

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
359 Leonard Street N
West Salem, WI 54669

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DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
WEST SALEM, WISCONSIN
DECEMBER 2015

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Mission Statement:
To reach toward God
and to each other
for the sake of the world

OUR SAVIOR'S VOICE

Our Savior's Lutheran Church 359 Leonard Street N West Salem, WI 54669
www.oursaviorswestsalem.org 608-786-0030

PASTOR'S REFLECTIONS

Merry Christmas!

Wow, did that sound strange! I'm writing this November 13. How many shopping days left?

And earlier this morning I finished off other newsletter material, including (are you ready?) an announcement about Lent.

So here we are, mid-November, and I've skipped ahead to Christmas, and beyond. Pretty sad! Can't even find the time to enjoy the season. Like retailers who tear down their Christmas displays by noon on December 26, I'm all over the map. Can't let Christmas be Christmas...if even for just a moment.

Maybe.

A recent article I wrote elicited a puzzling response from a reader who claimed I had a bias. For the record, the reader totally missed it – any bias I had was the other direction, the direction the reader wanted me to go. Here, however, I'll be clear – I have a bias, and it's a big one – the cross!

Now, don't get me wrong. I love Christmas. I love the carols, candlelight, worship, snow, decorations, and even the music that began already at the beginning of November.

Christmas, however, isn't about the trappings of the season. Christmas is something bigger. Christmas is the breaking into our world of God's plan for life, which, in our sight begins in the manger and acts decisively in the cross. In

the cross, God makes the difference between life and death, and brings all of God's plan together.

That's why I'm biased about the cross. In whatever we do as a community of faith, the cross of Jesus stands at the center. It's the cross that gives us life, allows us to fail and be redeemed, and holds us together. Around the cross, we gather, and in the power of the cross, we live. We make mistakes, we are vulnerable, but we are renewed in Jesus, not in ourselves.

The cross that empowers us also challenges us to live a different life, and to be faithful to God's vision, and that isn't always a vision we find comfortable. We are called to welcome the newborn child of Bethlehem. That part's easy. But we are also called to welcome those who might not be welcome other places into our midst. Because the cross has lifted us up, we recognize that our gathering is God's doing, and all of God's people are welcome to God's place.

In the end, the visible (to our eyes) part of the journey begins in the manger. In the manger, God comes into our midst in the person of Jesus Christ, and begins to walk to the cross. The cross is the point – the cross is precisely why we have a Christmas!

So, it shouldn't rattle me that even before Christmas, I'm thinking Lent...and the cross. Got to have the cross around if we are going to celebrate Christmas for what it really is – the coming of God in Jesus to bring us new life!

WELCOME, TIM BOWMAN!

Welcome
to Tim
Bowman!
Tim is our



new Interim Director of Youth and Family Ministry. The Congregation Council has engaged him to work with our kids and with us as we discern our directions for mission and ministry. Tim will be with us through the middle of next summer, when he and his wife Allyson (Vicar at English Lutheran Church in La Crosse) will return to the Twin Cities. We are excited to have Tim with us and look forward to his ministry!

INTERIM DIRECTOR OF YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

Greetings! My name is Tim Bowman and I am very excited to be the Interim Director of Youth and Family Ministry. I was born and raised in Verona, Wisconsin. In 2008, I moved to St. Paul to attend Bethel University where I majored in Biblical and Theological Studies and graduated in 2012. In the fall of that year, I began classes at Luther Seminary and graduated in 2014 with a Master's Degree in Children, Youth, and Family Ministry. It was also at seminary where I met my now wife, Allyson. We just got married on October 9th of this year and we live in La Crosse where she is the current Vicar/Intern at English Lutheran Church. I am very excited to serve in this congregation for the time that I have, and I look forward to getting to know you all. My door is always open so please feel free to stop by.



But if Christmas is about God coming to us in Jesus, becoming "incarnate," in flesh, then Christmas isn't just a fleeting moment of joy and wonder. Just as the cross swirls around us daily, so does Christmas, or at least, the point of Christmas. That God is present in our midst *every day* through Jesus is what Christmas brings to us – and that doesn't go away when the decorations are taken down. God remains with us, through the journey to the cross and beyond, into our daily lives.

That also means that the crucified Jesus, part of our daily lives, calls us to faithful living every day as we welcome all into our midst, not because we need the congregation to grow, or even because we are politically correct. Rather, because God is in our midst through Jesus, bringing us new life through the cross, empowering us to be difference makers in the lives of others.

So here's my thought – celebrate God's coming into our world at Christmas with gusto, but keep an eye on the cross.

And when the Christmas goodies are gone, the decorations packed away, and the music no longer heard, and you approach the cross of Good Friday, keep an eye on the manger too!

There's my bias!

Pastor Jon

MILL STREET UPDATE



Take a look – the Mill Street house is gone! Shortly, if not already, the lot will be graveled and available for parking during the winter. Note that the entrance and exit will be

through the alley. We hope to have a proposal for the annual meeting to blacktop the lot sometime next spring.

STAFF CHANGES

Dave Nelson, our custodian, has resigned as of the first week in November. The Administration Committee is in the process of securing new custodial services, and we hope to have those in place by early December.

We thank Dave for his work over the past 16 months, and wish him well. We also thank Sherri Neal, from ChildFirst, for keeping the building clean as an interim custodian over the past few weeks.

“OWL” GET TO KNOW YOU!

OWLS (Older, Wiser Lutherans) and their friends are invited to get to know our new Interim Director of Youth and Family Ministry, Tim Bowman, on Thursday, December 10, at 1:30 p.m. OWLS, seniors of all kinds, and anyone else who is interested can join us to meet Tim, and to share with him our visions, dreams, and insights about our youth ministry program at Our Savior’s. Grandparents have lots to share, so don’t be shy – come to listen, come to be heard!



NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is currently seeking nominees for Congregation Council and several other positions in our leadership. If you have an interest in serving, or just want more information about the many leadership roles, please speak with Pastor Jon or Pastor Jean.

HUNGER AROUND TOWN AND AROUND THE WORLD

While getting ready for Christmas, don’t forget that many struggle just to have enough to eat. The “Mission Central” display in the Gathering Area includes information about our ministries to bring life to the hungry – ministries in West Salem, and ministries across the globe. Check it out and see how you can do “God’s work with your hands” as you bring life through gifts of food to those who are hungry!



PASTORAL ACTS

Baptism

✝ **Brylee Lynn Schlifer**, daughter of Andrew and Audrey Schlifer was baptized November 8. Her baptismal sponsors are Travis and Mandy Zeman, Ryan and Rachel Fradette, Adam and Lacey Fradette.

Memorial Service

✝ Our sympathy to the family of **Frank J. Trautman** who died October 6. Services were held October 31.

NORWEGIAN SUPPER SUMMARY



Norwegian
Dinner

The 2015 Norwegian Supper was a huge success. 502 in the dining room and 90 carryout's. That is 26 more than last year. Our profits appear to be higher this year. We want to thank the 200 volunteers who helped make the dinner happen as well as all those who contributed in any way. Special thanks to Thrivent Financial for approving our application to be designated an action team which provided a pre-paid VISA card for \$250.00 which helped pay for groceries. Thanks to Kwik Trip for providing milk, Family Tree Floral for the table flowers, Linda's Bakery for the many goodies and Steve and Fran Noffke for contributing all of the rutabagas.

The final profits will be reported soon!

The Lutefisk Ladies

Lynette Ender,

Inger Michael and

Bonny Goodenough

CALLING ALL WOMEN!!!

Sunday, December 6

9:15 a.m. in the Library

Did you know you are a member of WELCA (Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) just because you joined this church?

Come help us decide where our Lutefisk Dinner proceeds are going to be sent. Also, bring your thinking caps to help us decide the direction we should take our WELCA group. More information about WELCA and what other church groups are doing will be discussed.



Any questions, call Inger Michael 786-1707, or Bonny Goodenough, 608-769-0758.

See you there!

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

The "Stewardship Corner" has been part of this newsletter for the past few years. Our goal is to try to give you a different perspective on stewardship, sometimes, yes, on money, but more often than not showing that stewardship is about all of life.

Every month in the "Stewardship Corner," we try to show you how Our Savior's Lutheran Church "Makes a Difference." This month the Stewardship Committee would like to extend a huge "Thank You" to the members of OSLC for their response to our letter that you received in October. We asked that you please fill out the "Estimate of Giving Card" and return it to the church by November 8. Even though the response has been good, we still would appreciate hearing from the rest of you. It is never too late to get this information to the church office.

Stewardship is about everything God has given us, and what we do with what we have been given.

God Bless and Thank You,

Ken Spratz

Chairman Stewardship Committee

Attention Please!

SIMPLY GIVING

If you use Simply Giving and made a change to your Estimate of Giving for 2016, please take a new Simply Giving form located on the Kiosk in the Gathering Area. Return the updated form to the church office, please.

A FELLOWSHIP HOUR THANK YOU



**Thanks
to Our
Volunteers!**

We have many folks to thank for making our Sunday fellowship hour successful. The following people have helped late-summer-into-fall.

Servers and treat providers:
Connie and Larry Blunck (2), Rita Schmitz, Bonny Goodenough and Jan Goetzinger (2), Joan Ewing, Shannon and Rob Wiese, Sharon Olson and Wendy Winters, Melody Schmitz, Jim Michelson, Sandi Stavlo, Maureen and Daryl Wermedal, Judy Gilbert, and Beth Quamme.

The following people were bakers and providers of fruit or other treats: Tracy Skrentny, Lisa Lee, Helen Friell, Linda Arentz, Marsha Bateman, Kristin Phillips, Candice Tlustosch, Connie Blunck (2), Carla Burkhardt, Dori Jensen, Fran Noffke, Naoko Aminaka, Connie Pinski, Joyce Schultz, Jill Iliff, Jean Fernstaedt, Velma Schmidt, Rita Schmitz (3), Kay Osiecki, Shannon Wiese (2), Jim Michelson (2), Lynette Ender (3).

A special thanks to Erik Peterson for providing complimentary coffee from Kwik Trip.

The signup sheet is on the bulletin board beside the kitchenette door. We welcome any offerings of homemade, bakery made, or store bought treats.

Thank you one and all!

DATE	ATTENDANCE	OFFERING	SUNDAY SCHOOL
Oct. 31 & Nov. 1	317	\$7,070	65
Nov. 8	249	\$4,029	75
Nov. 14 & 15	323	\$8,204	77



- We thank the **MAILING CREW** for assembling the Newsletter. The members who helped this past month were Bev Bockenbauer, Bonnie Ender, Sandra Holthaus, Judy Morzinski, Rich and Mary Storandt, and Betty Whitlock.

- The Dorcas Sewing Circle wishes to thank the **Rebecca Circle** for the Sunday coffee money. It will be used to purchase batting.

- Thank you to Lee Friell for the gift to the Endowment Fund in honor of the birthday of his mother, Helen Friell.

- Thank you to the family of Frank Trautman for the memorial gift to the Education Fund.

SEWING QUILT TOPS

Please ladies, help us by sewing some quilt tops. Quilt squares are in the basket in the Gathering Area. I know this is a busy time of year, but if we don't get some quilt tops, we will be done quilting by Christmas, and that would be a shame. Only you can help.



Thanks so much,
Dorcas Sewing Circle

NEW BOOKS & RECENT DONATIONS IN THE CHURCH LIBRARY

CHILDREN'S:

Ehrlich: Leo, Zack, and Emmie
Hissey: Little Bear's Trousers
Yashima: Crow Boy



YOUTH:

Frost: Poetry For Young People
Swift: Gulliver's Travels

FICTION:

Kingsbury: Reunion
Kingsbury: A Time to Embrace
Kinkade: Cape Light
Lewis: The Secret Keeper
Lewis: The Last Bride

NONFICTION:

Canfield: Chicken Soup for the
Mother's Soul 2
Canfield: Chicken Soup for the Soul:
Miraculous Messages
From Heaven
Guideposts: More Than Coincidence:
When God Shines His
Light on You

SALVATION ARMY DINNER SERVING

Our Savior's continues to take the second Friday of the month to serve the meal at the Salvation Army in La Crosse. We are there from 4:15-5:15 p.m. – no preparation or clean up, just serving and being the presence of Jesus as we do "God's work with our hands." We look to have six servers, and families are welcome, including children as young as ten. A number of confirmation students are already signed up, so fill in the slots and serve Jesus! A sign-up sheet is on the youth bulletin board outside Pastor Jon's office.



CONGREGATION COUNCIL REVIEW

The Congregation Council met on Monday, November 9, with President Char Buelow presiding. At this meeting the council:

- Opened with prayer.
- Reviewed and approved the minutes of the October meeting. Also reviewed and accepted the October financial reports and pastors' reports.
- Adopted revisions to the Emergency Action Plan.
- Heard an update on the Mill Street House and its removal.
- Approved the hiring of Tim Bowman as Interim Director of Youth and Family Ministry.
- Discussed the changes in custodial staff.
- Discussed the lease with ChildFirst for 2016. Approved renewing the lease for 2016.
- Set the annual meeting for Sunday, January 31, following 10:30 a.m. worship.
- Approved the housing allowance designation for 2016.
- Approved a contribution of \$500 toward Cathryn Bottem's mission trip to Thailand in January.
- Noted that the December meeting will be at the pastors' home.

The council meets again on Monday, December 14, at Pastor Jon and Pastor Jean's home. See Char Buelow or one of the pastors if you have any questions.

MISSION DISCERNMENT

The Vision Team and Space Team met together in early November and they continue to move forward in their work. The teams are looking at our ministry, and what God is calling us to be. They are also looking at how our assets, including our space, enable our faithful ministry.

Looking ahead, the teams will host another "congregational conversation" on Sunday, February 28, during the afternoon. Mark your calendar now to join us and share your insights and perspectives. Your input is valuable and we want you there with us! More details will be shared in the coming months. For now, mark it down!

NURSING HOME SERVICES

Outreach at area nursing and housing facilities continues in December. Each month, this outreach connects with almost 80 people!

Pastor Jon and Pastor Jean will lead worship services on Thursday, December 17:

10:30 a.m. – Lakeview
1:00 p.m. – Salem Terrace
2:45 p.m. – Mulder's

Come and join us as we share the good news with faithful folk around our community! See Pastor Jon or Pastor Jean for more information.

BIBLE STUDY IN DECEMBER!

- Sunday morning adult study meets on December 6 and 13, at 9:15 a.m. Grab some coffee, and join us in the classroom by the restrooms on the lower level. We watch a "Nooma" video, then take some time to "chew" on it a bit! No study on December 20 or 27. Study will resume on January 10.

- Wednesday morning Bible study completes Philippians, and then will take a peek at some of the Biblical texts surrounding the Christmas story. We meet at 9:30 a.m. in the Library, and YOU are invited! No experience or insight required – just come and enjoy the fellowship and exploration of God's word.

- Check out information on the Salem Terrace study elsewhere in the newsletter, and the calendar for WELCA circle studies.

LOOKING AHEAD...



Although Christmas isn't even here yet, it's not too early to think about Lent. Lent is early this coming year (Ash Wednesday is February 10!), and our Lenten worship will again feature a series of dramas. If you would like to be a part of one of the dramas, speak with one of the pastors and we will get you on the list!

SOUNDS LIKE LOVE 2015

Two carloads, seven kids, and one flat tire later, we made it to *Sounds Like Love 2015* at St. Andrew's Church in Minnesota. *Sounds Like Love* is a music festival with over 250 kids from all over the United States singing, dancing, and spreading God's word. The theme for the weekend was "Unbreakable."



"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties.

For when I am weak, then I am strong."
2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Watching the joy in the faces of all those kids brought tears to my eyes several times. It was amazing to be a part of it. And if the parents of Jarron, Molly, Aunna, Abby, Alysha, Allison, and Kamryn don't know already, you have wonderful kids. Thank you for letting me be a part of it. God's presence was definitely felt by all the whole weekend.

Tracey Beckley

YOUTH CHAPEL



Youth Chapel continues in December on Sunday, December 20 at 7 p.m., in the library. Youth Chapel is a casual, contemporary worship designed by some of our high school youth. The music is upbeat, the message is personal, and you are welcome. Most of all, we trust in the presence of Jesus as we gather together. Come expecting something a bit different, but the same Jesus!

CONFIRMATION AND AFTER SCHOOL



Confirmation classes are moving right along. 6th graders continue to meet at 6 p.m. on Wednesdays, studying the Old

Testament and learning how God worked through his people.

7th & 8th grade students meet in a core class on December 2, at 6 p.m., reviewing the Apostles' Creed. Several electives are set for December 9, and we go caroling on December 16.

9th graders meet on December 2, at 7:45 p.m. following the Hanging of the Greens, for a short class with parents joining us. We take a

quick look at families and what they mean to us, then go off with a project for Christmas!

After School meets on December 2 and 16. No After School on December 9 (early release day).



There are no classes or After School on December 23 or 30. We restart again on January 6, the Festival of the Epiphany!

SCRIP CARDS FOR CHRISTMAS

- **Stocking stuffers**
- **College students**
- **Donating practical and much needed basics (gas and groceries) to those in need**
- **Your own weekly grocery and gas needs**



Our youth benefit when you invest in their fund raising needs!

Please consider helping out in this meaningful and practical way by purchasing SCRIP cards. Denominations are available in \$10, \$20, \$25, \$50, and \$100. SCRIP cards are available from Kwik Trip, Woodman's, and Festival.

The SCRIP card sales provide essential and direct support for mission trips, retreats and important youth programs. Find our table in the Gathering Area!

Our youth appreciate your visible sign of support!



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Sunday School is plugging along every week with an energetic group of kids. Our friends from *Whirl* help us out as we learn about the seasons of the church year and hear the same Bible stories that are being shared in worship that day. We are always eager to welcome new students, so come join us!



Parents, if you haven't signed up yet to spend a day in your child(ren)'s Sunday School class, please be sure to do so the next time you are here. The teachers look forward to having family members around and the children need to know that it is important to learn about God's love together.



Mark Your Calendar

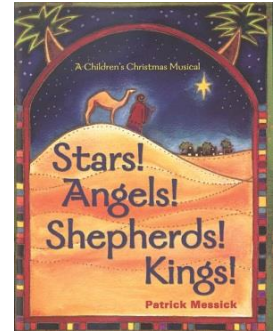
- Saturday, December 12** – Sunday School Christmas Program – Rehearsal – 9 AM
- Saturday, December 12** – Sunday School Christmas Program – 4 PM
- Sunday, December 27** – **NO** Sunday School – Christmas vacation
- Sunday, January 3, 2016** – **NO** Sunday School – Christmas vacation

You are invited ...

Sunday School Christmas Program

"Stars! Angels! Shepherds! Kings!"

**Saturday,
December 12 at
4 PM
at the Presbyterian
Church
(625 W. Franklin)**



Join us for the Sunday School Christmas Program – invite your family and friends! There will be treats and a time for fellowship following the program.

We will be collecting a **free-will offering for the Care & Share Food Pantry.**

Sunday School Offering

This year our Sunday School offerings will be collected for **God's Global Garden** through the work of the ELCA. Start with a large plot of land, add special drought-resistant seeds, and top it off with tools and training for all. The result – plenty of fruits and vegetables to go around! Extra produce and seeds are shared with neighbors in need. We will see how many garden plots we can get by filling them with carrots, cabbage, beans, and melons; then add fruit tree saplings; as well as the tools needed to tend the garden (rake, hoe, and shovel). Keep an eye on the bulletin board outside of Pastor Jean's office and watch our garden grow!





Our *friendly competition* continues

between the Sunday School classes to see which class will have the most weeks of "near perfect" attendance and which class can raise the *most offerings* to fill our garden. Can you help your class?

After 9 weeks (early November) ...

Our **Pre-K** class has the most weeks of "near perfect" attendance at 4 weeks.

We also have **13 children who have perfect attendance** and another **16 who only missed once!** Way to go kids!! Keep it up!

Our **5th grade, 4th grade (Ms. Kane/Ms. Schmidt), and 2nd grade** are running neck and neck for offering at \$46.50, \$45.70, & \$43.00 respectively! Watch the bulletin board outside of Pastor Jean's office to see our garden begin to grow.



We would like to **thank the congregation** for your contribution to the Hungry Jar in October for God's Global Garden.

We raised \$156.59 towards a second garden plot (\$300).



SUGAR CREEK
BIBLE CAMP

Hungry Jar Offering for December Sugar Creek Bible Camp

The snow has barely begun to fly and we are already looking ahead to summer. Mrs. Fortier's & Ms. Witte's 4th Grade Sunday School class has chosen **Sugar Creek Bible Camp** as the recipient of the Hungry Jar offerings for December. Sugar Creek is a place "where all generations encounter Christ through God's people and creation." Gifts are vital to the camp's operating budget as they help provide quality programs, a safe environment, well-maintained facilities, and a fun, memorable, Christ-centered experience for summer campers and those who attend retreats. Your gifts will help to make a profound difference to the ministry of Sugar Creek.

E-MAIL AND WEB SITE CHANGES

The long promised e-mail changes are now here! The old e-mail accounts at Centurylink.net (and the youth address at gmail.com) are no longer active. We will not receive any e-mails to those addresses. Please use our new e-mail addresses.



office@oursaviorswestsalem.org
pastorjon@oursaviorswestsalem.org
pastorjean@oursaviorswestsalem.org
youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org

Note too that Linda Berg, our music director, can be contacted at linda@oursaviorswestsalem.org.

Meanwhile, remember that weekly worship services are posted on the web site, along with current news. Check it out!

We are intentional about keeping in

college+ connection

contact with our college students – sending emails periodically, as well as remembering them during final exam week. We are also interested in hearing about life away from home and encourage them to share with us.

As our students are either away from home or studying in challenging environments, we keep them in our thoughts and prayers. This month please pray for: **Asher Carlson** (University of Minnesota-Duluth) and **Leif Ender** (St. Cloud State).



From *Sara Frank* (UW-L):

Thanks for checking in! School has been going okay for me, a little tougher than last year but it's worth it. It's nice being close to home and seeing my church family around La Crosse from time to time.

In other positive news, for my major I have to take a fitness exam and I passed with flying colors. I took a couple of days after for "cheat days" to skip a workout or two and eat what I please.

I love to receive these emails and hear how things are going at home. 😊

From *Mikaela Hunter* (Drake University, Des Moines, IA):

Thanks for the email. I love hearing what's going on back at home.

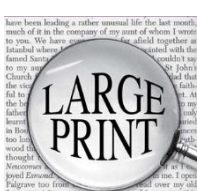
I'm taking an extremely difficult class load this semester so it's safe to say I hang out with my textbooks more often than people haha 😊. Besides going to lecture and lab, I have taken on three part time nannying jobs for some local families and various other date night babysitting gigs. I'm taking my Friday kids out trick-or-treating tomorrow so that will be exciting! I am also working at a church nursery downtown on Sunday mornings, so it's been nice to be in a church community when I'm away from home.

Outside of school and work, I am actively involved in my sorority, Kappa Alpha Theta, and my college competition dance team. It keeps my schedule full and provides a nice break from all the studying I'm doing!

Senior Ministries

We have what you need ...

When you're at church ... feel free to ask an Usher for ...



- ❖ a large print bulletin for use during worship – everything is included in the bulletin, no need to fumble with heavy hymnals

- ❖ a hearing assist device available for use during worship



For those who can't get to church ...

- ❖ we have large print copies of the daily devotional "**Christ In Our Home**" that comes out quarterly
- ❖ a DVD is made each week of the **Sunday worship service** and we have a DVD player to lend out with the DVD



If you would like to receive either of these, please call the church office and let us know. **We are happy to deliver!**



Breakfast & Bible Study @ Salem Terrace

Monday, December 14th at 9:30 AM

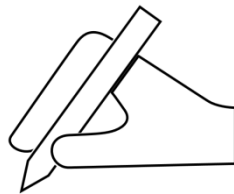
As we prepare for the holidays, we will partake in a tasty breakfast, followed by a rousing game of Bible Trivia! Come with your thinking caps on ... *prizes for the winning team!* We meet in the small kitchenette room off the parking lot between the two buildings.



The Ruth Circle will also meet with the Salem Terrace Bible Study group.

Card Ministry

In case you didn't know ... we send cards to two shut-ins each week to let them know we are thinking of them and praying for them.



We invite all of our members and friends to stop by the "Card Ministry" table (located outside of the Church Office) each weekend when you are at worship to sign the cards for that particular week's shut-ins. The thoughts and prayers expressed on the cards are much more meaningful when those gathered in community are the ones signing them.



Friends of Our Saviors,
Thanks for the real nice card signed by

so many. It just made my day special.

From Elaine Erickson

*Senior
Spotlight!
Celebrating
our Resident Theologians...*



Disciples come in all shapes and sizes. We have much to learn from our "elders" as these resident theologians have insights and stories to share. Yolanda Craig graciously allowed us to share a glimpse into her story. Yolanda, 92 years young, learned to drive in 1957 at the age of 34 alongside of the high school students at West Salem. She stopped driving a couple of years ago when she started looking like those "old people" she used to think shouldn't be driving anymore!

Yolanda's advice to new disciples of Jesus ... there is nothing better to believe in than faith. Anything else does not seem worthwhile.

Yolanda's favorite Bible passage ... because ... Psalm 23 because it has stuck with her the most.

Yolanda's earliest memories of church ... Yolanda grew up at South Beaver Creek church. She said they didn't have Sunday School, but for two weeks every summer, starting when she was 7 years old until she was confirmed, they would gather at the church for Norwegian School where they studied the catechism and bible history. Yolanda remembers cutting across pastures with animals and farm fields gathering up her friends along the way on the three mile walk to the church. Yolanda also remembers her mother reading the Bible to Yolanda's nephews during the summer.

Yolanda remembers being on the funeral committee at Our Savior's starting in 1957 and doing it until she couldn't go anymore.

Thank you for sharing, Yolanda! Please keep Yolanda and all of our "senior" members (and "resident theologians") in your prayers.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

November 28, Saturday

6 p.m. Worship

November 29, Sunday

8 a.m. Worship

9:15 a.m. Refreshments, Sunday
School, Adult Study

10:30 a.m. Worship

11:45 a.m. Tree Trimming

5 p.m. Beginning Handbells

6 p.m. Guitar Group

December 2, Wednesday

9:30 a.m. Bible Study

Noon West Salem Clergy

1 p.m. Dorcas Sewing Circle

5:30 p.m. Supper

6 p.m. Grade 6 Class

6 p.m. Grades 7 & 8 Core Class

7 p.m. Hanging of the Greens

7:45 p.m. Senior Choir

7:45 p.m. Grade 9 Students & Parents

December 5, Saturday

6 p.m. Worship

December 6, Sunday

8 a.m. Worship

9:15 a.m. Refreshments, Sunday
School, Adult Study

10:30 a.m. Worship

5 p.m. Beginning Handbells

6 p.m. Guitar Group

December 9, Wednesday

9:30 a.m. Bible Study

1 p.m. Dorcas Sewing Circle

NO SUPPER

6 p.m. Grade 6 Class

6 p.m. Grades 7 & 8 Electives

7 p.m. Advent Worship with Drama

7:45 p.m. Senior Choir

December 12, Saturday

9 a.m. Sunday School Christmas
Program Rehearsal at the
Presbyterian Church

4 p.m. Sunday School Christmas

Program at the Presbyterian Church

6 p.m. Worship

December 13, Sunday

8 a.m. Worship

9:15 a.m. Refreshments, Sunday
School, Adult Study

10:30 a.m. Worship

5 p.m. Beginning Handbells

6 p.m. Guitar Group

December 16, Wednesday

9:30 a.m. Bible Study

1 p.m. Dorcas Sewing Circle

5:30 p.m. Supper

6 p.m. Grade 6 Class

6 p.m. Grades 7 & 8 Christmas Caroling

7 p.m. Advent Worship with Carol Sing

7:45 p.m. Senior Choir

December 19, Saturday

6 p.m. Worship

December 20, Sunday

8 a.m. Worship & Christmas Cantata

9:15 a.m. Refreshments, Sunday
School, NO ADULT STUDY

10:30 a.m. Worship & Christmas
Cantata

6 p.m. Guitar Group

7 p.m. Youth Chapel

December 24, Thursday, Christmas Eve

1:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m.,

5:30 p.m. & 10 p.m.

All Services serve Holy Communion

December 25, Friday, Christmas Day

10 a.m. Worship

December 26, Saturday

6 p.m. Worship/NO COMMUNION

December 27, Sunday

NO COMMUNION

8 a.m. Worship

9:15 a.m. Refreshments,

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR ADULT STUDY

10:30 a.m. Worship

NO GUITAR GROUP

January 2, Saturday

6 p.m. Worship

January 3, Sunday

8 a.m. Worship

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR ADULT STUDY

9:15 a.m. Refreshments

10:30 a.m. Worship

HOLIDAY *Schedule*

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS!



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you, from the staff at Our Savior's! We treasure the community that gathers

here, and we are grateful to all of you for your support and your partnership in the gospel of Jesus. May God's blessings in the Christ Child be yours during this Holy Season, and throughout the coming New Year!

Pastor Jon, Pastor Jean, Kay, and Tim

VACATION

Pastor Jon and Pastor Jean will be on vacation the week following Christmas. If you have need of pastoral care please contact the office. We thank Cathryn Bottem for leading worship on December 26 and 27.

LAKEVIEW GIVING TREE



Each year Lakeview Health Center provides us with a wooden Christmas tree. On the tree are 20 tags with the Christmas needs of the residents at Lakeview. Some of these residents are far from family or are alone. We help to make their Christmas just a little brighter.

When you receive this newsletter, the tags might already be gone. This is a reminder, however, that the gifts are due back to the church by December 7.

SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGING

We are looking for bell ringers at Hansen's IGA on December 4 and 5, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. A sign-up sheet is on the kiosk in the Gathering Area. This is an important ministry of support for the work that the Salvation Army does with people in our community who are in need. Can we fill the time and make the Christmas holiday brighter?



Sign-ups are for two-hour slots, but if you can only do one hour, we can split the slots. The sign-up also indicates the "high traffic" times when we really want to be present!

MIDWEEK ADVENT WORSHIP WEDNESDAYS, 7 PM

Come and join us as we journey to the manger...

December 2 – It's the "Hanging of the Greens" – several of our confirmands help us to prepare for Christmas by exploring some of the symbols of the season. *Bring an ornament to put on the tree in the sanctuary!*



December 9 – Advent is a time of preparation for Jesus. Are you ready? Several confirmands help us with a drama presentation.



December 16 – Carol Sing – we gather with our confirmands for an informal carol sing, message, and prayer. Like gathering around the Christmas tree, or in front of the fireplace, we are children of God getting ready for God's greatest gift!



CHRISTMAS CAROLING

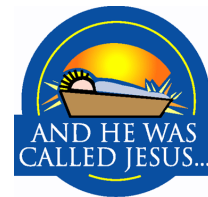
7th and 8th graders are going caroling around town on Wednesday, December 16, at 6 p.m., and YOU are invited to join us! We start with subs for dinner at 5:30 p.m., and then head out in various groups and various directions to share the music of the season. Following our journeys, we return to the church building for our 7 p.m. "carol sing." Dress for the weather, then come and share the Christmas spirit, having fun doing it!



CHOIR CANTATA



Please join us Sunday, December 20 as the choir presents the Christmas cantata "Were You There On That Christmas Night?" Obviously, none of us were actually there that night, but in the mystery of God's holy ways, all of us in a sense were there. The eternal and timeless nature of God places us in Bethlehem as we hear the story in music and scripture. We sincerely thank the family of Joanne Schmid for their generosity in providing our music.



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

1:30 PM

3:30 PM

5:30 PM

Festive Celebration of Jesus' birth with candle lighting, special music, and Holy Communion.
The Christ Child is born for me and for you!

10 PM

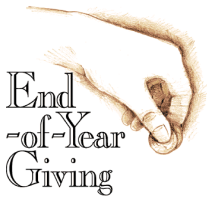
Lessons, carols, candle light, Holy Communion...and the newborn Jesus! *Come and welcome the savior of the world!*



CHRISTMAS DAY

10 AM

We gather in the morning to rejoice in the newborn child of Bethlehem and to reflect on the gift of grace God gives us in Jesus.



YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS DUE DECEMBER 31

Members of the congregation are reminded to make their year-end contributions by **Noon on Thursday, December 31**. No credit for contributions given after December 31 can be credited to your giving statement for 2015. Statements will be mailed to you in January.

Thank you for your contributions.

LEAVING YOUR LEGACY

Pastor Larry Westfield, Regional Gift Planner with the ELCA Foundation, joined us in worship October 31 and November 1, and spoke of our legacy, and how we impact others through our planned giving. If you have an interest in exploring how your planned giving can make a difference, and in learning how to do planned giving that works best for you, Pastor Westfield is available to meet with you confidentially. He charges no fee and sells no product – he just helps you figure out what directions to consider with your charitable giving.

Contact Pastor Westfield at 262-224-9574, or larry.westfield@elca.org.

SIMPLY GIVING

As a new year beckons, it's a good time to think "Simply Giving." Simply Giving is a way to support the work of Jesus Christ through Our Savior's using automatic withdrawal from your bank account. You determine the amount and the frequency of your gift, and it can be changed at any time. Simply Giving covers the fees. Currently, over 20% of our offerings here are done through Simply Giving, and all gifts are acknowledged on your giving statement for tax purposes. To sign up, contact the office, or speak with Pastor Jon or Pastor Jean.

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.

E-COMMUNICATIONS OR PAPER COPY



Did you know that **112** people receive the newsletter by email instead of the **447** people who receive a paper copy?

Interested in helping us save paper and postage? One way we can do that is to send you an email each time we post the newsletter on our website. Give us your email address, let us know you don't want a paper copy of the newsletter, and we'll do the rest. You can find the website at

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org

HOSPITAL REMINDER

Being hospitalized is never easy. Our goal is to visit each member during this difficult time.



At Gundersen, please be sure to alert the hospital of your church affiliation when they ask and they will then release your name to us when we call. At Mayo Clinic Health System/Franciscan Healthcare, it is important that you or a family member contact the church office to notify us of your stay. Mayo is no longer able to give out that information.



Once again, you're invited to place poinsettias in the church at Christmas. Many people have found it a special way to remember or to honor someone in this season. You may provide your own plant or we will order a plant for you through Family Tree Floral here in West Salem. Red or white poinsettias are available for \$20.00. Please let us know how we can acknowledge your poinsettia in the Christmas bulletins.

CHECK ONE:

_____ Please purchase a poinsettia for me. I understand the price is \$20.00.

_____ Red _____ White

_____ I will provide a poinsettia but prefer to purchase my own plant. I will have it at church by December 23.

IN MEMORY OF

IN HONOR OF

GIVEN BY

Please return this slip and \$20.00 by December 7 to the church office or put it in an envelope and place it in the offering plate.

You may take your poinsettia home after the Christmas Day worship service.

DECEMBER

ACOLYTES

Dec.	5	6 p.m.	Jade Turnipseed
	6	8 a.m.	Alyssa VanRiper
	6	10:30 a.m.	Samara Wheeler
Dec.	12	6 p.m.	Alayna Aleckson
	13	8 a.m.	Madison Dutton
	13	10:30 a.m.	Ashlyn Arneson
Dec.	19	6 p.m.	Elizabeth Averbeck
	20	8 a.m.	Brianna Bores
	20	10:30 a.m.	Mitch Dunham
December 24 – Christmas Eve			
		1:30 p.m.	Thor Anderson
		3:30 p.m.	Kessler Goodenough
		5:30 p.m.	Eli Elsen
		10 p.m.	Trenton Foreman
December 25 – Christmas Day			
		10 a.m.	Olivia Haun
Dec.	26	6 p.m.	Sydney Fitzpatrick
	27	8 a.m.	Dagan Hemker
	27	10:30 a.m.	Anna Johnson

BASKET HOLDERS

Dec.	6	8 a.m.	Delaney Christianson
	6	10:30 a.m.	Ashlee Garbers
Dec.	13	8 a.m.	Justin Hennessey
	13	10:30 a.m.	Madeline Janisch
Dec.	20	8 a.m.	Zachary Long
	20	10:30 a.m.	Mallory Matheny
December 24 – Christmas Eve			
		1:30 p.m.	Megan Marcou
		3:30 p.m.	Elsa Mitchell
		5:30 p.m.	Eddie Schmitz

ALTAR GUILD Stacey Sjoquist
Tracy Skrentny

HOME COMMUNION SERVERS

December 5/6
December 12/13

Iliff Family
Ilene Pavelko

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

Dec. 5 6 p.m.
 6 8 a.m.
 6 10:30 a.m.

Jane Frank
Eric and Lynette Ender
Carla and Carlie Burkhardt

Dec. 12 6 p.m.
 13 8 a.m.
 13 10:30 a.m.

Marjorie Anderson
Bill and Dori Jensen
Corey Sjoquist and Jaime Fortier

Dec. 19 6 p.m.
 20 8 a.m.
 20 10:30 a.m.

Judy Gilbert
Mike Alumbaugh and Bonnie Goodenough
Wayne and Darlene Affeldt

December 24 – Christmas Eve
 1:30 p.m.

Marjorie Anderson, Carla Burkhardt,
Carlie Burkhardt, Jon Hetland

 3:30 p.m.

Judy Long, Eric Iliff, Jill Iliff,
Bonny Goodenough

 5:30 p.m.

Sharon Olson, Eric Ender,
Lynette Ender, Karen DeSchepper

 10 p.m.

Jeff and Melissa Haldeman

READERS

Dec. 5 6 p.m.
 6 8 a.m.
 6 10:30 a.m.

Angie Hemker
Naoko Aminaka
Michelle Witte

Dec. 12 6 p.m.
 13 8 a.m.
 13 10:30 a.m.

Amy Molling
Sharon Olson
Corey Sjoquist

Dec. 19 6 p.m.
 20 8 a.m.
 20 10:30 a.m.

Candice Stoll
Choir Cantata
Choir Cantata

December 24 – Christmas Eve
 1:30 p.m.

Errol Kindschy

 3:30 p.m.

Eric Iliff

 5:30 p.m.

Karen DeSchepper

 10 p.m.

Jeff Haldeman

December 25 – Christmas Day

10 a.m. Connie Blunck

Dec. 26 6 p.m. Karen DeSchepper
27 8 a.m. Marsha Bateman
27 10:30 a.m. Dottie Baumgartner

OFFERINGS

Dec. 2, 7 p.m. Hanging of the Greens Jim Quamme

Dec. 5 6 p.m. Kay Niemeier
6 8 a.m. Ken Spraetz
6 10:30 a.m. Carlie Burkhardt

Dec. 9, 7 p.m. Advent Worship with Drama Wendy Kane

Dec. 12 6 p.m. Marjorie Anderson
13 8 a.m. Char Buelow
13 10:30 a.m. Vernetta Moe

Dec. 16, 7 p.m. Advent Worship with Carol Sing Char Buelow

Dec. 19 6 p.m. Steve Ahles
20 8 a.m. Mike Alumbaugh
20 10:30 a.m. Tracey Beckley

December 24 – Christmas Eve

1:30 p.m. Marjorie Anderson
3:30 p.m. Tracey Beckley
5:30 p.m. Wendy Kane
10 p.m. Sandi Stavlo

December 25 – Christmas Day

10 a.m. Steve Ahles

Dec. 26 6 p.m. Rich Clements
27 8 a.m. Ken Spraetz
27 10:30 a.m. Vernetta Moe

USHERS

Dec. 5 6 p.m. Jon Rigotti Family
6 8 a.m. Harlan Oldendorf, Ken Spraetz,
Rick Morgan, Gus Zabel
6 10:30 a.m. Steve Noffke
Paul Beckley Family

Dec.	12	6 p.m.	Phil and Judy Gilbert
	13	8 a.m.	Harlan Oldendorf, Ken Spraezt, Rick Morgan, Gus Zabel
	13	10:30 a.m.	Steve Noffke Paul Beckley Family
Dec.	19	6 p.m.	Phil and Judy Gilbert
	20	8 a.m.	Harlan Oldendorf, Ken Spraezt, Rick Morgan, Gus Zabel
	20	10:30 a.m.	Steve Noffke Paul Beckley Family
December 24 – Christmas Eve			
		1:30 p.m.	Steve Noffke, Rick Morgan, Jim Anderson
		3:30 p.m.	Keith Goetzinger, Tim Goodenough, Boston Goodenough, Wyndsor Goodenough
		5:30 p.m.	Harlan Oldendorf, Tim Tiber
		10 p.m.	Jeff Haldeman, Jared Haldeman
December 25 – Christmas Day			
		10 a.m.	Steve and Sue Ahles
Dec.	26	6 p.m.	
	27	8 a.m.	Harlan Oldendorf, Ken Spraezt, Rick Morgan, Gus Zabel
	27	10:30 a.m.	Steve Noffke Paul Beckley Family

Web Site: 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
Kay Niemeier, Parish Secretary	Church Office: 786-0030	Fax Number: 786-0951
		Email: office@oursaviorswestsalem.org
Jill Iliff, Treasurer		Email: treasurer@oursaviorswestsalem.org
Linda Berg, Organist		Email: linda@oursaviorswestsalem.org
Eric Sorenson, Senior Choir Director		
Karen DeSchepper, Counter		
Tim Bowman, Interim Director of Youth & Family Ministry		Email: youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org