

Good News

February 2019



**Newsletter of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour
420 North Progress Avenue
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is a little early to think about gardening. But I wanted to share a story I read in a book by Leonard Sweet called *So Beautiful—Divine Design for Life and the Church*. The story goes like this:

On a spring day, a weekend gardener showed an out-of-town visitor the packets of seed he had received through the mail. The rainbow-colored packages promised huge, juicy, tasty vegetables of every kind.

“This will be my best garden ever,” boasted the backyard farmer.

Late that summer the same out-of-town friend dropped by for another visit. “How is your garden doing?” he asked.

“I’m sorry to day it hasn’t done very well,” the gardener replied.

“That’s a shame,” sympathized the visitor. “What’s the problem? Bad soil? Pests? Dry weather?”

The gardener shook his head.

“Then maybe your seed was the problem,” the visitor suggested.

“Yeah, I guess the seed was the problem,” the gardener admitted. “You see, I never got around to planting any of it.”

Leonard Sweet concludes this story by noting that the hardest part of farming is getting seed into the ground.

Furthermore, it is true that we can’t expect to reap a harvest if we never plant the seeds. This is not to say that a harvest will inevitably come. God is the one that produces the harvest. But we do have to plant the seeds.

Of course, this gardening analogy is used to speak of the mission of the church. How can we hope for the church to grow in members, in faith, in its mission, if we never plant the seeds for such growth?

What does planting seeds look like? It means telling people about what our faith means to us. It means telling people why we are members of Our Saviour Lutheran. It means telling the story of God at work in us. It means embodying that story as we love and serve our neighbors. Are we planting seeds of the gospel?

Furthermore, as a church community we need to be planting seeds. We need to be developing partnerships with other groups, whether it is with the local school, or the local hospital, or the local service organization. We need to be broadening our footprint in the world. Are we planting seeds of the gospel?

Furthermore, we need to be planting seeds in ourselves. We need to be partaking of Bible study. We need to be attending worship. We need to be taking time to pray. We need to offer ourselves whereby we can learn and grow into the people God would have us be.

Leonard Sweet makes the point that we as people can learn a lot by growing a garden. That is true. We learn patience. We learn trust that our seeds will grow into a harvest. We learn wonder when we see the earth produce from our labor. The church is like this. There is much to be learned by our planting, but we have to be diligent in sowing the seeds.

As we weather this winter season, many of us have dreams of when we can get back into our gardens. God, too, has his dreams of His people, you and me, tending to the planting of the gospel. The good news we are told is that the harvest is plentiful...but the laborers are few. Let us serve the Lord of the harvest for the sake of his kingdom.

In Christ, Pastor Joel Petruschke



The Lessons for January 2019

February 3 — Epiphany 4

Jeremiah 1:4-10
Psalm 71:1-6
1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Luke 4:21-30

February 10 — Epiphany 5

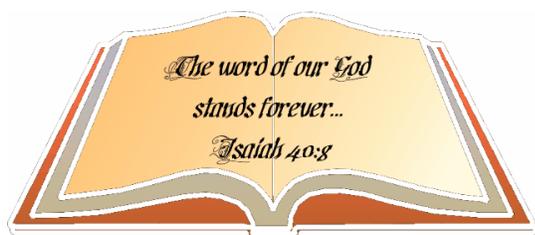
Isaiah 6:1-13
Psalm 138
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Luke 5:1-11

February 17 — Epiphany 6

Jeremiah 17:5-10
Psalm 1
1 Corinthians 15:12-20
Luke 6:17-26

February 24 — Epiphany 7

Genesis 43:3-11, 15
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50
Luke 6:27-38



Our Annual "Souper" Bowl

The youth group will once again be hosting our annual "Souper" Bowl after our 2nd worship service on Sunday, February 3rd.

Soup, bread, drinks, and dessert will be provided. This is an all-you-can eat event and there will be a basket for your free-will donation.

Thank you, Our Saviour Youth Group



Our Deepest Sympathies

We extend our deepest sympathies to Irene Nanov & her family. Our brother in Christ, Nano, passed away on January 29th. The funeral will be held here, at Our Saviour, on Saturday, February 9th starting at 11 am. Visitation will be from 10-11 am.



Parish Staff

Joel D. Petruschke, pastor
Margaret Quintanar, director of music
Barbara Johnson, administrative assistant

Good News is a monthly publication of **The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour**, 420 North Progress Avenue, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109, 717-545-9992, ossec@comcast.net. **Deadline** for submission is the third Monday prior to publication month.

If you do not have email or internet access, your addressed copy of *Good News* will be available in your church mailbox the first weekend of each month.

About Worship

Ever so often, a member of the congregation will bring me a bulletin from another church where that member had attended, perhaps because they were on vacation, or because there was a special occasion in the life of their family (a baptism, a confirmation, a funeral). I like to see these bulletins. I am always interested in seeing how other churches do things. And, I am always glad to know that even if our members may be absent from our congregation that they are still worshipping somewhere.

Churches do worship differently, as we know. Martin Luther said that worship happens wherever the Word of God is preached and where the sacraments are administered. This is why the Lutheran Church calls itself a "Word and Sacrament" church. Everything else is adiaphora. That word means that the other aspects of worship (music, the prayers, etc.) may vary in their presentation. Just because a church does things a little differently than we do does not mean that they are wrong or that we are wrong. As the saying goes, "Different strokes for different folks."

What is important is that we are praising God's holy name. What is important is that we are receiving God's grace through the means of grace (the preach Word and the holy sacraments). What is important is that we gather as God's people.

Are there wrong ways to do church? Can we do church by watching a televised service in our living room? Can we do church without gathering with other Christians? Can we do church if we don't partake of holy communion? That is difficult to answer. I would never want to say that God limits God's presence in only certain places, i.e. in a church building on a Sunday morning. I would not want to go so far as to say what God can and cannot do.

But as Lutherans, we believe that God promises to meet us in that gathering of his faithful people around Word and Sacrament. In short, we know that God promises to show up in worship on Sunday mornings. Jesus says, "Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them." In like manner, Jesus says that he is present in the communion meal and in the waters of baptism. So, we know God meets us at 420 North Progress Avenue at 8:30am and 10:45am. We have a date with Jesus!

And so, wouldn't we want to be there to fellowship with God and with God's people? We could even say very succinctly that "worship is where we meet God and where God promises to meet us." That is mind-boggling, is it not? That the God of the cosmos, maker of heaven and earth, deigns to meet us in a building at a given hour. That is wonderful, amazing, joyous good news.

You and I have a date with Jesus each and every Sunday. Thanks be to God.

Thank You

"On behalf of the Ranck family, thank you so much for your prayers, support, and comfort for my husband and son over the past several months. Both are doing well at this time. Peace, Carol Ranck

Thank
You

The Youth Group and The Social Ministry Committee would like to thank our members for the generous support of the Salvation Army Giving Tree. We collected and delivered 30 gifts to help those in need and make their holiday better. Thanks again to everyone in our caring congregation.

Thank you for all your donations to my Christmas food and clothing drive for the Bethesda Mission! The drive was a tremendous success. We were able to collect and donate 304 lbs. of food along with 70 lbs. of clothing in only 1 weeks time! What an amazing effort from the congregation! Thank you to everyone that contributed. The Bethesda Mission was very grateful for these much needed items. Maddy Schreffler

A Word on Stewardship

February is American Heart Month. It is a time when we focus on the health of our hearts. Unfortunately, we don't do a very good job of taking care of our hearts. The American Heart Association tells us that "heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. Every year, 1 in 4 deaths are caused by heart disease." Eating right and exercising go a long way to help keep our hearts healthy.

As we think about the health of our hearts in this month of February (and really throughout the whole year), I would remind us of the spiritual side of a healthy heart. In the Bible, various passages refer to one's heart. Consider the following: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10); "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21); and "Even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart" (Joel 2:12).

It is strange, but we speak of our heart as the seat of our emotions. After all, the heart is but a muscle that pumps blood through our bodies. It doesn't think or feel. But because our heart beats faster as a result of certain feelings we experience, we humans have associated the heart with our emotions. And so, we speak of tending to our hearts with respect to our relationship with God.

Now, I have no idea if our relationship with God has a bearing on the physical health and well-being of our hearts. I don't know. But God tells us that the spiritual side of a healthy heart has a great bearing on our relationship with God and with one another.

What does the spiritual side of a healthy heart look like? It looks like the "confession of sin," that is, admitting our faults and shortcomings. It looks like "repentance," that is, changing our unhealthy, sinful habits. It looks like "thanksgiving," that is, being grateful for the blessings of God. It looks like "generosity," that is, sharing our blessings with others. Heart health, at least from a faith perspective, means exercising our hearts in these ways.

So, as we think about American Heart Month, let us consider how we are caring for the spiritual side of our hearts. And may we remember what St. Augustine once wrote, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in God." I would say, "Our hearts are spiritually unwell, until they find their health in God."

Eggs Making Will Begin!

We will begin making eggs on Wednesday, February 6th. The forms to sign-up for our 'Sweet Teams' are on the table in the Narthex. **More help would be appreciated.** There will be four 'Sweet Teams' with 10-12 persons needed per team. The teams make eggs Sundays after the 2nd service, Monday mornings, Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings. So come and join our 'Sweet Teams' and help make our Easter Egg project for 2019 a rousing success. Again this year, we will be providing written information about our program to anyone interested in selling eggs. As much as we need help in making the eggs we also need help in **selling the eggs!** Last year our profit was down because of leftover eggs that weren't sold, so please help sell the eggs also. Thank you, Julie Drake, Chair Bunny.



Attention: Easter Egg Project 2019

In the last few months it was noted that we have some important issues to overcome due to health issues with Connie & Julie, who won't be helping this year. With much discussion we will not be making Butter Cream Eggs. Our Monday team will be making Peanut Butter. Jeanette's team will form Coconut Eggs, others will dip & wrap them. The Saturday team will be making Peanut Butter eggs. With guidance from Pastor Joel, we will do our best. Please keep our egg project in your prayers. Connie (chair) & Julie (co-chair).

Dear Padre,

How should we respond to some who questions the historicity of the Bible? How do speak to a person who questions whether the events recorded in the Bible actually happened?



Signed, In a Quandary

Dear "In a Quandary,"

As Christian people, we confess that God acts in history. Our very creeds mention an historical person (Pontius Pilate) for that very reason, to give an historical underpinning to the events surrounding Jesus. The problem is that we live in a post-Enlightenment era, where divine events (like the virgin birth, like the resurrection) create skepticism in the human mind. So your question is an important one. How do we speak of the actions of God in history without sounding like we are oblivious to natural laws that say otherwise?

I am reminded that God acts in mysterious and miraculous ways all the time. The Bible talks about Jesus changing water into wine. Well, even more miraculous is the fact that God can create grape juice which is used to produce wine...God is able to produce grape juice from rain water. How does that happen? And the Bible speaks of Jesus being born of Mary and the Holy Spirit. Even more miraculous is that God creates humans beings all the time with diverse personalities, with remarkable talents, with powerful imaginations...God does all that from the union of two cells. How does that happen?

We can talk about the numerous miracles in Scriptures, the so-called specific miracles. We can talk about God acting in history in specific events. But, the truth is, God is acting all the time in history. God is creating miracles all the time. These are the general miracles. It is just that we create language (the words of empirical science) to describe it for our human benefit, so that we can create some ordered understanding to what we see. But make no mistake about it, what we see in the specific is being done all the time in the general. In short, what we call the "mundane" (the everyday, the ordinary) is indeed the extraordinary.

I hope this helps. Thanks for your question.

Signed, Padre

Thank You

On behalf of the Manna Food Pantry Board, we want to take the opportunity to thank you for the gift of \$105.10, as we continue to serve the hungry in our area. We really appreciate all the support from people such as yourself. There is a great need out there, and Manna wouldn't be able to help the number of folks we help each month if it weren't for kind hearted friends like you. Sincerely, Sarah Kempf, Administrator of Manna Food Pantry



- Terry Gervasio 2/5
- Merlin Beachell 2/8
- Jonah Petruschke 2/10
- Renee Gibson 2/11
- Michael Balas 2/13
- Pastor Joel 2/29



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

					1	2 2-5 pm - private event
3 - Epiphany 4 8:30 am - Word & Sacrament 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:45 am - Word & Sacrament Annual Souper™ Bowl	4 6:30 pm - Welcome Committee	5 1 pm - Bible Study	6 4 pm - Egg Making begins 7 pm - Choir	7 6 pm - Chimes Choir	8	9 8 am - Egg Making
10 - Epiphany 5 8:30 am - Word & Sacrament 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:45 am - Word & Sacrament Egg Making	11 8 am - Egg Making	12	13 6:30 pm - Council 7 pm - Choir	14 <i>Happy Valentine's Day</i> 6 pm - Chimes Choir	15	16 8 am - Egg Making
17 - Epiphany 6 8:30 am - Word & Sacrament 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:45 am - Word & Sacrament Egg Making newsletter deadline	18 8 am - Egg Making	19	20 7 pm - Choir	21 6 pm - Chimes Choir	22	23 8 am - Egg Making 1-4 pm - private event
24 - Epiphany 7 8:30 am - Word & Sacrament 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:45 am - Word & Sacrament Egg Making	25 8 am - Egg Making	26 1 pm - Bible Study	27 7 pm - Choir	28 6 pm - Chimes Choir		

The Evangelical Lutheran
CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR
420 North Progress Avenue
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109

Phone: 717-545-9992
Email: ossec@comcast.net
Web Site: www.oslutheranharrisburg.org



Mission Statement

Our Saviour Lutheran Church, a caring congregation dedicated to the word of Christ, welcomes all people to worship and to grow with us as we share His love and salvation with our neighbors, our children and ourselves.

Worship

8:30 am & 10:45 am
Holy Eucharist is celebrated
every Sunday.
Sunday School 9:30 am

Church Office

9:00 am -12:00 pm Monday through Friday

Phone: 717-545-9992
Email: ossec@comcast.net
Web Site: www.oslutheranharrisburg.org



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.