

# Our Savior's Voice

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

359 Leonard Street N - West Salem, WI 54669

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

608-786-0030

## November 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.***

# Our Savior's Voice

## November 2020

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## Pastor's Reflections

### *Turning a corner – but which one?*

A politician recently declared that we are “turning the corner” on Covid. Well, yeah, we are, just not the corner we want to turn!

Now, before you accuse me of being “too political,” I’m not. I’m stating the facts. The pandemic is worsening. And all the reliable medical advice says the same thing. It’s going to get worse before it gets better. Yes, people are tired of Covid. But Covid is not tired of us!

That’s why even though we are still the church, still in mission, we just aren’t opening the building for worship. And you know what? People are noticing. Just the other day I delivered a DVD to one of our older folks. As she met me on her driveway the first words out of her mouth were, “My doctor says to thank you for not opening up for worship.”

Oh, how I hate those words (we would love to open up – we miss you all!), but she is right. We can’t. Not until we turn the right corner.

So, what corner have we turned? Maybe more than one...

The most obvious corner is the corner in the depths of winter. It’s getting darker and colder. The winter will be long and trying. The virus is not going away on November 4<sup>th</sup>...or December 4<sup>th</sup>...or January 4<sup>th</sup>...that’s just the fact. We may be moving closer to a vaccine, but even then, it’s going to be a while.

Yes, we are tired of Covid. And yes, Covid is not tired of us!

The corner we have turned is into a long, cold, and dark stretch, with little light yet at the end of the tunnel.

But there's another corner being turned. We move into November. The month of "thanksgiving."

And then December...the month of advent and incarnation.

And then January...the month of new beginnings.

Long, cold and dark, yes, but God is still at work. And so...

- We celebrate the gifts of life as we "thanks-give."
- We look with great hope to the fulfilment of God's promises, promises which God keeps in a drafty barn at another time that was long, cold, and dark.
- And then with renewed vigor we enter a new year, knowing that no matter what is to come, we are already in the embrace of a loving and caring God.

Yes, we are tired of Covid. And yes, Covid is not tired of us! But neither is God!

And so, we turn two corners, taking us in opposite directions. One filled with fear and uncertainty; the other filled with Jesus, with grace, and with hope.

What's the result? No contest! Remember one of my favorite passages...

*"I am convinced that neither death, nor life...nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*      Romans 8:38-39

Not even Covid!

That confidence, that hope, moves us forward. We may be in times of fear and uncertainty, but we also have Jesus. And that moves us around yet another corner.

For months we have worked to re-understand how to be the church in a changing world. We've scrambled to put together worship in new formats, figure out how to share and nurture faith, and how to meet the needs of people. And we've done it. Not always perfectly, but it's been happening.

But now...now we are beginning to look ahead. To turn the corner and look to new things, to new possibilities. We're still in a pandemic, we still need to be safe, but now we are looking ahead, not just to hang on to what is, but to bring about what God is calling into being.

How? Well, for starters...

- We are looking at new technology for the building, not just for a better "Covid" experience, but beyond too.
- We are still moving to increase our outreach to kids and to families, with increased youth ministry and new worship.
- Speaking of kids, the outdoor gatherings for confirmation kids worked well – now we are working on something a little warmer, yet still safe.
- We are not content to let go of the ministry that comes from the Norwegian Dinner (see the challenge elsewhere in this newsletter) – we want to change even more lives!
- Just today Pastor Jean and I developed some plans for Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas...and more.
- We're not interested in merely finding someone to be on the Congregation Council. No...we are looking ahead to invite new leaders to partner with us, to grow in their gifts, and to share those gifts!

We are turning multiple corners, some into dark spaces, others into places of hope. But we are also turning the corner and looking ahead. We do not know what the coming months – or years – will bring, but we do know that God has called us to this journey, that God is walking with us on the journey, and that (here's the surprise!) wherever the journey takes us, *God is already there!* Already there to embrace us, empower us, and send us forth – around the next corner!

Because that's what it means to be faithful. Even in days of Covid!

*Pastor Jon*



## We Are Worshipping!

Lots of ways, lots of times!

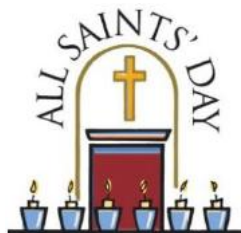
**Online videos** bring a message, prayers, and music. Posted by 6 PM on Saturday on YouTube, access them through our web site: [www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos](http://www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos). You can watch any time, and you can even catch up on previous weeks.

**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 11 DVDs going out each week, reaching over 60 individuals – and 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 30 over the summer – with over 300 participants! Even as the weather grows cooler, we're ready to come to your place!

**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.



## **All Saints' Sunday**

As in past years, we remember on All Saints' Sunday (November 1) all the saints who have gone before us. We remember in our prayers all who continue to grieve, and we thank God for the gift and witness of all who have gone before us. This year we especially remember those who have joined the church triumphant during the past year, including:

*Earl Farnham Jr* ~ November 3, 2019

*John Becker* ~ November 24, 2019

*Ardelle Johnson* ~ December 9, 2019

*Sarah Fleischman* ~ December 12, 2019

*Roberta Gruen* ~ December 15, 2019

*Steven Bartz* ~ January 20, 2020

*Betty Gilbertson* ~ February 5, 2020

*Doris Michelson* ~ April 2, 2020

*Andrea Page* ~ April 25, 2020

*Alice Bolstad* ~ June 18, 2020

*Joyce Root* ~ July 6, 2020

*Patrick Hansen* ~ July 8, 2020

*Herbert Hetland* ~ August 7, 2020

*Doug Pierce* ~ September 23, 2020

Join us for the YouTube worship on November 1<sup>st</sup> to celebrate their witness, give thanks for their presence, and pray for continued healing for all who grieve the loss of loved ones!



# Thanksgiving Eve Worship Experience

## Wednesday, November 25

### 6:30 PM via Zoom

(find the link on the homepage of the church website)

Gather around the table with your favorite dessert and communion elements.

*Enjoy a treat and then be treated to God's gifts of life in the sacrament.*

Join us for a 30-minute worship experience. The service will be recorded if you can't watch it live.



### **Pastoral Acts:**

Funeral – Doug Pierce – October 10

Wedding – Samantha Taylor &

Nicholas Peterson – October 24

## 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!

## The long-awaited pictorial directories have arrived!



If you had your picture taken, there is a directory waiting for you. If you chose not to have your picture taken, but would like to have a directory, they are available for \$5 to cover the cost.



The directories are available in the church office (call before you come to make sure we are here).

# Christian Education Update

## Sunday School



It's hard to believe it's November already! Time is flying by. I am missing my kids each week and find myself looking in the new church directory to "see" your smiling faces! I think of you all each week when I'm recording the Sunday School lesson.

Those lessons are available on YouTube. The links for the grade appropriate videos can be found on the church website ([www.oursaviorswestsalem.org](http://www.oursaviorswestsalem.org) -- resources/videos). You should also receive an email from Pastor Jean each week with the worksheet that goes with the lesson. *If you aren't getting the emails (check your spam file), please call the church office (786-0030) and we'll get them to you. Or ... if you don't have email, we can send them to you via the Post Office.*

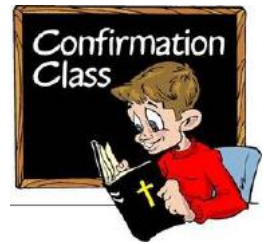
It's time to start practicing for the Sunday School Christmas program, "Miracle in the Manger".

***Kids, if you would like to be a part of that video, let Pastor Jean know and she will be in touch with parts and plans.*** Let's have some fun and be really creative with this!



## Confirmation

Watch your email for details and schedules of upcoming classes and activities.



### From the Youth Director ...

#### Let's get together!

The seasons are changing, the air is getting colder, and we are needing to stay warm and safe. As the weather dictates we will still meet for the outdoor gathering. *Watch your e-mails!*

We had hoped we could move smaller groups indoors, but...currently, with schools returning to virtual learning, indoors is not yet safe. If that changes, so will we, so *watch your emails!*

Regardless, we continue to look for ways to safely connect... and maybe even accomplish something! So...*watch your emails!*



Remember to continue to be safe – wear your masks, keep your distance, and know that you are not alone.

**(Don't forget...Watch your email for updates!)**

Take care, and stay safe!

**Wendy Kane**

[youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org](mailto:youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org)





## Last Call ... College Students ...

... wherever they are going and wherever they are living (at home or on campus), we need our college students' emails and (campus) addresses. Please get that information to Pastor Jean as soon as possible. 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.

college+  
connection



As our college students are studying in challenging environments at home or on campus, we keep them in our thoughts and prayers. This month please pray for: **Kirin Linse** (UW-Eau Claire), **WyndSOR Goodenough** (UW-Eau Claire), **Emily Trautman** (student teaching at Blair/Taylor - UW-Eau Claire), **Alea Fortier** (UW-Platteville), and **Everett Michael** (UW-Platteville).

## Lakeview Caring Tree

In light of the pandemic and the restrictions that come with it, we are doing things differently this year. The caring tree will be available at church starting on November 6<sup>th</sup>. If you would like a tag, simply call the church office (786-0030) and Kris will get one for you.



You then purchase a simple gift for the nursing home resident on your tag. The wrapped gift should be returned to church by December 4<sup>th</sup>. Please include the information from the tag on the outside of the package. Call before you come to make sure someone is here to receive your gift. Thank you for caring for our neighbors!



**Blood Drive**  
**Monday, November 2**  
**12:30 – 5:30 PM**  
**West Salem Presbyterian Church**



## Take the Lutefisk Challenge!

No, sorry, no lutefisk...or lefse...or meatballs...or rutabaga...no tasty treats. No Norwegian dinner this year!

Ouch! That hurts the lovers of fine cuisine. And it hurts all of us who enjoy working together. And it hurts our sense of “tradition.”

But most of all, it hurts people – people whose lives are impacted by the proceeds of the dinner. ***Every penny of profit from the Norwegian dinner (usually around \$7500) goes to programs and ministries in our community and beyond.*** People in need are touched by what we do with lutefisk, lefse, and the like.

But not this year. Unless...

Recently, a family came forward with a challenge – they offer \$400 to replace the profits that are lost, and they challenge you to match – or to at least add – to his gift.

Already, someone else has added \$100 more. ***How about you? Can you join them? Can we replace the profits so that we can turn around and share them with programs and ministries that change lives?***

You can take the challenge by sending in your gift marked Norwegian dinner. Or just “lutefisk!” Or go to the giving page on our web site ([www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/giving](http://www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/giving)) and make your gift there – make sure to use the *Norwegian Dinner Fund*.

Just think...no goodies, no aroma filling the building, no tables of eager diners...but lots of people whose lives are changed because we care!

For more information, or more conversation about the challenge and the needs of people, contact one of the pastors!

# Quilts and School Kits are on their way ...



The LWR quilts and school kits were delivered in October to the boxcar in La Crosse. Thanks to Jim Michelson for all of his work making up the school kits, packing all of the boxes, labeling them, and taking them to the boxcar. Thanks also to our quilting ladies – over the last six months, especially Norma Piper, Connie Blunck, and Ruby Kerkman (*apologies to others we may have missed*) – who have been diligently working from home to get the quilts made, ensuring people will be warm this winter. The final totals were 171 quilts in 20 boxes and 56 school kits in seven boxes.



## Looking Ahead...



**Let your voice be heard!**

The last few years we have followed a process of “group discernment” to lift up leaders for the congregation. Rather than ask for volunteers, or trying to “talk someone into it,” instead we’ve asked you – who do you see around you who has the gifts to be a leader in this community of faith? In the context of worship, we’ve invited your reflection...and your sharing of names.

It’s worked! We’ve received good names, people who then discerned that God has both gifted and called them to the ministry of leadership. Thank you!

But, this year...that’s a bit tougher to do! Still, we believe that God calls us to ministry, and God gifts us. So...we’ll ask the question...who do you see? Even though we can’t be together in worship, who do you see who has the gifts and abilities to partner with us?

We invite you to share the names you discern. Send them on to Pastor Jon, Pastor Jean, or Steve Ahles. Your eyes and ears might just be the way God chooses to bring new leaders into the mix!



**loving**  
God



**growing**  
together



**serving**  
others

# Stewardship for All Seasons Update

Last month, when I wrote this, it was raining. Today there is snow on the ground. The seasons are changing!



But while the seasons are changing, God's call has not. Nor has God's generosity! We are gifted, and we are sent to do "God's work with our hands."

Our Stewardship ministry is well underway. As you read this you should have already received two mailings, with a few more to come. Read them carefully! God is doing exciting things in our midst, and we invite you to join us in doing "God's work with our hands," as we are "always building bridges."

How do we plan to "build bridges?"

- Maintain our excellence of ministry.
- Call and nurture more young people as disciples of Jesus.
- Increase the opportunities for young families and young people to experience a loving Jesus in worship.

So, what's next? Watch for the last two mailings, especially the letter with your invitation to be a partner in our work together.

Then, on November 15, bring your statement of intent card to the church parking lot. Safely distanced, we will receive your intent and share a gift or two with you – all from the warmth and safety of your vehicle!

Watch the mailings for more details...and please...pray! Pray that God direct you in ways of faithful discipleship and stewardship here, in our work together, and in all that you do as a follower of Jesus!

# Scrip Cards Available

## Start your Christmas shopping early!



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.



## 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!

**Please NOTE: The Food Pantry thanks you for your donations of egg cartons. At this time, they are no longer in need of these!**



# Congregation Council

The Congregation Council met via Zoom on Monday, October 12, with President Steve Ahles presiding. At this meeting the council:

- Shared in study and prayers based on Psalm 23.
- Approved the minutes of the September 14 Council Meeting, and received the September financial report.
- Heard an overview on what has been happening with our various ministries.
- Heard that Pastor Jon is continuing to work with Jim Anderson on the PPP Grant.
- Heard a report from the Tech Team. They are exploring a set up that would allow for video, improved audio and WiFi, and livestreaming worship. They are awaiting a proposal.
- Heard a report from the re-opening team. The team affirms that we should delay reopening, but has also put in place some plans to reopen safely when appropriate.
- Discussed the youth ministry position. Asked Wendy Kane to leave the meeting. Decided to ask the Administration Committee to interview her to determine if we should remove the “interim” label as it will be difficult to carry out a normal hiring process for some time. Based on the recommendation of the Administration Committee, the Council will consider action at the next meeting.
- Noted that there will need to be discussion in November regarding nominations and the annual meeting.

The next meeting of the council will be held Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM via Zoom. If you have questions, or if you have ideas for enhancing the ministry of Our Savior’s, 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.

Financial gifts can be shared in a variety of ways. You may choose 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.oursaviorswestsale.org/giving](http://www.oursaviorswestsale.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 give, 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.

# November Dates for your calendar:



November 1 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

November 4 - Confirmation @ 6 PM

6<sup>th</sup> grade via Zoom

7<sup>th</sup> grade **OUTSIDE** gathering + video posted

8<sup>th</sup> grade video posted

9<sup>th</sup> grade **CLASS** via Zoom

November 8 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

November 11 - Confirmation @ 6 PM

6<sup>th</sup> grade via Zoom

7<sup>th</sup> grade **CLASS** - Servant Leadership - via Zoom

8<sup>th</sup> grade outside/fellowship gathering???

9<sup>th</sup> grade - Off

November 15 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

November 18 - Confirmation @ 6 PM

6<sup>th</sup> grade via Zoom

7<sup>th</sup> grade - Off

8<sup>th</sup> grade **CLASS** - Servant Leadership - via Zoom

9<sup>th</sup> grade outside/fellowship gathering???

November 22 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

November 25 - Confirmation - No Classes - Worship!

9<sup>th</sup> grade video posted

November 25 - Zoom **Thanksgiving** Experience @ 6:30PM

November 29 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

**\*\*Confirmation students watch your emails for details about these events closer to the time!!**

Web Site: [www.oursaviorswestsalem.org](http://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



## Check your spam



We have been sending out more emails to share information or keep in touch lately. It has come to our attention that many of you – mostly those of you with **yahoo.com** email accounts – have not received our communications because the emails have gone to your spam file. So ... please take a minute to check your spam files and see if you have any communications from church/pastors that you may have missed over the last several weeks (and maybe even months!). This is especially critical for those of you with confirmation and Sunday School aged children. Please let us know if you have missed dates, deadlines, and information so we can get you up to speed and make sure everyone has the information needed.

Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
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