

Our Savior's Voice

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

359 Leonard Street N - West Salem, WI 54669

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org

608-786-0030

July 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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July 2021

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Pastor's Reflections

Decisions ...

Have you ever bought lake property? For the last 20+ years we have owned a piece of undeveloped lake property in Upper Michigan. A piece of property that we thought was “just perfect.” However, as we look to the future ... retirement someday, building a cottage in anticipation of spending time away ... we have decided we need something closer than seven hours from home. So, the process begins, selling and buying ... looking at real estate listings and determining if they check all of the boxes on our list of priorities.

In the old days, you went to the realtor, got paper listings of the various properties, and drove around to see what they were like. In today's world of technology, you can look up listings on line, map out how long it will take to get there, check out close-up and aerial pictures and watch videos, based on the stated size of the lot and lake frontage you can calculate the lot lines and figure out almost exactly where the lot is located, you can immediately know the status of the listing – how long it's been on the market, price changes, etc.. And, if you really want to do your research (like Pastor Jon does) you can check out the Wisconsin DNR website to find out where the wetlands are on the property, see the topography around the lake, the condition of the lake water (the clarity, the amount of phosphorus and mercury, whether it's eutrophic or mesotrophic, the likelihood of algae blooms, the kinds of fish that thrive there ...). It's almost limitless the amount of information you can gather without ever physically being there.

As you begin to dream and make plans, you picture in your mind the ideal piece of property and you set your standards, your requirements ... how much



acreage, how much frontage, how far from home, how far from civilization, how many trees, how close to the next piece of property, how close to a road, any covenant restrictions. And when there's more than one person involved in the decision-making process, each one has different ideas of the ideal, the priorities, the standards, the requirements.

We all know when you start looking, the ideal piece always seems to elude you. So, you start making concessions ... you compromise on this and that, here and there, and pretty soon you have to say *"hey, wait a minute!"* ... because what you now have doesn't look anything like what you started dreaming about, it doesn't look anything like "the perfect" piece anymore. Now you have to take a step back to evaluate and ask, what are the priorities, what am I willing to sacrifice, what can I be satisfied with, what am I willing to do for the sake of the other.

Hey, wait a minute ... doesn't this sort of sound like the state of our existence these days as we are trying to navigate coming out of 16 months of a pandemic? We all have that picture in our minds of the ideal normal. We have our list of priorities, standards, and requirements. We have learned to use the technology available to us to research the intricacies of science; to research the pros and cons of everything from wearing masks, distancing, hand washing, and staying home; to hearing the conflicting opinions and beliefs of those around us. We have also used technology to keep connected, to share new ways of doing things, to support one another, to gain insight and understanding from others.



As we take the steps to come out of our pandemic world, and begin to live into a post-pandemic world, we are needing to make concessions, to compromise on this and that, here and there, and pretty soon we hear *"hey, wait a minute!"* ...

because ideally what we really want is to go back to what was “normal”, and now what we have doesn’t look anything like what we knew to be normal. So, now we have to take a step back to evaluate and ask, what are the priorities, what am I willing to sacrifice, what can I be satisfied with, what am I willing to do for the sake of the others. And, those are the questions we need to think long and hard about ... and pray about.

*I lift up my eyes to the hills –
from where will my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
Psalm 121:1-2*

**Let's
Pray!**

God, your Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness at his baptism and it drives us forward even now, to the places you would have us go, the places where you are already preparing for our arrival. And yet, we want to go back.

We cry out for a nostalgic vision of the past that never truly existed. We selectively remember the good and forget the bad of what was. Though this year has been one of revelation, we know that we cannot, should not, must not go back. Like the Israelites experiencing freedom but crying out to go back to Egypt, we whine and cry for what was ... because change is hard and the unknown is scary. But we cannot go back. We must go forward.

It is where your Spirit is driving us. Lead the way and help us to follow and to trust your loving presence; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and our guide. Amen.

(Prayer from June 23, 2021 LEAD blog – Creating Space)

Praying with you,
Pastor Jean



35th Anniversary

Thank you to all who participated, in one way or another, in the recognition and celebration of the 35th anniversary of my ordination. From the comments, music, flowers, and cake at worship on June 13, to the cards and well-wishes gathered by Kris Seeger, and the blessing by Pastor Jean, it was a total surprise, and was a wonderful gift. I have served as the called pastor at four congregations, and assisted as the Administrative Interim in eight other congregations. All have been a blessing, but none as much as the people at Our Savior's. Thank you for all you have shared, and for your prayers and support!

Pastor Jon



Pastoral Acts:

Baptism – Kaia Quinn Giblin – June 12



Affirmation of Baptism

After a long year of confirmation via Zoom and outdoor gatherings, which followed three other years of learning and sharing in the building (hey, it's been a wild ride!), our 9th (now 10th graders) were able to affirm their baptism! On June 27, at the Lion's Shelter, 27 of our young people spoke for themselves, affirming their commitment to Jesus, but also being reminded of God's commitment to them!

As we acknowledge, congratulate, and bless these disciples of Jesus, please remember them in your prayers ...

Siri Anderson

Mia Bahl

Derek Bores

Adelyn Burt

Noah Campbell

Haley Chandler

Sophia Clements

Scarlet Fullwood

Elizabeth Hesse

Jesse Howell

Carson Hundt

Jonathan Iliff

Ella Janisch

Nicholas Jones

Reice Kammel

Mya Koudelka

Nolan Langrehr

Keaton Linse

Celia Mitchell

Makenzie Murphy

Ian Nickles

Sydney Niemeier

Elliott Sjoquist

Amanda Vick

Brandon Wiese

Samuel Williams

Jack Witte

Riley Wuensch



A very special thanks to the group guides for this class ... Marjorie Anderson, Beth Clements, Angie Koudelka, Brian Linse, Kim Schmidt, and Shannon Wiese. They did a great job working with our kids, sharing faith, and guiding them in their journey.

And (*again!*) thanks to Corey Sjoquist for his work with the 6th grade class this year. Even in a challenging year, Corey kept the kids engaged and connected – *thank you, Corey!*



“Returning to Normal” News

With the improving conditions and increased vaccinations in our area, the Congregation Council is moving to return worship and congregational life to a more “normal” posture. That means some welcome changes:

- Following CDC guidelines, masks are no longer required in the building or worship for those who are vaccinated. We ask those not vaccinated to remember that some (children and those with certain underlying conditions) are not yet eligible to receive the vaccine. Please be sensitive to them!
- Sign-ups are no longer required, though we will continue to practice distancing. We will ask worshipers to sign in upon arrival should there be a need for contact tracing.
- We hope that by mid-July we can modify how we distribute Holy Communion.

Looking ahead ... we yearn to return to a fuller normal, and hope that can happen soon. Remember that there are lots of differing perspectives on the pandemic and how it will wind down. Please remember too that we are a community of faith and the Body of Christ, and while we aren’t always in agreement, we are always called to love and care for one another!



July Worship

We continue to offer a variety of worship opportunities during July, including both “in-building” and virtual options.

- **In-building worship** is held on Saturdays at 6 PM and Sundays at 10 AM. Following CDC guidelines, vaccinated individuals need not mask. We will, however, continue to distance in the building, with a limit of 60 worshipers.
- Join the **Sunday morning worship at 10 AM on Zoom** – find the link on the home page of our web site.
- Watch a recording of the Saturday worship, posted on **YouTube late Saturday evening**. Link on our video page.

And then...

**July 25
10 AM worship
Lion's Shelter**



Masks not needed as we are outdoors.

Bring your own seating and elements for Holy Communion.
(Pre-packaged elements will also be available.)

Sit distanced in family groups

Office Hours

The church office and building have reopened!

Hours are Monday - Friday,

8:30 AM - 2 PM. Use the East Avenue entrance.

Remember that we now have a locked and secure mail box outside the East Avenue entrance if you need to drop off an envelope or other similar material.



Synod Assembly Report

The La Crosse Area Synod met in a virtual assembly June 11-13. The big news out of this year's assembly is the election of a new Bishop. Pastor Felix Malpica, from Janesville, was elected on the fifth ballot, with over 57% of the vote. He will be installed September 26. The assembly also elected a number of other leaders, and adopted a mission budget for 2021 and 2022. For more information check out the synod web page at www.lacrosseareasynd.org, or speak with one of our voting members – Pastor Jon, Pastor Jean, Eric Iliff, Dori Jensen, Wendy Kane, or Corey Sjoquist.



Annual Meeting Report

Just as the La Crosse Area Synod concluded the 2021 Assembly, Our Savior's held our annual meeting.

Meeting at the Lion's Shelter on June 13, we gathered to hear about our ministry, even in difficult days. We elected Tiffany Janisch and Brenda Skittone to three-year terms on the Congregation Council, with the Council to appoint one more person to serve for one year. We also elected Lee Friell to the Mission Endowment Fund Committee.

In other business the meeting adopted a budget for 2021 that continues to embrace our dream to expand youth ministry and offer new worship opportunities.

The big action at the meeting was the approval of a major Technology/Audio project for the sanctuary. The project includes a projection screen, several monitors, the ability to livestream and record worship services, and a major upgrade to the audio equipment. The project will cost \$40,000, but at the meeting we were able to share that \$14,000 is already in hand – and since the meeting another \$1,000 has been gifted. This project will greatly enhance our outreach, and your gift can be a part of making this new ministry happen!



Thanks to the almost 40 folk who attended. We are grateful for your participation, and we look forward to the 2022 meeting ... back in the sanctuary (we hope!)

We are excited to invite you to join us for ...



**Family Vacation
Bible School**

**Sundays – July 11 and 25
August 8 and 22
11:00 am – 1:00 pm
at the Lion's Shelter**

**Pack a lunch and join us
We will have lots of fun and adventures
learning about Bible stories
Sign-up on the church website or just
come when you can!**

Confirmation and NHS Students ...

If you are looking for a fun way to earn National Honor Society hours or you just want to be a part of the action, let us know ... we have a job for you and would love to have you be a part of VBS!





Sugar Creek Bible Campers

Please keep the following youth who will be attending Camp this summer in your prayers:

June 13-18

Lydia Jothén
Olivia Maki
Emelia Tlustosch

June 20-25

Will Clements
Elliott Sjoquist
Graham Sjoquist
Amy Stefferud
Laney Kneifl
Layla Kneifl

June 27-29

Owen Christianson

June 27-July 2

Paige Christianson
Candace Drury
Chloe Drury

July 11-16

Henry Bakkum
Jesse Jothén
Adelyn Tlustosch

July 11-13

Mabel Sjoquist

July 18-23

Maddie Giblin
Isabella Quackenbush

July 25-30

Bennett Fennigkoh
Anya Tenner

July 25-27

Ellie Tlustosch
Alise Jothén

Adult Bible Study Back in the Building



Wednesday Bible study has resumed in the building, from 9:30 to 11 AM. Or ... you can participate via Zoom! We take a look each week at the Gospel reading for the upcoming Sunday. Join us as we share our insights and discover what God is saying to us ... today! For information on the Zoom connection, contact the office.



From the Youth Director ...

8th and 9th graders – emails have been sent out with an attachment containing details about the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering that will be held in Minneapolis July 24 – 28, 2022. *(If you didn't get it,*

check your spam folder.) Join us for an informational meeting (details on page 15).

Wendy Kane, Youth Director

youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org



**ELCA National Youth Gathering
July 24-28, 2022
Minneapolis**

High School Students Check it out ...

Every three years, 30,000 high school youth and their adult leaders from across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gather for a week of faith formation known as the ELCA Youth Gathering. Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives.

**Informational Meetings
July 11 or July 25 at 1 PM at the Lion's Shelter**

For youth and parents interested in finding out more about the Youth Gathering, please join us. You won't want to miss this once-in-a-lifetime experience! If you can't make either of the meetings, contact Wendy Kane or one of the pastors for more information. Check out the Gathering website for the latest information: www.elca.org/youthgathering/updates

Wands for Wildlife ...



Thank you to all those who have turned in mascara wands. At this time, we do not have enough to send out, so we will hang on to them and continue collecting until we have enough to ship out.

Please continue to bring your clean, used mascara wands to church. To clean them: soak in a mixture of dish soap and warm water to get the mascara out of the brush, air dry, and place in a Ziplock bag. *Our little furry friends would appreciate them.*



Helping Hands Ready to Work ...

Do you have a small project around the house that needs to be tackled, but you just aren't up for the job? We have youth eager to be of assistance, *for a small fee* that will help them fund future mission opportunities. Contact Wendy Kane, Youth Director, to make arrangements – youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org or call the church office and leave her a message.



Peaches should be here on August 26th – watch for updates and details.

... and if you didn't get your order in by July 5th, don't worry, we will be ordering some extra.



Calling all Youth ...

We could use some help unloading the semi-trailer and distributing the peaches. This is a great way to put funds in your youth family accounts for the ELCA Youth Gathering, Sugar Creek Camp, and other trips. Call Wendy (608-518-9593) to let her know you can help.

Corn Roast

Rumor has it we will once again have a Corn Roast in August. The corn roast is a great gift to the community around us, so come and join us as we serve the people with a small gift of life! Watch for details on how you can help.



Planning ahead ...

Lutheran World Relief School Kit Project



Imagine having to choose between a meal or purchasing a notebook. School Kits are sent to places where even the few required school supplies may be more than a family can afford. Pencils and paper can help write a positive future.

Once again, we will collect items to fill school bags for this ministry. As the summer rolls along, sales will begin for school supplies. Please take this list with you when you shop, as the list of needed items is quite specific. We are unable to send items that are not on the list!

Each School kit contains the following:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1 – 30 cm ruler | 1 – pencil sharpener |
| 1 – BLUNT scissors | 5 – unsharpened pencils |
| 1 – box 24 crayons | 1 – 2-1/2 inch eraser |
| 4 – 70 sheet notebooks (no loose-leaf paper) | |
| 5 – blue or black ball point pens (no gel ink) | |

In past years we have been able to fill 100 backpacks and we are confident we can do that again. Have fun shopping!

Beginning July 3rd there will be a collection box in the Gathering Area.

If you have any questions, please call Wendy Kane at 608-518-9593.

Thank you in advance for your support



You're Invited!

Dear Friends,

For over eight years the people of Our Savior's have embraced and nurtured us, and especially our daughter Rebecca. In 2020 she graduated from West Salem High School, and this year she graduated from Project Search, a program at Gundersen Health Systems, facilitated by Holmen High School.

On Saturday, July 24, from 12-4 PM, at the Lion's Shelter, we will celebrate, and we want you to join us! Some light goodies, pictures and a video to watch, and our thanks to you, are all a part of this gathering.

We hope you can join us. ***Please note: your presence is your gift!***

Thank you for your continuing support of our young people, and especially of our family.

Pastor Jon and Pastor Jean





Red Cross Blood Drive

Monday, July 26

11:30 AM - 5:30 PM

**American
Red Cross**

at the Presbyterian Church
(625 W. Franklin Street)

Sponsored by the West Salem Middle School Band.

Appointments can be made online: redcrossblood.org, or call
Connie Blunck at 786-0684.



"By God's Grace, We Are Called" (1 Peter 4:10)

La Crosse Area Synod WELCA Convention
Saturday, July 31

Trinity Lutheran, 539 South Street, Cashton

Registration - 8 am Worship - 9 am

Guest speaker: Pastor Ben Morris from
Lutheran Campus Ministry

In-Kind Offering: non-perishable food items,
especially cereal and hygiene products,
for the Cashton Cupboard and Closet Food Pantry

Registration cost \$20 - checks payable to La Crosse Area
Synod WELCA. A registration form is available on the kiosk
until July 21. For more information check the Synod
newsletter, *Crosswinds*, or call Connie Blunck, 786-0684.



Congregation Council

The Congregation Council met for a time of fellowship and actually seeing each other face-to-face. The council met outdoors on June 14, and welcomed Tiffany Janisch and Brenda Skittone, while thanking Steve Ahles, Tracey Beckley, and Wendy Kane. Some time was spent informally discussing a number of issues, but no formal action was taken. The council will meet again July 12.

Scrip Cards Available



We continue to have Scrip cards available for purchase in the office during the day.



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 is open Saturdays, 10 AM to Noon. If you have food to drop off, please call the office to ensure that we will be able to receive your gifts. And, thank you!

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!***

Web Site: www.oursaviorswestsalem.org
OUR SAVIOR'S STAFF

Pastor Jonathan Schmidt, Senior Pastor 612-0217

Email: pastorjon@oursaviorswestsalem.org

Pastor Jean Schmidt, Associate Pastor 612-0217

Email: pastorjean@oursaviorswestsalem.org

Kris Seeger, Administrative Assistant Church Office: 786-0030

Email: office@oursaviorswestsalem.org

Wendy Kane, Director of Youth Ministry 518-9593

Email: youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org

Jill Iliff, Treasurer

Email: treasurer@oursaviorswestsalem.org

Linda Berg, Organist/Choir Accompanist/Director of Music

Email: linda@oursaviorswestsalem.org

Eric Sorenson, Senior Choir Director

Karen DeSchepper, Financial Secretary

Josh Corning, Custodian



Check your spam



It continues ... many of you with **yahoo.com** email accounts are not receiving 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.

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