

Our Savior's Voice

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

359 Leonard Street N - West Salem, WI 54669

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org

608-786-0030

July 2022



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 2022

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Memorial Day weekend (May 29)
through Labor Day weekend (September 4)

Saturday – 6 PM
Sunday – 8 & 10 AM

Masks are NOT currently required, but if you feel safer with a mask, we encourage you to wear one!

Meanwhile...

Virtual worship options

We **Zoom 10:00 AM Sunday worship** (check out our home page for the link and have your Communion elements handy!)

We also record the Saturday worship and post it later that evening as a YouTube. You can access this worship through our web site: www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos. You can watch any time, and you can even catch up on previous weeks.



Pastor's Reflections

Summer is here and life (we hope) is (finally) back to normal! That really seems to be the big wish. Can't we just move beyond Covid back to where we were?

Looking around, however, it's apparent we aren't quite there yet. Masks are still present, mitigation steps are still in place in certain spots, and even though as I write this La Crosse County has slipped back to "low" community risk, just a week ago it was "high."

At Our Savior's too we are struggling to find our way back to normal, and that has caused some anxiety. The most obvious example is in worship. We aren't back up to the numbers we'd like. Things are still not back to normal.

That really shouldn't be a surprise. I've been reading a book by a Baptist church consultant. He says several things:

1. The old normal is NOT coming back. At all.
2. The new normal is not yet fully apparent.
3. Worship in the future will be smaller.
4. Digital (such as online) ministry, especially worship, will continue to grow, and will be a mission of its own.

Wow – not what I wanted to read, but as I see things, I think he's on target. And so, what's one to do? Cling to God's promise! ***"I make all things new!"*** (Revelation 21:5) But what "newness" of any value can we discover here?

Maybe more than we think. Let's consider our numbers. Numbers do not tell the whole story, and we want to make sure we don't get distracted or even buried by them, but numbers do help us understand what is happening around us. So, let's compare where are, with where we were in 2019 using some numbers.

But first, some observations:

1. The Bishops of the ELCA have been told to expect worship attendance to drop 20-30% coming out of the pandemic. Fits with the book I read!
2. The ELCA suggests that online worship views, like our YouTube worship, should be counted for one week.
3. Since we cannot know how many people are watching on each “view,” use the industry standard of 1.9 persons per view.

So, what are we finding? Worship is indeed smaller than we once had, at least in the building. And that’s what we see, and what perhaps raises a bit of anxiety. Where once we had 100+, now we are excited when we top 50.

I don’t have exact worship counts for every weekend from 2019 (we don’t normally keep the individual weekend numbers from years past), but we can make some good estimates.

In 2019 our average for the year was 221. I figure a summer average of 140, and a normal, mid-year weekend, about 235. So, let’s take a small sample – the four weekends in February, and the first two weekends of June – a mix of mid-year and summer.

In 2019 we would have had four weekends in February at 235 each for a total of 940, plus (and this number I do have for certain) 28 total online views for an additional 53 viewers, giving a total of 993 for the month.



For the two weekends in June, using an average of 140 for 280 worshipers, along with an additional 10 online views, or 19 online, gives us 299 for two weekends in June.

Now, what about 2022? For February, our in-building worship attendance for four weeks totaled 323, and our online consisted of 226 online views, or an estimated 429 individuals. For two weekends in June, after removing lots of visitors for two baptisms, in-building worship totaled 156, while online we had 85 views estimated at 162 persons.

But wait, there's more! For years we have distributed a DVD to be used at Mulder's, but during the pandemic we began to distribute DVDs to individuals and to Salem Terrace. Each week an additional 16 persons watch worship on the DVDs.

Adding it all up...February gave us 816 worshipers, and two weekends in June engaged 350.

The numbers don't lie.

It is true. We have fewer worshipers in the building. But we also engage close to the same number of worshipers overall. In February we engaged 44 fewer per week, but in the first two weeks of June, we have engaged 25 more per week. And remember, things are safer now than in February, leading to an increase in the in-building part of our worshipping attendance.

Look, I get it. We would all like a packed house, but right now, and for the foreseeable future, and maybe into the new normal, that's not happening. But people are connecting, even when we can't see them. For some it's still safety, others are unable to be here due to mobility issues, still others are new folk, reached by our ministry even if it's obvious to us.

And that is what really matters. This isn't just about trying to get people in the building (remember my book – digital is a mission of its own?). Nor is it about making ourselves feel better in challenging times. Instead, it's about what we are

called to do – the mission God has placed in our midst. And we are doing it. We are connecting, just not the way we used to, and we are connecting even with folk we never encountered before (I won't go in to details here, but I can share some stories with you.)

Meanwhile, even as I write this, the Summer Lunch crew is hard at work, pastoral care is happening, and kids, supported by this congregation, are learning about Jesus at Sugar Creek. The bottom line – our ministry is working, and even thriving. Even when it doesn't look like it!

I do expect these numbers to change. September may give us an opportunity for something of a “reset,” but for now I am just thankful – **and I am excited** – that people are connecting and engaging with the good news of Jesus in a variety of ways, and in ways what we hadn't in the past.

And I am excited that even in a very changed world, God is working through us to make a difference, to proclaim the good news, and to bring life and hope to people.

So, there you have it – promise made and promise kept...
I make all things new!

Pastor Jon

*Behold,
I make all things new*

Revelation 21:5



Planning ahead ...

Yikes! It's July already! Summer is flying by...(how sad is that?) With that in mind, please continue to ponder (and discern) where God is calling YOU!

And how MIGHT God be calling you? Glad you asked!

Maybe...with Sunday School will be back every week and the kids singing in worship again, we need folks who have a love for kids and a love for Jesus! Young or old, parent/grandparent or not, you can be that caring role model for our children.



Or...we are looking for ...

- ♥ **Team Teachers** – the lessons and activities are scripted, there will also be a time for a video and music. Our goal is to have **two teachers** for each grade to make scheduling easier.



- ♥ **Music Leader** – the kids learned new songs using videos that we hope to share with the congregation.

Just imagine...YOU...making a difference in the life of child FOR JESUS! Really, what more could you ask?

If you would like to be a part of our Sunday school ministry, ***we would love to have you.*** Talk to Pastor Jon, Eric Iliff, or Wendy Amundson for more information.



July Sugar Creek Bible Campers

Your prayers matter!
Please keep the following
youth who will be

attending Sugar Creek Bible Camp in *July* in your prayers:

July 10-15

Bennett Fennigkoh

Alise Jochen

Olivia Sprehn

Lydia Jochen

Adelyn Tlustosch

Graham Sjoquist

Ellie Tlustosch

Mabel Sjoquist

Emelia Tlustosch

July 17-22

Laney Kneifl

July 24-29

Henry Bakkum

Layla Kneifl

Jesse Jochen

Sophia Sprehn

Anya Tenner

July 31-August 5

Marissa Eckland



Prayer Labyrinth



A reminder that our Prayer Labyrinth is “open for business.” Actually, it’s always available, but this an especially good time to walk the labyrinth. The labyrinth, located in the lot across from the parking lot, is available to anyone who wants to use it – always without charge!

What is a “prayer labyrinth?” A labyrinth is a path that leads from the outside to the center. Not a maze designed to confuse, a labyrinth is instead a way to symbolically leave behind the hustle and bustle of the world, and enter a place of peace and quiet, where one can engage God in prayer and meditation. There’s even a bench at the center for a time of reflection.

We invite you to use the labyrinth, and let your friends know that it’s there. To follow the labyrinth, find the grassy path between the bricks along the side closest to the side walk...and then follow around and along until you come to the center. And when you are done, follow the path back as you reenter a busy and sometimes very hectic world.



Pastoral Acts:

Baptism – Evelyn Kay Haines – June 11

Baptism – Grady Ronald Wickland – June 12

Baptism – Beau Anthony Wiedemann – June 19

Marriage – Elizabeth Trocinski & Brett Trautsch – June 18

Funeral – Gregory A Craig – June 3

Funeral – Larry Larson – June 8

Funeral – Carol Pederson – June 14

Funeral – Norma Marking – June 25

Funeral – David Witte – June 28

Adult Bible Study

Bible study, live or via Zoom, continues on **Wednesday mornings from 9:30 to 11 AM**. We take time to ponder the gospel reading for the coming Sunday, so each session is “stand-alone.” NO previous Bible knowledge is needed – just come and enjoy some great conversation and “faith-deepening” discussions.



We meet in the Library. If you'd rather join via Zoom, contact the church office or Pastor Jon.

Note – with Pastor Jon's vacation, no Bible study July 20-August 3...*unless you want to meet up in Colorado!*

PEACHES ... They're NOT back ...



A reminder that we will NOT have peaches this year due to the extreme increases in production and transportation costs. To make it work would have required an almost 50% increase in price. we would have to charge \$50/case for the peaches. After prayerful consideration, we have decided NOT to offer the peaches this summer. We are open to the possibility in 2023, but will wait until next year to see where things are at. We apologize for any inconvenience and are just as disappointed as you are.

Summer Lunch – Feed Our Children *July update*

The Feed Our Children Summer Lunch Program is hard at work, serving lunches to West Salem kids on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the summer months.

So far we have been serving about 175 meals daily, with a great crew of volunteers. ***We ask your prayer support for the continue smooth operation of serving!***

Our current needs are:

- fruit cups
- granola bars
- snack items such as goldfish, animal crackers (bulk or individual)

There is a drop-off box in the gathering area for your donations.

If you are interested in helping to prepare food, serve or deliver meals, or have other questions, please contact Angie Hemker 608-780-9172 (text is preferred).



La Crosse Area Synod Assembly

The 2022 La Crosse Area Synod Assembly is now “in the books!” Held June 10-12, at Good Shepherd, UW-L, and Riverside Park, the assembly was the first in person assembly since 2019 – and it was so good to be together again.



Friday evening, at Good Shepherd, the assembly got underway with Vernetta Moe and Dori Jensen receiving their School of Theology certificates. Later, the assembly worshiped with Bishop Kevin Strickland, of the Southeastern Synod, sharing the message.

Saturday we were at UW-L – business, including elections and adopting a budget, along with greetings, workshops, and the keynote address.

Sunday was gathering time at Riverside Park. We worshiped, we closed the assembly, and we picnicked! Kids got to play in the font, and then share a blessing with others through a “wet” sign of the cross, and they also brought forth the offering of undergarments for clothes closets around the synod.

To learn more, check with one of our voting members...Jeff and Melissa Haldeman, Vernetta Moe, Carolyn Karl, and Pastor Jon.

And then...consider being one of our voting members – great worship, challenging presentations, building relationships with others across the synod, and a time to be church together. See Pastor Jon if you would like to be on the list already for next year!



Sabbatical Update

Pastor Jean's sabbatical continues...she has traveled a bit, reconnecting with important people from her past...she's engaged in some long lost loves (cooking and sewing)...and she has worshiped in different ways and places. She even got to preside (in a pinch) at Holy Communion at her childhood church when the "supply" pastor didn't make it in time!

As she is about half way through her sabbatical, she's starting to anticipate the cookbook, so keep sharing your cookbook recipes (see the announcement about the cookbook elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Homer Moe Scholarship

Our Savior's recently awarded a number of scholarships to High School grads, and to one college freshman. But, did you know we also have a scholarship for individuals pursuing continuing education or even a second career?

If you are working on an education plan that will build on what you already are doing, or if you are needing to move in a new direction, the Homer Moe Scholarship may be available for you!

Established in memory of Homer Moe, this scholarship supports second career students and those who need to move beyond where they currently are. The scholarship amounts vary, and application can be made at any time during the year. For more information, see Pastor Jon.

Vacation

Pastor Jon will be on vacation July 2-3, and then again July 19-August 3. The office will be staffed, and pastoral care will be available through the office.

And who will “supply the pulpit?”

- **July 2/3 – Pastor Rose McCurdy.** Pastor Rose is an ordained Presbyterian minister, and is the wife of Pastor Dan McCurdy, the new pastor at West Salem Presbyterian Church.
- **July 23/24 and 30/31 – Pastor Kris Bjerke-Ulliman.** Pastor Kris has been here before – and now is a member of Our Savior’s. She currently serves with St. Croix Hospice.

Come and welcome both Pastor Rose and Pastor Kris as they share with us the gifts of life...in Word and Sacrament!

And as Pastor Jon and Pastor Jean find some time for rest and renewal, make sure YOU practice good stewardship of the life God has entrusted to you...and find time for your own “rest and renewal!”





**Seriously ...
You...yes, YOU!...
can be...
a difference maker!**

As we continue to “re-gear up” our ministries, we have places where you can make a difference!

... **Altar Guild** - getting things ready for worship each week – filling candles and changing banners/paraments if needed (but truth be told, we are going to be in the ‘green season’ for a loooong time!)

www.signupgenius.com/go/20F044CA5A629A7F85-altar

... **Ushers/greeters** – be a welcoming presence to those coming to worship, handing out bulletins, counting how many are in attendance

www.signupgenius.com/go/20F044CA5A629A7F85-ushers1

... **Communion Assistants** – preparing the trays before worship (putting in the cups and filling them with wine/grape juice) and getting the wafers on the plate, helping the pastor serve communion during worship, cleaning up afterwards

www.signupgenius.com/go/20F044CA5A629A7F85-communion

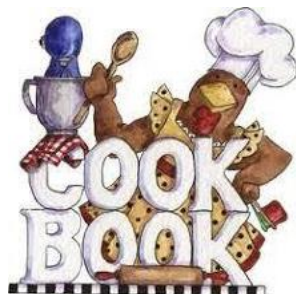
Please use the appropriate SignUpGenius link above or let the pastors know you will share your time with us.

let's get cookin' ...

The first recipes are flying in! It's sooooo exciting!

As part of Pastor Jean's sabbatical, a new cookbook project is on the horizon, but she can't do it alone.

That's where YOU come in ... providing the necessary recipes for a new cookbook. While Pastor Jean is on sabbatical, the congregation is invited to submit your favorite recipe(s), and when Pastor Jean returns, she (along with a few helpers) will compile the recipes and create a new cookbook.



As you share your recipes, you are also invited to ***share a short note/comment*** about why the recipe is special to you. What's a recipe without a story!

We'll have fun collecting ... and testing ... and maybe even sampling!

Recipe forms are available in the office or on the front page of the church website. Drop your submissions off in the office, send them by email, or drop them in the mailbox by the East Avenue entrance **by July 15.**



let's have some fun

Get in on the action

See your name in print

Sunday School kids you are invited to be a part of Pastor Jean's new **COOKBOOK** project.



Here's what you need to do ...

- ♥ Tell your parents what your favorite food is
- ♥ Ask them to fill out the **RECIPE** form
- ♥ Put **YOUR NAME** on it as the one submitting it
- ♥ At the end of the recipe, tell me **WHY** it's your favorite
- ♥ Turn it in to church (office, email, website)
- ♥ Get a token for an **ICE CREAM** at LeCoulee Cheese Castle

If you have more than one family member in Sunday School, each one can submit a different recipe and get a token.



DEADLINE to submit – **JULY 15**

Let's see how many Sunday school kids we can get in our new book!



**Why should the kids
have all of the fun?**

**The rest of you can
get in on the action
too ...**



and to “sweeten the pot” ...



For every recipe you submit, you will be “entered” into a drawing for a gift card ... we will break it down by “age-decade” (i.e. 20-29, 30-39, etc.). So ... don’t forget to include your age-decade ... and don’t forget to include your story!

Start Watching!

Keep an eye out for more information on the annual Corn Roast, in early August. Details will be in the August newsletter. Remember, this is a gift for our neighbors, so invite them to join us!

Tech Project Delays ...

It's coming – it really is! As we go to press, we expect the tech project to come together towards the end of July/beginning of August. A HUGE thanks to Dean Olson for staying with this, even through all the ups and downs!



We also thank those who have contributed towards this project – over \$15,000 has been received. And remember – you can make a gift towards covering the cost of the project. This project will enhance the audio in the building and add a screen for projection, and also allow high quality livestream of our worship and recording for online use. You can be a part of this new ministry outreach.

For more information on the project see Pastor Jon or Dean Olson.

Blood Drive

Join the fun – give blood...and the gift of life! The next blood drive is just around the corner – mark your calendar!

Monday, July 25, 12:30-5:30 pm
West Salem Presbyterian Church





La Crosse Area Synod School of Theology Summer Sessions – 2022

Thursdays, 6:30 – 8 PM, via Zoom
One last class!

Sessions are offered at no cost; one or more sessions can be taken – each session is “independent” of the others.

Sessions focus on issues of importance in our world, using the applicable social statements of the church as a point of reference.

July 7: Criminal Justice

Dawn Bartusch, Professor at Valparaiso University, member of the team that drafted the 2013 social statement on the criminal justice system.

Contact Pastor Jon for the Zoom link.

And then...**this fall**...in person, right here at Our Savior’s...

- Gospels (Pastor Mark Kvale)
- Just what is the ELCA all about? (Bishop Malpica and Assistant to the Bishop Dione Stapanek).

See Pastor Jon or Dori Jensen for more information.



Thank you ...

to the June newsletter mailing crew –
Connie & Larry Blunck, Bev Bockenhauer,
Carolyn Karl, Vernetta Moe, and Marion
Twite-Stensven.

Received from others ...

To the People of Our Savior's, I had a great visit with Pastor Jon and Pastor Jean learning about the church and sharing about the work of Lutheran World Relief. Thanks for all the generosity and love given over the years. It makes a difference.

*Lutheran World Relief,
Grace, Peace, and Rev. Tim Krick
Trenton Foreman*

In Loving Memory

Memorial Gifts Received ...

In Memory of Myron Thompson

From Eva Farris to Sugar Creek

In Memory of Gregory Craig

From Family and Friends

In Memory of Jim Johnson

From Arlan & Sandra Holthaus and Bev Bockenhauer

In Memory of Jim Johnson

From Dennis & Ann Sprain and Helen Friell to the
Choir





Congregation Council

The Congregation Council met on Monday, June 13, with President Jen Linse presiding. At this meeting the council:

- Shared in devotions centered on Genesis 22.
- Reflected on the changing world and how that impacts our ministry. Heard that Pastor Jon is acquiring copies of a resource for council members to read and consider.
- Continued in conversation around Youth Ministry. Heard that we may need to find new support staff for Wednesday After School.
- Approved the minutes of the May 9 Council Meeting, and received the May financial reports.
- Heard an update from Pastor Jon on congregational life, including the tech project.
- Heard an update on Pastor Jean's sabbatical.
- Heard a report on the recent Synod Assembly from Pastor Jon, Jeff Haldeman, and Carolyn Karl.
- Heard that the landscaping on the north and east sides of the building is still on the schedule.
- Received Katrina Lewis as a new member via transfer from Holy Trinity, Marshall, Wisconsin.
- Decided to participate in the National Night Out Event in West Salem on August 2, and to give a \$300 gift toward the event.
- Noted that the council will not meet in July.

The next meeting of the council will be held Monday, August 8 at 7 PM. If you have questions, or if you have ideas for enhancing the ministry of Our Savior's, contact Jen Linse or one of the pastors.

Ukrainian Relief



The continued warfare in the Ukraine has displaced millions, and left millions more without food, water, or adequate shelter.

Lutheran World Relief (LWR) works with partner churches in Eastern Europe, providing resources to meet those needs. By working with those already on the ground, who know the needs the best, LWR is very effective in making a difference.



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**

You can join LWR's work through your financial gifts. Mark your gift "Ukraine," and we will forward it to LWR. You will save lives!

On behalf of God's people who are suffering, *thank you for your support!*

Scrip Cards News

Now available ... Culver's Scrip cards – \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$25! We earn 10% on the purchase of each Culver's card. Grab a card and enjoy a *Butterburger* and frozen custard!



Don't forget we continue to have Kwik Trip, Kwik Trip car wash, Woodman's, and Ship Shape car wash cards.



Proceeds go to help World Hunger and Our Savior's Youth programs – ***think Sugar Creek Campership support!***



**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

Financial Support Ministry

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.

Like the support for our kids going to Sugar Creek this summer, which you make possible. 25+ kids heading out to learn more about Jesus, and discover how God's love transforms their lives. You, with your financial support, make a difference!

Financial gifts can be shared in worship, by mail, or placed in our locked mailbox. You can also make gifts electronically. Go to www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/giving to find out more!

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



Stewardship



Check it out!

Changes have been made to our on-line and mobile giving! Current recurring gifts already set up will

continue as before, but new gifts and any changes need to go through the new app. From the giving page on our website, you can link directly to Vanco. If, however, you use the mobile app, you now need to download the new "Vanco Mobile" app. All of your passwords stay the same. For more information contact the church office.

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.

Web Site: www.oursaviorswestsalem.org
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Eric Sorenson, Senior Choir Director
Karen DeSchepper, Financial Secretary
Josh Corning, Custodian



Care and Share Food Pantry

The Care and Share Food Pantry is open Saturdays, 10 AM to Noon. Food can be dropped off during office hours. Thank you!



Newsletter Deadlines – July 13

Change in plans! After consulting the calendar a bit more, we will have an August newsletter on the regular schedule. So...note the July 13 deadline!

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
359 Leonard St N
West Salem, WI 54669

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Change Service Requested