

Our Savior's Voice

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

359 Leonard Street N - West Salem, WI 54669

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org

608-786-0030

March 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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March 2021

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Pastor's Reflections

March 15. Our last “in building” worship. With the exception of a few very small (less than 15 in attendance) weddings, baptisms, and funerals, there have been no times of Word and Sacrament, no songs of joy or sorrow, no gatherings of the Body of Christ. No public gatherings to give thanks to a good and gracious God.

Still, we have sought to be faithful, even with Covid breathing down our necks. We have carried on ministry with a variety of virtual worship experiences, and when the weather allowed, a variety of outdoor worship services. Confirmation and Sunday School have continued, albeit in a new and strange format. People have been connected, and prayers have been lifted up. The Food Pantry and Feed our Children have been busy meeting needs. The Norwegian Dinner didn't happen, yet thanks to your generosity, we reached out to make a difference. The Mission Endowment Fund still made its gifts to the community and beyond. And lots more.

We even have a new member, and a few other families ready join us when we are able to be back together.

That's all fine and good, but as we approach the one-year anniversary of a very different time of life and ministry, just when will we get back to our building?

Interestingly, this year is the centennial of the sanctuary. On July 10, 1921 the sanctuary was dedicated. Who knew that a hundred years later, despite a vibrant and active ministry, the building would be cold, quiet, and empty?



Now, I know many businesses and other venues are open, and even more open than they were months ago. But I also know that the virus is still there. It's not going away. Not yet.

Besides, the church is different. Hansen’s can be at 25% or 50% capacity, and there’s still plenty of room to maneuver. But our building, and our activities are tight. That still puts us together, close, too close. And we sing – do you know how many viruses can come out of the mouth during just one verse of “How Great Thou Art?”

Most of all, as a church we understand that there is more to this than just “when can I get back.” *It’s also about our calling and our responsibility to care for our neighbor.* Martin Luther, in his explanation to the Fifth Commandment (“Thou shall not kill”), makes it clear that we keep the commandment when we neither endanger or harm our neighbor. I like that commandment, so I wear my mask. And we stay away from worshipping together.

But there is good news – the vaccine is out! Pastor Jean and I are in Wisconsin’s “1A” group (not sure we should be, but we are), so we’ve had our first shot – second coming in early March. Some of you have also had your vaccine, and others will be coming in the months ahead. The tide is turning, and the time is coming to be back together. Just not yet.

But if not yet, when? When will we be back in the building? I don’t know. And given that things seem to change, sometimes rapidly, I’m not sure when I will know...for sure. But we do have a goal and a direction. And the beginnings of a plan.

So, here’s what we are thinking...

We have reserved the Lion’s Shelter for the 2nd and 4th Sundays of June-July-August, along with the fifth Sunday of August (“Gospel on the Green”). We plan to worship those Sundays at the shelter, with no concern over the numbers – we’ll just make sure to distance as needed. We’re also planning for our Annual Meeting on June 13 – at the Lion’s Shelter, of course!



Meanwhile, we will continue to produce weekly YouTube worship videos, and continue our Zoom worship on Sunday mornings. We will continue that until we have completed a hoped-for tech project that will allow us to “Livestream” and record worship each week.

And then...***and this is a goal not a plan...***we hope that by September we can gather again in the building, safely, without a restriction on numbers, or a need to “sign up” to worship. Maybe the first Sunday back (September 12???) we can even party together! Wouldn’t that make for a fabulous “Rally Day?”

I know this is long, and September is still far off. We thought this would be a few weeks, then a few months, and instead it will be more than one year. You are disappointed – so are we – ***we miss you dearly!*** We miss the voices, the smiles and laughter, the pitter patter of children’s feet, and the energy and excitement that you all bring. We want you back!

But remember...we have a responsibility to care for our neighbor. Moreover, remember that we have not been separated. ***In the care of God’s Holy Spirit, we are still together in the Body of Christ.***

And remember that the church has never shut down – because as a community we have continued to proclaim hope in a variety of ways, but most of all because YOU are the church, and ***wherever you are, there the church is open for business!***



We are Church Together. . .



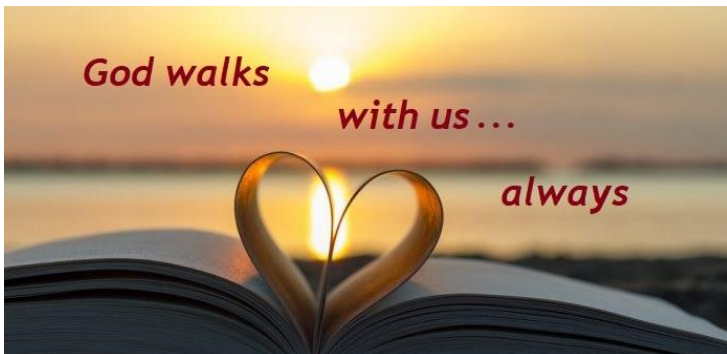
I am also aware – very aware – of the generosity of so many of you in maintaining your support of our work together, even when that work needed to take on a very different shape. ***Thank you for your ongoing support of our work together!*** As a community of faith, we have been blessed by you!

Finally, a HUGE thank you to our Congregation Council, and especially to Steve Ahles our president, for their thoughtful, prayerful, and faithful leadership during this time. So much of what we have done has been due to their insight and wisdom. God is at work in our council!



So, please continue to watch for updates as the calendar moves forward, the vaccines roll out, and God calls us to continued faithful service. And know that God is always with us!

Pastor Jon





We Are Worshipping!

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

Holy Week and Easter worship is being planned ... so watch the April newsletter and the web site for updates ... but for now ...

Online videos bring a message, prayers, and music, and are posted by 6 PM on Saturday on YouTube. Access them through our web site:

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos. You can watch any time, and you can even catch up on previous weeks.

DVDs are also available of our online service. Let us know if you or someone else can use a DVD. A bunch go out every week!

Zoom Communion ... join us on Sundays at 10:30 AM in virtual worship, using the Zoom platform. Easy to do – just head to our home page, and click on the link. Have bread and wine/juice available as we take 25 minutes to hear God’s Word and celebrate the sacrament.

For more information and updated details, check out the Covid-19 Response page on the web site.



Riddle Me This

Why did the chicken noodle soup cross the road? To get to the Lenten Soup Supper, of course!

Normally, Wednesdays in Lent include a soup supper between worship services. The proceeds from a really good meal of soup and a few extra goodies would go to the World Hunger Appeal. We would eat simply, so others could simply eat.

But this year – no soup crossing the road. Unless ... what if ... you could have your own soup supper? Hey, you can!

Here's how: make the decision to watch the Lenten worship video – it will be posted by late afternoon on Wednesday. It's about 35 minutes, and includes Holden Evening Prayer and a message.

But as you watch, watch it a bit differently. First, watch it over a bowl of soup ... Campbell's, Ramen noodles, or even better, homemade! Then, make a gift to the World Hunger Appeal. Send the check in to the office (make it out to Our Savior's, but mark it clearly for world hunger), or go to our electronic giving page and make the gift that way (you can designate it there – check out www.oursaviorswestsaalem.org/giving.)

You can have your soup supper ... be refreshed with great worship ... and save lives – all in one fell swoop! No riddle, just a great way to walk the journey of Lent!

Wednesdays in Lent

February 24 – March 24

Video

Holden Evening Prayer Worship

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



Holy Week & Easter

Palm Sunday – March 28

Maundy Thursday – April 1
Zoom worship at 7PM

Good Friday – April 2
YouTube video

Easter – April 4

*Watch the April newsletter or the home page of our web site
(www.oursaviorswestsalem.org) for details.*

You Don't Have to be a Kid ...

Do you like to color ... on Ash Wednesday, we passed out "tiles" to color for our **Easter mosaic**. If you weren't able to be here then and would like one, please let us know (call the office or Pastor Jean – 786-0030) and we will get one to you. A reminder if you already have a tile or are just getting one, we would like them **back by March 22** to allow us time to put it all together. **EVERYONE** is invited to be a part of this project and we will unveil the finished masterpieces on the Easter video. *Let's all be a part of this!!*



If you know anyone who uses mascara ... we are collecting the used wands for the **Wands for Wildlife** project – where they are used to help keep wildlife animals clean. Be sure to clean your used wands thoroughly when you're done with them!

- Clean them by soaking in a mixture of dish soap and warm water to get the mascara out of the brush.
- Air dry and put the clean wands in a bag.
- Drop the bag off at church.

Adult Bible Study

Bible study, via Zoom (or dial in as a conference call) continues on **Wednesdays**

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



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



Synod School of Theology

The La Crosse Area Synod School of Theology is a great way to expand your horizons, learn about Bible, faith and life, and make some great connections! The school currently meets virtually, via Zoom, on Thursday evenings. Starting in March, Pastor Len Liptack teaches a six-week course on Apocalyptic in the Bible and in culture. Note that this class will be held from 7:30-9:00 PM each evening beginning March 4. For more information contact Pastor Jon or check out the synod web site at www.lacrosseareasynd.org/synod-school-of-theology.



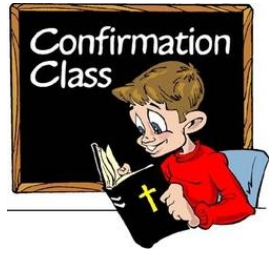
Sunday School

It's hard to believe we have already completed two quarters of our Sunday school curriculum. Over the last six months, we've met six Bible Buddies who have taught us the Bible points and memory verses. We have learned new songs – and Pastor Jean is hoping you are as anxious to sing them together as she is!

Guac, the iguana, just finished helping us learn how *Jesus rescues us* – *yay Jesus!* If you've been watching the videos, you know Pastor Jon has really gotten into the "yay Jesus" part! 😊

Remember – the Sunday School lessons are available on YouTube. The links for the grade appropriate videos can be found on the church website (www.oursaviorswestsalem.org -- resources/videos). You should also receive an email from Pastor Jean each week with the worksheet that goes with the lesson. *If you aren't getting the emails (check your spam file), please call the church office (786-0030) and we'll get them to you. Or ... if you don't have email, we can send them to you via the Post Office.*

Confirmation Schedule for March



Confirmation classes are on “Lenten break” and will resume in April, after Easter. 9th graders should note that the April video will be posted on March 31, so watch for it!

Now is a good time for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders to get caught up with your sermon notes – there are more opportunities these next weeks with the mid-week Lenten worship, too.

college+
connection



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: **Sydney Fitzpatrick** (UW-L), **Trenton Foreman** (UW-SP), **Taylor Hennessey** (WTC), **Dagan Hemker** (UW-M), **Alayna Kennedy** (Viterbo), **Justine Rich** (MN State-Mankato), and **Lexi Giblin** (UW-EC).



From the Youth Director ...

Sending out a special **Thank you** to the 7th graders and a special helper, Carolyn Karl, who came out to help with **Operation Homefront** putting

together 50 care packages for military individuals that are stationed overseas – *Baylee Faucett, Emelia Tlustosch, Breanna Smith, Olivia Maki, Autumn Loging, Lydia Jothen, Nathan Premo, and Bennett Fennigkoh.*



- During the month of March, on a Wednesday night, we are **planning a gathering for each grade** (7th-9th) to either (1) work on sermon notes or (2) have an outdoor gathering (*what we do will depend on the weather*). Watch for emails telling each class what is happening.



- It is very important to **watch your email** for anything that comes from youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org. We are finding out that emails may go to your junk folder, or a person is not getting them at all.
- Keep collecting the **mascara wands** so we can have a full box to send out to the Wands for Wilderness group.

I am excited to finally see our weather turning around and we can get together again!

Wendy Kane, Youth Director
youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org



Scholarships

As the school year continues, time to be thinking about high school graduate scholarships! Current high school seniors at Our Savior's are eligible to receive a one-time scholarship, which can be as high as \$750. Information will be mailed shortly to seniors, or check out the web page at www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/youth-and-family. Applications will be due April 30, with awards announced later in May.

Emphasis in the scholarships will be on involvement in the work of the church, and how students have lived out their faith. Scholarships come from a variety of sources, including the Michelson and Marking Scholarships.

A change this year is with the Lewis-Meyer Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to a current college freshman who has connected with a faith community, or maintained active connections with Our Savior's. Due to the difficulties with the pandemic, that scholarship will be delayed for one year.

Finally, a reminder that there are some scholarship funds available for non-traditional students, such as second career, or courses taken to enhance one's career. There is no set deadline on applying for this scholarship.

For more information on any of these scholarships, see Pastor Jon.



SUGAR CREEK BIBLE CAMP - 2021

“Come and See” – John 1

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

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

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

OUR SAVIOR'S CAMPERSHIPS AVAILABLE

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

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

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

In Loving Memory

Memorial Gifts Received ...

In Memory of Bonnie Ender

From Family & Friends (Choir Fund)



Annual Meeting

Note that the Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, June 13, following 10 AM worship at the Lion's Shelter. More details will be announced in coming months, but for now, mark down that date!

Scrip Cards Available



We continue to have Scrip cards available for purchase in the office during the day. We ask that you call

ahead to make sure someone will be there to get the cards for you.



Just a reminder ... we have Kwik Trip, Kwik Trip car washes, Woodman's, Festival, and Ship Shape car washes.



Proceeds go to help World Hunger and Our Savior's Youth programs.



Pictorial directories



If you had your picture taken, there is a directory waiting for you. If you chose not to have your picture taken, but would like to have a directory, they are available for \$5 to cover the cost. The directories are available in the church office (call before you come to make sure we are here).



Congregation Council

The Congregation Council met via Zoom on Monday, February 8th, with President Steve Ahles presiding. At this meeting the council:

- Shared in conversation and reflection around the quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer in “Life Together” ... “God taught us to meet one another as God has met us in Christ.”
- Approved the minutes of the January 11 Council Meeting, and received the January financial report.
- Heard an overview on what has been happening with our various ministries.
- Heard the Forward, Fearless, and Faithful team will be sending Valentines to every household in the congregation.
- Heard that we received the other proposal on the tech project, however it is missing components we need, so they are being asked to resubmit their proposal with the additional items.
- Heard the Pastors’ goals for re-opening and instructed them to share with the congregation in the March newsletter. The Lion’s Shelter has been reserved for the 2nd and 4th Sundays of June, July, and August, in addition to the 5th Sunday in August, for in-person worship this summer.
- Discussed possibility of allowing small groups back in the building, and the protocols and requirements that must be followed.
- Set the date for the Annual Congregational Meeting for June 13 to be held at the Lion’s Shelter.

The next meeting of the council will be held Monday, March 8th at 7 PM via Zoom. If you have questions, or if you have ideas for enhancing the ministry of Our Savior’s, contact Steve Ahles or one of the pastors.

Financial Support Ministry



**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

THANK YOU!!! Thank you for your continued financial support of our ministry together! You make a difference in the lives of children and adults, in those across the globe, and those right here in our midst.

Financial gifts can be shared in a variety of ways. You may choose to mail in your envelope, or use one or more of the electronic giving options which we have available. You can find more information, and directions on starting your electronic giving, on our web site at www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/giving. Among the giving options:

- Electronic transfer...directly from your financial institution.
- Mobile app...Easily create an account to set up recurring donations and review your giving history.
- Text...The first time you use texting, you will be asked to register your payment information; after that, enter the amount and send the text.

However you give, give in confidence! At Our Savior's we value integrity in our financial practices. Transactions are made via a secure web portal, and are facilitated by Vanco, an industry leader in online financial products.

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



Shopping Online?

Our Savior's has an account with "Amazon Smile." If you shop with Amazon, you can support our work together by designating your "Amazon Smile" contribution to Our Savior's.

Thrivent Choice Dollars



Remember that if you are a Thrivent member you may have "Thrivent Choice Dollars" to direct. Our Savior's is one of the many potential recipients of your choice dollars, but your direction needs to be made each time. A number of Our Savior's folk direct their choice dollars – do you? See Thrivent's web site for more information or stop by the office and we will help you out.



Care and Share Food Pantry

The Care and Share Food Pantry remains open, Saturdays, 10 AM to Noon. As the pandemic continues, your support is critical! As the building is still locked, please call the office to ensure that we will be able to receive your gifts. And, thank you!

March Dates for your calendar:



- March 3 - Lent worship video posted
- March 7 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM
- March 10 - Lent worship video posted
- March 14 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM
- March 17 - Lent worship video posted
- March 21 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM
- March 24 - Lent worship video posted
- March 28 - Zoom Communion at 10:30 AM



**Don't forget to spring ahead
March 14**

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

Pastor Jonathan Schmidt, Senior Pastor 612-0217
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Pastor Jean Schmidt, Associate Pastor 612-0217
Email: pastorjean@oursaviorswestsalem.org
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Jill Iliff, Treasurer
Email: treasurer@oursaviorswestsalem.org
Linda Berg, Organist/Choir Accompanist/Director of Music
Email: linda@oursaviorswestsalem.org
Kathy Brisson, Organist
Eric Sorenson, Senior Choir Director
Karen DeSchepper, Financial Secretary
Josh Corning, Custodian



Check your spam



We have been sending out more emails to share information or keep in touch lately. It has come to our attention that many of you – mostly those of you with **yahoo.com** email accounts – have not received our communications because the emails have gone to your spam file. So ... please take a minute to check your spam files and see if you have any communications from church/pastors that you may have missed over the last several weeks (and maybe even months!). This is especially critical for those of you with confirmation and Sunday School aged children. Please let us know if you have missed dates, deadlines, and information so we can get you up to speed and make sure everyone has the information needed.

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359 Leonard St N
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