



DIVINE SAVIOR
Lutheran Church
102 Northridge Dr. Shawano, WI 54166
715-526-6880

MESSENGER December 2020

Special Dates in

December

Ladies Aid

1st @ 1:00 p.m.

Co-or. Council Mtg.

11th @ 6:30 p.m..

Food Pantry *

Thursdays

1:00– 3:00 p.m.

Choir Practice

Weds. @ 6:30 pm

Christmas Eve.

Service

24th

@ 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Day

Service

25th

@ 9:00 a.m.

New Years Eve

Service @ 6:30

Bible Class

Mondays

@ 5:00 p.m.

Pray & Play

Tuesdays @

3:00 p.m.

Advent Services

Wednesdays

@ 4:30 p.m.

Worship service times.

Sun. 9:00 & 10:30 am

Weds. 4:30 p.m.

Christmas—God's Gift to You

When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."

It's the moment for which children wait so excitedly: the time for tearing open Christmas presents. It's thrilling to see their excitement and joy to find out what lies beneath the bow and paper. But often, just as quickly as the excitement erupted, it begins to disappear. When the flying bows and paper settle, feelings of disappointment and ingratitude so often start to surface. The moment everyone so eagerly looked forward to becomes yet another disappointment.

For so many, the Christmas season and celebration ends up like the boxes strewn across the floor—empty. Because, eventually, the decorations are taken down, the parties end, and life goes back to normal.

But this won't be the case when we remember what Christmas is really about. Christmas is the celebration of the gift of God's one and only Son, a gift he gave to the world. It's the gift that I need, that you need, that this whole world needs. You see, this world—including you and me—is wrapped and covered in sin. It is this covering of sin that leaves us empty and disappointed and looking for more gifts and other presents that we hope will fill the void. But they can't.

It is only through the gift of God's Son, and his life and death that removes from you the ugly covering and wrapping of your sins. Jesus did not come to be placed under a Christmas tree, but to hang upon a tree, not as an ornament, but as the one who would die upon it to pay for all of your sins. His perfect, innocent life and death are gifts he offers to you to make you his perfect and holy child and heir of heaven.

PARISH NEWS

Congregational Changes last month:

Added:

Called Home to Jesus: Charlotte Perryman on 11/2/20

Transferred: Current Congregational Stats: communicants: 170 souls: 157



**IF YOU WERE ACCUSED OF BEING A CHRISTIAN,
WOULD THERE BE ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO CONVICT YOU?**

I came across this question a number of years ago, and it was very thought-provoking. It made me wonder, “Do I hide my faith? Do I hold back when there are opportunities to share it? Can people tell that I a Christian?”

We all find it difficult sometimes to share our faith for any number of reasons. We aren’t sure how someone will react. We don’t want to damage a relationship. We simply don’t feel confident enough to do so. But actively sharing your faith and talking about Jesus are not the only ways to show that you are a Christian.

Is there evidence in the way that you live your life that shows you are a Christian? Jesus spoke to this point. ¹⁴“**You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.**” ¹⁵**Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.** ¹⁶**In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”** (Matthew 5:14-16)

As Christians who long to serve our Lord, it is only natural that our faith would be visible in the way that we act, talk, even think. In the same way that light naturally shines forth, our faith is just as visible. That is, unless we hide it away, like putting the lamp under a bowl. So long as we don’t actively try to hide our faith from the world, those around us can naturally see God working in our lives. Then, our actions, shining forth, glorify our Father in heaven. As one who has been made into a new creation, let your life be evidence of the change that has been made in you.

When the Spirit worked faith into your hearts, when he moved you to believe that you are saved because of Jesus’ perfect life and innocent death, he made it so that you could do good works that praise God. **Let your light shine before others** so that they will know that you are a saved child of God. If the Spirit moves you to do so, let others know that the same can be said for them: Jesus died for their sins, too! May God help us to shine the light of our faith into the world at all times. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!

In Christian love,

Pastor Wolf B. Parsons

(Continued on page 3)

Special Service Notes:

No Monday services beginning 11/23/2020. Will resume Monday services on 1/4/2021.

Thanksgiving Eve Service will be 11/25/2020 at **6:30pm**. (choir sings)

Midweek Advent Services will be each Wednesday after until Christmas at **4:30pm**.

(no midweek service on December 23rd)

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be 12/24/2020 at **6:30pm**. (choir sings)

Christmas Day Festival Service will be 12/25/2020 at **9:00am**. (no choir)

New Year's Eve Service will be 12/31/202 at **6:30pm**.

We understand that some feel uncomfortable at this time gathering in groups, such as for worship. For this reason, **every service will be recorded this year and posted online** so our members can join us virtually if they wish.

Sunday/Wednesday Services are different services:

Just your annual reminder that the Sunday services are different than the special midweek services that are coming. We encourage you to join us for all services, if possible, and in this way take part in the wonderful opportunities we have to grow together in God's Word.

We understand that some feel uncomfortable at this time gathering in groups, such as for worship. For this reason, **every service will be recorded this year and posted online** so our members can join us virtually if they wish.

News Bits and Pieces

Food Pantry Insights

The Food Pantry at \$15,000 is the largest line item in the 2020 Unified Budget outside of Pastor's salary and health insurance premiums. But, how much do members of the congregation know about the Food Pantry ministry? And, how does the Food Pantry fit into Divine Savior's mission?

The Food Pantry is a primary means for sharing Christ's love, which is the third purpose in the church's mission statement. (Proclaim Christ. Embrace His Word. Share His love.) In Matthew 25 Jesus said, *"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink..."* And when asked, *"Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?"* Jesus replied, *"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*

Who and how many people use the Food Pantry? During the three months ending on September 30, a total of 519 people (353 adults and 166 children) received food from our pantry. Among the adults there were 112 seniors. Also, included in the 519 people benefitting from our Food Pantry were 214 American Indians and 299 European Americans, to use the ethnic labels in the Feeding America statistical reports, which we are required to submit at the end of each calendar quarter.

More recently, an analysis of a random selection of Food Pantry clients, people who came on the first two Thursdays in November, found that over half (58%) were one- or two-person households. On the other end of the spectrum, 10% of the families served had six or seven people in their homes. Interestingly, 14 men and 11 women made up the group of one-person households. People in this group ranged in age from 25 to 87 with half of them being over 70 years of age.

Food Pantry Schedule Changes for 2021

For January through April, 2021, the Food Pantry will continue to provide drive-thru service but only on the first and last Thursdays of each month. The primary cause for changing the schedule is a lack of available volunteers. Each week seven people are needed to staff the pantry's operation, but with some people going south for the winter, some being "safer at home" during the COVID pandemic, and still

others not able to stand for extended periods or lift heavy boxes and bags, there are not enough people available for the pantry to be open weekly.

People able, willing, and available to help in the Food Pantry should contact Carol Jaeger, who schedules volunteers.

Food Pantry coordinators will meet again in March to assess the situation at that time in order to consider operations beyond April. Considerations will include scheduling and whether the Pantry can discontinue drive-thru service and return to indoor operations, which could allow Bread of Life Bible study classes to resume.

Holiday Meals

Since 2012 Food Pantry coordinators have provided special holiday meals to approximately a dozen families each Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Meal boxes include sufficient food for an entire holiday main meal. This year 10 households received meals for Easter and 14 for Thanksgiving. Five of this year's 14 Thanksgiving meal recipients were members of Divine Savior. Typically, there are members of Divine Savior included among those receiving special holiday meals.

Toys for Tots

This year the Food Pantry is not coordinating Christmas gift-giving to children of families in need as has been done in recent years. The task had become very time consuming, and a number of insurmountable difficulties had become apparent in the past few years. Instead, we have joined the Toys for Tots program that already exists within the Shawano community. In this way Divine Savior members who wish to participate in giving gifts to children in needy families can still do so simply by dropping gifts into the donation box in the church hallway.

The program is for children from birth to fifteen years old residing in Shawano County. Donations may include new, unwrapped toys or items for teenagers up to age 15. An alternative is to make monetary donations that will go toward purchasing new toys. (Checks payable to Toys for Tots are preferable to cash.)

News Bits and Pieces

Toys for Tots (continued)

Questions may be directed to Michael Johnston (715-280-0991), who is the local Toys for Tots Coordinator. The donation deadline is Sunday, December 6. Donation boxes will be picked up on December 7th.

Christian Family Solutions

Pastor James Mattek, Director of Ministry for Christian Family Solutions, also known as Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service (WLCFS), recently sent a thank you note to the members of Divine Savior after having received a \$240 donation from our congregation. WLCFS is included in the Divine Savior Unified Budget as a "Shared Ministry." Members also have a special envelope in the November group of envelopes in their offering packets that they can use to support this ministry. Donations to Christian Family Solutions are remitted quarterly.

Pastor Mattek wrote in part: "Thanks to your generous support, God's blessings flow into the lives of many hurting and frail people. Thousands of people--many affected by the virus threat and social upheaval, have turned to this ministry for help and healing. Thanks to you, their cup of blessing is a reality. *You have made a difference.*"

Christian Family Solutions is a non-profit social service agency headquartered in Germantown, WI, and is affiliated with the Wisconsin Synod, but not financially supported by the WELS. The agency provides counseling services to troubled families and individuals in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota. An office in Appleton serves people in the Shawano area.

Ten-Month Financial Picture

After ten months in 2020, contributions to fund the Unified Budget are still sufficient to cover expenses but not enough to fully fund ten twelfths of budget-permitted expenditures. Donations totaling \$148,949 have exceeded expenses by \$6,839. We have spent \$142,110; but by comparison, ten months of the budget would have permitted spending \$162,553. Thus, we underspent the budget by \$20,443.

A comparison of the first ten months of 2020 income and expenses with 2019 is interesting because 2019 might be considered "normal" while 2020 is very different.

	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Difference</u>
2019	154,028	144,274	9,754
2020	148,949	142,110	6,839

Thanksgiving Zambian Style

In America Thanksgiving Day traditionally involves stuffing turkeys and stuffing ourselves with the turkey, but how is thanksgiving observed in other countries? Even a partial answer can be interesting and thought-provoking.

A number of Divine Savior members are aware that this writer's daughter is married to a WELS missionary currently living in Lusaka, Zambia, and a member of the One Africa Team, which is a WELS World Mission effort to coordinate the training of African pastors and evangelists. This connection provides small glimpses into how things are done in congregations of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA). One such insight relates to the observance of thanksgiving days.

Members of Zambian Lutheran congregations select various days throughout the year for their "thanksgiving days" since there is no traditional national Thanksgiving Day as in America. On their thanksgiving days, Zambian Christians give extra, special offerings to show their thanks for blessings received. Recently, one of the congregations in Lusaka used their thanksgiving offering to hire an electrician to fix ceiling fans at the seminary, where assembling in 90 degree heat without air conditioning and with inoperable fans was more than just uncomfortable.

We also learned that in Zambia there are no Butterball turkeys, and the African turkeys are scrawny birds, not plump and juicy. This year some of the WELS missionaries in Lusaka gathered for a Thanksgiving Day meal featuring chicken.

(DRF)

Selections from WELS TOGETHER

Colorado Church Receives Relief from Fires

“At our final outdoor worship services at Carbon Valley Lutheran we could see the smoke coming across the sky, and by the end of worship we had ash and burnt pine needles on our cars,” describes Rev. Tim Spiegelberg, pastor at Carbon Valley Lutheran Church, Firestone, Colo., and also vacancy pastor at Peace, Boulder.

While Colorado is no stranger to wildfires, 2020 brought some of the biggest and longest lasting in the state’s history. As the fires closed in, four families from Peace, Boulder, were told to evacuate.

Two of the families needed a place to go, and without hesitation, the council at Peace opened the doors of the church, allowing the members to stay on the church property as needed. Carbon Valley assisted as well, providing gift cards for necessities. Unsure of how widespread, long, or damaging these fires would be for the community, Spiegelberg turned to Christian Aid and Relief, seeking assistance before the crisis got bigger. Christian Aid and Relief answered the call and provided additional funds to help families if needed.

Spiegelberg explains, “It was incredibly easy working with Pastor Dan Sims [director of WELS Christian Aid and Relief]. I was actually surprised at how easy it was and how receptive he was. It was as simple as a phone call describing the situation and [Sims] gave me the assurance that Christian Aid and Relief was there for us.”

“I think the story here is moving swiftly with compassion before things get out of hand,” says Spiegelberg. “It turned out that those families were okay. They were able to go back. God sent snow and stopped the progression of the fire. But we were in place and ready to go. Immediately and without hesitation, the leadership said to use the church.”

After a record fire season, not just in Colorado but on the West coast as well, Sims said he will be meeting with a group of pastors from the fire-hit regions to brainstorm the best ways for Christian Aid and Relief to assist with these disasters in the future.

To learn more about Christian Aid and Relief, visit wels.net/relief.

Planning Has Started for the 2021 Synod Convention

Planning has begun for the 66th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, which will be held at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich., July 26-29, 2021. More than 400 delegates and 50 advisory members will be meeting under the theme “Here We Stand,” reflecting the 500th anniversary of the historic and bold confession made by Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms in 1521.

Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum

Two dozen leaders from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) and WELS met Oct.19-20 at the Country Inn and Suites, Mankato, Minn. The forum was to take place on the Bethany Lutheran College campus but was moved due to COVID-19.

“We would have enjoyed the opportunity to gather on the Bethany campus, but due to our COVID-19 protocol requiring social distancing in classrooms, and given that the Bethany student body was already using all of our larger campus spaces, we just didn’t have the facility space on campus to host the forum this time,” says Dr. Gene Pfeifer, president of Bethany Lutheran College. “Nonetheless, we’re pleased our two synods could still gather in Mankato to discuss ways we can work together to advance confessional Lutheranism among our church bodies.”

The meeting provided the sister synods an opportunity to share information about what each synod is doing during the pandemic and allowed discussion of several theological topics.

“As ELS and WELS leaders hear what is taking place in the two synods, it is a time to reflect and to rejoice in the blessings the Lord provides,” says Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Home Missions. “It is a time to discuss ministry. Above all, it is a time to pray for our ELS brothers and sisters in Christ as well as for our church body that we remain faithful to the teachings of Scripture as we point more people to Jesus Christ as the world’s Savior from sin.”

Selections from WELS TOGETHER

Lutheran Confessional Forum (continued)

During the forum, ELS/WELS leaders updated one another on mutual issues in the synods. Following reports from each synod president, three theological essays were presented and discussed.

ELS Communications Director Rev. Paul Fries [noted that] “The past year has shown the importance of communicating the gospel in new ways to our members and to our world.” “Technology provides many ways for us reach out with God’s Word—the message of saving grace through faith in Jesus. As we explore new ways of reaching the world with the gospel, we continue to treasure the fellowship that we share.”

The next Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum is scheduled for Oct. 17-18, 2022, at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, Waukesha, Wis.

Congregation Mission Offerings

Congregation Mission Offerings [also known as WELS CMO] for the fiscal year that ended June 30 totaled \$21.4 million, which was \$467,000 higher than planned and \$353,000 more than the prior year. Those increased offerings and the \$750,000 in lower-than-planned expenditures combined to enable WELS to end the year in a better-than-expected financial position. The financial position of the four synodical schools, WELS Church Extension Fund, WELS Foundation, WELS Investment Funds, and Northwestern Publishing House also improved significantly. The financial blessings continue as Congregation Mission Offerings for the year have increased 2% over the prior year.

Worship Resource Previews New Hymns

To help WELS members get a taste of some of the new hymns that will be included in *Christian Worship: Hymnal*, the WELS Hymnal Project has released *Christian Worship: Hymn Preview*.

This digital resource showcases 54 of the more than 200 new hymns that will be included in the new hymnal scheduled to be released by Advent 2021. With each hymn is a brief comment on its origin, spiritual meaning, usage in the wider Christian church, or other interesting detail. The booklet also

includes several examples of additional accompaniments that will be available for musicians in the accompaniment edition. “It’s more than just a little appetizer—it’s a full course,” says Rev. Aaron Christie, chairman of the Hymnody Committee. “If you spend time with it, you will have an excellent sampling of the various types of hymns and concepts that are there for you in the new hymnal.”

Due to copyright restrictions, *Christian Worship: Hymn Preview* is only available as a downloadable, viewable (but not printable) PDF at christianworship.com. The WELS Hymnal Project has also added several other hymn resources online, including a comprehensive list of the 683 hymns planned for inclusion in the new hymnal and a list of cut and retuned hymns from the 1993 hymnal and 2008 supplement. Several articles explain more details behind the creation of a new hymnal. Read more about these new additions.

Christie prays that the preview will be a tool to help leaders make a decision about the new hymnal but also that “it gives a wide swath of members a new appreciation for the treasures we have in hymnody.”

He continues, “Spend time experiencing it. See what wonderful things are there. Work with it. Read it. Listen to it. Pray its texts.”

Learn more about *Christian Worship: Hymnal* at christianworship.com.

Did you know...

WELS has a Facebook page?
facebook.com/welslutherans

WELS has Instagram?
instagram.com/welslutherans

WELS has Twitter?
twitter.com/welstweets

Forward in Christ magazine has a Facebook page?
facebook.com/forwardinchristmagazine

Forward in Christ magazine has Instagram?
instagram.com/forward_in_christ_magazine/



2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 Ladies Aid @ 1:00 p.m. Play & Pray 3:00 p.m.	2 Advent Service 4:30 p.m. Choir Practice 6:30p.m.	3 Food Pantry 1:00-3:00 p.m.	4 Parade 6:00-8:00 p.m.	5
6 Worship @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	7 Bible Study 5:00 p.m. No Monday Night Service	8 Play & Pray 3:00 p.m. Co-ord. Council Meeting 6:30 p.m.	9 Advent Service @ 4:30 p.m. Choir Practice 6:30 p.m.	10 Food Pantry 1:00-3:00 p.m.	11	12
13 Worship w/communion @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	14 Bible Study 5:00 p.m. No Monday Night Service	15 Play & Pray 3:00 p.m.	16 Advent Service @ 4:30 p.m. Choir Practice 6:30 p.m.	17 Food Pantry 1:00-3:00 p.m.	18	19
20 Worship @ 9:00 a.m. Voters Mtg. @ 10:15 a.m.	21 Bible Study 5:00 p.m. No Monday Night Service	22 Play & Pray 3:00 p.m.	23 No Advent Service	24 Food Pantry Closed Christmas Eve Service 6:30 p.m.	25 Christmas Day Worship Service 9:00 a.m.	26
27 Worship w/communion @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	28 Bible Study 5:00 p.m. No Monday Night Service	29 Play & Pray 3:00 p.m.	30	31 New Years Eve Service w/Comm. 6:30 p.m.		