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# THE LIVING GRACE NEWSLETTER

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Issue 15

January 2025

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## In the Light

*Stories of faith from the people of Living Grace*

Ruth Hayden

As I reflect back on my life, I can see how God really held me in his hands, whether I could see it at the time or not. I can see where I had my plans but God had other plans for me. There is no time in my life where Jesus has not been an important part, but there are definitely times when I did not walk as close with him. I grew up in Colombia, South America, as a child of missionaries. We had a two-fold ministry. My parents had a school in our home for other missionary children, to provide them with a solid education without having to be sent to boarding school; and they worked in the local Pan American church as well. A lot of my memories revolve around music ministry, although I know there were other areas of ministry as well. Eventually, the emphasis changed. After we moved to Bogota (the capitol city) we gradually moved away from the Pan American church. I was happily unaware of the undercurrents in the churches and the precarious situation we were in sometimes. My parents started working as local teachers at one of the bilingual schools in Bogota. All of a sudden I went from being homeschooled to being with children of senators, bank presidents, ambassadors etc. I didn't fit in very well, but found a group of friends that included other teachers' kids, missionary kids and a few others. We started attending a Wesleyan church, and I was very happy and involved in teaching Sunday school, worship ministry, and the choir. My senior year we moved to Venezuela as import teachers (a huge change in pay and benefits). For the first time in my memory, we did not attend church. After I graduated, I decided to attend college in McPherson, KS. It was a huge shock for me, trying to fit into a new culture and so far from anything I knew. I was blessed to have the opportunity to get to know my paternal grandparents. They lived about 15 miles away and would often come pick me up for the weekends. I was blessed with a year with my grandfather before life changed again. (Continued on Page 7)



# The Bulletin Board

## Fairless Food Cupboard

The Fairless Food Cupboard is always taking donations of any nonperishable items, but for the month of January we are focusing on spaghetti sauce and spaghetti noodles, as well as any nonperishable food items.

## Operation Christmas Child

We are collecting items each month for Operation Christmas Child. For the month of January, we are asking for accessories such as jewelry, sunglasses, watches and hair bows. It is unbelievable how many boxes we were able to do last year and it is all thanks you all! We hope to do even more in 2025! Thank you!!

## An Hour of Prayer

The prayer group meets on Thursday at 10:00am. Together, we share scriptures, devotions, joys, concerns, and experiences. We laugh, cry and sometimes even sing together! More important, as we pray, we are growing in a closer relationship with God and as a family in the body of Christ. Please join us, and experience God's grace together. We hope you are able to join us!!!!

## Communion Schedule

Below is the Communion Steward Schedule for 2025.

1/26 – Russ & Arbie Mathias

2/23 – TaJuana West

3/30 – Ashley Lynch

4/27 – Russ & Arbie Mathias

5/25 – TaJuana West

6/29 – Ashley Lynch

7/27 – Russ & Arbie Mathias

8/31 – TaJuana West

9/28 – Ashley Lynch

10/26 – Russ & Arbie Mathias

11/30 – TaJuana West

12/24 – Ashley Lynch

12/28 – Russ & Arbie Mathias

(Please contact Ashley Lynch if you need to reschedule)

## The Widow's Ministry

The Widow's Ministry is in the start up phase of serving so if you or anyone you know is in need of any kind of help please contact Tim Mihal or the church office. This could be anything as simple as grocery pick up, raking leaves, seasonal decorating to the big things like housework, laundry, home projects or repairs. Please let us know if we can be of service to anyone.

## Upcoming Church Events

- January 11th = take down Greens 10am
- January 11th = Bingo & Chili cookoff with Cinnamon Rolls for dessert (judging for chili only) 5pm
- February 1st = (tentative date) Clue event/fund raiser put on by Youth
- February 8th = Preparing of Super Bowl Subs Fund Raiser for Youth pick up after church service Sunday 9th
- May 10th = packing of rice packets for missions 10am-2pm

## Living Grace Sports Fellowship

We are starting a sports fellowship! The goal is to foster connections & build relationships by periodically playing a variety of sports in an environment that is welcoming to people of all ages and skills. Initially, we are thinking of the following sports: flag football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, ultimate frisbee, golf, and more to come. Join us whenever and for whatever you want! If you are interested, please complete the contact form on our website.

## Annual Chili Cook Off

Please come and join us on Saturday January 11<sup>th</sup>. We are going to be holding our annual Chili Cook Off. If you have a great chili recipe now is the time to show it off! There is a trophy on the line 😊 Also, if you make great cinnamon rolls those are needed as well. Sounds strange but it is a great combination! Please see Hannah Stacy if you haven't already to sign up to bring something, even if it is just the toppings for the chili. It is always such a fun night! Hope to see a lot of you there! It will start at 5pm.

## Undecorate

If you are free on Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> of December at 10am, we could really use your help taking down all of our Christmas decorations. Your help would be greatly appreciated!

# tithes & offering

Worship the Lord in Giving



## Stewardship Report...

Date	12/1/24	Date	12/8/24
Attendance	P- 84 OL- 63	Attendance	P- 97 OL - 43
Offering	\$3,921.09	Offering	\$4,249.50
Date	12/15/24	Date	12/22/24
Attendance	P- 116 OL- 23	Attendance	P - 133 OL- 22
Offering	\$5,604.30	Offering	\$3,305.50
Date	12/24/24	Date	12/29/24
Attendance	P - 163 OL - 66	Attendance	P -92 OL - 40
Offering	\$	Offering	\$

Total Operating Expenses: \$ 209,560.00  
 Finances Needed Per Week: \$ 4,352.45

Special thanks to Cadyn & Jenna McKelvey who do our church sign out front. Jen Troyer & Nicole Denney who do all the bulletin boards in the church. You all do a **WONDERFUL JOB!!**

Weekly Sermons can be accessed on our Facebook page as well as the church YouTube channel.

## Those Serving our church in December.....

### January Media Technicians

1/5 Hunter Miller                      1/12 Jason Everhart  
 1/19 Gabe Kukuk                      1/26 Tyler L.

### January Door Watch

1/5 TaJuana West                      1/8 Matt Miller  
 1/12 Judy Werstler                      1/15 Ray George  
 1/19 Tyler L.                              1/22 Russ Mathias  
 1/26 Morris Chaney                      1/19 Persephone L.

### January Scripture Reader

1/5 Phil Glasgow                      1/12 Hannah Stacy  
 1/19 Mary Wuske                      1/26 Ken Jones

### January Kidz Church Helpers

None – Bible Olympics

### January Sunday School Teachers

K – 2: Sarah                              3 – 4: Nicole Denney  
 5 – 8: Tim Mihal                      High School: Sherri Kandel  
 Adult class: Pastor Carl              Nursery: N/A

### January Greeter – Josh & Hannah Stacy

January Ushers – Matt M. Ken J. Tim M. (alt. Moses T.)

### January Card Ministry – Mariah Ricker

January Communion Stewards – Russ & Arbie Mathias

# missions

our backyard and beyond



2024 was a busy year for Missions! Here are some highlights of what was accomplished this past year:

- In January we made a donation to St Jude Children's Research Hospital. St Jude does not charge the patients for treatments and shares their treatment advances to other medical providers.
- In February we made a donation to Fairless LifeWise Academy. Several members of Living Grace volunteer at Fairless LifeWise Academy. We also took a special offering and raised over \$800 to purchase graduation Bibles for the students.
- In March we made a donation to Doug Dennis Ministry. Doug serves in Venezuela and Columbia planting new churches, preaching and teaching and recording Christian radio programs.
- In April we made a donation to the tornado relief effort through the West Allegheny Conference.
- In May we made a donation to the Miracle offering held at the Allegheny West Annual Conference. The Miracle Offering will be used to help The Church in Africa. Evelyn's Girl Scout group collected personal hygiene products for RAHAB Ministry. Rosie gave the profits from the garage sales to Operation Christmas Child and the Fairless Food Cupboard.
- In June 11 volunteers went to Oak Hill, West Virginia. The Mission Committee paid the \$210 fee for both youth and adult volunteers. Wheelchair ramps were made and home improvements accomplished. We worked with 7 other churches from eastern Ohio. Oak Hill is a deeply impoverished community. **The 2025 mission trip again will be going to Oak Hill from Sunday June 22 to Saturday June 28. If you are interested in going please see Pastor Carl or Tim Mihal**
- In May the mission offering went to the Voice of the Martyrs. The Voice of the Martyrs is an international nonprofit organization whose mission is to defend the human rights of persecuted Christians.
- The August Missions offering was used to purchase lumber for wheelchair ramps.

Through the Widow's Ministry, 3 wheelchair ramps were made and several other projects were completed for members of Living Grace.

- September's offering went again to RAHAB Ministry.
- On Halloween we gave out 300 gift bags filled with treats, a gospel tract, and church information. Some of the youth dressed up in VBS character costumes to help hand out the treats. We also made a donation to the West Allegheny Conference hurricane Helene relief effort. So far almost \$500,000 has been donated to the Conference.
- In November our offering went to the Fairless Food Cupboard Toy drive.

We also had our Operation Christmas Child packing party. Over 50 people, 5 young and old, packed 408 gift boxes! A small lunch was provided. Some of the donations were homemade baby blankets and Haky sacks.

- Our December offering went to help pay the suggested \$10 shipping fee for each box. Sherrie brought to our attention a local lady and 3 children who needed some Christmas joy. Gifts were provided for all and the love of Christ shared. The Mitten Tree was filled with over 90 mittens, gloves, scarves, and warm socks. The donations will be given out to local children.

In 2025 Mission's will continue reaching out to those in need by sharing Christ's love for them.

We will continue:

- Support for Steeve, Emmanuel, and Marivella through Compassion International
- The monthly Fairless Food Cupboard donation suggestions
- The monthly Operation Christmas Child donation suggestions
- The Pill Bottle Ministry
- Widow's Ministry
- Mission trip to Oak Hill, WV June 22-28
- Rice Meal Packs May 10
- The St Pauly Used Clothing Shed which accepts all used clothing, shoes, belts. Purses, pillow cases, sheets, curtains, and stuffed toys.

2025 will be another year of service to others. Where do you fit in? There will be plenty of opportunities to serve and we hope and pray you will join us.

Thank you!

The Mission Committee

# GROUP 412

**BE AN EXAMPLE**

*Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.  
1 Timothy 4:12*

## LIVING GRACE YOUTH MINISTRY

[livinggracecc.org/youth](http://livinggracecc.org/youth) | [youth@livinggracecc.org](mailto:youth@livinggracecc.org)

Wow, hard to believe that 2024 is over! Group412 had an amazing year (below is our Year in Review). We continued to engage in God's word, have meaningful conversations & discussions and most importantly grow in our faith! It has been a privilege and a joy to continue to get to know your youth and we are thankful for your support!

As a reminder, beginning Wednesday January 8th, Group412 Youth will meet every Wednesday from 5:30-7pm. The intention and heart behind this change is to allow us to connect more consistently and creating more opportunities to grow.

On Friday (11/29) from 1-3pm the Sports Fellowship is playing flag football (at Navarre Sports Complex). This is not a Youth Event, but I know some youth have mentioned wanting to play. If your youth is planning to play, please complete either the full [Medical & Permission Form](#) or the simple [Event Permission Form](#).

### News & Important Reminders:

- We are having a game night on Friday January 31<sup>st</sup> from 5:30pm-8:30pm
- The 2024/2025 Health & Permission form is now available. To access, select the following link: [Health & Permission](#)

## GROUP412 YEAR IN REVIEW (2024)

[livinggracecc.org/youth](http://livinggracecc.org/youth) | [youth@livinggracecc.org](mailto:youth@livinggracecc.org)

### 12 Youth Nights

**Table of Context:** A guide to understanding ancient words for modern times.

**Everything Everywhere:** What to do when life feels like a lot.

**The Hills:** God created youth to shine!

**Messy Christmas:** A series about the joy of Jesus coming to Earth.

### 23 Bible Studies

**Jonah:** God uses extraordinary circumstances to break our selfishness and unite our lives to His glory.

**Heart of God:** A journey of discovery to the heart of God.

**James:** Faith that works.

**Ephesians:** We dive in with a challenge to live out the Gospel

### 8 Events / Activities

2 Game Nights

1 Alive Music Festival

1 Level Up Weekend

1 End of School Party

1 Seph Schlueter Concert

1 NFL RedZone Watch Party

### 7 Service Activities

Mission Trip  
Thanksgiving Dinner  
RAHAB Service  
Operation Christmas Child  
Youth Room Workday  
Potato Bar  
Super Bowl Subs

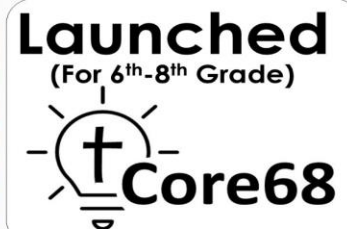
### Youth Church Service



### Level Up Weekend + Parent Night



### RAHAB Service



Youth Night @ Escape Room



Alive 2024



Bible Study @ Alive



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Prayer Group 10am  B – Randy Lint	3	4  Men’s Breakfast 8am  B – Owen Miller
5 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 11:00	6  B – Tyler Seese, David Miller, Jamie Askren, Ruger Huntsman	7  B – Alyssa Janson	8 Wednesday Night Reset 5:30 – dinner 6 – 7 Joy Club 6 – 7 Worship 7 – 7:45 Bells B – Loi Gaut, Kenzie Lanier	9 Prayer Group 10am	10  B – Tim Mihal & Ashley Lynch	11  Undecorate the church 10am  Bingo Night & chili cook off with cinnamon rolls 5pm
12 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 11:00  Nydegger Rented  B – Heidi Lynch	13	14 Trustee Meeting 7:00 p.m.  B – Lila Ware	15 Wednesday Night Reset 5:30 – dinner 6 – 7 Joy Club 6 – 7 Worship 7 – 7:45 Bells B – Zach Hughes	16 Prayer Group 10am	17	18  B – Rosemary Chaney
19 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 11:00  B – Jessica West	20	21	22 Wednesday Night Reset 5:30 – dinner 6 – 7 Joy Club 6 – 7 Worship 7 – 7:45 Bells	23 Prayer Group 10am	24	25
26 Worship 9:30 Sunday School 11:00	27  B – Vivian Denney	28	29 Wednesday Night Reset 5:30 – dinner 6 – 7 Joy Club 6 – 7 Worship 7 – 7:45 Bells B – Judy Michener	30 Prayer Group 10am  B – Keith Kerby	31  B – Mackenzie Glasgow	

# In the Light

*Stories of faith from the people of Living Grace*

I returned to Venezuela for a year to work as a secretary for the school I had graduated from and during that year, my grandfather's health deteriorated even more. He suffered a massive coronary shortly before I returned, and died shortly after I had arrived back in the US. This was a major trauma for me, and it took many years before I forgave myself for having left that year and not being present when he died.

As life continued, God's plans continued to unfold. I had my plans laid out, but I can see now where God said "I know the plans I have for you" and am so thankful that he guided me. I met Richard and ended up marrying him and becoming mother to 2 wonderful children. Our first years of marriage had many challenges, and I can honestly say that without God, our marriage would never have survived. We tried to find a church home and had started the confirmation classes with a church, when the bottom fell out. Suddenly there was a falling out between pastors and the pastor that we had connected with was pushed out. The church eventually split and we did not feel a connection with either side. It was difficult to do many activities with 2 children with special needs that needed individualized attention and an infant. We gradually quit attending church and decided we would try to do Bible education with the children in the home. As life got busier, this fell further and further away. Jesus was still part of my life, but was not at the forefront as he had been for so many years.

There is so much more that would take too long to tell, but in May of 2021 our life changed again. We came to Ohio to celebrate the graduation with 3 nieces. As we drove home, we both felt like it was time to move to Ohio. After talking and praying for a week, we made the decision to move. We gave 30 day notice at work, put our house and the market and started packing. This was a blind leap of faith. We had no jobs lined up, no where to live and no idea what options we would have for Hope with her disability. However, God was there and kept guiding us. I had never before felt his will so strongly or felt so much peace. God kept showing us his plan and providing. My sister had a house in Canton that she wanted to sell, but still needed some work from previous tenants and offered it to us as we moved up and made plans. As we drove to see the house on a quick trip to Ohio to start moving, we drove past Beaver Excavating, and were told it was a good place to work.

There was a job opening that could have been written just for Rich. My brother flew to Kansas to help us finish packing and drive the moving truck and other vehicles up. Everything just fell into place as we needed it. Rich got the job with Beaver that enabled me to stay home with Hope and work on getting everything taken care of. We found a house that called to us and everything worked out to purchase it. The Lord laid everything out as we needed it. As we settled in, one thing we both felt strongly about was finding a church we could be a part of. Over a period of 2 years, we researched so many churches and just did not feel peace with any of them. Then the county closed the road just north of us to replace a bridge and we had to detour to get home. We kept driving past a church and rekindled the desire to find our place. As we kept looking, Living Grace Christian Church showed up. I hadn't seen this name before and started reading about it. Everything we read seemed to match what we wanted and we decided to visit. Our first visit was amazing. We were welcomed by all, and so many people went out of their way to include Hope. The message was the first in the series of grace and captivated my attention. I wasn't sure if this was where we were supposed to be, but I definitely wanted to hear the rest of messages on grace. As we continued attending, I felt so much at home and at peace.

To end the story, God has taught me such an important lesson through all of this. I have always had a strong faith in God, but the longer I was on my own away from other believers, the easier it became to let things slip. I look back and see that I really didn't want to listen to Christian music when it was on the radio and would tune away from sermons. The more I am immersed in this wonderful family of God, the more I actively want more. I am eager to come to church, feel called to help however I can, and actively look for the Christian broadcasts on the radio. I feel like I am home and have found a family. Maybe it took those years away from everything to really appreciate the love and joy I have now.



December 11, 2024

Dear Living Grace Christian Church,

I hope this message finds you well. On behalf of LifeWise Academy, I want to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your generous pledge to support our mission of providing Bible teaching to school children during their school day. Your commitment to our cause not only empowers us but also enriches the lives of countless young learners who benefit from this invaluable education.

At LifeWise Academy, teaching children about faith and morality is essential in helping them navigate the complexities of today's world. Your support allows us to continue our work, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to learn about biblical principles, character development, and the importance of community. Thanks to your generosity, we can expand our programs, reach more children with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and impact even more lives. Together, we are fostering a generation of compassionate, responsible, and faith-driven individuals.

Once again, thank you for your incredible support. We are truly grateful to have you as part of the LifeWise family. If you have any questions or wish to learn more about our programs, please do not hesitate to reach out.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brandon M. Simmons". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the "S".

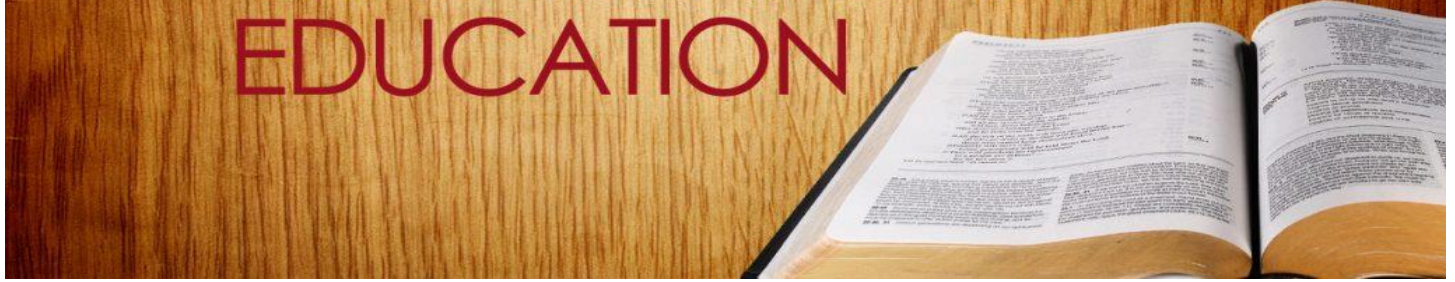
Brandon Simmons

LifeWise Fairless Program Director

→ LIFEWISE.ORG →



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



## January Christian Education Updates

Sunday School starts back up on January 5th. Our January Sunday School teachers are Sarah Hess (k-2nd) The Stacys (3rd-4th) Tim Mihal (5th-8th) and Sherri Kandel with our highschoolers. Pastor Carl is still teaching *The Israel Story* in the adult class. Grab some coffee and a donut and join us if you haven't, yet!

The KIDZ Church Kidz did an AMAZING job on their Christmas Program! Thank you to our kidz, Evelyn, Phil & Lisa, Trudy, Cory and our choir for all the help in making our program what it was. Our Birthday Party for Jesus was equally as amazing. Thank you again to the Glasgows and Hesses for leading the charge on our Spaghetti Lunch, and thank you to Persephone and Evelyn who provided the cookies to decorate! Everything was delicious and everyone seemed to have a wonderful time eating and celebrating the real Reason for the Season.

Bible Olympics start on January 12th in Smith Hall! Parents of our KIDZ church kidz, please feel free to bring your child's friends!! The more kidz the better for Bible Olympics! Group412 (past and present youth) will be helping out by being our kidz coaches! This is going to be a great 2 months for the children of our church.

Wednesday Night Reset starting January 8th

5:30-6:00 -Dinner in Nydegger Hall

6:00-7:00 - Nursery 0-4 years old

JOY Club K-5th

Group412 6th-12th

Worship & The Chosen Study for Adults

7:00-7:45 - Bell Choir

Our first Wednesday Night Reset (WNR) is a big Family Worship Night! We will all have a meal together and then all go upstairs to the sanctuary together for worship. We have a worship band coming in and they will be leading us through a 30 minute worship session with an awesome playlist. After worship, we will then break into our groups for the remainder of our time. Kids will go up to JOY Club, Group412 will meet in the youth room and Pastor Carl and give a short message to end the night.

Our Christian Ed. Committee is SO excited for WNR! We really hope it is well attended and will be wonderful nights of fellowship and worship. Please bring your family and friends. The more crowded the better! 😊

-Mariah Ricker  
Christian Ed. Director

## Mission Statement

**“Make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.”**

### To Witness

\*Pointing to Jesus in all we do

### To Disciple

\*Teaching how to apply Christ in everyday life

### To Worship

\*To glorify the Lord in all we do

### To Serve

\* To be a servant of the Lord and those He loves

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Pastor - Rev. Carl Kandel  
Secretary - Ashley Lynch  
Youth Director – Gabe Kukuk  
Youth Assistant – Trudy Kukuk  
Pianist & Choir Director - Cory Janson  
Christian Education Director – Mariah Ricker  
Custodian – Seth Lackey

You can find us on Facebook and YouTube!

Church Website: [www.livinggracecc.org](http://www.livinggracecc.org)

Church Email address: [livinggracecc@yahoo.com](mailto:livinggracecc@yahoo.com)

Church Phone: (330) 879-2340

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 9 – 2 p.m.

Living Grace Christian Church  
121 Basin St.  
Navarre, OH 44662

