



February 2026

the VINE

Dear Grand Avenue Church Family and Friends,

Well it's February, the month squarely in the middle of Christmas and Easter. This cold, dark month is one that most people just struggle through, remembering the recent holidays and looking forward to Easter and the warmer spring months to come. At first glance there isn't much memorable about February. It is a month that you just keep your head down and get through. However, from a Christian perspective I think this is what makes this month so valuable for us in our spiritual journey. You see this month is very reminiscent of the everyday mundane monotony life can sometimes become. Just doing what is in front of you and consciously or subconsciously wondering why. How is anything meaningful? Amazingly, the answer is the Christian Season that begins this February. This season is of course, Lent.

Lent is a season of sacrifice intended to re-centering our lives on God. A period in which we seek to identify that which is superficial and realign our lives with the deeper significance of God's truth. This mindful re-centering has the power to not only illuminate the dark month of February but also the dark months of our lives. If we examine this we can see the truth that the things in our lives only possess true value when they are connected to the permanence of God's Kingdom. That said, this realization should empower us to embark on a Lenten season that seeks to create God-centered mindfulness in all the circumstances of our lives. This paradigm shift is then intended to continue beyond the Lenten season to the rest of the year and be the governing force in our lives moving forward.

The realization that a life not centered on God is not a life at all is encapsulated by King Solomon's existential crisis in the Book of Ecclesiastes where he concludes that God is all that can matter in this life.

Ecclesiastes 12:13, "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

The implications of Solomon's struggle is that those who truly contemplate the nature of their existence can only validate it with God as the necessary center.

So in this cold, dark time of year, let us re-center ourselves on the light of God's revealed truth. Let each of us embark on bringing our lives to life by living for a purpose that knows no lifespan. A purpose that seeks to love God first in this world. In serving this purpose we are brought to life and become His instrument of light in His creation. This is the truth and purpose of our existence.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

- Our love for others is our greatest work.

Your Brother in Christ, *Pastor Vince*

CELEBRATE

Happy Birthday

Jake Freeland	2/3
Nelson Benning	2/9
Nancy Haacke	2/14
Bob Graff	2/17
Chris Killey	2/19
Will Kissinger	2/20
Renee Keller	2/22
Laura Didier	2/27

Happy Anniversary

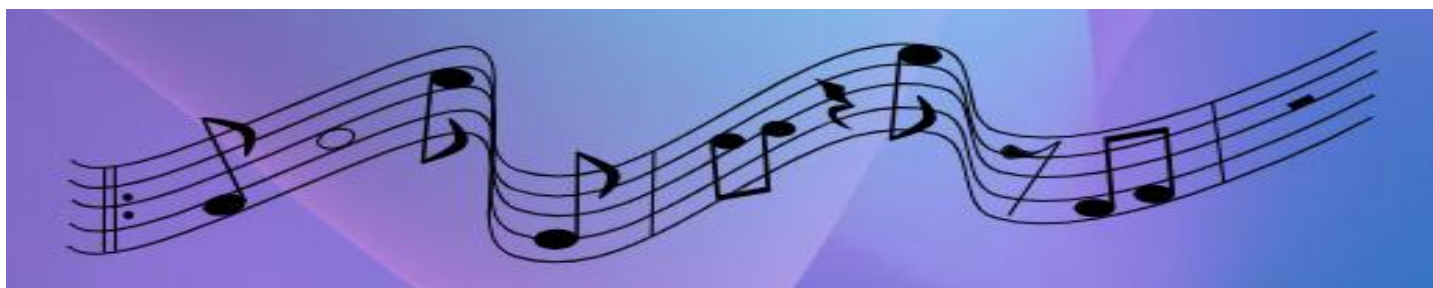
Larry & June Caro	2/19
Gregg & Erica Lentz	2/26

VOLUNTEERS

Thank you, Volunteers, for serving in our ministry!

Date	Usher	Liturgist	Cupbearer	Coffee Host	AV
2/1	Larry Maechtle	Rama Bharadwaj	Mary D.	Cheryl Wozniak	Scott Penkivech
2/8	Larry Maechtle	Jan Young	n/a	Bonnie & Maple	Scott Penkivech
2/15	Larry Maechtle	Lin Lohr	n/a	Judy, Deb, & Vickie	Scott Penkivech
2/22	Larry Maechtle	Ardelle Dionne	n/a	Netta, Gwen, & Ed	Scott Penkivech

*Please see sign-up sheet on the church bulletin board.



Want to Make a Joyful Noise???

The Music Committee is looking for musicians who would like to share their talents with our congregation throughout the Lent and Easter Season.

Let us know the Title, Composer, and when you would like to perform. We will find the perfect spot to place your musical offering in worship!!!

Just a thought: we would LOVE to hear "The Palms" – Jean-Baptiste Faure on Palm Sunday! Or how about "The Holy City" – Adams/Weatherly on Easter? Or something contemporary? Instrumentals also desired and welcome!

Contact Ardelle Dionne, Sue Merrill, or Stacy in the GAUMC Office.

MISSIONS & OUTREACH



Non-Perishable Donation Needs

Pudding Snacks, Canned Fruit, Fruit Cups, Applesauce, Boxed Potatoes, Beef Stew, Soups, Pasta, Pasta Sauce, Canned Chicken, Oatmeal, Peanut Butter, & Toilet Paper.



Upcoming Meal Week

Our next opportunity to serve meals at the Portlight Shelter with Christ the King Church is **February 23-27**. Funds are available for reimbursement of your meal costs.

Please consider helping with this mission by providing a side dish, helping serve a meal, or being a meal leader. Sign up using [this link](#) or call the GAUMC office at 262-284-9478. Thanks for considering being a part of this important ministry!

Current Shelter Needs

Gift Cards (gasoline, Walmart, grocery stores, Dollar Tree, & Fast Food), toilet paper, size 4 diapers, aluminum foil, toilet bowl cleaner, Febreze Air Mist Air Freshener, Laundry Detergent Pods, and Mucinex Congestion & Cough Medicine.

[Portlight Shelter Amazon Wish List](#)

Craft Booth Update

With the closing of Port's Artisan Market, a downsized version of our Craft Booth has relocated to Fellowship Hall. Craft Booth items are now available in Fellowship Hall during coffee hour – Seroogey's Candy Bars, greeting cards, dishcloths, and other items can be found on the pink table and are priced as marked.

To make a purchase simply put your cash or check in the small Craft Booth envelope provided on the table and then put that in the larger manilla envelope that is on the table on Sundays, or drop off in the church office.

FAITH GROUPS & ACTIVITIES



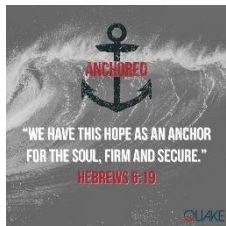
February Events

February 8th from 1:30-4:00 pm– Winter Olympics Party

Celebrate the 2026 Winter Olympics with an afternoon of fun, group bonding, and a little friendly competition! Youth will be invited to compete as teams in a variety of modified winter games including hockey, skiing, bobsledding, and more. And no need to worry about the cold, because all games will take place indoors. Please RSVP by February 1st.



**Please drop off/pick up directly from First Congregational Church (131 N. Webster St. in Port).*



We have a great group of Lighthouse Youth and adults attending the Quake retreat in the Wisconsin Dells from **February 13-15**.

This will be an awesome weekend of worship, speakers, workshops, a service project, and of course, some waterpark fun! Please keep this group in your prayers as they travel, learn, play, and grow in faith together!

February 22nd from 6:30-8:00 pm – Birthday Kits and Game Night

We will be putting together birthday kits to deliver to our local food pantries. Donations of cake mix, frosting, candles, and festive plates and napkins will be collected by each of our 5 supporting congregations and assembled by our Lighthouse youth. After assembling, any remaining time will be spent enjoying a game night together.



Help the Lighthouse Youth spread some birthday joy to those in our community!



Lighthouse will be once again be collecting items such as cake mix, frosting, candles, etc to assemble “birthday kits” to donate to our local food pantries. These kits will help ensure that pantry guests can enjoy a birthday celebration on their special day. **Be on the lookout for the birthday cake collection poster at each church with more details about what items are needed.**

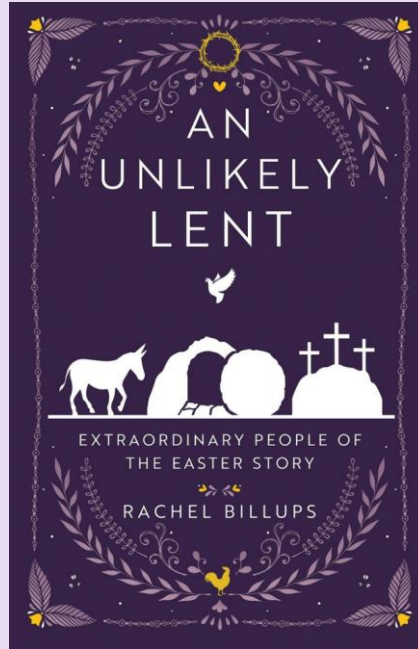
Please submit all donations by Wednesday, February 18th.

Lighthouse events are open to all students in grades 5-12.

Have questions or want to get involved?

Contact Director Christin Flucke at 262-483-9582 or email christin.flucke@lighthouseyouth.org

FAITH GROUPS & ACTIVITIES, cont.



Six Week Lenten Study Group **Wednesday's from 11:00 am - 12:00 pm** **Feb 25th through April 1st**

We will be studying the book **“An Unlikely Lent: Extraordinary People of the Easter Story” by Rachel Billups**. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus are at the heart of the story of Easter. But the resurrection was not witnessed in isolation; it unfolded before a crowd. What might the stories of those women and men teach us today? How will they help us step into the story of Easter?

"This beautifully written Lenten resource invites reader to encounter Scripture through the lives of unlikely biblical figures reminding us of God's irresistible grace.. With fresh insight, Rachel Billups lifts up people on the margins to show us how their stories speak to our own places of struggle and hope. This is a fresh invitation to an old journey drawing us deeper into God's transforming love". - Tom Berlin

Books are \$16 each and will be available on the counter in the narthex on Feb 3rd.

Sister Circle - Thursday, February 26th, 7:00 pm **Christ the King, 420 W Whitefish Rd, Port Washington**

In February, we will focus on Robin's Memory Bear Ministry. Robin makes keepsake bears. We will be cutting, sewing and stuffing the bears. Please bring a sewing needle and scissors, if you have them.

As we help with the memory bears, we will discuss our book, The Resolution for Women - New Revised Edition by Priscilla Shirer, **Part II: This is what I have, Section: My Heart**.

Questions, please contact Mary at 414-828-4675 or mariwags@gmail.com.

FAITH GROUPS & ACTIVITIES, cont.



As we enter the New Year, do
you feel called to deepen
your prayer life?



Would you like to develop a
closer personal relationship
with our Creator but aren't
sure where to begin?

Join us

in a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere
to pray for others, creation,
and the world.

Everyone is welcome!

Bring your prayer concerns and
requests, or simply join us in prayer,
thanksgiving, and music.

One Voice in Prayer Community Prayer Group



1st Wednesdays

beginning January 7th
9:30 am - 10:30 am

Meeting at
Christ the King
Lutheran Church
420 W. Whitefish Rd
Port Washington, WI

*...God's Spirit is right alongside
helping us along. If we don't know
how or what to pray, it
doesn't matter. He does our praying
in and for us, making prayer out of
our wordless sighs.*

Romans 8:26, 27 Message Bible

For more information

Contact Leslie Braun
lesliebraun050@gmail.com
(262) 227-8905

THANK YOU NOTES

Our Craft Booth at Port Artisan Market, started by Margaret and Merton Lueptow many years ago, is now closed. Thanks to Cathy and Dave Guse, Jeff Killey, Rama, Sue, Lin, and Mary Kae, all Booth items and fixtures have been returned, donated, recycled, saved for the summer plant sale, or ... placed in the Fellowship Hall for anyone to buy (Check it out!).

We are so grateful for the support of all of you at Grand Ave. You created interesting items, donated wonderful things, and shopped at the downtown booth. We owe a HUGE THANK YOU to our artists and crafters Bonnie Pachner, Kay Hamann, Margaret Lueptow, Rob Schafman, Gus Geib, and Denise Wanninger, --- and many more of you who quietly left donations of puzzles, books, and other items to sell in the church library. We'd especially like to thank Joan, our ADRC gal and best customer, who found many goodies to take home! Thank you, Joan!

We could not have closed down our booth, without the HUGE help of the Guses who bagged up many, many books and brought them to the Washington County jail and thrift stores for continued reading. We owe TONS OF GRATITUDE to Jeff Killey and Rama, who loaded up Jeff's truck to make trips to St. Vinnies as well as the recycling center! Also, Thank You to Ernie and Laurie Commons who have taken many of our collectibles to auction for the church.

Last, but never least, Stacy continually made signs for the store, for the closing, coupons for Family Promise, listed and continues to list our items for sale online --- and let us interrupt her work many times to pick her brain! THANK YOU, STACY!!!

Cathy and I would like to thank you for your very generous monetary gift. I appreciate so much your well wishes that Cathy passes on to me as I continue my interim assignment. It's this spirit of love and support that continues to keep me trusting in the value of being part of a community where we can "weep when one another weeps and rejoice when one another rejoices". God bless you all! – Dave & Cathy Guse

Dear Grand Avenue Church Family,

Thank you so very much for the kind Christmas card and generous gift. I love working in the office and helping everyone carry out God's work. Thanks again for thinking of me! Blessings, Stacy Peters

CHURCH NEWS

Lenten Worship Schedule

Our Ash Wednesday worship will be an ecumenical service with Christ the King at CTK. We are also doing an ecumenical worship series again this year on Wednesday evenings during Lent. GAUMC is hosting the February 25th Supper & Service. There are plenty of opportunities to get involved as a reader, greeter, special music performer, food donor, or kitchen helper. Look for the sign-up sheet at church.

Lent Series: Tell Me Something Good

FEBRUARY 18 - ASH WEDNESDAY

5:30 PM Supper | 6:30 PM Service at Christ the King ELCA

FEBRUARY 25

5:30 PM Supper | 6:30 PM Service at Grand Avenue UMC

The good news is....so good it catches us by surprise (wedding at Cana / Parable of the Mustard Seed)

MARCH 4

5:30 PM Supper | 6:30 PM Service at Parkside Community UCC

The good news is...great love for God and neighbor (woman with alabaster jar washes Jesus' feet; do for the least of these)

March 11

5:30 PM Supper | 6:30 PM Service at Lighthouse Youth Ministry
(supper at Grand Avenue UMC)

The good news is...the impossible is possible (feeding of the 5,000 in Mark; God can accomplish abundantly more than we ask or imagine)

March 18

5:30 PM Supper | 6:30 PM Service at First Congregational UCC

The good news is...protection and care for the vulnerable (Jesus blesses children, care for those on the margins)

March 25

5:30 PM Supper | 6:30 PM Service at Living Hope ELCA

The good news is...rooted in justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Jesus refuses to condemn woman caught in adultery; you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy, and faithfulness)

YOU ARE INVITED!

These events are a collaboration of First Congregational UCC, Grand Avenue UMC, Parkside Community UCC, Lighthouse Youth Ministry, Christ the King ELCA, and Living Hope ELCA

CHURCH NEWS, cont.



Bishop's Convocation of Laity 2026 - "Practicing Hope"

March 7, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

For those of you who are unable to get to the Portage UMC for the March 7, 2026, event, know that **Watch-party locations** are also available at no cost, offering the opportunity to participate online alongside others in your community.

Register today! [Click Here To Register!](https://wisconsin-reg.brtapp.com/LaityConvo2026) (<https://wisconsin-reg.brtapp.com/LaityConvo2026>)

We hope you will join us for this meaningful and hope-filled event.

Watch parties in the South East District are being held at:

Bristol United Methodist Church

8014 - 199th Avenue (highway 45)

Bristol, WI 53104

and

Brown Deer UMC

5736 W Brown Deer Rd

Brown Deer, WI 53223

If you are a member of **The United Methodist Church** and a disciple of **Jesus Christ**, this gathering is for you. Join laity from across the conference as we connect with **conference leadership** and come together in worship, learning, and fellowship around the theme **"Practicing Hope."**

Together we will explore:

- What does it mean to practice hope?
- What did Jesus teach us about practicing hope?
- How is our Bishop calling us to live out hope today?

We're so very grateful that two area churches will be opening their doors for all to join the event.

The registration deadline is February 21, 2026, at 4:00 pm.

Everyone needs to be registered.

CHURCH NEWS, cont.



January 26, 2026

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

In recent days, events in Minnesota and beyond have caused deep grief, concern, and alarm across our connection. The use of lethal force in public spaces, the detention of naturalized citizens, members of our indigenous communities, children, documented and undocumented immigrants, and the treatment of other vulnerable persons have weighed heavily on the hearts of many in our church. These actions have unsettled communities, strained trust, and intensified fear among those already living at the margins.

Scripture reminds us that “when one part of the body suffers, we all suffer with them (I Corinthians 12:26). As a Connectional church, we are reminded that we are one body that cares for and needs each other. The whole body is suffering, right now, today! The violence being perpetrated on our streets, the loss of safety, and the inhumane treatment of God’s children, are hurting us all. We cannot stay silent in the face of the evils of our day.

The United Methodist Church deplores the use of violence, fear, separation, and intimidation as a means of creating social order. Such means do not build beloved community. We reaffirm our longstanding commitment to the sacred worth of every person and to the way of peace taught and embodied by Jesus. We stand against the separation of children from their families. We detest the inhumane, evil actions that are perpetuated by governmental authorities.

Our Social Principles are clear: “We reject governmental use of threats, extortion, unlawful detentions, extrajudicial killings, and other forms of coercion to silence political opponents and those objecting to unlawful or immoral government policies and practices.” They further affirm that the church has both the right and the responsibility to educate and equip its members to be advocates for justice in the wider world (§163D).

This is a moment that calls for prayerful courage to speak against actions that are bringing harm to our neighbors. This is our time to have an effectual faith that stands with those who are suffering. This is our faithful response to our baptismal vow that summons us into what is required of us “to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8). We must continue to work for justice to help heal the brokenness in our communities and in the world.

We ask you to pray for peace and for justice. And we ask that we work together with our communities so that we can create a world where the sword is turned into plowshares, and the lion lays down with the lamb. May we be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, who empowered by the Holy Spirit, do our part to bring comfort, just practices, and healing for all God’s suffering people.

In Christ’s peace,

Bishop Tracy S. Malone
President, Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church

CHURCH NEWS, cont.



Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange

Help fill the time on these cold winter nights by doing a new-to-you puzzle! A Free Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange is now available in the Church Library. You can take a puzzle and bring it back when you are done or donate a used puzzle of your own.

We accept puzzles of all levels. Please secure the puzzle pieces in a zip-lock bag inside the box or tape the box shut to keep pieces from escaping. If a puzzle has a missing piece, please note that on the box.



RaiseRight™

Simply the right way to fundraise

Did you know our RaiseRight program earned over \$700 in donations to our church last year? RaiseRight allows you to support our church simply by using pre-paid gift cards to do your shopping. You get a gift card for it's full value and a donation goes right to our church.

Go to raiseright.com and use our enrollment code 45F776D958L66 to begin shopping or use the form on the counter in the Narthex to get physical cards.

♥ Buy Your Valentine a Gift They Love with RaiseRight ♥

If you're looking for Valentine's Day gifts that are unique and memorable, consider giving a RaiseRight gift card.

- A gift card to their [favorite restaurant](#) or a [Starbucks gift card](#) for your weekly coffee dates.
- A gift card to help [start a home improvement project](#).
- A gift card for a delivery service like [DoorDash](#), [Uber Eats](#), or [Instacart](#).
- A gift card for a [spa treatment or makeup](#).



United Methodist Corner

I have been reflecting lately about the future of the church, in part, because of the current state of the churches where I am serving as an interim pastor. The prophet Isaiah wrote to the Israelites who were in exile in Babylon. The message was also meant for those left behind who saw their sacred Temple and city in ruins, not unlike the pictures our nation saw after 9/11. Isaiah wrote, "Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Is. 43:19-20).

Those former things included what Israel would refer to as their glory days; the day when King David ruled over them as a monarchy. Now those days are behind them. Some even questioned whether God may have permanently punished them and exiled them for their transgressions.

I believe that God is telling us as the church not to remember the former things like when Sunday schools were packed with children and pews were packed with worshipers. All was not well back then despite the numbers. We have seen a tremendous shift in our society over the past 40 years in its perception of the church. An ever-growing number are questioning the relevance of the church. How do we understand the words of our Lord saying to us, "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?"

John Wesley' view of the church was that it is a was a Holy Spirit-led community of believers. He saw the church as less defined by structure (e.g. rules and committees) and more shaped by a shared and active pursuit of holiness and love. Holiness for Wesley was both personal (practices of piety and spiritual growth) and social holiness which includes works of mercy and justice. He also believed in ecumenism. He understood the catholic (universal) church to the entire body of believers in which the local church congregations being "branches" of this larger body. I remember in my former days singing with the children, "I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together! All who follow Jesus all around the world! Yes, we're the church together."

I believe God's promise of "doing something new" includes the future of the church, which Jesus initiated and the Holy Spirit has empowered over the past 2,000 years. Perhaps we need to consider what former things need not be remembered and to be more open to the movement of the Holy Spirit who will lead us towards the day when Jesus' prayer will be answered, "May they all be one."

In Christ's Love, Dave

CALENDAR

February Events

Worship Service	Weekly Sunday at 10:00 am	Sanctuary
AA Meeting	Weekly Wednesday at 8:00 pm	FAC
Private Meeting	Weekly Thursday at 5:30 pm	FAC
ADRC Meal Distribution	Mon – Fri from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm	Kitchen
Community Prayer Group	Wednesday, February 4 at 9:30 am	Christ the King
Port Washington Woman's Club	Monday, February 9 at 11 am	Fellowship Hall
Social Principles	Tuesday, February 10, 1 pm	Gathering Area
Friendship Club	Wednesday, February 11, 6:30 pm	Fellowship Hall
Administrative Council	Thursday, February 12 at 7 pm	Zoom
Stockbox Distribution	Tuesday, February 17 at 10:00 am	FAC & Parking Lot
Ash Wednesday Supper/Service	Wednesday, February 18, 5:30 / 6:30 pm	Christ the King
Newsletter Articles Due	Monday, February 23	Office
Family Promise Meal Week	Monday, February 23 – Friday Feb. 27	Portlight Shelter
Lenten Supper/Service	Wednesday, February 25, 5:30 / 6:30 pm	Grand Avenue UMC
Sister Circle	Thursday, February 26, 7 pm	Christ the King

GRAND AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

505 W Grand Ave Port Washington WI 53074 262-284-9478 www.portumc.com

Pastor:	Vince Pepin	pastor@portumc.org
Pastoral Assistant:	Dave Guse	senegaldave1@gmail.com
Administrative Assistant:	Stacy Peters	office@portumc.org
Lay Leader:	Dan Benning	bennida01@att.net
Admin Council Chair:	Mark Grams	mgrams@wi.rr.com

Bishop: Dan Schwerin / District Superintendent: Rev. Dr. InSun Lee

Did you know you can help support our church through the fundraisers below?

- **Aluminum Can Collection** – Put your aluminum cans in the barrels at the back entrance into church and we'll recycle them for you.
- **RaiseRight Scrip (Gift Card) Program** – You can order gift cards for businesses you already shop at and the church gets a donation. Forms are on the counter in the narthex or go to www.raiseright.com and use our enrollment code of 45F776D958L66.



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church™

Orders are due in the church office on the 1st Sunday of each month. Please remember to include your payment. You can also order on-line at www.raiseright.com Your order of gift cards will be ready for pick-up at church on the 2nd Sunday of the month.

Questions? Contact the Kay Hamann at 262-284-3168 or khamann530@yahoo.com

*Each retailer makes a donation to the church for every gift card purchased.
For a complete list of over 700 participating retailers, go to www.raiseright.com*

RETAILER	QTY	TOTAL
Amazon \$25		
Amazon \$100		
Arby's \$10		
AutoZone \$25		
Barnes & Noble \$10		
Barnes & Noble \$25		
Bath & Body Works \$10		
Bath & Body Works \$25		
Bed Bath & Beyond \$25		
BP \$50		
BP \$100		
Burger King \$10		
Cousins Subs \$10		
CVS Pharmacy \$25		
CVS Pharmacy \$100		
Dick's Sporting Goods \$25		
Dick's Sporting Goods \$100		
Exxon \$50		
Fleet Farm \$25		
Fleet Farm \$100		
Home Depot \$25		
Home Depot \$100		
Jiffy Lube \$30		
Kohl's \$25		
Kohl's \$100		
Kwik Trip \$25		
Kwik Trip \$50		
Kwik Trip \$100		

RETAILER	QTY	TOTAL
Meijer \$25		
Meijer \$50		
Meijer \$100		
Mobil \$50		
Noodles & Company \$10		
Panera Bread \$10		
Panera Bread \$25		
Papa Murphy's Pizza \$10		
Pick'n Save(WI) \$25		
Pick'n Save(WI) \$50		
Pick'n Save(WI) \$100		
Piggly Wiggly (WI, IL) \$25		
Piggly Wiggly (WI, IL) \$50		
Piggly Wiggly (WI, IL) \$100		
Qdoba Mexican Grill \$25		
Sendik's Food Market \$25		
Sendik's Food Market \$50		
Sendik's Food Market \$100		
Speedway \$25		
Speedway \$50		
Starbucks \$10		
Starbucks \$25		
Subway Restaurants \$10		
Target \$25		
Target \$50		
Walgreens \$25		
Walmart \$25		
Walmart \$50		
Walmart \$100		

Total number of gift cards ordered: _____

Total amount due: _____

Name _____ Date: _____

Make checks payable to
Grand Ave Church