

Our Savior's Voice

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

359 Leonard Street N - West Salem, WI 54669

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org

608-786-0030

February 2021



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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February 2021

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Pastor's Reflections

So, it's our turn. As I write this we are in quarantine. Some mild symptoms of Covid in our house, but two negative tests. So ... not sure, but we are playing it safe. Going nowhere, doing what we can from the house, and waiting it out.

It's been over a week, and "freedom" is days away. Looks like we will make it. But ... what if?

I wondered that a few times over the past week, and given that we are not "safe" yet, I still wonder ... what if?

While finding things to do, I've seen more stories of people whose lives have been devastated, and even ended, by this virus. What if that was us? Me? Or worse, my wife? Or even worse, my child?

So ... I'm wondering ... and pondering ...

There are always a lot of lessons to take away from a moment like this. Like, a reaffirmation of the importance of people in my life. I don't even want to think about what it would be ... what it would be to lose Pastor Jean or Rebecca ... and what has it been for others, to lose a loved one who is in an ICU bed, but unable to be visited, unable to be with loved ones as life is ebbing away. Too painful!

A take away? Treasure the gift of those in your life!

Another lesson ... we have been very careful, masks, distancing, haven't eaten out in 10 months (LOTS of take outs to bring home instead!), and not taking many chances. We still got (it appears) the virus. That doesn't mean, however, that our precautions weren't of value, and won't continue. In fact, all the more. Since we aren't feeling very ill, what if we hadn't determined we might have Covid and we went about the community living more recklessly? We might have shared it with you!

Not a good thing! But, a take away? Remember what Martin Luther said when confronted with a return of the “Black Death” in 1527 ...

I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me, and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others.

In other words, even though we have (it appears) “dodged the bullet,” we still bear a responsibility to you – our neighbor. A reminder that in many ways our response to the virus is less about ourselves ... and more about you!

But there is one more lesson. And that’s about God and God’s work in the world. We’ve had conversations with a bunch of health care folk, including the school nurse, the “telephone” nurse, and even our doctor. Health care professionals. God’s agents of change. In them, God is at work.

Moreover, we are watching the horizon for the coming of the vaccine. Again, God at work – in scientists, health care professionals, and all the support personnel. God at work to bring change, to restore life, to rekindle hope.

Most of all, resting in God’s embrace, we learn (again) to trust in God’s care, even in these days that continue to test our faith and wear us down. Even now, in days where we find it difficult to see where our world is heading, we do see God at work!

And that is a good thing! The take away? Yes, right now, more than ever, we do need to see where God is at work in our world and in our lives. But that’s always true. Five years ago, and five years from now we will still live in a troubled, challenged world.

Covid wasn't around back then, and (we hope) it won't be around in coming years, but we still need to see God at work. The really good news is that back then, and in the years ahead, God will be with us, and God will be making life happen.

That lesson is the best take away, because I assure you – there will be pain, fear, uncertainty and brokenness in the years to come. But there will also be God's presence in the love of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit. We won't be alone, we will be in God's embrace, and the crucified Jesus will still be renewing and restoring life.

And so as these days plod on, and it seems like this will never end (two weeks of quarantine seem long enough!), remember that the only thing that never (ever!) ends, is God's work through Jesus. Jesus, who in his death and resurrection transforms our lives and our world, renews and restores us to life. And Jesus, who sends the Holy Spirit to empower and re-energize our (sometimes) sagging faith.

The days are long, the end is in sight, but God is here, with us, right now!

Pastor Jon



Pastoral Acts:

Funeral – Leona Friske (1/7)

Funeral – Bonnie Ender (1/16)



Ash Wednesday

February 17

Worship – video
Posted by 5 p.m.

Parking Lot Imposition of Ashes,
Holy Communion,
and a small (“sweet”) gift of grace

7:30 – 8:45 a.m.

5:15 – 6:30 p.m.

Bring your own bread and wine/juice

Join us on your way to or from work for a 5-minute time of prayer, imposition of ashes, and Holy Communion. Annual Reports will be available for those who can't get it on the website.

Wednesdays in Lent

February 24 – March 24

Video

Holden Evening Prayer Worship

*Each week “just where do you
see God these days?”*





We Are Worshipping!

Worship continues, even though we are not together in the building, and some new worship opportunities are being planned!

Details on Ash Wednesday worship are elsewhere in this newsletter, and we are thinking about Easter, and even worship later this summer. Meanwhile ...

Online videos bring a message, prayers, and music, and are posted by 6 PM on Saturday on YouTube. 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. Let us know if you or someone else can use a DVD. A bunch go out every week!

Zoom Communion ... join us on Sundays at 10:30 AM 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 information and updated details, check out the Covid-19 Response page on the web site.



Got the gift of directing traffic?
Greeting folks?
Sharing a bit of grace? Handing out materials?

We need a few

of you to brave the weather with the Pastors safely in the parking lot (*because you know it will be cold or even snowing!*) on Ash Wednesday (February 17) during one or both of the parking lot Distribution of Ashes and Holy Communion. Contact Pastor Jon or Pastor Jean if you can help!

Adult Bible Study

Bible study, via Zoom (or dial in as a conference call)

continues on **Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11 AM.** Some great conversation and probing discussion – all from the comfort of your home!



Not sure how to do it? Contact Pastor Jon or the church office and we'll help you get connected.

Christian Education Update

Sunday School



Pastor Jean continues to do a weekly lesson that you can access on our website. We

just finished learning about Joseph, the unfortunate situation created by his coat of many colors, and what happened to him and his brothers. Now we are learning about Moses. The *Group* curriculum gives us the opportunity to sing songs each week, along with learning the memory verse from a Bible Buddy, and hearing the story.

Remember – the Sunday School lessons are available on YouTube. The links for the grade appropriate videos can be found on the church website

(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.



From the Youth Director ...

We have come up with some great ideas to help keep our youth engaged during the year. We will start with two.

Wands for Wildlife - is a program designed to collect used mascara wands, which are then used to help keep wildlife animals clean. ***ALL are invited to be a part of this project!***



- Start collecting used mascara wands.
- Clean them by soaking in a mixture of dish soap and warm water to get the mascara out of the brush.
- Air dry and put the clean wands in a bag.

In June watch for a collection box at the Church. Once we get enough they will be sent in. If you would like to give a monetary donation for this project, please contact Wendy at the church office or email her (see below).

Operation Homefront - is a program that sends care packages to Military families all over the world. We have been in contact with the Director and she is very excited to know we are willing to help. A date will be set to have small groups help put the packages together at Church. Confirmation families watch for an email with more specific information regarding a date for this event in February. If you have questions, contact Wendy.

Check it out! Outdoor Gatherings will begin again in March. Watch for details on the dates.

Wendy Kane

youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org

9th grade **January 27** – Video posted to YouTube
February 3 – Zoom session at 6 PM



college
connection

Allie Arentz (WTC), **Jarron Beckley** (UW-GB), and **Delaney Schomberg** (UW-L).



SUGAR CREEK BIBLE CAMP - 2021

“Come and See” – John 1

Sugar Creek Bible Camp is excited to be back with world-class summer camp programs for youth this summer. As vaccines are delivered nationwide, safety practices are honed, medical knowledge increases, and the camp program and facilities are adapted, they are confident in moving forward with plans for summer Bible camp.

Wherever vaccinations are in the coming months, all Covid-19 safety practices will be fully in place through the entire summer season. Campers will receive detailed information on prevention, preparations, and camp expectations before arriving for summer camp.

There will be exciting new programs as well as beloved favorites. Check out the Summer Brochure on their website - www.sugarcreekbiblecamp.org.

OUR SAVIOR'S CAMPERSHIPS AVAILABLE

\$150 full week -- \$75 half week

**Request forms due in the office NO LATER than
May 9th**

(Forms will be available in the church office,
or on the website – www.oursaviorswestsalem.org)

Watching over you ...

The days are growing shorter, the weather is getting colder, the white stuff will soon be swirling, and the Covid virus continues to wreak havoc with our world.

We want to keep everyone as safe as possible with the recent increase in COVID positive cases, especially those most at risk in our community. If you need help with grocery or medication pick up, shoveling snow, raking leaves, minor home repairs, a friendly person to chat with, or other needs, please call the church office (786-0030) and let us know how we can be of service. We have members ***ready and willing*** to help out with these tasks.



Willing and Able ...

Early in the pandemic several folks stepped up and offered to help with tasks for members unable to get out. Thank you for thinking of others, but needs did not materialize as we expected. Now, as the winter descends, we want to be prepared for the changing world. We are rebuilding our list and welcome your call (or email) to say you are still willing to be a part of caring for our community. As the needs arise, we will get you connected



The Lutefisk Challenge at Work!

The annual Norwegian Dinner may not have happened this year, but community organizations and ministries that meet human needs will still be supported thanks to your generosity during our challenge appeal.

World Hunger	\$1,000
Lutheran Social Services	\$1,000
Sugar Creek Bible Camp	\$1,000
Coulee Council on Addiction	\$1,000
New Horizons	\$1,000
Salvation Army	\$1,000
Lutheran Disaster Relief	\$ 500
St. Claire Health Mission – Sparta	\$1,000
LaCrosse Warming Center	\$1,000
Quilt Shipping	\$ 500
Sleep in Heavenly Peace	<u>\$ 285</u>
Total	\$9,285

Mission Endowment Fund Distribution



The Mission Endowment Committee was able to distribute \$16,200 to Missions in 2020. This Endowment has allowed Our Savior's to distribute in excess of \$205,200 since being established in 2002.

La Crosse warming shelter	\$ 2,000
New Horizons	\$ 3,000
St. Claire Health Mission	\$ 2,000
Sleep in Heavenly Peace	\$ 1,200
Sugar Creek	\$ 2,000
ELCA World Hunger	\$ 2,000
OSLC Capital Improvements - Technology	<u>\$ 4,000</u>
Total	\$16,200



Leftover Thank-You's

There are always lots of “thank-you’s,” and we need to catch up on some!

Thank you to...

- **Jeff and Melissa Haldeman** for putting up and decorating THREE trees this past Christmas season.
- **Dean Olson** for continuing to make DVDs every week, and to **Carolyn Karl** for picking up the delivery while Pastor Jon was in quarantine.
- **Corey Sjoquist** for navigating Zoom to teach 6th grade Confirmation, and to the **8th and 9th grade group guides** for working with Pastor Jon on their Zoom sessions.
- **Our singers and lectors** for recording word and song *safely* for our video worship, and to **Linda Berg** for working with the singers.
- The members of the **Prayer Chain** and the **Prayer Team**, both of whom regularly lift up the needs of God’s people in prayer.
- **Judy Long and Angie Hemker, and everyone else** who has been a part of the food pantry and Feed Our Children over the past months.
- **Congregation Council and committees** who continue to meet virtually and safely plan our ministry together.
- **Everyone** who contributed to “restock” the Norwegian Dinner fund so that we can make a difference in the world.
- The **FFF** group, working on ways to keep us connected.
- The **Reopening Planning Group**, as it considers how and when we can reopen our building safely.

And thank you to ***all of you*** for your continued prayers and support as we work together, even in different and difficult days!



For the last ten months the newsletter has not been as complete as it once was. As we continue in this time of pandemic and get more comfortable with a “new norm”, we will once again include the thank-you’s and memorials that have been missing. During these last months, we received memorial gifts from the family and friends of Doris Michelson and thank them for their generosity to the Choir, Library, and Mission Endowment Funds. We received thank you notes from our college students who received notes and a Kwik Trip gift card as they ended their first semester of classes.

Thank you ...

From others ...

Thank you so much for your generosity in providing gifts for the residents at Lakeview Health. We greatly appreciate your continued support to help brighten Christmas for our residents.

Kari Coaty – Volunteer Outreach Specialist

Thank you for the gift of the poinsettia plants! They have been placed in households for residents. We appreciate the beautiful colors and your thoughtfulness!

Jennifer Hill – Lakeview Healthcare Center

In Loving Memory

Memorial Gifts Received ...

In Memory of Karen Hehl

From Lowell Hehl (Education)

In Memory of Bonnie Ender

From Joanna Stelloh Phelps (Choir/General)

From Linda & Gary Berg (Choir Fund)

In Memory of Bonnie Ender & Leona Friske

From Bev Bockenbauer (Kitchen)



Synod School of Theology

The La Crosse Area Synod School of Theology is a great way to expand your horizons, learn about Bible, faith and life, and make some great connections! The school currently meets virtually, via Zoom, on Thursday evenings. For more information check out the synod web site at www.lacrosseareasynod.org/synod-school-of-theology or contact Pastor Jon.

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.



Pictorial directories



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) or ask about them when you come for Ash Wednesday parking lot communion.



Congregation Council

The Congregation Council met via Zoom on Monday, January 11, with President Steve Ahles presiding. At this meeting the council:

- Shared in conversation and reflection around our baptisms and the importance of sponsors (godparents) in our lives.
- Approved the minutes of the December 14 Council Meeting, and received the December financial report.
- Heard an overview on what has been happening with our various ministries.
- Heard that we are still awaiting another proposal on the tech project.
- Authorized an updated list of check signers.
- Received a report from the Administration Committee, including a proposal to adjust salaries. Noted that even with some increased salaries, the overall compensation portion of the budget will decrease by almost \$5000.
- Received advice from the synod regarding voting members to the 2021 Synod Assembly, noting that members elected in 2020 are still our voting members until a change is made. Will check with voting members to make sure they can still serve in that roll this year.
- Heard a letter from Bishop Jim Arends, now retired, which he requested be shared with members of the synod.

The next meeting of the council will be held Monday, February 8th 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. 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.



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!

February Dates for your calendar:



January 27 - Confirmation @ 6 PM

6th grade via Zoom

9th grade video posted

January 31 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

February 3 - Confirmation @ 6 PM

6th grade via Zoom

7th grade video posted

8th grade video posted

9th grade CLASS via Zoom

February 7 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

February 10 - Confirmation @ 6 PM

6th grade via Zoom

7th grade CLASS - via Zoom - **NOTE TIMES!**

(Boys 6 PM + Girls at 6:30 PM)

8th grade - Off

February 14 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

February 17 - Ash Wednesday - Worship Video posted

Parking Lot Ashes & Communion -

7:30-8:45 AM + 5:15-6:30 PM

February 17 - Confirmation @ 6 PM

8th grade CLASS - via Zoom @ 6:30 PM - NOTE TIME!

February 21 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM

February 24 - Lent worship video posted

February 28 - 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



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.

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