



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

MESSENGER

February 2021

Special Dates in February

Co-or. Council Mtg.

9th @ 6:30 p.m.

Comm. Mtg.

16th @ 1:00 p.m.

Adult Bible Study

Mon. 5:00 p.m.

Pray & Play

Bible Study

Tuesdays
3:00 p.m.

Food Pantry

Thursdays
Feb. 4th & 25th
1:00—3:00 p.m.

Worship service times.
Sunday 9 & 10:30 a.m.
Monday 6:30 p.m.

LOVE

Our God is...Love

“How much do you love me?” Brenda asked her two-year-old son. Jonah held out his hands about a foot apart and said, “I love you this much.”

Paul turned to Jonah’s twin sister and asked her, “Hannah, how much do you love me?” Hannah extended her hands as far apart as they would go. “I love you this much,” she said.

Four-year-old Kevin was watching closely. When Brenda and Paul asked him how much he loved them, they expected him to copy the actions of his younger brother and sister. Instead, he spread his arms out in front of him as wide as possible and then curled them down and behind his back until they met. Kevin said, “This is how much I love you, all the way around.”

Brenda and Paul looked at each other in amazement. Kevin understood that the greatest love is all-encompassing!

If your sweetheart asks you how much you love her on Valentine’s Day, you

probably should not just stretch out your arms. You probably shouldn’t even curl them behind your back, unless you have a gift hidden there!

Yet, it is in the outstretched arms of Jesus that we know the love God has for us—all of us.

Perhaps you have seen pictures of Jesus with his arms spread wide on the cross. “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

Valentine’s Day is a good day to express your love for the special people in your life. It is also a good time as Christians to remember that “We know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them” (1 John 4:16).

Join us at church to celebrate more of God’s love.

PARISH NEWS

Congregational Changes last month:

Added: 0

Baptism : 0

Released: 0

Transferred: 0 Called Home to Jesus: 0

Current Congregational Stats: communicants: 156 souls: 169



Fades or Endure Forever

⁶ A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. ⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

(Isaiah 40:6-8)

Will you fade? Or will you endure forever? Isaiah shares with us God’s desired answer and how we can reach his goal for us. He also shows us how we will never reach that end. It is God’s will that we endure forever, that we reap all the benefits of redemption and forgiveness that Jesus has earned for us.

In order to receive eternal life, our focus must never be on things that will fade away, that will come to an end. Such things cannot provide salvation. Notice the kinds of things God said will fade away. **“All people are like grass . . . [which] withers because the breath of the LORD blows on them.”** We cannot hope to reach heaven if we look to ourselves for salvation. Nothing we do will last because everything we do and everything we are is infected with sin. And sin brings only death.

But what if we are faithful? God addresses what it means to have saving faith . . . and what is not a saving faith. **“Their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field . . . [which] fall because the breath of the LORD blows on them.”** OUR faithfulness, like us, is going to fade away. This happens if our faith is not focused properly on Christ. There is any number of reasons this may be, but ultimately, the problem is that we tend to focus on what we can do for salvation.

We’ve obeyed God’s commands. We worship regularly. We’re nice people. But we are still sinners. **“Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.”** (James 2:10) We cannot hope to reach heaven with our self-absorbed faithfulness because we are imperfect. We have broken the whole law of God. If it were left to us, we would fade away.

But when our faith is rightly-focused, on Christ alone, we receive the fullness of the glory of God. This is based on his obedience, and he was perfect. The promises of God’s Word assure us of salvation in Christ. And unlike us and our failing efforts, **the Word of our God endures forever.** God’s Word never changes. It is living and active and will be no matter what happens in this world.

Praise God that he has exposed us to this saving Word, and through it, he has brought us to trust in his plan of salvation. Through it, our faith is focused on Christ, who does not fade, but endures forever. When we are in Christ, we receive this same blessing. May God keep us faithful and true unto eternity, strong in his Word. Amen

In Christian love,
Pastor Wolf B. Parsons

(Continued on page 3)

Announcements

Results of Councilmen Elections: The following men were elected to the specified positions at the Voters' Meeting in January 24th.

Vice President: Dr. Tom Henke

Treasurer: Mr. Don Frisque

Adult Discipleship: Dr. John Dahlie

Property: Mr. Patrick Zoeller

Job descriptions are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway.

Thank you to all who prayerfully considered a nomination.

Thank you also to the gentlemen who faithfully served the church as members of the Coordinating Council and have completed their recent terms of service.

Mr. Matthew Porter; Mr. Don Frisque; Mr. Les Schultz; Mr. Ed Blum

Pastor's Office Hours:

As you already know, Pastor can be reached almost immediately via his cell phone (which is printed in the member directory) when needed. But I've also decided to start holding set office hours twice a week in case you would prefer to find me face-to-face. Please note that these office hours may be subject to change without notice depending on certain obligations to my schedule. But for the most part, I should be available.

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 9:00am-11:00am

Camp Phillip Membership

Many years ago Divine Savior chose to be a "member church" supporting Camp Phillip in Wautoma, WI. To continue as active Camp Phillip members, congregations agreed to give their members an annual opportunity to provide financial support for the camp. Most churches do this with a yearly door offering.

Divine Savior will provide members an opportunity to support Camp Phillip with door collections being taken on the first two weekends in February (February 7,8 and 14).

What is Camp Phillip and what benefits does it offer to Divine Savior members?

Camp Phillip serves youth, teens, adults, and families and provides staff and facilities (cabins/campsites) as well as on- and off-site programs. Camp is held year-round. Announcements about coming events are shared with member congregations. A congregation's membership in Camp Phillip gives members of the congregation a 10% discount on all programs and fees at the camp.

A recent letter from Camp Phillip reported: "Even though this year we were at half capacity for Summer Camp, we had a wonderful Summer with no COVID-19 cases. The ministry continues to be one that God blesses and works through...for that we praise Jesus."

More information is available on the camp's website campphillip.com.

Thrivent Choice Dollars

People who do business with Thrivent will have the Choice Dollar program available to them again this year! Thrivent members have until March 31 to direct their monies from last year to eligible charities of their choice. They can do so by calling 800-847-4836 and following the prompts to get to an actual person to speak with.

Divine Savior is eligible to receive Thrivent Choice Dollars. However, members should be aware that when Thrivent deposits money directly into the Divine Savior checking account, they provide only the grand total of all members' dollars and a list of the participating members. Since Divine Savior members can choose to have their Choice Dollars used for various church purposes, it is necessary for them to provide the church treasurer with two pieces of

information. First, how much Choice money they are directing to Divine Savior; and second, what they want the money used for. People generally do this with a short note to the treasurer (Don Frisque).

Finally, please be aware that Thrivent Choice Dollars are actually donations from Thrivent to Divine Savior. Consequently, for tax purposes they cannot be used by the individuals as deductible charitable contributions. Thrivent members are given the opportunity to direct the dollars based on the volume and type of their business with Thrivent, but Thrivent, as a fraternal benefit organization, makes such charitable donations in lieu of paying corporate income taxes.

Kingdom Workers Acknowledges Donation

In acknowledgement of support from Divine Savior in 2020, Bill Meier, Kingdom Workers President & CEO, wrote, in part:

"We rely on gifts like yours to do our vital work all over the globe. With your support and the assistance of hundreds of Kingdom Workers volunteers, we're helping our neighbors in the United States, South America, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

"Whether our work involves helping the disabled, providing access to clean water and healthier sanitation, giving support to survivors of domestic violence, or mentoring teens from underprivileged backgrounds and teaching them basic construction skills, it all has impact and influence.

"And regardless of what we are doing or where, our volunteers are always sharing the good news of salvation through Jesus--most vital of all!

"Through your donation, you're helping us deliver on all three aspects of our mission--meeting Christian welfare needs, boldly proclaiming the Gospel of Christ Jesus, and cultivating meaningful local relationships and volunteers.

"Thank you for being a vital partner in our work."

By using special offering envelopes, Divine Savior members donated \$577 to Kingdom Workers in 2020.

(DRF)

Holy Scripture Lutheran Church Receives Endowment Fund Grant

Holy Scripture Lutheran Church, Midland, MI, the victim of catastrophic flooding in May 2020, will receive a \$1,000 Divine Savior Endowment Fund grant following voters' approval of the use of Endowment Fund monies at the Annual Meeting on January 24.

Articles in the July and November issues of the *MESSENGER* provided more details about the disaster that was not covered by flood insurance. Some congregations helped by providing volunteers to assist with cleanup and restoration work; others donated supplies; and still others gave much needed financial assistance.

When developing the 2021 Budget, members of the Divine Savior Coordinating Council considered how to help Holy Scripture, and suggested that an Endowment Fund grant might be the way to go. As a result, a Divine Savior member wrote a grant request for \$1,000 that the Endowment Fund Committee agreed to fund fully.

Even though Holy Scripture Lutheran Church is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) and is hundreds of miles away from Shawano, WI, there is a connection with Divine Savior. Pastor Paul Schneider had served for a short time as a vacancy pastor at Divine Savior in the mid 1970s while he was pastor at St. Martin's, Belle Plaine. At least one of the Schneiders' children had been a student in the Divine Savior Elementary School. Some Divine Savior members might still remember Pastor Schneider, his wife Barbara, and their family.

The following message currently appears on Holy Scripture's website: "We at Holy Scripture greatly appreciate the prayers, good wishes, volunteer hours, and financial support which have poured in from around the country."

Members of Divine Savior who might want to give financial assistance in addition to the Endowment Fund grant can do so by mailing donations to Holy Scripture Lutheran Church, 4525 W. Main St., Midland, MI 48640, or by using the "Donate" button on their website: holyscriptureelsmidland.com

COVID Closures Rethought

Following recent cancellations of several worship services out of caution about spreading the COVID virus, the Church Coordinating Council at its January meeting discussed possible options to consider before cancelling services.

Previously, if a person had been present for any worship service and later tested positive, other worshippers could have been infected. As a result, all of the next week's services were cancelled to give time for anyone who might have become infected to develop symptoms and not attend a service the following week thus unknowingly being contagious and spreading the virus.

The new option encourages and allows the pastor and congregation president to discuss details of each instance before deciding whether to cancel any services. For example, if an infected person had been present at a Monday night service, all members would still be contacted using the calling tree and email (where available) and notified of when exposure had been possible. Each member would then be able to make an informed decision about attending a worship service the next week. Those attending the same service as the infected person might decide to stay home the following week--a type of self-quarantine; but services would not necessarily be cancelled.

Voters Consider Surplus Donations

During 2019 and 2020, members' contributions into the Unified account exceeded expenses by several thousand dollars. In fact, the combined total for both years was \$31,436.17. The question is: What should be done with this money?

The voting members present at the Annual Meeting on January 24 considered the question and adopted a resolution putting the surplus donations into a non-budget, restricted funds account titled: "Cash Carryover - Unified Balance." In addition, the resolution directed the Coordinating Council to bring recommendations on how to use the money to the Semi-Annual Meeting in July.

(DRF)

Selections from WELS TOGETHER

MLC Gifts (continued)

MLC is thankful for the gifts received from many individuals, congregations, and schools throughout the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. MLC is also thankful for the support it has received from the New Ulm community. Those gifts provided a generous financial foundation for facilities, and now, God has moved the heart of two very generous donors to provide a transformational gift to the athletic center that will allow construction to commence.

The athletic center, named the Betty Kohn Fieldhouse, will be located at the MLC Athletic Field Complex west of the main campus, near the soccer and baseball fields. This 36,000-square-foot indoor turf facility will feature large practice areas, baseball/softball batting cages, golf simulators, and locker rooms. In April, the MLC campus family will celebrate the groundbreaking of the fieldhouse, with student use anticipated by the beginning of 2022.

MLC President Rich Gurgel commented on this milestone of the Equipping Christian Witnesses campaign: "We are thankful to God for the generosity of so many people. The Betty Kohn Fieldhouse will serve our student body well. It is also a significant beginning to our long-range plans for making our campus even more attractive to prospective students. And we look forward to exploring how the fieldhouse can serve the recreation needs of the New Ulm community as well."

(Note: This article was written by WELS President Mark Schroeder for the Jan. 13 issue of *TOGETHER*.)

Encouraging Financial News

We have great news to celebrate. Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) submitted by congregations to the synod in December totaled \$3.45 million, which was an increase from the previous December of 1.5%, or \$50,328. For the entire year of 2020, CMO totaled \$21.7 million, an increase of 2.3% (\$498,000) from the prior year and \$633,000 higher than the 2% increase that was projected. The 2021 CMO totals were the highest in history, eclipsing the previous high in 2008.

This blessing is especially amazing because it took place in a year when congregational worship was severely disrupted and the economy significantly

impacted by COVID-19. Our thanks to God for his gracious providence and to the faithful way, motivated by the gospel, in which congregations and their members did not let a crisis get in the way of their support for the mission and ministry of our synod.

The synod's financial situation is in very good shape, thanks to the generous gifts of God's people and to the reduction in expenditures that resulted from less travel and fewer meetings. We pray that we will see similar blessings in the new year. And we continue to sing with the psalmist, "Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness" (Psalm 115:1).

(Note: This article was written by WELS President Mark Schroeder for the Jan. 19 issue of *TOGETHER*.)

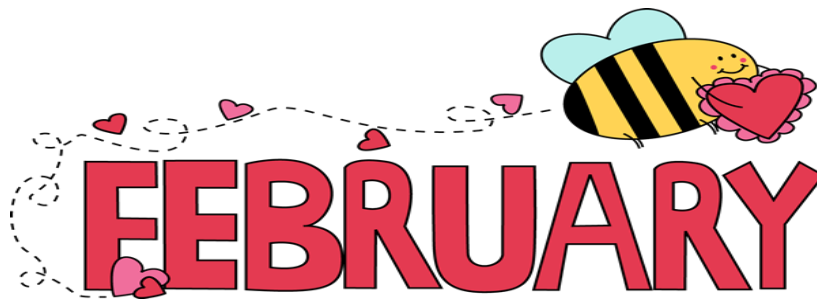
(Editor's note: Divine Savior's 2020 CMO pledge was \$22,000, and we remitted \$23,283, which was 5.8% above the pledged amount.)

Mission Congregations Give Aid in Pandemic

Christian Aid and Relief and WELS Home Missions have teamed up to offer more than \$160,000 in pandemic relief matching grants to 24 mission congregations that are offering aid to those in their communities who are struggling. Grants were allocated in January.

"Our mission is to relieve suffering, to reach out to those who have been hit hard by something and help them through it, while we reflect the love of Jesus and gain opportunities to share the good news of Jesus as their Savior," says Rev. Daniel Sims, director of WELS Christian Aid and Relief. "It's easy to look at the pandemic as a problem—and it is—but it's also a tremendous opportunity to do exactly what our mission is set to do."

These home missions were creative with their ideas, offering plans to provide food and supplies to families in need and counseling and support groups for those struggling with their mental health. Many are partnering with other community organizations, working closely with local homeless shelters and schools in their area.



2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Monday Eve. Worship @ 6:30 p.m.	2 Pray & Play Bible Study @ 3:00 p.m.	3 Choir Practice 6:30 p.m.	4 Food Pantry 1:00-3:00 p.m.	5	6
7 Worship @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	8 Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Monday Eve. Worship @ 6:30 p.m.	9 Pray & Play Bible Study @ 3:00 p.m. Co-ord. Council Mtg. @ 6:30 p.m.	10 Choir Practice 6:30 p.m.	11	12	13
14 Worship @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 w/Communion	15 Bible Study 5:00 p.m. No Monday Service Choir 6:30	16 Communication Meeting 1:00 Pray & Play Bible Study @ 3:00 p.m.	17 Ash Wednesday Service 4:30 p.m.	18	19	20
21 Worship @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	22 Bible Study 5:00 p.m. No Monday Service Choir 6:30	23 Pray & Play Bible Study @ 3:00 p.m.	24 Lent Service 4:30 p.m.	25 Food Pantry 1:00-3:00 p.m.	26	27
28 Worship @ 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 w/Communion						