

Our Savior's Voice

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

359 Leonard Street N - West Salem, WI 54669

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org

608-786-0030

December 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

December 2022

Table of Contents

Pastor's Page	Pages 3-5
Staff Greeting	Page 6
Advent & Christmas Worship Schedule	Pages 7-10
Christmas Cantata	Page 11
Sunday School Program	Page 11
Sunday School	Page 12
Confirmation	Page 13
December Hungry Jar	Page 14
Youth Ministry Director Update	Page 14
College Connection	Page 15
Adult Bible Study	Page 15
Gift Ideas	Pages 16-17
Stewardship	Page 18
Nominations	Page 18
Council Review	Page 19
Home Communion Ministry	Page 20
Norwegian Dinner Disbursement	Page 20
Thank You	Page 20
Financial Support Ministry	Page 21
Worship Leaders Schedule	Pages 22-23
End of Year Contribution Information	Page 24
Annual Meeting Information	Page 25
Mission Endowment	Page 25
Giving Opportunities	Page 26



Pastor's Reflections

“A Gift?” ...

The Congregation Council has a Christmas gift for you ... **Guiding Principles!** Seriously? What kind of gift is that? I can't touch it or eat it ... I can't wear it or watch it ... it has no glitz or glamor ... it has no monetary value ... no one is fighting to get it ... So, just exactly what is a guiding principle, and why would I want it?



For much of the past year the Ministry Exploration Team met faithfully to talk about the life of the congregation ... what do we do well, what have we done in the past, where do we want to go in the future, what are we known for in the community, what do we want to be known for, what are we excited about ... After all of their thoughtful conversations, they came up with a list of observations and discoveries; a list of principles they believe define who and what we are as a congregation and as people of God.

That list was shared with the Council and further refined to come up with statements that can guide us as we go forward. Statements that we can use to help us make good decisions, in light of who we believe we are as a congregation and what our purpose is. These statements become our “guiding principles”.

As we head into the new year, the full list of guiding principles will be shared with the congregation, and as various committees and groups meet, these guiding principles will be lifted up as our barometer when making decisions.

But for now, let's lift up the first guiding principle ... *Jesus is Lord and Savior!* What more needs to be said!? Jesus is

our Lord and Savior ... period, end of story! And what a better time than now to think about that. It's Advent and we are preparing for Christmas.

But how are we preparing? Baking cookies, decorating the house, putting lights outside and trying to outdo the neighbors, trimming the tree, writing the letters and signing the cards, buying the presents to put under the tree, listening to Christmas music ...

And maybe that's the problem, maybe that's why this gift doesn't seem all that, you know ... exciting. We get stuck in the glitz and glamor, the lights and decorations, the gifts we can get our hands on. Maybe we need to take a step back and think about that guiding principle ... *Jesus is Lord and Savior* ... to think about what this season is really all about and to focus our actions and decisions on that.



And to ponder the point ... Jesus is Lord and Savior. So, what IS the point? We begin our "Guiding Principles," we get ready to begin a new year, and really, we begin each day grounded in one fact – Jesus is Lord and Savior. And that fact makes all the difference.

To proclaim that Jesus is Lord and Savior is to proclaim the very core of faith, and the very core of faithful living. Especially at this time of the year there are a lot of distractions and diversions. Lots of things make a claim on us, demanding our attention. After all, lots to do!

But those claims don't end with the season. Day in and day out lots of things grab our attention. Lots of things that seem, at the moment, to be important, even critical. But in the end, in a world of brokenness and pain, a world full of

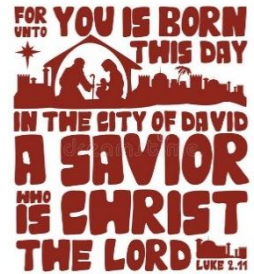
hurt and hurting, a world that is so often shallow and disappointing, there is one thing that endures: Jesus is Lord ... and Jesus, the Lord, is our Savior.

And so, as we move forward as a congregation, and as disciples of Jesus, as we wonder and ponder where the world is headed, and where we are going, we continue to cling to the assertion that ... Jesus is Lord and Savior.

And that assertion, grounding us in God's presence, but also empowering us with God's gifts, sends us forward into the world with hope, confidence, and conviction that God really is at work in our world – and that we can be a part of all that God is doing.

And that's what these days of Advent lead us to ... to Christmas ... to the birth ... of Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

That's why this is a "Guiding Principle" – it defines and declares what we are, what is essential in our identity, and what's in our "DNA." Quite simply put, you can't be what we claim to be without "Jesus is Lord and Savior," right at the top!



So, bask in that Guiding Principle, and watch next month for "Principle #2!"

Pastor Jean





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, Kris, Rachel,
Linda, Eric, Josh, Jill and Karen*

Office Schedule

The office will be closed
December 26 and January 2



Advent and Christmas



Hanging of the Greens

November 30 + 7 PM

It's time to get things ready – and so we sing some songs, hear God's word, and “hang the greens!” Join us as we get the season started, with help from some of our confirmation students.



Christmas Caroling ... With Songs and Treats!

December 14 – 6:30-8 PM

Come and join us as we sing the songs of the seasons, and enjoy a few treats as well. We'll begin in the Gathering Area around 6:30 PM, but come whenever you can ... and then around 7 PM we'll spend some time singing the beloved carols of Christmas.

And a special bonus ... let's share some recipes too! Send us your favorite Christmas/winter recipe, and as we share songs and treats, we'll also share copies of the recipes as a “take home bonus!”



Christmas Eve

*We are there, at the manger,
worshiping the child!*

1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 10 PM from the Sanctuary
Music ... Holy Communion ... Candlelight ...
and the Christmas Gospel

Zoom 8 PM from the Stable (literally!)

Link on home page of web site

*We're out at the Holthaus Farm,
in the barn, in the cold and the dark,
yet the light of the Christ Child
brightens our world and warms our hearts.*

*Have bread/wine/juice available as we celebrate the Sacrament,
along with music, message, and maybe even a "moo" or two!*



YouTube

YouTube Worship

*Recording of the 1:30 PM
Christmas Eve worship
posted on web site by 7 PM*

*Access video on
home page of web site*

Christmas Day

Sunday, December 25

10 AM



Worship with Holy Communion

*In the light of day rejoice as we continue to celebrate
the wonder of the newborn Christ!*



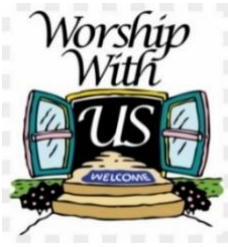
Saturday, December 31

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:

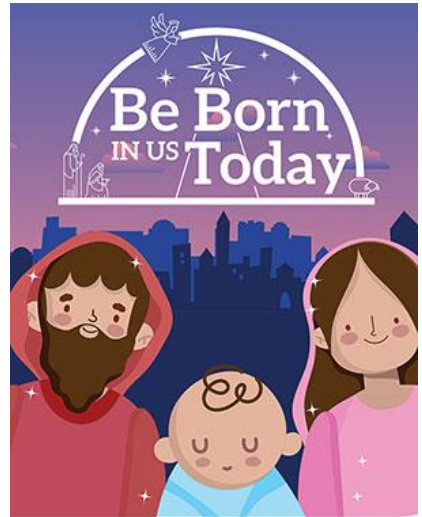
Funeral – Ted Wilcox - November 21



Christmas Cantata

Join us Sunday, December 18 as the Senior Choir sings the cantata "Classic Noels" during 8 am and 10:30 am worship services. "Classic Noels" blends classical masterworks with favorite Christmas carols creating a unique collection for the Advent and Christmas. We have really enjoyed working on it and look forward to singing it for you!

**Sunday School
Christmas Program
December 11
During the
10:30 AM worship**



Faith Formation ...



We have been working hard practicing our songs and our lines in preparation for the Christmas Program. We look forward to sharing the program with the congregation!

Don't forget your Sunday school offerings for Lutheran World Relief personal care kits. The contents of each kit costs about \$13. Our offerings will "purchase" the needed items. Let's see how many kits we can "assemble" this year! (If you still need envelopes, talk to Pastor Jean.)



Important Dates

Saturday, December 10 -

Christmas Program practice - 9-11 AM

Sunday, December 11 -

Christmas Program - 10:30 AM worship



Faith Formation ... Confirmation Ministry

Confirmation instruction for 6-9th grade continues with some “road trips” in the works!

6th grade...

- December 7 – **meet at 5:30 (note the earlier time)** to travel to “Bethlehem” at English Lutheran in La Crosse. We return around 8 PM. Thanks to our drivers for helping us out!
- Class continues on December 14 and 21. No class on December 28!

7th grade...

- December 7 – Core class at 6 PM.
- December 14 – meet at 6 PM to travel to “Bethlehem” at English Lutheran in La Crosse. We return around 8:30 PM. Thanks to our drivers for helping us out!

8th grade...

- December 7 – **meet at 5:30 (note the earlier time)** to travel to “Bethlehem” at English Lutheran in La Crosse. We return around 8 PM. Thanks to our drivers for helping us out!
- December 14 – Core class at 6 PM.

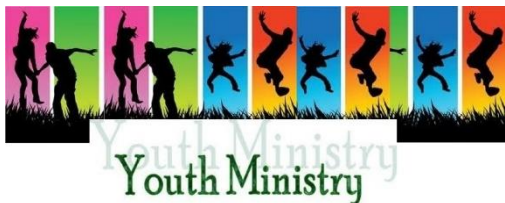
9th grade...Class on December 7 at 7 PM. Class will be finished by 7:30. And then ... a bit of Christmas homework!

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

Hungry Jar Offering for December – ELCA World Hunger



Working with and through ELCA congregations, Lutheran churches overseas and other partners, ELCA World Hunger is uniquely positioned to reach communities in need. From health clinics to microloans, water wells to animal husbandry, community meals to advocacy, gifts to ELCA World Hunger enable the ELCA to respond, supporting sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty. By providing immediate relief to those who are hungry, we meet basic needs and recognize the universal human right to food. But ending hunger is about more than food. By connecting people with the resources they need to produce food and gain access to clean water, education, health care and sources of income, we can foster long-term, sustainable change.



Youth Ministry Director Update

The Congregation Council is in the process of engaging Rachel Holthaus as the new Youth Ministry Director. We still have a few details to resolve. We look forward to working with Rachel and will have a full update in the January newsletter.

As our college students are studying in challenging environments at

college+
connection



home or on campus, we keep them in our thoughts and prayers. This month please pray for: **Madeline Janisch** (UW-SP), **Elsa Mitchell** (New York University), **Kirin Linse** (UW-Eau Claire), and **Maddie Haun** (UW-Madison).

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!



ELCA Good Gifts

Looking for that gift to give someone who has enough? ELCA Good Gifts are the perfect answer! Again, this year, you can get the gift of bees, piglet, goat, or chicks. Also available are fruit tree seedlings, seeds and gardening tools, hygiene kits, child vaccinations, Bibles, and health care visits all between \$10-\$50, and other gifts for higher costs. Give a gift that goes beyond our view and help some family in need.

Watch the Gathering Area for the opportunity to participate in Good Gifts, or contact the office for more information.

These gifts are great for teachers, your mail carrier, neighbors, music lesson teachers, and the list goes on! Thank you for supporting our neighbors around the world!



Lakeview Caring Tree

If you took a tag from the Lakeview Caring Tree, please remember the gifts (*wrapped and with the tag on the outside of the package*) are due back in the office by December 12th. Thank you for helping to make Christmas just a little brighter for our neighbors!

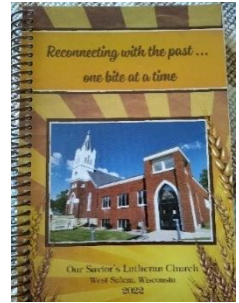
Christmas gift ideas ...

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

It's getting to be that time of year ...
Christmas gift giving is right around the
corner ... for the person who has
everything, why not give them a gift card!



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

KWIK TRIP

WOODMAN'S

And, remember the proceeds go to help Our Savior's Sugar
Creek Bible Camp Camperships and World Hunger.

Scrip Cards make great stocking stuffers!

Fall Stewardship Ministry



Thanks to all who have submitted “statement of intent” cards for 2023. If you have not done that yet, we would love to hear from you! You should have received a card in the mail; if not, or if you can’t locate it, contact the office.

We are using statements of intent to determine our ministry goals and objectives for 2023, so your response is very important!

Thank you again – and thank you for all your support of our work together!

Nominations

We’ve got the opportunities...do you know someone with the gifts?



As part of our nomination process, we are looking for people with the gifts to lead and serve at the same time! Specifically, the following elections will be held at the annual meeting. 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 (formerly Bethany Homes) (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, November 14, with President Jen Linse presiding. At this meeting the council:

- Shared in devotions and prayer around special people and exciting ministries.
- Discussed the ongoing “Vital Congregations” training.
- Adopted the revised guiding principles, and heard of plans to share the principles with the congregation.
- Heard that the Administration Committee would be meeting with Rachel Holthaus to discuss the youth ministry position on November 15, and that they would collaborate on revising the job description to match the vision of youth ministry around “Servant Leadership.”
- Approved the minutes of the October 10 council meeting, and received the October financial reports.
- Heard that the contract for the tech project has been signed, and the initial payment of 50% has been made, with a January-February projected installation.
- Set the annual meeting for January 29, and discussed nominations and the budget work prior to the meeting.
- Discussed some December programming, including a “Christmas party” hymn sing on December 14.
- Received Lisa Cash as a new member, from Gift of Grace in Holmen.
- Was reminded that the December meeting will be at Pastor Jon and Pastor Jean’s home.

The next meeting of the council will be Monday, December 12, at Pastor Jon and Pastor Jean’s home 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.

Home Communion Ministry



We are excited to restart the Home Communion Ministry to our shut-ins in January. We invite you to be a part of this ministry ... think about it ... pray about it ... watch for details ... and let us know you will join us. If you have questions or would like more information, speak with one of the pastors.

Women of the Congregation ...



You are invited to help determine the disbursement of the 2022 Norwegian Dinner profits. Meet in the Library on December 4 between worship services.



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

Tiffany Janisch & girls – thanksgiving baskets; those who delivered them to our shut ins.

Those who helped decorate the sanctuary to get us ready for Christmas – Jeff & Melissa Haldeman and Weston, Carla Burkhardt, and Justin, Katie & Chloe Drury.



**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

Financial Support Ministry

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

Like our ministry to residents at Lakeview, Salem Terrace/Mill Street Manor, and Mulder's. They are not forgotten! On the third Thursday of the month we travel to join them in worship, with Word, music, and Holy Communion. We also provide a weekly DVD of our Sunday worship to Salem Terrace/Mill Street and Mulder's.

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!*

Worship Leaders



December 3-4

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

6 p.m.
Isaiah Laack
Marjorie Anderson
Bell Family

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

8 a.m.
Gunnar Eckland
Alison Hemker
Dale & Kathy Anderson

10:30 a.m.
Charlie Ihle
Jessica Kennedy
Dawn Affeldt

Altar Guild for December Stacey Sjoquist & Tracy Skrentny

December 10-11

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

6 p.m.
Charlie Fullwood
Jill Iliff
Baumgartner Family

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

8 a.m.
Julia Hansen
Dori Jensen
Christianson Family

10:30 a.m.
Grace Johnsrude
Stacey Sjoquist
Steve & Sue Ahles

December 17-18

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

6 p.m.
Will Clements
Rich Clements
Laack Family

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

8 a.m.
Noah Johnsrude
Lynette Ender
Draxler Family

10:30 a.m.
Lexi Marinelli
Michelle Witte
Fortier Family

December 24 - Christmas Eve

1:30 p.m.
Worship Assistant Briauna Mathison
Communion Assistant Eric & Jill Iliff, Pam Gresens
Welcoming Team Iliff Family

3:30 p.m.
Worship Assistant Drew McConkey
Communion Assistant Bonny & Elly Goodenough, Jen Linse
Welcoming Team Goodenough Family

5:30 p.m.
Worship Assistant Mara McNaughton
Communion Assistant Wendy Amundson, Jon Hetland,
 Gillian Twite
Welcoming Team Beckley Family

10 p.m.
Worship Assistant Graham Sjoquist
Communion Assistant Jeff Haldeman
Welcoming Team Sjoquist Family

December 25 - Christmas Day

10 a.m.
Worship Assistant Jaxen Quackenbush
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team Brenda Skittone

Saturday, December 31

6 p.m.
Worship Assistant
Welcoming Team

Sunday, January 1 - New Year's Day

10 a.m.
Worship Assistant Tula Mitchell
Welcoming Team Dan & Jan Wee

Year End Contributions



With the end of the year fast approaching, this is the time to make sure you are up to date on

your financial support of our ministry at Our Savior's. *Your gifts **DO** make a difference!* You can mail your gifts to the office, or go to the church website: www.oursaviorswestsalem.org for secure electronic giving options.

In order to be included on your 2022 giving statement, gifts must be received in the church office **by noon on December 31, 2022.**



Any checks dated 2023, regardless of when they are received, will be acknowledged for 2023.

2023 Offering Envelopes

If you haven't already received your offering envelopes for 2023 in the mail, you should be receiving them soon.

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. **Also note: it is possible you will have a new number in 2023, so be sure to use the 2023 envelopes beginning in January.**





ANNUAL REPORT

Thinking Ahead ... 2022 Annual Report deadlines

It's hard to imagine, but the new year is right around the corner. And that means getting an 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.**

Mission Endowment Fund



The Mission Endowment Fund will soon be preparing its recommendations for the 2023 distribution. The recommendations will be presented to the annual meeting for approval. Each year the distribution of the fund makes a difference many ways through a variety of community and worldwide ministries and programs. Thank you for your part in making this ministry happen, and changing lives.

Looking ahead...you can be a life changer too. Consider including Our Savior's in your estate planning – 70% of any undesignated gifts – and 100% of any designated gifts – go to the fund, making a difference for years to come!

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



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.



**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!

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

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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 – December 15

Vacation



Pastor Jon and Pastor Jean will be out of the office December 27-January 2. If you have need of pastoral care please contact the office.

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

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West Salem, WI
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Change Service Requested