

Our Savior's Voice

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

359 Leonard Street N - West Salem, WI 54669

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org

608-786-0030

September 2020



Vision Statement:

***We are a church centered in Christ,
inviting all into a community of worship,
nurturing all to be disciples of Jesus.
Together we reach out to make a difference
here and throughout the world.***

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September 2020

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Pastor's Reflections



The constant of Jesus...and

Do you get the sense that we are at “hold your breath” moment? With schools set to re-open, and college campuses filling up (sort of), we are all waiting to see what happens next. Will schools be able to pull it off safely? Will there be an uptick – or even a surge in Covid cases? Will we be back to virtual education in a month – or will we be able to maintain education in person?

Who knows...just hold your breath...be patient...and wait and see.

Or better yet, just “take a breath and relax.” For while the pandemic has forced us to make changes, lots of them, and quickly, there are still some constants in life. One of them is Jesus.

Jesus is Master, Savior, Redeemer and lots more. But most of all, Jesus is still Lord over all of creation (check out Philippians 2:5-11), and nothing can keep us from God’s love in Jesus (Romans 8:38-39). Even Covid trembles in the presence of Jesus!

And the very presence that brings Covid to its knees, embraces us and holds us in light and life.

But, there is still the reality of Covid, and lots more. We are called to be faithful to Jesus, yet wise and caring for those around us. (Note my comments on Luther’s reflections in the July newsletter.)

So it is, that in the confidence in God’s care for us through Jesus, we have carried on the ministry to which we have been called very differently. No in-building worship, and lots of other activities postponed. Yet, at the same time, ministries have continued. Worship in a variety of forms, Bible study, Sunday School, Feed Our Children, the Food Pantry, pastoral care, weddings, funerals, baptisms, prayer ministries, and more. None of it the way we have

done it in the past, but all of it done faithfully, proclaiming the good news of Jesus, and changing lives.

Because, Jesus is Lord!

Now what? As we move into the “hold your breath” moment, and instead “take a breath and relax,” what’s on tap?

Glad you asked! Here’s what’s on tap these days:

Worship – *“No, but...”*

No, not yet. But maybe soon. The current county recommendation would allow for up to 50 in a space, with masks, and distancing. The Council will discuss this at its next meeting, and IF things remain stable, we may resume worship in the building.

We have a team already in place to develop appropriate safe procedures. We also have a “tech team” looking to upgrade our tech resources so worship will be as smooth as possible. And the Worship Committee will consider how our worship might look, in the absence of singing and other “standards” of worship.

All looking ahead to worshipping together, but also knowing we might have to “hunker down” again. So, whatever we do, we will be agile and flexible.

But in the meantime...YouTube worship, DVDs, Driveway Communion, and Zoom Communion continue. Use them! And when we resume in-building worship, we will continue with YouTube, DVDs, Driveway, and Zoom. Lots of possibilities!

Because, Jesus is Lord!

Education – *“Only one priority!”*

Well, maybe two. Of course, our priority is to share faith with children, young people, and even a few older folks as well. That's why we are here, and that's what we do.

But we also care about the safety and wellbeing of our children (young and old!). For that reason, as the school year begins both Sunday School and Confirmation remain virtual. We will use videos and online material to share faith.

Ideal? Hardly! But we refuse to risk your child or your family. We'll be faithful and teach faith, but do it safely.

Because, Jesus is Lord!

In-building Ministries – “Look out!”

And all the rest of our “in-building” ministries? From quilting to Norwegian Dinner, from Choir to Committees, from prayer shawls to After School?

Not happening, not yet!

But instead, “look out!” The church is still at work. How? Take a look in the mirror. There is the church – YOU are the church. Where you are, the church is, and where you are at work, for the sake of Jesus and the gospel, the church is at work.

So maybe we can't do the many ministry tasks we've done in the past, the way we always did, but we can still do “God's work, with our hands.” Wherever you are “out there,” you can be a difference maker. So, “look out” and see what opportunities God places before you – and go for it! After all, YOU are where the church is!

Meanwhile, know that there is a lot of ministry still happening. Our prayer team is active, we've got folk ready to work with our online education ministries, and we are connecting via email and letters with all sorts of folk, from our young people to our seniors.

Meanwhile, we have singers and musicians leading our YouTube worship, and we continue to support our partner ministries – from the Food Pantry to Campus Ministry to World Hunger.

Because, Jesus is Lord!

Finally, know that as eager as you are to return to this place, we are eager to have you back. We yearn for the time when the halls are full of the energy of our young people, and coffee is flowing in the Gathering Area. When we are cooking lutefisk and planning to share the proceeds to meet community needs around us. When the voices of the choir mixes with the voices of infants as generations worship together. When meetings end, but people remain to converse and connect. The signs of life together.

Not yet, but soon (we hope). When the time is right. And then we will rejoice. Not because we can be in a building, surrounded by familiar walls, but because again – *as has happened throughout history* – God has been with us.

And because...you guessed it...Jesus is Lord!

Pastor Jon



You are invited ...

Sunday, September 20
2 PM
at Veterans Memorial Park Shelter #4



Join the Forward Fearless & Faithful Team for outdoor fun and a time to be together. We will have games, there are trails for

walking, and a big open space to visit with one another.

The event in August was a great success, so we're doing it again.



Please wear your masks and bring your own lawn chairs and snacks/water.



We Are Worshiping!

We are still worshiping! Lots of ways, lots of times!

Online videos bring a message, prayers, and even music. Posted by 6 PM on Saturday on YouTube, you can access them through our web site:

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos. You can watch any time, and you can even catch up on previous weeks.

DVDs are also available of our online service. If you, or someone you know, does not have the ability to watch online, but can use a DVD, let us know. Currently, we have ten DVDs going out each week – we can do more!

Drive-way communion – we come to your house, and outdoors, safely distanced, we share a brief (10-15 minutes) worship with communion. You provide your own bread and wine/juice, the driveway, and maybe even some neighbors – we bring the Word and a message. Contact us to get on the list. We've done almost 20 of them this summer – with over 200 participants!

Zoom Communion...join us on Sundays at 10:30 in virtual worship, using the Zoom platform. Easy to do – just head to our home page, and click on the link. Have bread and wine/juice available as we take 25 minutes to hear God's Word and celebrate the sacrament.

For more info and updated details, check out the Covid-19 Response page on the web site.

And don't forget to check the website for ...



Children's Message

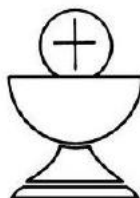
Sunday School

Driveway Holy Communion



Here's how it works – **you invite us** to come to your home – we would stand safely distanced, in the driveway, as we offer a scripture reading, prayer, and Words of Institution. You would supply your own bread (of whatever kind), and

either wine or grape juice. About 10-15 minutes, and we are on our way. We will have gathered as God's people, around the gifts of bread and wine, hearing the Word and the words of promise, and sharing together a brief meal.



And ... if you have others in your neighborhood – members of Our Savior's or just those who you know are disconnected these days, they could join us, also safely distanced. Wouldn't it be just wild to have two or three family groups, all safely distanced, sharing in God's gifts of grace?

We think this will be a way to connect, even briefly, and share the sacrament with you. Maybe even a few minutes of conversation (we really do miss you all!).

If you are open ... and interested ... give us a call (you can leave a message directly for one of us), or contact us via e-mail.

Christian Education Update

Sunday School



We have been paying close attention to what the schools are doing, listening to advice from the medical professionals and health department, and engaging in conversations with leadership here at church. At this time, we believe it is in the best interest of our students, teachers, and families to begin our Sunday School year virtually, knowing that our goal is to be able to gather again in person. We very much miss being together and seeing everyone.

That means we will continue to record the weekly lesson and put it on the church website – www.oursaviorswestsalem.org. As time goes on, we will re-evaluate where we are and pivot accordingly. When it becomes safe to be back in the building with limited numbers, we may be able to bring back a few classes each week and take turns when you're here. Watch for details in the future.

As with everything else these days, nothing is “normal”. In addition to Sunday School beginning, this is the time of year that we do the blessing of the backpacks in worship, and it is also the time of year we gift our 4K class with their *Whirl Story Bibles* during worship. Lots should be going on right now. But, not to worry, we have a plan ...

... Backpack blessing on the children's message video on September 13th

... 4K Bible blessing on the worship video on September 20th

Please note we will be distributing the backpack tags and Bibles on September 13th. Check out the next page for information.

You should have received letters about all of this along with registration forms. If not, please let Pastor Jean know.

To get us off to a good start now ...

You are invited ...



Sunday, September 13

9:15 AM – 10:15 AM

**ALL Sunday School
Re-connecting
and 4K Bible gifting**

in the Prayer Labyrinth

(on East Avenue across from the parking lot)

(wear your masks and physically distance)

**(watch the website for updates if the weather is
questionable)**

Meet your teachers

Pick up materials

Pick up backpack tag

Return registration form

And watch for a *surprise!*



Confirmation

Confirmation ministry for 6-9th graders is on tap again this fall! Plans are being finalized, but most of the instruction will be online (YouTube and Zoom). Details for 7-9th grade will be shared with parents at orientation sessions on September 2 – login information has been mailed out to families. 6th graders will have a “meet and greet” with Corey Sjoquist that same evening.



Classes will begin September 9. Specific class schedules will be distributed at the orientation sessions.

More kids are ALWAYS welcome – and can join anytime!
Contact Pastor Jon for more information.



First Communion Instruction

Over the last two weeks of August a number of our soon-to-be 6th graders engaged in First Communion instruction. We hope to finish off the group by the end of September.

If your new 6th grader missed the class, it's not too late (actually, it's never too late!). Contact Pastor Jon or Pastor Jean and we'll get you set up.

And for the new 5th graders? We're looking forward to working with you next spring!



Affirmation of Baptism

Congratulations to our 2020 confirmands. It wasn't easy, but we got it done!

During the week of August 24-30, 27 of our young people affirmed their baptisms in several different venues. Three more remain – and we're making plans to give them that opportunity as well.

Please keep our confirmands in your prayers as they seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus, even, and especially, in challenging days like these!

Ella Beal	Jacob Helgeson	Adrianna Massman
Lauren Bell	Amalia Hemker	Tyler Mathison
Kendall Burkhamer	Jacob Hickey	Anna McConkey
Eva Clements	Kendra Hillyer	Brett McConkey
Alena Donahue	Ruby Hughes	Regan Peterson
Zachary Fitzpatrick	Morgan Kammel	Morgan Quackenbush
Emma Fortier	Brennan Kennedy	Brandon Riley
Madeline Giblin	Ben Larson	Sophie Taylor
Elly Goodenough	Tyler Leren	Dylan Wiese
Jaden Hammes	Jesse Loging	Noelle Zarecki

To help us nurture these disciples, we had a great team of group guides – they did a GREAT job – thank you for your work with our kids!

Dawn Beal	Ann Donahue	Adam Kennedy
Jennifer Bell	Jaime Fortier	Mike Larson
	Bonny Goodenough	

Please keep all of these disciples – young (and a bit older) – in your prayers as they continue their journey of life and faith.



We will be finding ways to keep in touch in these next weeks and look forward to the time we can reconnect in person again. Feel free to reach out if you want to talk or have ideas of ways we can gather.

Take care, and stay safe!

Wendy Kane

youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org

A Little Bit of This and That...



THANK YOU to our special helpers for the Affirmation of Baptism services:

- Bonny Goodenough (with some help from Elly) finished off the banners that had been started, but not completed back in March.
- Dean Olson set up the sound system for our six services at the Lion's Shelter on August 30.

LOOKING AHEAD to when we can worship again together:

- The "Tech Team" (Cody Anderson, Ken Isler, Dean Olson) are working on developing plans for improved technology in the sanctuary, including upgraded video, audio and WiFi. Watch for updates in the months to come.
- The "Re-opening Task Force" (Wendy Kane, Jaime Fortier, Brian Linse, Melody Schmitz, Beth Clements) are working to plan a safe environment when we do return. When we return, we want it to be as safe as possible!

Adult Bible Study

Bible study, via Zoom (or dial in as a conference call) continues, with two opportunities each week!



Wednesday from 9:30 to 11 AM we discuss the gospel reading for the coming Sunday. Some great conversation and probing discussion – all from the comfort of your home!

Sunday from 11 to 11:30 AM we check out one of the other passages appointed for that weekend. Again, lots of good connecting and exploring!

Details on how to join us are on the Covid-19 Response page on our web site, or call the office and speak with Pastor Jon. Either way, we'll get you on board!



Synod School of Theology

Over the past years, the Synod School of Theology has met at Our Savior's. Now, with the pandemic around us, classes will begin this fall via Zoom, on Thursday evenings, from 6-7:30 PM. Reformation History and the Holy Spirit will be the two classes offered. Cost is \$20 for each class, plus any books needed, and you can join the class from the comfort of your own home.

Reformation begins September 10 and concludes October 15. Holy Spirit runs from October 29 through December 10. Take one or both – classes are taught by pastors from our synod.

Contact Pastor Jon for more information!



Off They Go ...

It's hard to believe but the summer is winding down and we are beginning to look to the fall and the activities that may be happening. One event will be our college students heading off to campus (hopefully). Now is the time to help them on their journey ... why not get a (some) Kwik Trip card(s) to help with their travel expenses ... *that's one way to make sure they have gas money to come home and visit!*

Also ... whether they are going to WTC and living at home or traveling to the far ends of the country, we need our college **students' emails and campus addresses**. Please get that information to Pastor Jean when you know it. We like to keep in touch during the year and let our students know we are thinking about them and keeping them in our prayers.

Scrip Cards Available

We continue to have Scrip cards available for purchase in the office during the day. We ask that you call ahead to make sure someone will be there to get the cards for you.



Just a reminder ... we have Kwik Trip, Kwik Trip car washes, Woodman's, Festival, and Ship Shape car washes.



Proceeds go to help World Hunger and Our Savior's Youth programs.





Feed Our Children Summer Lunch

The preliminary numbers are in from another successful season of Feed Our Children Summer Lunches:

- 877 lunches served
- 710 snack portion servings sent to the Boys & Girls Club (BGC) as they had strict restrictions on food prep so couldn't receive the lunches
- 189 bags of groceries for families
- 99 volunteers prepared food, served the vehicles, and delivered meals to homes

Left-over groceries were donated to the Food Pantry and left-over snack items were donated to the BGC. Watch for more information in October, as we thank our leaders, volunteers, financial supporters, and business partners, without whom we could not have done this.

Angie Hemker



Care and Share Food Pantry

The Care and Share Food Pantry remains open, Saturdays, 10 AM to Noon. As the pandemic continues, your support is critical! As the building is still locked, please call the

office to ensure that we will be able to receive your gifts. And, thank you!

Stewardship for All Seasons Update

Let's be honest – we couldn't do what we wanted to do this year – thanks to Covid! Our Stewardship challenge – and plan for 2020 was to significantly increase our youth ministry programming, and to introduce a very different Wednesday worship experience. Not happening!



So, what are we doing? We are being flexible and agile, and we are investing in new technology, the kind of stuff we need to respond to a changing world, not just now in Covid times, but into the future. Covid struck, we have responded, and God is still at work in our midst!

But what about next year? We still want the expanded youth ministry programming, and we still want to craft a new worship experience on Wednesday.

So...for 2021...that's our goal!

1. Maintain the excellence of our ministries.
2. Respond to a changing and challenging world by expanding our connection with young people and young families.
3. Develop a new Wednesday worship experience.

You will be hearing more about this in the coming months. For now, consider how, even in the craziest of days, God has continued to bless you. And then consider how you can be a part of making a difference in the lives of others, especially those who really need that in this time of fear and uncertainty.



Congregation Council

The Congregation Council met at Steve Ahles' home on Monday, August 10, with President Ahles presiding. At this meeting the council:

- Began with "driveway communion" worship.
- Heard income has stayed fairly strong and expenses have been different due to changes in ministry.
- Heard from the Pastor's about ministry – worship, education, communions, baptisms, weddings, funeral.
- Learned about plans for fall ministries – continuing worship videos, Zoom communions, driveway communion, confirmation and Sunday school virtually
- Forward, Fearless and Faithful Task Force planning in-person gatherings third Sunday in August, September, and October.
- Stewardship for All Seasons Team planning for fall and 2021. Our energies pivoted to upgrading technology in 2020, and focus for 2021 will go back to increasing youth ministry position and creating new Wednesday night worship experience.
- Heard about various property issues – roof repair, Tech Team working on technology issues, Johnson South lease extended for another year.
- Waiting for new guidelines from Health Department to help with re-opening plans. Groups will be meeting in the near future to come up with plans for worship and re-opening when the time is appropriate.
- Motion to send the \$2400 budgeted for camperships to Sugar Creek to help with operating costs in the absence of campers this year.

The next meeting of the council will be held Monday, September 14 at 7:00 PM via Zoom. If you would like to know more about the ministry of the council, contact Steve Ahles or one of the pastors.

Financial Support Ministry



**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

THANK YOU!!! *Thank you for your continued financial support of our ministry together!* You make a difference in the lives of children and adults, in those across the globe, and those right here in our midst.

As the summer comes to a close, and we find new ways to carry out long-standing ministries, we continue to work to bring hope and the life of Jesus to a broken and hurting world. Your financial support makes that happen. You are always welcome to mail in your envelope, or use one or more of the electronic giving options which we have available. You can find more information, and directions on starting your electronic giving, on our web site at www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/giving. Among the giving options:

- **Electronic transfer**...directly from your financial institution.
- **Mobile app**...Easily create an account to set up recurring donations and review your giving history.
- **Text**...The first time you use texting, you will be asked to register your payment information; after that, enter the amount and send the text.

However you do it, give in confidence! At Our Savior's we value integrity in our financial practices. Transactions are made via a secure web portal, and are facilitated by Vanco, an industry leader in online financial products.

***Thank you for your support.
We are grateful for your partnership as
we proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ!***



Shopping Online?

Our Savior's has an account with "Amazon Smile." If you shop with Amazon, you can support our work together by designating your "Amazon Smile" contribution to Our Savior's.

Thrivent Choice Dollars



Remember that if you are a Thrivent member you may have "Thrivent Choice Dollars" to direct. Our Savior's is one of the many potential recipients of your choice dollars, but your direction needs to be made each time. A number of Our Savior's folk direct their choice dollars – do you? See Thrivent's web site for more information or stop by the office and we will help you out.



Pastoral Acts:

Baptism – Hattie Bateman – August 2

Baptism – Axel Schlifer – August 7

Funeral – Herb Hetland – August 14

Wedding – Kayla & Kyle Wright – August 14

Wedding – Emily & Jake Wiedeman – August 21

Wedding – April & Alex Premo – August 28

September Dates for your calendar:



September 2 - Confirmation Students and
Parents Orientation

6 PM - 6th grade @ Prayer Labyrinth

6 PM - 7th/8th grade via Zoom

7 PM - 9th grade via Zoom

September 6 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

September 9 - 6 PM - Confirmation classes begin
via Zoom

7 PM - First Communion class via
Zoom

September 13 - 9:15-10:15 AM - Sunday School
re-connecting @ Prayer Labyrinth

September 13 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

September 20 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

September 20 - 2 PM - F3 Event @ Vets Park #4

September 27 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

Web Site: www.oursaviorswestsalem.org

OUR SAVIOR'S STAFF

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Kathy Brisson, Organist

Eric Sorenson, Senior Choir Director

Karen DeSchepper, Financial Secretary

Josh Corning, Custodian

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