

Our Savior's Voice

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

359 Leonard Street N - West Salem, WI 54669

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org

608-786-0030

February 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.***

Our Savior's Voice

February 2022

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Worship Update!

Saturday @ 6 PM
Sunday @ 8 and 10:30 AM

To ensure the safety of all, masks are required.



Meanwhile...

Virtual worship options

We **Zoom the later 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.

Ushers Needed at worship

If you know what service you're planning to attend, why not help out?! We are grateful to the faithful few who are here week in and week out. If you can help, please let Pastor Jean know, or better yet, sign up using the SignUpGenius link found here or on the website:



<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F044CA5A629A7F85-ushers1>



Pastor's Reflections

I'm writing this on January 26. A day with all sorts of connections ... to other days!

Consider:

- This morning it was bitterly cold – 21 below at our house.
- Today, in the office, we had some conversations about upcoming schedules, including Ash Wednesday.
- Last year, on Ash Wednesday (February 17), we did outdoor ashes – and it was bitterly cold – 10 below at our house.
- On Ash Wednesday, last year, in the midst of the cold, a car ended up in the snowbank and we pushed it out.
- Today, in the midst of the cold, a car ended up in the snowbank and we pushed it out.
- Oh, and did I mention? One month ago today we were resting after a busy Christmas celebration.

All sorts of connections. Today to a year ago, to a month ago. Cold then, cold now. Cars stuck then, cars stuck now. All the while we remember where we were just one month ago. It's all connected, and it's all ... "Deja vu all over again!"

Or, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Cold then, cold now ... people in need then, people in need now ... important spiritual moments then (Christmas and Ash Wednesday), important spiritual moments now (Ash Wednesday soon to come) ... and of course, Covid then, Covid now.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Boring ... wearying ... overwhelming ...

And then, soon to come (but before you read this), our annual meeting. Let's see ... this will be my 35th annual meeting (I missed one in 1992 – long story – ask me about it if you're curious). 35 budgets approved, 35 minutes, 35 elections, and so on. Over and over again.

Have you caught a pattern here? Challenges ... celebrations ... ministries, many rather mundane ... dates on the calendar ... all coming and going ... and coming again. Over and over ... again!

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

That's right. The more things change, the more they stay the same. We are stuck in patterns of life that repeat, over and over. Yes, Covid is new, the challenge of a lifetime. But so was the Cold War, the war on terror, the Great Depression, the Spanish Flu pandemic, the Bubonic Plague ...



And the dates on the calendar, flying away, one year after another. Been through that before too.

And cars stuck in the snowbank – been there, done that!

The fact is that we've been down this road before. Like living an endless loop that keeps going and going and going ... And that makes it all the more wearying and burdensome. Won't life ever change?

Probably not, and that, surprisingly, is a good thing! A good thing because life is not about the tough moments that overwhelm us. Nor is life about how we figure out how we

can at least avoid those tough moments, or even overcome them. Life is about “God at work – in our life, and in our world.”

We joke sometimes that you should have been at my Bible study last week because we discovered the “meaning of life” – and you missed it! As though the “meaning of life” is some mystery that we yearn to uncover. In fact, it’s pretty simple. Life is God at work ... and the meaning of life is discovering, celebrating, and being embraced by “God at work” right here in my little corner of the world, but also across the globe.

And how does “God at work” happen? Through Jesus, the child, the teacher and healer, the crucified and risen one. In Jesus, life has meaning because in Jesus God creates life (you and me), renews and restores worn out life (you and me), empowers life (you and me), and sends life forward (you guessed it, you and me!).

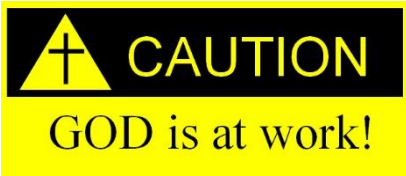
Which brings us to the point. In a world in which “the more things change, the more they stay the same,” so much of life seems to be “in a rut,” and not in a good way. But as much as we seem to be in an endless loop, well, we are. Stuck in the endless loop of God’s embrace, God’s love and care, God’s renewal of life, and God’s calling to share life with the world around us. That is the constant of all constants. Yes, life isn’t changing – God’s life is not changing! And that is a good thing!



That too is where our journey is right now. We are in Epiphany, a season of discovering God’s revelation of life through Jesus. Discovering that the Jesus of the manger, who shortly will become the Jesus of the cross and the resurrection, is the real deal. Jesus is God at work. And so, when Jesus comes into our world, it’s God in our midst. And when Jesus takes the brokenness of life upon himself on the

cross, it's God sacrificing for us. And when Jesus triumphs in the resurrection, it's God restoring life.

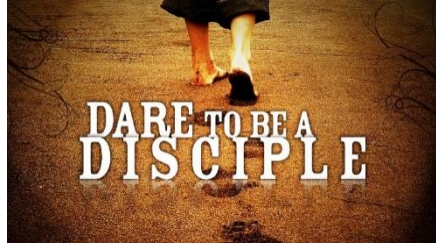
And that – God at work in Jesus – is the meaning of life. As I trudge through difficult days, as I yearn for a renewal of hope, as I make a difference in the lives of others, it's all about God at work in Jesus – in me!



So, yep, good news! The more things change, the more they stay the same. God is still at work, Jesus is still my Savior, and I am still a disciple.

And so are you!

Pastor Jon



Building and Office Update

We welcome Kris Seeger back to the office!
Office Hours return to Monday-Friday 8:30 AM – 2 PM



**** Please note we require everyone in the building to wear a mask! ****



Ash Wednesday ... and Lent

Ash Wednesday ...
and Lent are fast



approaching. Worship will be held each Wednesday from March 2nd through April 6th at 6 PM. And (spoiler alert!) you will leave worship each week with ... something! A take-home souvenir will be a part of worship each week, so plan to join us!

But also ... we had so much fun last year with Ash Wednesday ... we're doing it again! March 2nd ... Ashes and drive-up Holy Communion from 7:30-8:45 AM in the parking lot. Bring elements for Holy Communion (or, if you forget – we'll have some on hand). Stay in your car and stay warm as we impose ashes, hear brief Scripture and share in prayer, and celebrate the gifts of life in bread and wine.

And in the evening, at 6 PM, in the sanctuary – ashes, Scripture, prayer, and the Sacrament. Either way – a great start to the Lenten journey!



Got the gift of directing traffic? Greeting folks? We need a few of you to brave the weather with the Pastors safely in the parking lot (*because you know it will be cold or even snowing!*) on Ash Wednesday (March 2) during the parking lot Distribution of Ashes and Holy Communion. Contact Pastor Jon or Pastor Jean if you can help!



New Members



Good news! A new member class has been set for Tuesdays at 6:30 pm – February 15 & 22 and March 1 & 8. The class comes with no obligation, but with the opportunity to join Our Savior's!

But ... why??? EVERYONE is always welcome in worship, and our ministry involves ALL of God's children. YOU are welcome to all of our ministries. Members, however, help us by making a commitment to this community of faith, and by taking a role in leading our ministry. Regardless of where you are coming from, we would love to have you, and to partner with you in your journey of discipleship.

How can you make that happen? If you come from another Lutheran congregation, a transfer works best. Or, if you come from another Christian tradition, we offer a new member class to help you learn more about how Lutherans understand the faith we share.

For more information on membership and how it can happen for you, see Pastor Jon or Pastor Jean!

Sunday School



We were off to a slow start in January, but the faithful few who keep showing up are hearing stories from the books of Ruth and 1 Samuel. We met a new Bible Buddy in late January – Amanda the red panda. She is teaching us about red pandas ... did you know red pandas use their long, fluffy tail to keep themselves warm on cold nights? ... and our Bible verse from Philippians 4:6. We are also reminded that “God knows what we need” ... *trust God!*

We look forward to seeing everyone in February!

Our February schedule:

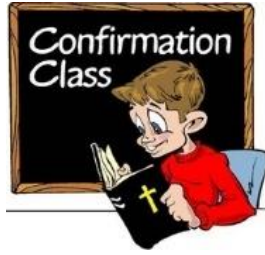
PreK/4K to 2nd Grade – February 6 and 20
3rd to 5th Grade – February 13 and 27

Thank you for bringing your offering envelopes to be shared with Lutheran Disaster Relief.

Thank you, also, for faithfully wearing your masks!



Coming soon ... a First Communion class near you! Watch for details in the March newsletter about First Communion for 5th graders, or older kids who have not yet had First Communion, and their parents. We will explore God’s gifts in bread and wine, dabble in a bit of creativity, and have a little fun too!



Confirmation Ministry

Confirmation ministry, i.e. “disciple making,” continues!
For February ...

6th graders meet Wednesday evenings (Feb 2-9-16-23)
at 6 PM to continue their journey through the Bible, with
Corey Sjoquist as their guide.

7th and 8th graders

- Meet on Wednesdays at 6 PM as they continue to explore the gift of prayer, learning about the Lord’s Prayer.
 - ✓ 7th grade – February 2
 - ✓ 8th grade – February 9
- 7th and 8th grade electives are scheduled on February 23. Check to see if you are signed up for one of the classes!

9th graders meet **EITHER** February 2 or 9 (but not both)
at 7 PM and **parents are asked to join us.**

See Pastor Jon for more information on our “disciple making” ministry!

SUGAR CREEK BIBLE CAMP - 2022

“Boundless” – *Ephesians 3:18-19*



Back in the SADDLE again, with ELEVATED excitement, this summer is sure to be a SPLASH! PADDLE along with us, and bring your FRIENDS! You'll be GAGA about camp because it's a cool place

Sugar Creek Bible Camp is excited to report “following the many ACA & CDC safety standards for accredited camps, with God’s help, Sugar Creek provided a 100% Covid-free summer in 2021” and they are ready to do the same in 2022!

All Covid-19 safety practices will be fully in place through the entire 2022 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

\$300 full week -- \$125 half week

**Request forms due in the office NO LATER than
May 5th**

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

From the Youth Director ...



The 7th through 9th graders should have received an email from Wendy regarding Confirmation Camp at Sugar Creek this summer. She is still waiting to hear from you!

Watch for information directly from Sugar Creek or check out their website to find additional offerings for this summer.



*** For all of our youth who plan to attend Sugar Creek this summer, remember the "profit" from the sale of Scrip cards goes directly into your family account and can be used towards your Sugar Creek registration. Talk to Wendy or one of the pastors to find out how you can start earning those dollars ... think Culver's! (and Kwik Trip and Woodman's).

Wendy Amundson, Youth Director
youthsaviorswestsalem@gmail.com

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!**

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: **Josh Iliff** (WTC), **Bailee Peterson** (UW-M), **Kirin Linse** (UW-EC), **Taylor Jones** (UW-Whitewater), **Zach Friell** (UW-SP), **Rebecca Michael** (UW-M), and **Taylor Hennessey** (WTC).

college
connection

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is again looking for folk to assist in the serving of their evening meals in La Crosse. They are asking Our Savior's to take the first Friday of each month.



Several families and individuals have already shared in making a difference – you can too!

Teams of three are asked to come to the Salvation Army building at 223 N 8th Street at 4:15 PM. Serving lasts a bit over an hour. It's a great service and witness, but also a moment to build relationships with folk who are in need. YOU can be the presence of Jesus for them, and maybe even discover that THEY can be Jesus to you!

Sign up on SignUpGenius or call the church office.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F044CA5A629A7F85-salvation>

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 Gathering Area. If you'd rather join via Zoom, contact the church office or Pastor Jon.



Evening Study

OK, so I'm Lutheran. So, what? Good question! Just what does it mean to be a Lutheran? And are Lutherans “looney?”

Join us to find out. Pastor Jon will lead a four-session study on faith and life as a Lutheran. Even a looney one!

We will meet on Tuesdays ...February 15 & 22, and March 1 & 8, at 6:30 PM. We'll explore a number of facets of our faith together, and (hopefully!) have a little fun along the way!

Don't miss this chance to “beat the winter blues” with some new discoveries ... and maybe a few new connections as well. See Pastor Jon for more information



Tech Project ... *good news, of a sort!*

After a very long delay, the supply chain is beginning to “un-freeze,” and the parts for our tech upgrade are starting to move!

We now have a tentative installation date of the last week of May. This project will include a drop-down screen, monitors, livestreaming, and a significant audio upgrade.

The cost has risen due to supply issues, and YOUR gift can make a big difference! So far, over \$15,000 has been given toward the project – but there’s still time for you to be a part of this new venture. Mark your gift “tech project” to make a difference!

See Pastor Jon or Dean Olson for more information on this new resource for our ministry together.



Synod Assembly Voting Members

The annual meeting will need to elect voting members to the 2022 La Crosse Area Synod Assembly sometime in the near future. If you are interested in participating in the assembly, contact Pastor Jon or Pastor Jean. The assembly will be held June 10-12. If it is in person, it will be in La Crosse. Otherwise, the assembly will be held virtually. Regardless, expenses are covered. Assemblies involve business, fellowship, worship, and a lot of learning about the work of God’s people!



Congregation Council

The Congregation Council met on Monday, January 17, with President Jen Linse presiding. At this meeting the council:

- Shared in discussion and prayer centering on the ministries of the church.
- Received a presentation from Melody Schmitz and Lee Friell of the Mission Endowment Fund Committee. Approved a recommendation to the annual meeting for changes to the Endowment Fund operation plan.
- Approved the minutes of the December 13 Council Meeting, and received the December financial report.
- Heard an overview on what has been happening with our various ministries, and that Kris Seeger has returned to the office after her medical leave.
- Voted to recommend to the annual meeting the budget proposal as presented.
- Decided to place the Mission Endowment disbursement for capital projects into the Building Centennial Fund for future use.
- Heard updates on the Audit Committee and the Property Committee.
- Heard that the tech project is getting closer and should be completed by the end of May.

The next meeting of the council will be held Monday, February 14th 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.

Annual Meeting



It's a wrap! The 2022 Annual Meeting is now history, and Our Savior's is moving forward!

The Annual Meeting was held Sunday, January 30, with 31 in attendance, and was chaired by President Jen Linse. Thank you

to all who joined us in reflecting on God's call to ministry, and our faithful and Spirit-led response to that call!

At the meeting, the congregation ...

- Began the meeting with prayer and song.
- Received a variety of reports from the pastors, the council, and a number of ministries.
- Adopted a budget for 2022 for just over \$375,000.
- Elected the following persons to positions of leadership:
 - Congregation Council – Naoko Giblin, Jeff Haldeman, Alison Hemker, and Jen Linse (for three years); and Michelle Witte (for two years).
 - Mission Endowment Fund – Jeff Rich and Melody Schmitz
 - Eagle Crest Communities (aka Bethany Homes) – Larry Blunck and Jim Michelson
 - Sugar Creek – Jeff Haldeman and Mike Larson
- Authorized an additional \$5,000 to the tech project, for a total of \$45,000, and heard that installation is scheduled for late May.

- Adopted three amendments to the Mission Endowment Fund governing document:
 - Removed undesignated memorials from the income stream.
 - Increased the cap on the Fund from \$750,000 to \$1,500,000.
 - Decided that future disbursements will be recommended by the committee and approved by the Annual Meeting.
- Closed the meeting with prayer.

Again, we are grateful to all who participated in the meeting as we not only heard where we have been, but also, through our elections, our budget, and our partnership, set a direction for our ministry in 2022 and beyond. Thank you to all!

For more information, see Jen Linse, or one of the pastors.

Check it out!



Changes are coming 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, as of February 1 you will need to download the new "Vanco Mobile" app. All of your passwords stay the same. For more information contact the church office.



Thank you ...

Received from others ...

... Thank you for the nice card and gift card! I was so happy when this semester was finished because it was my hardest so far! Only two semesters to go and then I am officially a nurse! I hope you had a Merry Christmas and have a Happy New Year!

Emily Steele

... Thank you very much for the Kwik Trip gift card for finals week. I am very appreciative of your continued generosity. Thanks again,

Liam Sjoquist

... Thank you very much for the gift and the kind words. I really appreciate it and I am still doing well with my now in-person schooling. Thanks,

Everett Michael

... Thank you so much for your continued support of my academic career in gifting me a KT gift card – it'll be duly used as I enter my final semester at UW-Madison! It's been a long journey, one I'm grateful to have almost finished. Thanks again for your contributions over the years, it means a lot. Best,

Rebecca Michael

... Hope you and your family had a happy holiday. Thank you for thinking of me and for the gift card. School has been going great, albeit a little stressful at times. Hope to keep in touch. Once more, thank you so much! Sincerely,

McKenna Riley

... Thank you so much for purchasing gifts for the residents at Lakeview Health Center. We appreciate your generosity to make the season bright for our residents. Merry Christmas to you and your family.

Kari Coaty, Lakeview Health Center

... We recently received a donation on behalf of the various youth ministries, and cannot thank you enough! WAFER, along with generous donors like yours, can continue to address food insecurities in our area. These dollars get put to great use in not only providing meals to our communities, but also critical programs for our clients. Your gift does not go unnoticed or un-appreciated. Thank you. Many holiday blessings.

Anne Clarkin, Board Member

... Dear Our Savior's Youth, Thank you so much for the recent gift of \$338.46 that was sent to the synod office for Lutheran Disaster Response hurricane relief efforts. ... In Christ,

Bishop Felix Malpica



A pair of women's glasses – in a pew – back in early January. If they're yours, contact the office to claim!



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 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!***



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
OUR SAVIOR'S STAFF

Pastor Jonathan Schmidt, Senior Pastor 612-0217

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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



Feeding the
Community

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 Deadline – February 15

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

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
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Permit #21

Change Service Requested