

## CROSS CONNECTIONS—DECEMBER 2023

Dear Siblings in Christ,

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:5)*

This is one of my favorite verses, and it's a good reminder at this time of year. For many, December is a time of joy and wonder as the snow falls, the decorations go up, and Christmas songs fill the air. It is a time that is anticipated since we put it all away last year. Our kids have their holiday programs at school, family comes to visit (or we go and visit), and we celebrate with those we love. And, of course, there are the presents that bring happiness on Christmas morning.

December can also be a month filled with other emotions ... and great darkness.

For some, December is a month of grief and despair if a loved one is near death. We've watched them suffer. We've been at their side. We've made sure family and friends come near to say their goodbyes. There is no time to think of celebrations and presents as we wait.

For others, this can be a month of uncertainty, frustration, and fear with the loss of employment or other income. There is fear of the loss of a home. No one wants to be homeless – but especially at Christmas. Will there be a new job in time to provide a Christmas, food, or a home for the family?

Still others simply cannot consider these holidays a happy time, as they remember events of the past that have happened at the worst time. A tragic accident steals their loved one's life as they travel home for the holidays. Disasters don't honor the calendar. For too many, Christmas is a time of great loneliness.

I'm sure there are other emotions the people feel at this time of year. We may go out with smiles on our faces and say, "Merry Christmas!" but inside, the stresses and anxieties of life simmer.

Regardless of our emotions and what has happened or is happening - the message of Christmas is still the same. Christ's birth is celebrated because of the Hope we find in the promises of God. Jesus is the light in our darkness that reaches us in our grief, despair, uncertainty, frustration, fear, and loneliness. It is the Hope that Jesus brings that carries us through those heart-breaking times.

Whatever emotions this time of year brings, may you know the blessings of a God who will never let the darkness win.

In Christ,  
Pastor John



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of Pastor John**

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Held on Sunday, November 5, 2023**





## Take 5: Reconciling in Christ (RIC) explained

### **I've heard a little about this RIC. What is it about?**

Reconciling in Christ (RIC) is a program that is a public way for faith communities to see, name, celebrate, and advocate for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and people of color.

RIC started in 1983 with a few congregations in U.S. and Canada, the program has grown to include hundreds of faith communities. There are 29 other ELCA churches in the Greater Milwaukee Synod with the Reconciling in Christ designation.

### **Why does this matter?**

The Reconciling in Christ designation is a tangible signal to the community that our congregation is a safe haven, a place where all people are accepted and welcomed as they are. According to Reconciling Works, the demographic most often drawn in by RIC status is young couples with families as they seek to raise their children in ways consistent with their values and surrounded by diversity.

In addition, research from the Trevor Project shows that one in five (21%) LGBTQ youth reported that their religion or spirituality is important or very important to them. Nearly one in four (23%) LGBTQ youth reported engaging in prayer, meditation, or private reflection on their religion on at least a weekly or daily basis. All of this points to the importance of making sure congregations are safe and affirming places for LGBTQ members.

### **Where is Cross on its RIC journey?**

At Cross, we are just starting the process of exploring how to become an RIC designated congregation. We are putting together a Core Team of 3-5 members who are interested in developing our ministry of reconciliation.

### **How long will it take to become an RIC designated church?**

It's anticipated the process of becoming a Reconciling in Christ designated congregation will take 9-10 months. The process will conclude with a congregation vote.

### **Who can I talk to if I want to learn more about RIC?**

If you would like to learn more about our RIC journey please connect with Pastor John or any Mission Council member. For more resources and information, feel free to check out this website:

[www.reconcilingworks.org](http://www.reconcilingworks.org).

### **Mission Council**



## MISSION COUNCIL—October 26, 2023

**Present:** Pr. John Brink, President - Andy Johnson, Rachel Bennett, Joyce Etter, Claudia Kreuzscher, Secretary Patty Oldenburg.

**Excused:** Ryan Jazdzewski

**6:35** – Called to order.

**Opening Prayer** – Rachel shared a devotional from the book “Devotions for Church Leaders and Small Groups”, by Lynne Modranski, and led us in prayer. Claudia will share a devotional in November.

**MOTION** – by Rachel, second by Joyce, to approve the minutes from the September 14, 2023 meeting.  
– **Approved**

### **Pastors’ Report:**

Attendance each week is steadily going up which is encouraging. A new member session will be held on November 12<sup>th</sup>.

Pastor will be holding a first communion class on November 15th.

The Stewardship Team will meet the first week of November. He would like to have Stewardship be more visible year-round. He hopes to have something highlighting our stewardship each month and have quarterly celebrations.

On Sunday October 29<sup>th</sup> five youth will be confirming their faith in front of the congregation.

He has had several good conversations and visits with individual members about our RIC journey. There have been no negative comments.

### **Major Ministries**

- **Turkey Dinner update** – Marie Way is up to her elbows in preparation for the dinner. Andy is handling the publicity and has created a flier for the paper. There will also be yard signs in members’ yards for advertising. Please let Marie know if you can help in any way. There are sign-up sheets in the narthex. Doug Bochat will be organizing the parking lot route to ensure that those attending the 5:00 service will be able to park.
- **RIC Partner Update** – Messages have gone out that we are looking for members to volunteer to be on the RIC Core Team. We have one volunteer who has come forward and Pastor John has confirmed their participation. A few other members have expressed interest. Andy would like the core team in place by the end of November. We are looking for two more commitments. Andy & Pastor John will create a list of those who seemed interested if no one steps forward by then. They will contact them to confirm the timeline involved and emphasize the short-term commitment. In December we plan to have some bullet points available to spark discussion and to educate.
- **Seminary Scholarship Fund** – The Mission Council received paperwork of the breakdown of annual costs to attend Wartburg Seminary. Discussion was had.

**MOTION** - by Patty, second by Claudia, that Cross Lutheran Church will provide Joseph Brink with \$8500.00 per semester from the Seminary Scholarship Fund for the 2023/2024 school year.

- **Approved.**

**NOTE** – Pastor John abstained from the discussion and vote.

## MISSION COUNCIL—*Continued*

### **Minor Ministries**

**Business Board Update** – The Business Board has made and approved a motion that any checks written for \$2000.00 or less will require just one signature, instead of two. This addresses the bottleneck of unsigned checks.

**Building Insurance** – Business Board reviewed a presentation from Jim Peterson regarding our building insurance premium and policy. Following discussion, we will renew our building policy at approximately the same premium we are paying now.

**Scouts Key Request** – Bob will install a lock box on the outside of the church that will hold one key for the scout troops to use to enter the church.

**Annual Meeting Date** – Mission Council approved the date of February 4, 2024 for our annual meeting.

**Thank You Notes** – Andy

**Closed with The Lord's Prayer.**

**Meeting adjourned** – 7:50 p.m.

**Next Meeting – Tuesday, November 21, – 6:30 in person, church library.**

**Devotions - Claudia**

Respectfully submitted, Patty Oldenburg - Mission Council Secretary

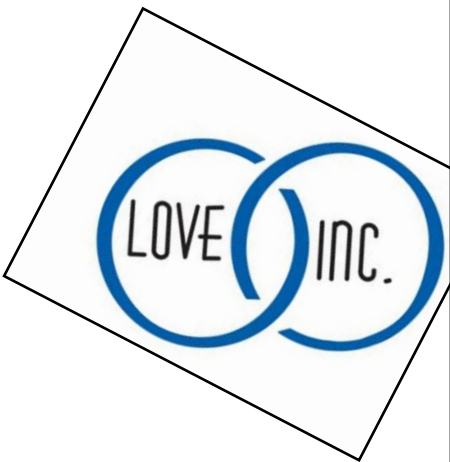
### LOVE INC.

Love, Inc. is always in need of volunteers to help in their food pantry or sorting through donations.

Please visit [love-inc.net/volunteer/opportunities](https://love-inc.net/volunteer/opportunities) for the most up to date list of volunteers needed.

For more information on how to donate and what to donate, please visit [love-inc.net/donate](https://love-inc.net/donate).

Make sure to follow Love, Inc. on Facebook (@Loveincwi) for the most up to date information on hours of operation, donations being accepted and more.



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/4 Zabler, Mr Eugene  
 12/4 Richards, Brody  
 12/5 Alby, Becca Christine  
 12/7 Manka, Mr Joshua (Josh)  
 12/7 Schmidt, Zachary (Zach)  
 12/8 Garland, Mrs Joyce  
 12/9 Guard, Mr Lowell  
 12/10 Olson, Mrs Eileen  
 12/10 Belau, Miss Kathy  
 12/10 Gesteland, Annette Joan (Annie)  
 12/11 Bourassa, Mr Scott  
 12/12 Glader, Mr Dan  
 12/12 Traber, Mrs Lori Marie  
 12/13 Tate, Kyle  
 12/14 Gaethke, Mrs Kelly  
 12/15 Ivy, Mr Ples  
 12/15 Stublely, Mr Charles (Chuck)  
 12/15 James, Mr George  
 12/16 Oldenburg, Mr Seth  
 12/16 Metzger, Mr Brett  
 12/17 Peuschold, Mr Dan  
 12/17 Geyso, Mr Matthew  
 12/17 Robers, Mrs Jessica



12/17 Mundt, Miss Merin I.  
 12/17 Klug, Jacob  
 12/18 Dey, Mrs Nancy  
 12/18 Holle, Mr Walter  
 12/18 Ladd, Rylan  
 12/18 Oliver, Matthew  
 12/19 Chart, Liam  
 12/20 Morris, Ms Carol  
 12/20 Olson, Karin  
 12/20 Lejcar, Megan  
 12/21 Spitzer, Mrs Laura  
 12/21 Gustafson, Mrs Su Ash  
 12/22 Lory, Mr Robert C.  
 12/22 Whiteside, Parker  
 12/23 Alm, Anya  
 12/24 Olson, Mrs Henrietta (Etta)  
 12/24 Everett, Gwen  
 12/27 Gruber, Mr Jeff  
 12/28 Erb, Mrs Terry Lynn  
 12/29 Biedrzycki, Mr Ben  
 12/30 Deans, Mr Michael T. (Mike)  
 12/31 Stammers, Mr Patrick  
 12/31 Kehrer, Ms Kristina

## CROSS PRAYERS LIST

Annie Bailey	Virgie Heineman
Cody Baumgart	Jim Kohler
Don Brink	Ken Krause
Jim Brink	Ryan Larson
Pat Christopherson	Bev Leonard
Mel Dey	Pauline Mann
Terry Erb	Howard Murrah
Liam Finucane	John Oldenburg
Tiffany Freiwald	Etta Olson
Jeff Gayhart	Bob Remer
Richard Griebel	Ginny Richards
Lowel Guard	Delta Shine
Michelle Harlan	Addison Smith

Mapenzi and Clarisse,  
 the children we sponsor through World Vision.

## CONNECTING TEAM



### Christmas Extravaganza—Open House

at: Bob & Marlene Remers—2810 Knollcrest Drive, Burlington  
Sunday, December 3—from 1-5pm.

Please bring a non-perishable food item or monetary donation. Enjoy a walk through themed rooms. Cookies & beverages will be served!



**Christmas Caroling:** Join us as we go to a few Burlington locations Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 10th. Gather at church at 2:15pm to sing and bring some joy to people in our community. We can car pool. If you can't carry a tune, carry bells or small rhythms instruments to play softly in the background. Bring a friend, a child, a grandchild. A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex so we know how many to plan for. We will be going to 4 or 5 facilities and then return to Cross Church for a light supper as well as cookies and hot chocolate.

## SERVING TEAM



**Thanksgiving:** Thank you for your donations to Southern Lakes Area Love, Inc. to provide Thanksgiving dinners for a local family in need. "\$36.00 will provide everything needed for a Classic Thanksgiving Dinner . . ."



**Christmas:** Two families were chosen from the Southern Lakes Area Love, Inc. Adopt-a-Family for Christmas activity. Two Christmas trees are hung on the hallway wall outside of the lounge. Ornaments with the wishes of the children and for family gifts are on them. After an ornament is chosen, sign your name and telephone number on the clipboard and take the guidelines information. Gifts should be returned unwrapped and with the ornament attached to them by December 4. The gifts will be delivered to Love, Inc. for the families to pick-up. Thank you for your willingness to provide the joy and love of Christmas for needy children and families by fulfilling their wishes.





World Vision is a Christian Humanitarian Organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. Motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, we serve alongside the poor and oppressed as a demonstration of God’s unconditional love for all people. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

Christmas story cards were received from World Vision for Clarisse and Mapenzi. The accompanying letter noted: “. . . the beautiful cards . . . tell the story of Jesus’ birth in a language they can understand. It’s a story that never grow old. When they receive your card, your sponsored children will learn about who Jesus is. And the story can be read to children too young to go to school.” A message was added to each card and they were returned with a donation of \$9.00 to assist with postage for each of them and an extra Christmas donation of \$200.00 to help meet the urgent needs of other children and families around the world.

Add – Paragraph 3: Sponsors are need for Clarisse and Mapenzi for 2024. Each girl can be sponsored for \$40.00 a month or both girls for \$80.00 a month. Checks can be written to Cross Lutheran Church with “World Vision Sponsor” noted on the memo line.

It was indicated that we can give with confidence because “In 2022, 89% of World Vision’s total operating expenses were used for programs that benefit children, families, and communities in need. World Vision provides hope and assistance to communities through our presence in nearly 100 countries.

## ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS THROUGH SIMPLY GIVING

If you plan to start giving through Simply Giving, please remember to contact the Financial office.

Forms are in the church office for new requests. We would be happy to email or mail you a copy to fill out and return. If you are changing your giving dollar amount, an email or signed letter is acceptable. Contact Bobbie Abel at [financial@cross-church.org](mailto:financial@cross-church.org).



## SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Consider a Contribution to the Cross Lutheran Lifetime Learner Scholarship. Are you looking to help others in our congregation who are guided by Christ get a post-secondary education?

Consider donating to the Cross Lutheran Church Lifetime Learner Scholarship Fund. To do so, mark "Scholarship Fund" on your giving envelope.

This annual fund (totaling \$1000 to \$5000) is awarded to up to three congregation members who are enrolling full time into a university or college for the first time in their lives. A heartfelt thanks for your consideration.

### DIFFERENT WAYS ON HOW TO GIVE:

- ◆ **MAIL a check to: Cross Lutheran Church at  
126 Chapel Terrace, Burlington, WI**
- ◆ **ON THE APP: Click "Give"**
- ◆ **TEXT: "GIVE" TO 608-888-9247**
- ◆ **ONLINE: Visit the homepage [www.cross-church.org](http://www.cross-church.org).**

### **NOTICE OF FILMING & PHOTOGRAPHY**

When you attend service or an event at Cross Lutheran Church, Burlington, you enter an area where photography, audio, and video recording may occur.

If you choose not to have your image used, please see one of the pastors, church leaders, or communications director.

## FINANCIAL REPORT—As of October 31, 2023



	INCOME	EXPENSES	
Jan.	\$22,793.76	\$33,431.50	-\$10,637.74
Feb.	\$26,787.59	\$25,281.34	\$1,506.25
Mar.	\$25,204.32	\$23,948.74	\$1,255.58
Apr.	\$21,188.86	\$23,814.90	-\$2,626.04
May	\$24,533.15	\$24,506.18	\$26.97
Jun.	\$19,230.78	\$20,935.44	-\$1,704.66
Jul.	\$22,732.04	\$21,557.26	\$1,174.78
Aug.	\$24,039.85	\$24,409.71	-\$369.86
Sept.	\$17,427.28	\$18,744.90	-\$1,317.62
Oct.	\$20,911.85	\$21,090.21	-\$178.36
Nov.			\$0.00
Dec.			\$0.00
<b>Totals</b>			-\$12,870.70
Major Maintenance			\$51,819.64
Parking Lot Fund			\$42,019.98
Parking Lot CD			\$125,000.00
General Scholarship		2024	\$450.00

### ENDOWMENT FUND BOARD

The next zoom meeting of the Endowment Board is scheduled for  
6 pm on Thursday, December 7.

### DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS: Assisting Ministers

Special Service	Saturdays	Name	Sundays	Name
Advent 1	12/02/23	Bob Remer	12/03/23	Ryan Jazdzewski
Advent 2	12/09/23	Anita Mucci	12/10/23	Bruce Tate
Advent 3	12/16/23	Ryan Jazdzewski	12/17/23	Barb Tate

# Cross Lutheran Staff & Ministry Leadership Teams as of May, 2023

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Saturdays In-person - 5pm

Sundays In-person & On-line - 9am (summer) 10am

\* Facebook: [@crossburlington](#)

\* [YouTube Channel](#)

\* Website: [www.cross-church.org](http://www.cross-church.org)

[Online Fellowship](#) - 15 minutes following worship

## CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor - Pastor John Brink

Church Office Administrator - Carol Fischer

Financial Administrator - Bobbie Abel

Custodian - Bob Remer

## CHURCH MUSIC STAFF

Organist - Ginny Richards

Part-time Organist - Brian Plehn

Contemporary Music Director - Brian Plehn

Joyful Voice Director - Brian Plehn

Chapel Bells Director - Open position

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Cross Office: 262-763-6570

Emergency: 262-757-8111

E-mail: [crossbur@cross-church.org](mailto:crossbur@cross-church.org).

Noah's Ark: 262-767-9095

Website: [www.cross-church.org](http://www.cross-church.org).

Facebook: [@crossburlington](#)

Instagram: [@crosslutheranburlington](#)

## BAPTISM PREPARATION SESSIONS

Call the office for further information

## LUTHERDALE REPRESENTATIVES

John Hakala

Blaine Warren

## SYNOD VOTING MEMBERS

Jim Hansen

Marilynn Hansen

## THRIVENT REPRESENTATIVES

Scott Herrmann: 262-716-5454

Call 800-Thrivent to direct your "choice" dollars

## MISSION COUNCIL

Andy Johnson, President

Ryan Jazdzewski, Vice President

Claudia Kreuzscher

Patty Oldenburg, Secretary

Rachel Bennett

Joyce Etter

## BUSINESS BOARD

Lois Berg, Director

Brett Metzger, Treasurer

Doug Bouchat, Secretary

## BUILDING & GROUNDS

Brian Erb

John Oldenburg

Terry Long

Bob Remer

Mike Ladd

Steve Schneider

## CONNECTING TEAM

Anita Mucci

Pam Murphy

Marlene Remer

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Terry Erb

Marie Way

Brenda Fanter

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Patricia Christopherson

Cheryl Theis

John Hakala

Chuck Stublely

## SERVING TEAM

Bonnie Flitcroft

Marilynn Hansen

Lisa Schneider

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Garry Giller

Tammy Hogan

Jenny Morehouse

Betty Olson

## ENDOWMENT BOARD

Marilynn Hansen, President

Doug Belot, Vice President

Blaine Warren, Secretary

Charles Stublely, Treasurer

Annie Bailey, Trustee

Sharon Johnson, Trustee

Beth Oliver, Trustee

# December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>3 8:50am Sunday School — <b>Sings</b> 9am Adult Bible 9am Coffee hour <b>10am Worship—Advent 1</b></p>	4	 <p>5 9:30am Gospel Gatherings 10:45am Staff Meeting 4pm Connecting Team 6:30pm Scouts Committee</p>	6 6pm Confirmation 6pm Praise Band 7pm Choir Rehearsal	7 6pm Endowment Fund Board Meeting via Zoom	8 1 <b>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b>	9 2 9am Men's Ministry <b>5pm Worship</b>
<p>10 8:50am Sunday School 9am Adult Bible 9am Coffee hour <b>10am Worship—Advent 2</b> <b>2:15pm Christmas Caroling</b></p>	11	12 9:30am Gospel Gatherings 10:45am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Webelos Meeting	13 6pm Confirmation 6pm Praise Band 7pm Choir Rehearsal	14 6:30pm Bear Den Meeting	15 22 <b>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b>	16 3 9am Men's Ministry <b>5pm Worship—Advent 3</b>
<p>17 8:50am Sunday School 9am Adult Bible 9am Coffee hour <b>10am Worship—Advent 3</b></p>	18	19 9:30am Gospel Gatherings 10:45am Staff Meeting 1:30pm Pastor John @ Pine Brook 6pm Building & Grounds Meeting 6:30pm Business Board	20 6pm Confirmation <b>6pm Noah's Ark Christmas Program</b> NO Praise Band 7pm Choir Rehearsal	21 11:15am Pastor John at Oak Park Place 7pm Ruth Circle	22 23 9am Men's Ministry <b>5pm Worship—Advent 4 w/ Cantata</b>	23 4 9am Men's Ministry <b>5pm Worship</b>
<p><b>24—CHRISTMAS EVE</b> <b>10am Worship—Advent 4 w/ Cantata</b> 4pm—Family Candle Service 10pm—Traditional C</p> 	<p><b>25—CHRISTMAS DAY</b> 9am Christmas Day Service</p>	26	27 2pm Pastor John at The Bay <b>NO CHOIR REHEARSAL</b>	28 	29 <b>REMINDER: COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORTS DUE 01/05</b>	30 5 9am Men's Ministry <b>5pm Worship</b>
<p><b>31—NEW YEARS EVE</b> 10am Wo</p>						



**Cross Lutheran Church, Burlington, WI**

**126 Chapel Terrace  
Burlington, WI 53105  
(262) 763-6570**

**Tuesday – Friday: 9:30 am to 2:30 pm  
Saturday: Open for worship at 5pm until after service.  
Sunday: Open for worship at 9am service (summer) &  
On September 10th services go back to regular time—10am**

**[WWW.CROSS-CHURCH.ORG](http://WWW.CROSS-CHURCH.ORG)**



**@CROSSBURLINGTON**