

# Our Savior's Voice

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

359 Leonard Street N - West Salem, WI 54669

[www.oursaviorswestsalem.org](http://www.oursaviorswestsalem.org)

608-786-0030

## July 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.***

# Our Savior's Voice

## July 2020

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# Pastor's Reflections

*OK, it's a little long this month, but there's a LOT in there!*



The pandemic continues...is worsening...and affecting lots of lives, including ours. Like so many we have a personal stake in this, not just as pastors, but as parents. More on that in a moment.

But first...let's go back a few years...in 1527 the plague, the scourge of medieval Europe, killing 30-60% of the population over two centuries, made a return to Wittenberg, the home of Martin Luther. What was Luther's response?

*"I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence.*

*If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me, and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others.*

*If my neighbor needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God."*

"Whether One May Flee From a Deadly Plague," Luther's Works 43:132.

Now, truth be told, Luther did not attend our last Council meeting, but Luther's spirit certainly did! That is what we are about, and will continue to be about. Especially as we ponder the resumption of worship and opening of the church building.

To be clear, ***we are still worshipping!*** How?

- Online videos bring a message, prayers, and even music.

Posted by 6 PM on Saturday on YouTube, you can access

them through our web site. Go to our video page: [www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos](http://www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos). You can watch any time, and you can even catch up on previous weeks.

- Drive-way communion – hey, this has been fun! We have had (as I write this) nine “DWCs”, with over 80 folks in attendance. We have stayed appropriately distanced, and have had some good conversation and reconnecting. Even some new members! More information on the Covid-19 Response page on our web site.
- And soon...here’s a tease...we will have a new worship opportunity beginning in August, so watch the August newsletter!

But don’t we all just want to get together? Why can’t we do that? Why can’t we let people decide the risks they are willing to take, and just go ahead?

We can’t because this isn’t about people taking risks. It’s about the others in our community. That is to say, we do what we need to do, not so much to protect ourselves, as to protect the others around us, and in that way, to be a gift to the community.

That’s also why we wear masks. Not because the mask will protect me (the wearer – it only does that a bit), but because the mask protects those around me.

But wait? I’m not sick!

Are you sure? Are you sure you are not asymptomatic? As I write this, just this morning news of a new estimate that millions have been exposed and are asymptomatic. And if that is you, without a mask on, and coming to worship, do you generously share your virus with those around you, adding to the spread that eventually hits someone who is vulnerable – and maybe costs a life?

Oops!

We also hear the advice of medical professionals, that this is not the time to be in groups. This is not the time to relax, or ease up.

And that is Luther's point. We listen to those who have the expertise, we follow best practices, and we do it for the sake of our neighbors and community. In true "Luther-ish" fashion, isn't that what Our Savior's has always done? Endowment Fund, Feed Our Children, youth ministry programs, Norwegian Dinner, support of missions, hunger relief, and campus ministry – all ways we have done things...for the sake of the community and others!

So then, what is the plan for worship and building re-opening?

The Congregation Council is relying on the La Crosse County Health Department, and it's "Covid-19 Compass Dashboard" (<https://lacrossecounty.org/covid19compass.>)

***After significant deliberation the Council has determined that worship in the building will not resume as long as we remain in the "severe risk" category, as we are at the current moment.***

When the Compass moves to "moderate risk," we will reassess and consider how we can safely resume worship together. Until then, we will continue to offer online worship and other ministries via technology. The Council has also developed a plan to reopen the building for worship when the time comes.

***In addition, the building remains closed at this time.*** Access will be limited and at the pastors' discretion, though Feed Our Children and the Food Pantry will continue to operate. ***Face masks will be required for those entering the building.***

Office staff continues to be present during most normal office hours, so we can always take your phone calls – in fact, we welcome them!

Yet, while the building is closed, the church remains at work. We have online worship (also available on DVD), a children's message, "Summer Sunday School," Bible study, phone calls, e-mails, cards to connect us, outdoor "driveway communion," and lots of planning for the fall.

We yearn to be together, but for the moment we cannot. ***Please know that we pray for you, and the pastors remain available by phone, e-mail, and other means.***

We thank you for your patience, understanding, and support during difficult times. We are especially thankful for all who have shared financial gifts with us. YOU are allowing us to continue to do ministry in a very difficult time. Your gifts are important – and they make you not only a gift to us, but especially to those whose lives are changed by the work we share together.

Whew! That's a lot, I know, but it's important stuff. Thank you for wading through it all!

Now, to a personal note. Like so many others, our family has been impacted – Rebecca graduates this year, but alas, no graduation party! We had hoped in May...then in July...to have a party at church, and invite you to share in our joy. You have been a big part of her life, and we are thankful to you for your embrace of us and her over the past years. So many of you have made a difference to her!

However ... not to be! So, like all the other grads, please keep her in your prayers during these times of “non-milestones.” But...next school year she will participate in “Project Search” at Gundersen, and at the end of the year, will graduate from that program. Maybe by then we can gather...and gather you with us to thank you for your presence in her life and ours.

So, we continue to move forward in faith, as faithful disciples of Jesus, in a troubled and uncertain world. Know that God's gifts of life continue to feed and nurture you, and that through the embrace of Jesus, “God's got your back!”

And remember that we pray for you!

***Pastor Jon***



## From Pastor Jon...

I have recently become aware that some e-mails are out there purporting to come from me. The emails are from "Pastor Jon Schmidt," but not from my e-mail address. They ask you to purchase an iTunes card or some other prepaid card. Please do not respond to these e-mails – they are a scam and a fraud. I would never send an e-mail with such a request. If you do receive an e-mail that may be from me, and are at all suspicious, please contact me first!



## Peaches

On top of everything else ... there are NO peaches this year. This is not, however, because of COVID – just an old-fashioned freeze that killed most of the Colorado peach crop. We are disappointed – we had hoped to maintain some sense of normalcy with the peaches. Moreover, though we are disappointed, we also know that a lot of folk lost their livelihood for this year. They are hurting far more than we are.

We hope next year to have the peaches. Thank you for your understanding!



## We Are Worshiping!

We are still worshiping! Lots of ways, lots of times!

**Online videos** bring a message, prayers, and even music. Posted by 6 PM on Saturday on YouTube, you can access them through our web site:

[www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos](http://www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos).

You can watch any time, and you can even catch up on previous weeks. Thanks to our music providers, lectors, and “peace teams” as they work with us to provide a worship opportunity.

**DVDs** are also available of our online service. If you, or someone you know, does not have the ability to watch online, but can use a DVD, let us know. Currently, we have six DVDs going out each week – we can do more!

**Drive-way communion** – we come to your house, and outdoors, safely distanced, we share a brief (10-15 minutes) worship with communion. You provide your own bread and wine/juice, the driveway, and maybe even some neighbors – we bring the Word and a message. Contact us to get on the list.

And then... ***something new***...watch for a new worship with communion opportunity beginning in August. Details in the August newsletter.

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



And don't forget to check the website for ...



Children's Message

Summer  
Sunday School

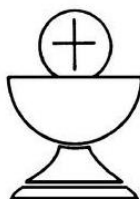


## Driveway Holy Communion



Here's how it works – you invite us 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.

# Graduate Recognition



One of the losses during the time of pandemic is the inability to honor our high school graduates, at least not the way we have in the past. But...we're still going to do it! **Graduate**

***recognition will be part of the online video for July***

**25/26.** Graduates have been contacted – we need your info sheet and picture, and we want to get together to do a short video clip. Contact Pastor Jon or Pastor Jean to be a part of the video. We want to recognize you...and ask God's blessings upon you even in these very challenging days!



## ***Hey, Confirmation Students!***

Recently, you received a card in the mail from me to say “Hi” and to see how things are going. Now, time for the next step - I would like to invite you to gatherings by grade, meeting in the lot across the street from the church building, sitting (socially distanced) in a circle to check in, see how things are going, and give each other support.

I will be sending out an e-mail (my address is below) to a group of students with a date and time. Please bring a lawn chair or you can sit on the lawn. I'll provide some safely distributed snacks. More details in the e-mail, but watch for it – soon!

Look forward to seeing you. Take care, and stay safe!

***Wendy Kane***

youth@oursaviorswestsalem.org



## Bible Study

Bible study, via Zoom (or dial in as a conference call) continues, with two opportunities each week!

**Wednesday from 9:30 to 11 AM** we discuss the gospel reading for the coming Sunday. Some great conversation and probing discussion – all from the comfort of your home!

**Sunday from 10:30 to 11:30 AM** we check out one of the other passages appointed for that weekend. Again, lots of good connecting and exploring!

Details on how to join us are on the COVID-19 Response page on our web site, or call the office and speak with Pastor Jon. Either way, we'll get you on board!

## Senior Connection

All Senior's ("AARP eligible" folk) are invited to a socially distanced and "as safe as we can make it" gathering on Tuesday, July 14, at 9:30 AM.



We will gather in the open lot across from the parking lot at church (the lot with the prayer labyrinth and chain link fence.) Bring your own lawn chair and coffee – we'll provide the donuts. We'll sit in a distanced circle and have some time to catch up, see each other again, and support one another.

Rain date is July 21 – plan to join us, but remember that the church building is closed, so bring with anything you need.



# Feed Our Children Summer Lunch

The Feed Our Children Summer lunch program has reinvented itself this year with additional considerations for everyone's health and safety, this includes mask wearing as well as limited contact drive up service or delivery. In the month of June, we served 302 lunches and provided 62 bags of groceries!

We are extremely thankful for continued support from the members of OSLC as well as the surrounding community. We continue to receive monetary donations which has been incredibly helpful. We use these dollars to purchase items locally. We also continue to use the large donation of food storage containers that we received in March. In fact, we had so many that we were able to share with the West Salem School's Food Service Staff at a time when purchasing paper products (March/April) was extremely difficult.

If you would like to help, you can contact any of the kitchen leaders directly (see the list on page 13) or you can email Angie ([hemker.angie@wsalem.k12.wi.us](mailto:hemker.angie@wsalem.k12.wi.us)) to be placed on the volunteer list that is updated and emailed to the kitchen leaders weekly.

Thank you for your continued support!

*Angie Hemker*

## Feed Our Children Weekly Leaders

| <b>Tuesday</b> | <b>Thursday</b> | <b>Leader</b>                    | <b>Phone</b>                     |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| June 30        | July 2          | Tracy Hesse                      | H 608-786-4205<br>C 608-317-4804 |
| July 7         | July 9          | Connie Pinski                    | H 608-486-4400<br>C 608-799-0830 |
| July 14        | July 16         | Collette Schockman<br>(P.O.P.)   | 608-774-5617                     |
| July 21        | July 23         | Wendy Kaiser -<br>HS Lunch Staff | 608-317-4236                     |
| July 28        | July 30         | Carla Burkhart                   | 608-317-3262                     |
| August 4       | August 6        | Audra Jandt<br>1st CCU           |                                  |
| August 11      | August 13       | Valerie Olson<br>WS Presbyterian | H 608-786-1834<br>C 608-397-1568 |
| 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!

# Stewardship for All Seasons Update

Last fall we brought a challenge to the congregation for 2020 – could we do three things?



1. Maintain our ministry excellence.
2. Increase staffing dedicated to youth ministry.
3. Begin a Wednesday worship, with a much different style and music. A worship not at all like the weekend!

So, what happened? First, we have worked to maintain ministry excellence. We did that by increasing salaries that had not received increases in several years. We also restored cuts that had been made to our mission support. We got off to a great start this year!

Then came COVID. And we were forced to pivot. But remember, we are also working on being an “agile” church, and an “agile” church is able to change to meet new needs in a changing world.

So...at the moment youth ministry (as it is traditionally done) needs to change. And it will. We are working on that!

And a Wednesday worship will probably happen when we can again worship together, but a new music style may have to wait until we can do it right.

Yet, new and innovative worship is still on course. Watch for a new worship in August. Maybe not the worship we wanted or envisioned, but remember? We are “agile.” It will be worship that will fit our moment in time.

And then? We are beginning to look ahead to 2021, seeking to discern the new ministries and new directions God calls us to embrace. While we are not sure yet what that will look like, we do know that in the end it’s not up to COVID – it’s up to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will guide us and get us moving.

And really, would we have it any other way?



# Congregation Council

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

- Shared in study and prayers based on Galatians 3:27-28.
- Approved the minutes of the May 18 Council Meeting, and received the May financial report.
- Heard an overview on what has been happening with our various ministries.
- Heard that Pastor Jon is working with Jim Anderson on the PPP Grant, and that most likely the entire amount will be a grant, with no balance as a loan.
- Discussed staffing and payroll through the summer, with the desire to maintain payroll as much as possible. Pastor Jon reported that most employees are working close to full hours, and that financially we are in a position to meet that payroll.
- Discussed at length the parameters for re-opening the building and resuming in-person worship.
- Decided to shift to using the LaCrosse County Health Department COVID-19 Dashboard Compass as our guide for re-opening, rather than Badger Bounce Back.
- Discussed, developed, and adopted a plan for re-opening the building and resuming worship.
- Discussed forming a task force to address details in resuming worship, and directing the Worship Committee to design a worship experience.
- Directed the pastors to send out a letter to the congregation prior to the newsletter informing them of the current plans.

The next meeting of the council will be held Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup> 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, from next door to across the globe!

Case in point – we are sharing online Sunday School this summer, but we also sent out an “end of year” card to our kids, along with a small gift. What happened? Some kids just down the street came and “chalked us” a thank you! We made a difference in their upside down, crazy world! And we want to continue! (Go to our video page – [www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos](http://www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/videos), click on worship for June 20-21, and go to the 34:20 mark.)

As the summer is upon us we continue to work to bring hope and the life of Jesus to a broken and hurting world, and your continued support makes that happen. You are always welcome 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](http://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 do it, 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.



## Pastoral Acts:

Funeral – Alice Bolstad – June 25



## Prayer Labyrinth

During these days of uncertainty when we seek to find peace within us, prayer can be our lifeline. Immerse yourself in prayer – center yourself as you slowly walk

in to the prayer labyrinth – ponder the scripture texts along the way – sit and pray, look at the flowers in the back – and then slowly walk back out and re-engage with the world knowing God is there with you every step of the way.



**American  
Red Cross  
Blood  
Drive**

**Save a Life, Give Blood**

**Monday July 27**

**12:30 – 5:30 PM**

**West Salem Presbyterian Church**

Web Site: [www.oursaviorswestsalem.org](http://www.oursaviorswestsalem.org)  
**OUR SAVIOR'S STAFF**

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Kathy Brisson, Organist

Eric Sorenson, Senior Choir Director

Karen DeSchepper, Financial Secretary

Josh Corning, Custodian

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