ladies Christmas Dinner, 5:30-8 p.m.

December 4
Communion at the Pekin Estates, 2 p.m.

December 5
UMW Executive Meeting, 1 p.m.
Leadership Board Meeting, Upper Room, 6 p.m.

December 7
Breakfast with Santa, Hospitality Area, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

December 8
Remaining amount due for the Youth Winter Xtreme trip.
Angel tree gifts should be returned by this date!

December 10
Book Club, Pekin Estates Library, 2 p.m.

December 11
UWF General Meeting, Hospitality Area, 1 p.m.

December 14
Rehearsal for Cantata, Sanctuary, 9-12
Grace Food Pantry, 11 a.m. -12 p.m.-

December 15
Christmas Cantata at Grace, Sanctuary, 11 a.m.
Delivery of Angel tree Gifts 2-4 p.m.

December 19
Susannah Circle, Shelly B's /UAW Building, 11:30 a.m.

December 21
Saturday Servants, Hospitality Area, 9-11 a.m.

December 22 through January 12
Youth will not meet

December 23 through January 3
No Children's Ministry programming

December 24
Christmas Eve Services

- GFFLC, 4 p.m.
- Sanctuary, 11 p.m.