

Our Savior's Voice

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

359 Leonard Street N - West Salem, WI 54669

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org

608-786-0030

June 2020



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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June 2020

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Pastor's Reflections



It's the big question. Maybe the only one. (*Actually, not really, but you'll have to read to the end to find that out!*) When will this all end? When will Covid finally retreat, or be beaten into submission?

I don't know. No one really knows. Well, God knows, but he hasn't let on, at least not to me, not yet.

Until then, we live with uncertainty, apprehension, frustration, and not a small amount of fear. Until we have a cure, or really effective treatments, this is our ongoing norm.

But at church we are different, aren't we? Aren't we built on trust in God's care? Don't we proclaim "faith over fear?" So, shouldn't we just open our doors and trust that God will protect us?

That question has already been asked. Satan challenged Jesus to do some jumping. "Just trust God, it will be all right!" Jesus' response? "Trust, but don't tempt, God!" (Matthew 4:5-7)

That is what the Congregation Council is seeking to do – trust, but don't tempt, God! And how do we do that? We use what God has given us – the gifts of science, medicine, public health ... and, quite frankly, our brains, and trust God will guide us.

The Congregation Council has spent a LOT of time considering what it means for us as a congregation to live faithfully in this challenging time. The Council has chosen not to rely on politicians or even legal authorities, but to listen to medical and health care experts – and specifically the guidelines of Badger Bounce Back (BBB).

In that light, here's what the Congregation Council is doing:

1. As called for in BBB, the Council has determined that we will continue to refrain from "in house" worship. When

- BBB enters Phase 2, the council will re-asses and consider if it is safe and appropriate to worship together again.
2. Until worship in the building is resumed, weddings and funerals can proceed, but only with fewer than ten persons present (we've had one of each already, and both had less than ten in attendance).
 3. The Council will consider further guidelines and requirements for reopening at its June meeting.
 4. The Council expects to appoint a team to make the arrangements necessary to resume in-house worship.
 5. At the same time the Council expects that in-house worship will need to be different from what we have done in the past, and will ask the Worship Committee, within the guidelines that the Council sets, to craft a worship experience that will be both meaningful and relevant.
 6. After in-house worship resumes we expect that an online presence will be vital and will need to continue.
 7. The Council has heard and affirmed the desire of the pastors to develop a creative way to share Holy Communion, even before in-house worship resumes.
 8. We will also consider in the near future a re-opening of the building, but with some restrictions.
 9. The Council will keep you informed of what is happening. If the situation changes mid-month we will connect with you, and we will keep the web site up to date.
 10. The Council does not take any of this lightly, and especially the Council cares for you, and for all God's children (more on that in a moment).

We do understand the desire to resume worship. Believe me, NO ONE wants you all back more than the pastors do! We miss you, and we really don't like an empty church building.

Nonetheless, we affirm the decisions of the Council. We do this as a council and a congregation in small part to protect ourselves, but in larger part to protect others – those who are more vulnerable, and the community as a whole. That's why this is not about my right to do what I want, my "personal freedom." Instead, it's about

my calling to care for my neighbor and to assist the community around me, my “personal responsibility” as a disciple of Jesus.

And isn't that what this congregation is known for? Feed Our Children, our endowment fund, the proceeds from the Norwegian Dinner, the Corn Roast – all ways in which we serve our neighbor. Now, with worship not happening in a group, we are doing the same thing.

Finally, you have a good Council. They are thoughtful and reflective. They care for this congregation, and take seriously the task of discerning God's call in leading the work we share as a community of faith. They ask the tough questions, they are dependable, and they are good! And that makes them a great gift to us during these times. So, pray for them, but also trust that they will do what is needed and right!

So, thank you for your continued presence and faithfulness, not merely as members and friends of this congregation, but as disciples of Jesus. We continue to be called to be God's agents in a world that has always been broken, but these days seems more broken than ever. In that world, in the confusion and disruption that is all around us, we bring the hope of Jesus, of God at work in the crucified and risen Christ.

And how do you do that? Maybe that needs to be the big question. Maybe that's really the important one to ask. I can't control, I can't change Covid and the development of a virus, vaccine, or other big picture items. But I can discern what God calls me to do.

That is what makes this the really big question for me – and for you. Just how does God call me to be faithful these days? How does God call me to live out the swirling of the Holy Spirit within me? And just how does God call me to be the presence of Jesus in a hurting world?

Like I said, a bigger question – and a lot more important!

Pastor Jon

Video Worship ... and More!

(www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos)



Weekly Worship

A weekly worship video is prepared ... and the link posted to the video page on our web site

by 6 PM Saturday. Message, prayers, some music, all in a worship format, designed for you to join along – *sing with us!*

No internet access? We can get you a DVD of our worship – just let us know and we'll have it made and delivered early the following week! And then ... you can share the DVD with others. Can't beat that!

Children's Message

Each week the pastors share a message for children. The video link is posted by Saturday evening. Invite your kids ... or other kids ... to join us and learn more about God's gifts of grace. Or ... just watch it on your own!

Sunday School Lesson

Pastor Jean prepares a Sunday School lesson each week, with the video link posted by Saturday evening. Support material is sent out on Friday, so if you'd like to receive it, contact Pastor Jean or the office.

And new for this year ... Sunday school will continue through the summer months! Each week a new video, so tune in, and celebrate Jesus as we trust in God's care during difficult times!

Graduate Recognition

Our Savior's is proud of all our high school graduates! We wish we could have celebrated in person with you on May 17, but Covid took care of that! Still, we want to celebrate your achievement and lift you up in prayer in the context of worship.



So ... we are planning ... watch the mail in early June for your invitation to participate in a “virtual baccalaureate” on **Sunday, July 26**. You will be done ... ready to move forward into a very uncertain world ... and we will ask God's very certain blessings upon you.

High School Senior Scholarships



Each year Our Savior's awards a number of scholarships to college bound high school seniors. These scholarships come from the Michelson and Marking Scholarship Funds, and from Norma Piper.

This year the following high school seniors have been awarded scholarships:

- Liam Sjoquist – Michelson Scholarship
- Lexi Giblin – Michelson Scholarship
- Wyndsor Goodenough – Piper Scholarship
- Cody Anderson – Marking Scholarship
- Everett Michael – Michelson Scholarship

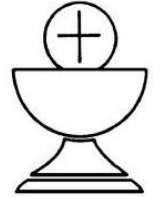
We congratulate all our recipients, and we thank the families that have chosen to continue a legacy by investing in the future through these young people!

Driveway Holy Communion



In consultation with other pastors in the La Crosse Area Synod, Pastor Jon and Pastor Jean are offering a new opportunity – “driveway Holy Communion!”

Built on the understanding we have of bringing Holy Communion to those who are homebound, this offering includes a very brief worship service – in your driveway!



Here’s how it works – one of us would set a time to come to your home – we would stand safely distanced, in the driveway, as we offer a scripture reading, prayer, and Words of Institution. You would supply your own bread (of whatever kind), and either wine or grape juice. About 10-15 minutes, and we are on our way. We will have gathered as God’s people, around the gifts of bread and wine, hearing the Word and the words of promise, and sharing together a brief meal.

And ... if you have others in your neighborhood – members of Our Savior’s or just those who you know are disconnected these days, they could join us, also safely distanced. Wouldn’t it be just wild to have two or three family groups, all safely distanced, sharing in God’s gifts of grace?

We think this will be a way to connect, even briefly, and share the sacrament with you. Maybe even a few minutes of conversation (we really do miss you all!).

If you are open ... and interested ... give us a call (you can leave a message directly for one of us), or contact us via e-mail.



Bible Study

Bible study continues on Wednesday mornings at 9:30 and Sunday mornings at

10:30, via Zoom. To connect, check out the “Covid-19 Response” button on the home page of our web site, or contact Pastor Jon. We have discovered that even if we can’t be in the same room, we are still gathered together into the same Body of Christ, by the same Holy Spirit!



Still on the Horizon...

A number of ministries have been “paused” by Covid 19, including the Affirmation of Baptism

(Confirmation), and First Communion instruction. We are still pondering how we can carry these out safely, and will keep parents apprised of what we plan ... when we can safely plan something!

In the meantime, to both our ninth graders and our (mostly) fifth graders looking forward to First Communion, we haven’t forgotten you – you are still in our thoughts and our prayers!



Feed Our Children Summer Lunch

The Feed Our Children Summer Lunch Program has been busy since our schools closed on March 17th. Each week we have provided a bag of groceries to families in need. The first 200+ bags were made possible by a parent-organized canned food drive. The second wave has been paid for with donations made to Feed Our Children. Many individuals have helped deliver these bags.

As summer begins we will continue to provide these bags as well as maintain a summer lunch program, providing lunches twice a week in the summer as we have in the past. This year, it will look a bit different.

- ❖ Some lunches will be picked up from Our Savior's and some will be delivered.
- ❖ We will still need volunteers! You can contact one of the leaders to sign up – *see the list on the next page.*
- ❖ We will also still need donations. Because things are different this year, **we are asking for monetary donations at this time** – **make checks payable to Our Savior's with Feed Our Children in the memo line.**
- ❖ We support local businesses in making our purchases.

We also thank Linda's Bakery, Hansen's IGA, Cortiva, and the LaCrosse County Dairy Producers for their continued support of our program - even during these challenging times.

Thank you for your continued support!

Angie Hemker

Feed Our Children Weekly Leaders

Tuesday	Thursday	Leader	Phone
June 9	June 11	Angie Hemker	608-780-9172
June 16	June 18	Tracy Hesse	H 608-786-4205 C 608-317-4804
June 23	June 25	Cheryl Lang	608-780-7598
June 30	July 2	Tracy Hesse	H 608-786-4205 C 608-317-4804
July 7	July 9	Connie Pinske	H 608-486-4400 C 608-799-0830
July 14	July 16		
July 21	July 23		
July 28	July 30	Carla Burkhart	608-317-3262
August 4	August 6		
August 11	August 13		
August 18	August 20	Angie Hemker	608-780-9172

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!



Congregation Council

The Congregation Council met on Monday, May 18th, via Zoom, with President Steve Ahles presiding. At this meeting the Council:

- Shared devotions on 1 Peter 3, asking “what is the hope that is within you?”
- Approved the minutes from April 26 and received the April financial reports.
- Heard an update on a variety of ministries and the PPP grant.
- Discussed staffing and payroll.
- Discussed Sugar Creek Camperships if there is no summer camp season this year.
- Spent considerable time discussing reopening, including the timing, the parameters, and planning for it.
 - Decided not to reopen at this time, and to re-asses when we enter Badger Bounce Back Phase 2.
 - Decided to limit weddings and funerals to no more than ten in attendance until further notice.
- Decided to continue to lease Johnson South for another year.
- Heard that there will be no peaches this year due to frost (and not due to Covid!)

The next meeting will be held via Zoom on June 8. Contact Steve Ahles or one of the pastors if you have any questions or concerns.

Financial Support Ministry

During these days of uncertainty and disruption, the work of Jesus Christ through Our Savior's continues. Now, more than ever, your financial support makes a difference as in new ways we proclaim hope to a very frightened world.

And we do just that! Our videos receive over 200 views each week, the children's videos are popular, and we even make DVDs for Mulder's, Salem Terrace, Mill Street Manor, and more. Feed Our Children is a major ministry in our community, and the Care and Share Food Pantry feeds those who are struggling. We connect by phone with hundreds each week, and lift up prayer concerns. We are studying the Bible. All of this is happening, even with the building locked!

Your support makes this happen. You can mail in your envelope (lots of you are doing that – ***thank you!***).

Or, you can use electronic giving (electronic giving is up significantly - lots of you are doing that too, so ***thank you!***). For more information go to oursaviorswestsalem.org/giving.

- **Electronic transfer ...** Your contribution is made 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.
- ***Give in confidence!*** 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!***

Thank you ...



The quilting ladies are very appreciative of all the sheets and fabric you have given us. This makes it very possible to happily continue our quilting mission. Thank you so much.

Norma Piper

For the twelfth year the church garden plots have been rototilled and are ready for planting thanks to Todd Michael and his trusty John Deere tractor. Though every growing season is unique, the quality soils of the coulee region along with a bit of TLC have always produced an abundant crop. We look forward to another prosperous year. Thanks again Todd!

Jim Michelson



Pastoral Acts:

Marriage – Emily Copus and Adam Wuensch – April 17

Funeral – Andrea Page – May 16

In Loving Memory

Memorial Gifts Received ...

In Memory of Doris Michelson

Kay & Tom Niemeier

Larry & Connie Blunck

Bill & Marsha Bateman

Marion Boyle

Cheryl Lee



For Endowment Fund – Eric & Lynette Ender

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Email: linda@oursaviorswestsalem.org

Kathy Brisson, Organist

Eric Sorenson, Senior Choir Director

Karen DeSchepper, Financial Secretary

Josh Corning, Custodian

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