

## Prayer Celebrations and Concerns

December 1-7, 2024

**New this week: John Rolland, brother of Mary-Beth Rolland; Angela Normington, friend of Margie and Lauren Coons; Chelsey Schreiner, daughter of Janice Walden.**

**Covenant members:** Helen Maden; Don Schalch; Jack & Joannie Carter.

**Covenant friends & extended family:** Anne Swanson, sister-in-law of Covenant friend Paula Rasanen; Emily & Andrew Meshnick and their unborn child—Emily is the niece of Barbara McCall and cousin of Betsy Erickson; Heather Oliver, cousin of Melissa Schmidt; Andrew Clarke, grandfather of James McGregor; Macy, cousin of Rhonda Rohn; The Frazier family, friends of Janice Walden.

**Covenant family & friends mourning the death of:** Edna Hulst, sister of Arlene Strikwerda; Dennis Swanson, brother of Covenant friend Paula Rasanen; Marie Turner, sister of Louise Douma; Erma Barnhart, sister of Kathy Nelson.

**Your continuing prayers are appreciated for:** Tom Schuster, Evelyn McMillan; Sandi Thompson-Royer, Covenant friend; Troy Griswold, nephew of Lori Voss; Sarah Day; Mark Middleton; Sally Nesser; Bill Wood; Brenda Moten; Pat Thielbar; John Wedberg; Barb Larsen; Cindy Blewett; Nancy McCulley; Larry Larsen; Patty West; Bill Lawrence; Russ McMillan; Don Peterson; Virgil Landry; Margaret Hickman; Joseph Hack; The people of Ukraine; Gina Fritz; Eve Casta; Jan Schaefer, sister-in-law of Bob and Nan Schaefer; Jodi Steidl; Tim Wade, father of Janna Doney; Charlene Duranceau, sister of Jan Schuster; Betty Matthews; Jane Stark; Bonnie Cameron, cousin of Jan Minardi; Robert Hill, father of Melissa Hardy; Jorge Asencion, Covenant friend; Gary Van Ess and John Van Ess, brothers of Vicki Alexander.

**World Mission:** Betsey and Eric Moe PC(USA); Bernie and Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta PC(USA) in Indonesia; Jed and Jenny Koball PC(USA) in Peru; Shelvis and Nancy Smith-Mather PC(USA) in South Sudan; Medical Benevolence Foundation in Haiti; Eric Miller in Kenya.

**Our elected leaders:** President Biden, Rep. Pocan, Sen. Johnson, Sen. Baldwin, Gov. Evers, and Mayor Rhodes-Conway.

### Birthdays

**Bob Taylor (12/3); Sally Davis (12/4); Steve Whayland (12/5); Michael Curtis (12/6); Gary Pivotto, Anne Lawrence, Cornelia Hempe (12/7).**

*Names will ordinarily stay on the prayer list for five weeks. If you would like to remain on the list longer, please contact the church office at 608-233-6297, Pastor Charlie Berthoud, Pastor Megan Berry, Pastor Jess Scholten, or Melissa Hinz, Minister of Music and Pastoral Care. You may also email us at [info@covenantmadison.org](mailto:info@covenantmadison.org).*

## Prayer

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United Methodist pastor, artist, and author, the Rev. Jan Richardson shares this blessing for our start to Advent from her book, *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons*.

“Here on the threshold of Advent, what does it mean for us to lean into this season once again, to give ourselves to these weeks that show us with such specificity and care that there is no place where God does not desire to meet us? How will we move through these days in a way that allows us to receive the gift that comes looking for us, that asks only that we open our hands, our eyes, our heart to the Love that knows our name?.... As we enter into this season of mystery, it seems fitting to open with an Advent blessing that asks for protection and encompassing in the dark. May you know yourself enfolded by the grace that dwells in these Advent days.”

### **A Blessing for Traveling in the Dark**

Go slow,  
if you can.  
Slower.  
More slowly still.  
Friendly dark or fearsome,  
this is no place  
to break your neck  
by rushing, by running, by crashing into  
what you cannot see.  
Then again,  
it is true:  
different darks  
have different tasks,  
and if you have arrived here unawares,  
if you have come in peril or in pain,  
this might be no place  
you should dawdle.  
I do not know what these shadows ask of you,  
what they might hold  
that means you good or ill.  
It is not for me to reckon  
whether you should linger  
or you should leave.

But this is what  
I can ask for you:  
That in the darkness  
there be a blessing.  
That in the shadows  
there be a welcome.  
That in the night  
you be encompassed  
by the Love that knows  
your name.

Jan Richardson, “A Blessing for Traveling in the Dark”, *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons*