

Gates Presbyterian Church

February 2025 Harbinger

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From Rev. Laura Bachmann

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Luke 4:18-19

Last Sunday, we heard the story of Jesus’ first sermon in his hometown of Nazareth. Quoting the words of Isaiah, he proclaimed his ministry – to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. What a wonderful message this must have been for those neighbors whose entire experience had unfolded under the heel of the Roman empire. Here was one of their own, returned after a successful healing and teaching tour, to promise them a new freedom and release.

And yet, scarce moments later, as we will read tomorrow, the people begin to question all Jesus has said. He has continued speaking, warning them that like Elijah who sought out, not one of the countless widows of Israel, but a foreign widow in Sidon to bless during the time of famine, Jesus too will perform his miracles and blessings elsewhere. No prophet is accepted in his hometown, he reminds them.

What is all this about? Everything we know about Jesus says he comes to offer grace and peace and new life to all, regardless of who they may be, what people group they belong to, what gender they are or whether they are slave or free. Why the confrontational words with his own neighbors – people he grew up with who remember him as a child? What is this about?

The truth is, we don’t really know. Is he warning them that he will be rejected by his own people? That in freeing God’s people from oppression, releasing captives and declaring a year of the Lord’s favor, he will be working against leaders in his own town that may have taken advantage of their own people? Whatever the case, Jesus’ neighbors become so angry they try to throw him off a cliff.

All this makes me wonder – are there times when we hear the good news of Jesus, only to become angry when we realize that we ourselves are part of the systems of oppression and harm that Jesus has come to repair? The good news indeed offers a beautiful, life giving, renewing message for those who struggle under the power of the world’s greed and violence. More complicated is the realization that we too contribute to the things that harm our neighbors, maybe not directly by stealing or controlling, but indirectly by participating in systems that favor some and shut out others, or passively simply by standing silently by when others are targeted.

In this new day that is unfolding before us, we would do well to listen for God’s good news in the world and to consider where we can help amplify the message, where we can be the hands and feet that make this good news come true, and where we must reform our own ideas and perspectives to follow pathways in life that affirm the value and dignity of all people and actively work to provide space for all to flourish.

This is good and important work. Work we undertake together. Let us be on the way.

Peace, *Laura*

Congregational Meeting – Sunday, February 2, 2025

There will be a congregational meeting on February 2, immediately following worship, to receive the annual report and the approved 2025 budget.

Bible Study

Every Tuesday @ 4pm in room 1
Scriptures for each week are posted to the GPC website [here](#).

Library News about February 9!

Immediately after the Sunday, February 9 service, the library volunteers are hosting an Open House in the GPC Library. Grab a drink in the fellowship hall, then join us for cookies and an informal tour of the GPC library! See you then!



GPC Coffee House

Dust off those routines and warm up your instruments: it's time for another GPC Coffee House!

Join us on Saturday, March 1st at 6:30pm for an evening of fun in the Fellowship Hall!

[Sign-up online](#) for performers and volunteers. We need volunteers for set-up on Friday evening, dessert donations, and kitchen crew. Email Katie Steinmiller at kathryn.steinmiller@gmail.com with any questions. Thank you for your help!

Rebecca Circle will meet next on Tuesday, February 11th from 10:30-12:30 at the church.

2025 Ladies' Brunch

On Sunday, February 16th, we will have our Ladies' brunch at Red Fedele's Brook House starting at 12 noon. The cost is \$28.00 per person and due by Sunday, February 9th.

I hope to have the Director of the YWCA come and speak to us about their future vision at Churchview Commons.

Contact Barb with any questions (585-727-4246)



Mental Health First Aid Training – Saturday, March 8 from 9a-3p

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults. GPC is partnering with DelphiRise to offer this training to the public. Childcare & lunch will be provided. Full flyer & registration information is posted on the GPC website [here](#).

Worship Support Schedule

Date	Liturgist	Greeter	Communion	Usher
2/2	Tess McKeel		Jan Beutner-Shirtz, Bill Shirtz, Eric Vail, Kecia Binko, MaryBeth MacKenzie, Anne Tonery-DeMars	6
2/9	Barb Snaith	Jan Beutner-Shirtz		1
2/16	Paula Sousa			2
2/23	Katie Steinmiller			3



Greeters Needed

Greeter dates for February 2025 – January 2026 are now available on the sign up. Please consider signing up to fill one (or more) of these dates. You can sign up online here:

[Greeter Sign Up](#)

Mid-Day Services

These services will be paused for February 2025. We will resume on March 6 in room 2.

GPC Food Ministries

As noted in the Annual Report, we were able to provide 4,800 bag lunches to St. Joe's in 2024 along with 320 extra PB&J sandwiches. We also filled 1,328 weekend bags for children attending Neil Armstrong and Walt Disney Elementary Schools.

These ministries are only sustainable because of the generosity, dedication and grace of our community. Your donations of food and funds and time are the life force of these efforts.

The need continues. We are currently sending 80 bag lunches & 20 extra sandwiches to St. Joe's each week. The number of weekend bags has been steady at 32 per week, but it is expected that this number will increase in the coming weeks.

Our most consistent needs and rate of use are detailed below:

- Tuna cans - 40 5oz cans each week
- Fruit cups or applesauce - 112 per week
- Mayo - 3-4 quarts per week
- Cold cereal singles - 32 per week
- Tuna pouches - 64 per month
- Chef Boyardee singles or Mac & Cheese or other protein source - 32 per week
- Chips - 80 per week

We can always use treats for both St. Joe's and weekend bags - cookies, granola bars, Cheese & PB crackers, etc.

Thank you for helping to feed our neighbors.



Deacons

Please keep in thought & prayer ...

- Hannah Walker, who has been diagnosed with cancer in her kidney. Prayers for her and her daughter Lori.
- Kay Harder's niece, Callie, who underwent a heart procedure and is waiting for results.
- Donald White, a friend of Dan Charcholla, who slipped and fell, and needed surgery.
- Linda Beattie's 40-year-old cousin, MaKenna, who is now out of ICU after a major stroke. Prayers her and her family, that she has a full recovery.
- All who are experiencing significant losses due to the wildfires in LA, including the animals and their habitats.
- For children with learning disabilities and their families.
- All those living in California near these raging wildfires, especially Zach Fields, Patty's son and Ginny Smith's grandson, Mark Hadley, Mary and Keith's son, and Aidan Bachmann, Laura and Chip's son.
- Angelika Alvarez, recovering from surgery.
- Dick and Christy Stewart, Dick is recovering from a fall.
- Keith VanNostrand who is beginning inpatient chemo treatments for stomach cancer.
- Anne Tonery- DeMars sister Linda, now home from hospital.
- Alex MacFarlane's Dad, Steve MacFarlane, recovering from knee surgery.
- Tom Dykes, who is at home recovering after a mild stroke.
- Mary Waugh's daughter's employees at Paris Heating. They are both in the beginning of cancer treatments.
- All those who died or were injured in the attack in New Orleans. Prayers for all who love them.
- All those needing prayers and preferring privacy, whose names are known to God.
- For Churchview Commons and our partnership with the YWCA and Pathstone, that your Spirit may guide us as we prepare to welcome new neighbors to our community.
- The Dream Team as they begin their work, that God will guide them as they work together to discern God's vision for our life and ministry together.
- The valued immigrant workers and their families, with very real fears about plans for massive deportation. They are our neighbors. And prayers for those stepping up to protect and defend these vulnerable ones.
- For all in our nation, national and local leaders and community members alike, that we may work together to advocate for the common good in the months and years ahead.
- For peace to prevail in all places where war is killing and injuring people, destroying communities and polluting the earth. For leaders involved in negotiations, that wisdom will prevail and peace may take root. Help us, O Lord, to affirm our common humanity so that in our differences we may build together for justice and peace.

Prayers of thanksgiving for ...

- Rev. Tedd Pullano, who after a bad accident in NYC, is now back to Rochester where he will continue his healing process at a facility here. Thanksgiving prayers that he is now awake and able to communicate.

Our deepest sympathy and prayers for God's comfort and peace for ...

- The family of Karen Booth Leskovics, and all who loved her. Karen passed this week and is Fran and Bob Paro's cousin. Prayers for comfort, strength and peace.
- The family of Robert Reynolds and all who loved him. Robert passed on January 8th.
- The McKeel and Bilohlavek families whose Uncle/Brother-in-law, Allan, passed away. Prayers for all who loved Allan.
- Carol and Paul Brown's family. Carol's brother, Norman passed. Prayers for all who loved Norman.

- The family of Rose Sidore, and all who loved her. She is Phil and Linda Sidore's mother.
- Chip Bachmann's friend Hank Petri and all who loved Hank.
- Steve and Aileen Szatynski and family, Steve's Mom passed, prayers for all who loved her.
- The family of Carmella Judd. Carmella passed, prayers for all who loved her.
- Betty Blystone, her friend, Shirley passed, prayers for all who loved Shirley.
- The members of Spiritus Christi and all those who loved Father Jim.
- The family of Debbie Incardona, and all who loved Debbie. Debbie passed December 6.
- The friends and family of Frona Rossman, who passed on Thanksgiving Day. Prayers for all who loved Frona.

Continued prayers for ... The Ohman Family, Fong/Meyer Family, Balsley Family, Beattie Family, Nolan Family, Arcara/Ortman Family, John Belt, Buz Bauman, Julie Seide, Angelika Alvarez and family, Djeinaba and daughter, Amiera, Robert Reynolds, Tim Williams and Joanna from St. Joe's community, Katie Steinmiller's sister, Jessie, Tracy Burkovich's mom, Darrell, Linda Allen, Jill Corey, Laura's Aunt Carol and Uncle Mike, Kecia Binko's parents Bob and Marilyn Hall, Linda Beattie's friends, Barb Cardenuto and Kerri Weaver, Barb Snaith's cousin Chip, Katie Waugh Samson's employees, Jeff and Andrew, Doris Barney, Kathy Wakeman's mom, Ruth, Laura's brother in law, Peter Chemery, the Priestleys, the Indian State of Manipur, Ukraine, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen, South Sudan, the Congo, Bangladesh and all those experiencing violence, war and natural disasters.

Mission

"The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps." (Proverbs 16:9)

The mission work continues as we all recover from the beautiful excitement and busy-ness of celebrating Jesus' birth and welcoming the New Year. The monthly food collections will resume on February 22nd from 11:00 – 1:00. The St. Joe's lunch prep and Gates Chili weekend lunch ministry are in full swing. As always, pick up some extra items when you are at the store to help our hungry neighbors.

Many thanks to all who purchased Christmas items for the families at Cameron Community Ministries. They had an interesting donation this year, through the intervention of State Senator Jeremy Cooney. Amazon delivered a truck of returned toys (that they apparently weren't going to reshelve) to Cameron Street. Every single one was used to brighten the holidays for the Cameron kids!

Gift cards were purchased and taken to Grace House as Christmas gifts for the residents there.

Thanks as well to all who donated Christmas dinners to SWEM. About 45 meals were collected from GPC members.

Homesteads for Hope is planning to organize their basement storage space, and GPC has volunteered to help build shelving units. The actual work will likely take place in March. Stay tuned for more details, or contact Tom Ward (261-2175) if you know you would like to help.

Also in March, we will once again be serving a chili dinner to the Protestant Chapel Community at the U of R. The date is to be determined, so stay tuned.

Remember the Green Island Basic School in Negril, Jamaica? They are once again embarking on a building project to enhance the educational experience of their children. Session decided that it would be much more helpful to support them financially, rather than spending many thousands of dollars on transportation, housing, and all of the other travel expenses required. Mission approved a donation to this project.

See the separate article in this Harbinger about clothing collections for El Shaddai members and Cameron ministries.

Our winter daytime meetings have eliminated the need to drive in the dark on snowy roads. The next mission team meeting will be on Monday February 3rd at 10:00. We were delighted to welcome Sam Dykes to our January meeting. Join us – Mission is fun!

Clothes for El Shaddai & Cameron

We will be having an ongoing collection of SEASONAL, gently used, clean clothing and shoes/boots for El Shaddai Church & Cameron Community Ministries. Cameron doesn't have storage space, so they're only accepting **winter clothes currently**. Just drop your donation in the box in the narthex.

From SWEM:

Dear Pastor Laura,

All of us at SWEM want to thank Gates Presbyterian Church for your wonderful support of the 2024 Christmas Dinner Basket Program. Once again your congregation supplied an amazing number of dinner baskets. But even more necessary and appreciated were the church members who assisted throughout the process. You have welcomed the SWEM emergency Food Cupboard into your building since 2021, and have embraced our mission from the beginning. We apologize for the disruption that the Christmas distribution causes and appreciate the additional space that the church provides for the dinner baskets that must be stored for the two weeks before distribution.



Besides the dinner baskets/bags/boxes, we also needed to store and move the 275 produce/dairy boxes and 450 very large frozen chickens that we received from Foodlink. This year we had use of a storage facility for the chickens and produce/dairy boxes, but that required additional labor and transportation. We fed a total of 261 households consisting of 559 adults and 408 children. Those numbers included the 36 senior households who received their monthly delivery of groceries as well as the Christmas goodies before the general distribution began. Recipients from our zip codes who had registered for the program received the Christmas dinner basket, chicken and produce/dairy box. On Saturday and Monday when we had the drive-through distribution at Gates Presbyterian Church, we served 133 households (326 adults, 223 children). On Sunday we distributed at St. Monica Church on Genesee St. since we wanted to be in the city for those recipients who had limited transportation. Over 50 additional chickens were given to the seniors at Dunn Towers.



SWEM could not do the Christmas program without all the contributions from GPC and other churches and individuals. You truly are the hands of Christ here on Earth bringing joy to our community.

May God bless you all now and in the New Year,

Sincerely,

Jody LaRose, SWEM Board secretary



February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Th.	Fri.	Saturday
						1
2 9am Choir (1) 10am Worship 11am Congregational Meeting 11am Jr. Choir (2,3)	3 8:30am St. Joe's Sandwich Crew 9:30am Mission (1)	4 1pm Prayer Shawl (16) 4pm Bible Study (1) 6pm Dream Team (1)	5	6	7	8
9 9am Choir (1) 10am Worship 11am Jr. Choir (2,3) 11am Library Open House	10 8:30am St. Joe's Sandwich Crew 1pm Library Ministry 6pm Trustees (zoom)	11 10:30am Rebecca Cir (1) 4pm Bible Study (1) 6:30pm Deacons (1)	12	13	14	15
16 9am Choir (1) 9:30am St. Joe's Meal Prep (st. joe's) 10am Worship 11am Jr. Choir (2,3) 12pm Ladies' Brunch (offsite)	17 8:30am St. Joe's Sandwich Crew	18 4pm Bible Study (1) 7pm Personnel (zoom)	19 <i>March Harbinger Due</i>	20	21	22 11am Mission Collection
23 9am Choir (1) 10am Worship 11am Jr. Choir (2,3) 11:30am Session (1)	24 8:30am St. Joe's Sandwich Crew 1pm Library Ministry	25 4pm Bible Study	26	27	28	

This calendar reflects only GPC related meetings/events. For a full listing of our building use, please see our online calendar [here](#).

Useful Info

- ❖ Join us for worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. We'd love to see you in person in our sanctuary, but if that doesn't work for you, you can join us online via our [YouTube channel](#).
- ❖ Visit our [website](#) where you'll find a lot of information [about our church](#), our [Mission, Values & Beliefs](#), and learn about the various [local missions](#) that we support.
- ❖ Follow us on [Facebook](#) to stay up to date on news & events.
- ❖ Want to volunteer, but don't know where you'd fit in? Check out our "[How to Get Involved at GPC](#)" brochure. This document outlines the various committees & groups at GPC and some of the things they do.