

Our Savior's Voice

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

359 Leonard Street N - West Salem, WI 54669

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org

608-786-0030

January 2023



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

January 2023

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Pastor's Reflections

New Years!

Time to pull out a new calendar, get used to writing “23,” and make a bunch of resolutions that might make it to mid-January! It’s also time to pay the bills for Christmas, try to start losing the extra weight we gained, and fully embrace complaining about the cold and the snow. It is that time of the year!

But more seriously, New Year’s really is a chance to reflect and “redirect” ourselves. True, resolutions can fail, and there are a lot of less than desirable changes (like paying the bills) that are a part of the change in the calendar. But other changes are important ... essential ... and maybe even exciting.

Take, for example, the new “guiding principles” that Pastor Jean introduced last month. Hey, if “Jesus is Lord and Savior” (Guiding Principle #1) doesn’t excite you, what will? After all, isn’t that pretty central to who we are?

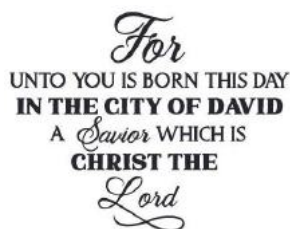
And that’s the point. A guiding principle is something we think is essential to who we are as a congregation, as God’s people. It’s sort of part of our DNA. And “Jesus is Lord and Savior” fits that. Can’t be “Our Savior’s” if we don’t claim, proclaim, and live out “Jesus is Lord and Savior.”

So maybe a good thing for us, as we move into a new year, is to continue to think a bit about who we are, and what makes us who we are. Which brings us back to our list of “guiding principles.”



1. Jesus is Lord and Savior.

Ok, we dealt with that. Pretty much the absolute core of who we are. I mean, if we don't buy that, we might as well shut down, right?



Now, moving right along ...

2. We welcome everyone, and we mean it.

Well, yes, of course we do. Doesn't pretty much every church proclaim that "all are welcome?"

True enough, and so do we. We welcome all to join with us in worship, in our community, in our service to the people around us. Doesn't matter who you are – we welcome you!

Talk is
cheap.
Words are
plentiful.
Deeds are
precious.

But we also know that talk is cheap. Remember? Lots of folk say what we say. We welcome everyone ... except when it really matters. Are we really welcoming ... of anyone and everyone? Folk who look, speak, and think differently? Or just plain new folk?

I really do think we are fairly good at the welcome. We have new people in our midst, and while we don't have too many folks who look or speak differently, we also don't have too many in the community around us. We reflect West Salem and Bangor.

Still, communities change, and would we be ready to welcome those who are different?

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. West Salem and Bangor are what they are right now. And we welcome everyone. We follow our guiding principle.

Part 1, at least. But what about part 2?

We welcome everyone, and we mean it. *And we mean it!*



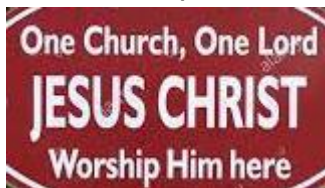
That's the key. Intentionality. Every congregation wants to think that it welcomes everyone. So, do we. But do we really mean it, or is it just talk? Or in other words, are we intentional about our welcome and do we do what we need to do to make it happen. Not just someday when someone who challenges us by their differences, but right now, when anyone enters our corner of the world.

Do we really mean it? Our “guiding principle” says we do. We welcome anyone and everyone, and we do what we need to do to show we are serious. You are welcome in our midst!

And why? Because “Jesus is Lord and Savior.” Jesus saves me ... and you ... and the newcomer, no matter who they are. And if Jesus is our Lord, we embrace all for whom Jesus died – everyone! Those who are just like me, and those who are very different. Everyone!

So, think for a moment ... imagine a year from now, beginning a new year (2024). How will we have changed as a congregation? What “everyone” will we have encountered, and who will have joined us? Picture that for a moment.

And then ponder something else ... how as the year unfolds can we be intentional, living out “Jesus is our Lord and Savior” in our welcome ... and showing that we mean it?



It's important. It's part of our DNA!

Pastor Jon

Office Schedule

The office will be closed
January 2



Thank you for all of your good wishes and thoughts this Christmas Season. Thank you for your support of the ministry here at Our Savior's. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year. Blessings ...

Pastor Jon, Pastor Jean, Kris, Josh, Linda, Laurie, Eric, Jill, and Karen



Saturday, December 31
6 PM

Sunday, January 1
10 AM

One more time ... the carols and the child ... and then the story continues! Worship includes a special message from Assistant to the Bishop Dionne Stepanek. End the year ... and begin the year right!



Worship Update

Saturday 6 PM
Sunday 8 & 10:30 AM

If you feel safer wearing a mask, we encourage you to wear one!

Meanwhile...

Virtual worship options
remain...



We **Zoom 10:30 AM Sunday worship** (check out our home page for the link and have your Communion elements handy!)

We also record worship and post it as a YouTube by 10:30 am on Sunday. You can access this worship at any time through our web site: www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos ... You can even catch up on previous weeks!



Pastoral Acts:

Funeral – Eleanor Lee - December 15

Hungry Jar Offering for January – Our Savior's LaCrosse Women's Clothes Closet



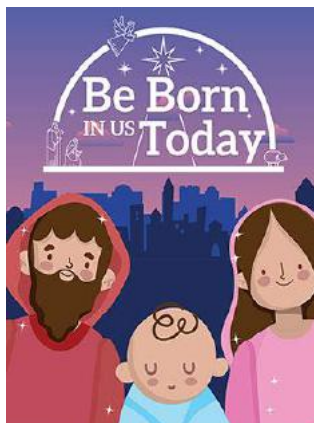
The mission of the Women's Clothes Closet of Our Savior's LaCrosse is to provide gently used clothing

to women who are entering the workforce, in the workforce, or otherwise in need. Started in 1997, the Women's Clothes Closet was created as a project by a student social worker at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse. In 2019, the Women's Clothes Closet had 1,622 clients and received 968 donations that included clothing, shoes, new undergarments, jewelry, accessories, coats, make-up, and personal care items. New visitors to the Women's Clothes Closet can choose three complete outfits. Returning visitors can select one outfit per visit, up to two times per month. No questions are asked about income or employment status.

At this time, they are especially in need of undergarments in very specific sizes. Unlike most clothes, undergarments must be new (still in the package) and not gently used. The folks at Our Savior's are good stewards of the resources they receive to purchase the necessary items to keep their clients appropriately clothed.

The Hungry Jar for January is to provide resources to purchase the undergarments, but if you have items you wish to donate, the Women's Clothes Closet needs gently used in-season clothing that is fashionable, clean, and in good repair. Bras (new), shoes, boots, handbags, scarves, and jewelry are also very much appreciated. Donations are made by appointment. Please call 608-784-5745 to schedule your donation appointment (please leave a message and someone will call you back to schedule).

Faith Formation ...



THANK YOU

What a joyous morning on December 11th when the children presented their Christmas Program, “*Be Born in Us Today*”. It was so great to have everyone in church! And, the kids did an awesome job!

Thank you to parents for getting the kids to Sunday school each week and to the practice. Thank you to our teachers who worked with the kids each week – Erin Hebrink, Amanda Vick, Lindsey Gilberts, Stacey Sjoquist, and Mariette Stefferud. Special thanks to Eric Iliff, Laurie Noelke, Naoko Giblin, Linda Berg, and Wendy Amundson.

We look forward to starting up our regular class time in January.

Thank you, kids, for remembering your Sunday school offerings for Lutheran World Relief personal care kits.



Sunday, January 1 - No Sunday School

Sunday, January 8 - Sunday School resumes



Faith Formation ... Confirmation Ministry

Confirmation instruction for 6-9th grade continues in January...

6th grade...

- Classes on Wednesdays, January 4-11-18-25

7th and 8th grade...

- January 4 – Core class at 6 PM.
- Electives on January 11-18-25. Check the schedule to see when you signed up!

9th grade ... Class on January 4 or 11, and again January 25 or February 1. **Parents are asked to join us!**

And don't forget ... **After School each week** starting ... after school ... and ending ... with dinner at 5:30 PM ... then off to class!



Youth Ministry Director Update

At it's December meeting the Congregation Council acted to formally hire Rachel Holthaus as our new youth ministry director. Rachel is a "native" of Our Savior's, and is now back in West Salem/Bangor.

We will be installing Rachel on January 15, at the 10:30 worship. Join us in welcoming her to our staff and our ministry!

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: ***Ed Schmitz*** (WTC), ***Dagan Hemker***, ***Everett Michael*** (UW-Platteville), and ***McKenna Riley*** (UW-Madison).

college+
connection

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. We can make that happen!

Home Communion Ministry



We are excited to restart the Home Communion Ministry to our shut-ins.

We will do a commissioning for our home communion ministers during worship the weekend of January 28-29.

We invite you to be a part of this ministry ... think about it ... pray about it ... and let us know you will join us. If you have questions or would like more information, speak with one of the pastors.

Norwegian Dinner Update

The ladies met in early December to distribute the proceeds from the Norwegian Dinner. Thank you to all who worked and dined ... your efforts will benefit the following:



World Hunger	400.00
Lutheran Social Services	500.00
Sugar Creek Bible Camp	300.00
Lutheran Campus Ministry	200.00
Salvation Army	500.00
Lutheran Disaster Relief	500.00
Synod Seminary Scholarships	200.00
St Clare Health Mission Sparta	500.00
LaCrosse Warming Center	200.00
LWR—Quilt Shipping	400.00
OSLC Camperships	<u>178.19</u>
Total	3878.19



Annual Meeting

The 2023 Annual Meeting for Our Savior's Lutheran Church will be held on **Sunday, January 29, 2023 following the 10:30 AM service.** At this meeting we will review the ministry of the congregation over the past year, set our mission goals for the coming year, and select leaders for our work together.

2022 Annual Report deadlines

We are getting the annual report together to share with the congregation all that has happened in 2022. We are looking for reflections from the various committees, teams, and ministries to be included in the report. Please note we will need those reports, preferably electronically, in the office as follows: **Written Reports by Friday, January 6 and Financial Reports by Tuesday, January 10.**



Nominations

Last call for nominations. We have a number of people interested in sharing their gifts – how about you? *We are especially looking for synod assembly voting members.* To step forward yourself, or identify someone else, please contact Jen Linse or one of the pastors, and we'll pass the name along.



- Congregation Council (4) – three-year terms
- Mission Endowment Fund (2) – three-year terms
- Synod Assembly Voting Member (4) – one-year terms
- Sugar Creek Bible Camp (2) – one-year terms
- Eagle Crest Communities (2) – one-year terms

Your leadership is important as we seek to be faithful to God's calling to mission and ministry!



Congregation Council

The Congregation Council met on Monday, December 12, at Pastor Jon and Pastor Jean's home, with President Jen Linse presiding. At this meeting the council:

- Approved the minutes of the November council meeting, and received the November financial reports. Also received a report from the pastors on their work.
- Took formal action to appoint Rachel Holthaus as permanent Youth Director. Decided to continue the current job description, but to revise the document within three months, after reviewing how the ministry is developing.
- Designated housing allowances for the pastors for 2023 and beyond.
- Received a report on November finances and anticipated financial gifts.
- Heard that names have been received for nomination for Congregation Council and the Mission Endowment Fund. Also received several names for other elected positions.
- Heard that the Mission Endowment Fund has completed recommendations for consideration at the annual meeting.
- Heard that the Property Committee is preparing a report for the annual meeting to outline the anticipated needs of the building over the next 5-10 years.

The next meeting of the council will be Monday, January 9, at 7 PM. If you have questions or ideas for enhancing the ministry of Our Savior's, contact Jen Linse or one of the pastors.



Thank you ... to the
December newsletter mailing crew:
Larry & Connie Blunck, Carolyn Karl,
Marion Twite-Stensven

Received from others ...

Thank you, Thank you! For your cards and prayers for an easy and speedy recovery. For the pretty yellow prayer shawl, for the Thanksgiving basket. For the pastors, and all involved in planning the retirement party. For the lovely service and lovely music. (Lutherans really know how to sing to the Lord.) For the coffee and cake and those who served. For the generous gifts from the congregation. I've been blessed to be part of Our Savior's. Gratefully,

Kathy Brisson



Ring your bell ...

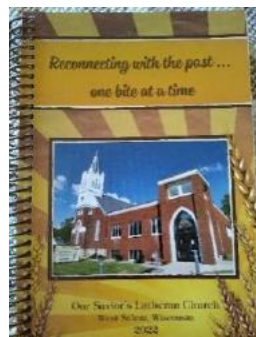
The handbell choir is starting up practices again on Wednesday, January 4 at 6 PM down in the Music Room. They are excited to welcome new members ... how about YOU?? Feel free to join them! If you have questions, speak with Laurie Noelke (608-317-2410).

Pastor Jean's sabbatical project ...

*"Reconnecting with the past ...
one bite at a time" Cookbook*

\$15

(Proceeds go toward the roof fund.)



Scrip Cards Available

Help support Our Savior's Sugar
Creek Bible Camp Camperships
and World Hunger!

KWIK TRIP



Culver's, Kwik Trip,
Kwik Trip car wash, Woodman's,
and Ship Shape car wash.

WOODMAN'S



**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

Financial Support Ministry

As we begin a new year, ***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.

Our budget, which we will adopt at the annual meeting, reflects some of our mission priorities, including youth and children's ministry, worship, pastoral care, outreach through Sugar Creek and Campus Ministry, and lots of other priorities. Your gifts make all that happen, and impact lots of lives!

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!***

Mission Endowment Fund



The Mission Endowment Fund has been working on its recommendations for the 2023 distribution. The annual meeting will approve the distribution. Over \$18,000 will be distributed to a variety of agencies and ministries. Watch for the full proposal in the annual report.

In the meantime ... consider how you can be a life changer too by including Our Savior's in your estate planning, making a difference for years to come!

For more information, see Melody Schmitz or one of the pastors.

2023 Offering Envelopes



By now you should have received your offering envelopes for 2023 in the mail. As the New Year begins, if you still need envelopes, please let Kris know in the office and she will gladly get some for you. If you are new to Simply Giving or are changing your amount in 2023, please be sure to fill out a new form and get that to the office ASAP. **Note: it is possible you will have a new number in 2023, so be sure to use the 2023 envelopes beginning in January.** Also to note, for recordkeeping purposes, everyone receives an envelope number, even those who use electronic giving.

Worship Leaders



Saturday, December 31

6 p.m.

Worship Assistant

Noah Johnsrude

Welcoming Team

Larry & Connie Blunck

Sunday, January 1 – New Year's Day

10 a.m.

Worship Assistant

Tula Mitchell

Welcoming Team

Dan & Jan Wee

WORSHIP LEADERS

January 7-8

6 p.m.

Worship Assistant

Nate Stefferud

Communion Assistant

Jon Hetland

Welcoming Team

Dennis & Ann Sprain

8 a.m.

Worship Assistant

Arianna Stugen

Communion Assistant

Steve Ahles

Welcoming Team

Mitchell Family

10:30 a.m.

Lexi Marinelli

Kyle Twite

Haldeman Family

WORSHIP LEADERS

January 14-15

6 p.m.

Worship Assistant

Landon Weiland

Communion Assistant

Bonnie Gensch

Welcoming Team

Long Family

8 a.m.

Worship Assistant

Laura Burt

Communion Assistant

Carla Burkhardt

Welcoming Team

Draxler Family

10:30 a.m.

Isaac Arentz

Melissa Haldeman

Hauser Family

WORSHIP LEADERS

January 21-22

6 p.m.

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

Henry Bakkum
Judy Morzinski
Phil & Judy Gilbert

8 a.m.

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

Will Byom
Vicky Johnson
Byom Family

10:30 a.m.

Lilly Muellenberg
Carolyn Karl
Kennedy Family

WORSHIP LEADERS

January 28-29

6 p.m.

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

Arianna Clements
Judy Gilbert
Vick Family

8 a.m.

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

Candace Drury
Sue Ahles
Drury Family

10:30 a.m.

Anna Gross
Gillian Twite
Brian & Jen Linse

Altar Guild for January

Wendy Amundson



Blood Drive

January 19 – 12:30-5:30 pm
Presbyterian Church West Salem



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.

Direct your
Thrivent Choice
Dollars
Today!



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

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

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Kris Seeger, Administrative Assistant Church Office: 786-0030

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Rachel Holthaus, Director of Youth Ministry

Email: youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org

Email:

Jill Iliff, Treasurer

Email: treasurer@oursaviorswestsalem.org

Linda Berg, Organist/Choir Accompanist/Director of Music

Email: linda@oursaviorswestsalem.org

Laurie Noelke, Handbell Choir Director/Assistant Worship Musician

Eric Sorenson, Senior Choir Director

Karen DeSchepper, Financial Secretary

Josh Corning, Custodian



Newsletter Deadline – January 13

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
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West Salem, WI 54669

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Change Service Requested