

Good News

February 2020



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

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As I write this newsletter article, the news of Kobe Bryant's death is still fresh in my mind. Learning of the tragic helicopter crash that not only took his life but the life of his 13 year old daughter, as well as seven others is hard to fathom. It is hard to imagine the inexpressible grief Kobe Bryant's family and those other families are experiencing. It is enough to shake one's faith.

And we have heard many say how important it is for us to treasure our loved ones each and every day. And we have heard many say just how fragile life is. Yes, it is true that life is short, sometimes all too short. And yes, it is true that life is tenuous; it can end just like that. But, we all tend to live life to a certain degree as if there is always tomorrow. We tend to live life to a degree as if we are invincible. And so I think reality hits us hard when a news story like this breaks. It hits us hard when we realize that we are all mortal after all.

Even Kobe Bryant whom we have made into something of a god, and who was just 41, is mortal. Even Kobe Bryant who reached global stardom, and who was just starting his second act in life after basketball retirement, is mortal. Even Kobe Bryant who had infinite wealth, and who was a parent to four daughters, the youngest still less than a year old, is mortal. Even Kobe Bryant who should have had so much of his life ahead of him, even Kobe Bryant is mortal after all. Death does not discriminate, based on your achievements, on your age, on your bank account, on your fame, or on your family life. No, death does not discriminate.

And I wonder, if maybe our society does us a bit of a disservice when we elevate any person to such heights, as we do for sports figures, actors and actresses, and every other famous person who comes along. Society probably does us no favors making people into such icons, because we think that there are people "larger than life" and even "larger than death." But, then reality strikes and we are hit hard with "mortality".

And so we need some perspective. And that perspective is this. In the history of the world, only one has been "larger than death," and that one is Christ Jesus. And the perspective Christ gives us is that because of Christ's death and resurrection, there is a most certain hope of more than just our short, tenuous existence here on earth. Now that doesn't mean we should stop feeling for people we have lost, and it doesn't mean that we should devalue our existence here on earth. But the knowledge of Christ's death and resurrection gives us perspective so that we see this existence on earth as what it truly is, just a blip really on a much larger timeframe, a timeframe that has its reality in Christ Jesus.

Now some will say that we should live life as if there is no tomorrow, because who knows if there will be. But I like to say, we should live life now, each and every day, such that heaven is not a surprise. Because the truth is, sisters and brothers in Christ, because we are baptized, there is a "tomorrow" and that "tomorrow," that ETERNITY, has already begun. Yes, it still hurts when we lose someone we loved, that is true. Yet, hope in the midst of grief is what Christ gives us. Hope is that which tempers loss. I pray that the families of those who lost loved ones in that helicopter crash, and everyone who has experienced any grief in life, can cling to hope. Yes, life is short, but Christ is eternal. Yes, life is tenuous, but hope is certain. Thanks be to God.

In Christ, *Pastor Joel Petruschke*

The Lessons for February 2020

February 2 - Presentation of Our Lord

Malachi 3:1-4
Psalm 84
Hebrews 2:14-18
Luke 2:22-40

February 9 - Epiphany 5

Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 112:1-10
1 Corinthians 2:1-16
Matthew 5:13-20

February 16 - Epiphany 6

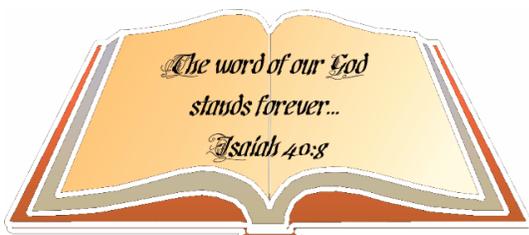
Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Psalm 119:1-8
1 Corinthians 3:1-9
Matthew 5:21-37

February 23 - Transfiguration of Our Lord

Exodus 24:12-18
Psalm 2
2 Peter 1:16-21
Matthew 17:1-9

February 26 - Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21



Our Annual "Souper" Bowl Sunday

The Youth will be holding their annual "Souper" Bowl this Sunday, February 2nd, following our second worship service. Please join us & we thank you for supporting this event and the youth!



Spiritual Stitches Ministry

A blessing of the Spiritual Stitches Ministry items will be held at both the 8:30 am and 10:45 am services February 9th. These items will then become part of the display in the Narthex. They are available **FREE** to you or for you to offer to others who may be suffering with life's challenges.



Check Out What's Happening at Our Saviour!

We now have a **master calendar** of all the happenings here at Our Saviour. It is on the Narthex bulletin board closest to the church office. Check it out to see all of the upcoming events!



Parish Staff

Joel D. Petruschke, pastor
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

This year, February 2nd is Super Bowl Sunday. It is also Groundhog's Day. And, I am sure that there will be one or two jokes during the Super Bowl about that very fact. Maybe a sports commentator will say something witty like if one team gets behind the other, "Looks like they (the losing team) have dug a hole for themselves. They will have to make like the groundhog and climb out." Who knows? And maybe one or two advertising companies will use Groundhog's Day in their commercials. It would be great if Bill Murray makes an appearance, where someone asks him, "Do you believe in déjà vu?" And, without missing a beat, he responds just like in the movie, "Didn't you just ask me that?"

But, besides it being Super Bowl Sunday and Groundhog's Day, February 2nd is special in the life of the Church for two reasons. First, some churches celebrate Candlemas on February 2nd. What is Candlemas? It is the day set aside to bless all the candles to be used in worship during the upcoming year. Somehow Candlemas and Groundhog's Day are related, because they both deal with light and shadow.

Second, the Church observes the festival of the Presentation of Our Lord on February 2nd. What is the Presentation of Our Lord? What is this festival about? It stems from God's command in Exodus 13:2 and in Numbers 18:15, where God speaks of the firstborn child being consecrated to the Lord. In ancient times, when presenting their child at the temple, the parents also made an offering for sacrifice. So, the festival is meant to give thanks to God for the gift of childbearing, much in the same way that the ancients brought the first fruits of the land as an offering to God to give thanks for the gift of the harvest.

Why is February 2nd the day of the festival? February 2nd is the 40th day after Christmas. And it is on this day, after the time of "purification" following childbirth, that God commands parents to present their male child. This is spelled out in Leviticus 12:1-8.

So Joseph and Mary were keeping with the Jewish law when they presented baby Jesus at the temple on the 40th day after his birth, the 40th day falling on our calendar as February 2nd. And Joseph and Mary offer two turtledoves as their thank offering to God. The two turtledoves suggests that Joseph and Mary were of modest means, as two turtledoves were required if a family could not afford a sheep.

So this is what February 2nd is all about this year: the Super Bowl, Ground Hog's Day, Candlemas, and the Presentation of Our Lord. It is unique that the Super Bowl falls on February 2nd this year. And it is unique that the Presentation of Our Lord then falls on a Sunday, even though it is always the 40th day after Christmas and thus always on February 2nd.

It's Time to Think About Making Eggs!

Willing to help this year? Please see Julie, call her (717-658-7618) or email her at

juliedrake2@comcast.net. We need volunteers to help make this a successful egg making year!

We need boxes to pack our egg orders in. If you have any unused boxes at home please consider bringing them in to the church. They can be placed in the fellowship hall. Thank you.



Classified Ad: Help Wanted!

College education not necessary. Applicant may choose hours and days of employment. Pay scale is \$0.00 up to \$0.00. Apply in the Narthex by signing-up on the appropriate form. Everyone is welcome!

Manager: Julie Drake, Chair Bunny.

A Word on Stewardship

“Usefulness” means “to be useful” or “to be of service.” For many, they measure the value of their possessions according to this term “usefulness.” If something has lost its usefulness—say an old car that doesn’t run anymore or a book we haven’t read nor ever will read—then we tend to get rid of it. We measure “value” according to what benefit we find in being able to “use” something. Usefulness equates to value.

It is interesting that many people see themselves in this same way. Persons who are elderly and infirmed may get depressed, because they feel they can no longer contribute to society. In short, they feel that they are no longer “useful.” Persons who are unable to find employment for whatever reason also can become depressed, because they wonder, too, what their existence means when no one will hire them. It is almost as if society is ready to discard them, like persons discard “things” they no longer find useful.

But what about God? How does God look at humanity? In the Bible, after sin had entered the world, God seemed to have looked at human beings as less than “useful,” such that God decided to wipe humanity from the face of the earth with a flood. But after the flood, God decided never to flood the earth again. It seemed then that God saw humanity through different eyes, so much so that God would even send his Son to save humanity.

How does God view humanity? What “value” is there in human beings? It appears that God values human beings not for some “benefit” they give God, not because humans are somehow “useful” to God. No, God values humanity because human beings are God’s good creation. John 3:16 says, “God so loved the world (including humans) that he gave his only begotten Son, so that all those who believe in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” God gives us “value” because we are loved by God. I don’t know if we would have “value” otherwise. But because God loves us, we are valuable. Our usefulness, our ability to be of service is not paramount in God’s eyes. No, God just loves us and so we are “valuable.”

And so, I think this says a lot about how we should view others. If we truly believe that others are loved by God, then they should be valuable to us, in spite of whether or not society would view those persons as “useful.” It is unfortunate that persons gauge their “self-worth” on their contribution to society. But society seems to make that connection, where if you make yourself useful (i.e. if you work), then certain rewards are given to you, like money, identity, and security. But if one is unemployed or underemployed, those rewards are not as forthcoming. And this reality has gone a long way to form our sense of how we view others.

God’s view of humanity is counter-cultural. God sees humanity differently from how society sees humanity. And all we can say to that is: “Thanks be to God.” Thanks be to God that God does not value us according to our usefulness. Yes, we might argue that we are useful, that we are contributing to society. But, our usefulness in society comes up short in relation to God. For what possibly could we contribute to God? How could we ever make the argument that we are useful to God? And yet, God loves us. And so, you and I are of great value. And stewardship in this life is to see others as valuable not because those others can contribute to society. We hope all can earn a living and utilize their abilities in service to others. But let us start seeing others as valuable, because God has seen all people as abundantly valuable through his love for all people in Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God.

Dear Padre,

I was told that if one commits suicide that one would not go to heaven, because that one would be taking away the life God had given. What about dying with dignity, where one can go to a certain country where they recognize assisted suicide? What happens if one doesn't want to suffer with a certain disease or illness, and decides to stop eating and drinking?



Signed, Church Member

Dear Church Member,

My personal opinion is that God is abundantly gracious and merciful and would not want to condemn any person even those who decide to end their life, for we are all God's good creation. If memory serves, the reason people have said an individual who commits suicide is condemned by God, is exactly as you said, "They are taking away (or rejecting) God's gift of life." In Matthew 12:31 it says these words, "...people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven." And this verse seems to be the "proof text" people turn to when they say God condemns people who commit suicide. But, there is much debate regarding what exactly is the meaning of this verse. Again, my feeling is that God is abundantly gracious and merciful and wants none of his children to be loss.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its predecessor church body produced a social message on this topic entitled "End of Life Decisions" and a social statement entitled "Death and Dying." It may be helpful to go to the elca.org and download these documents for further information, for these documents address the very questions you are asking.

I hope this helps. Thank you for your questions.

Signed, *Padre*

Thank You!

The Youth Group and Social Ministry Committee would like to thank everyone for items for our Advent Project for 2019. We collected items for HANNA's Pantry located at Susquehanna Township High School in Harrisburg. We had a very successful collection for the items. Once again our congregation showed how much they care for our community.



We collected the following items - 26 boxes of Macaroni and cheese, 21 boxes of pasta, 14 containers of spaghetti sauce, 12 boxes of tissues, 15 boxes of rice, 12 boxes of potatoes, 31 rolls of paper towels, 20 boxes of jello, 24 rolls of toilet paper, 17 jars of peanut butter, 12 bottles of cooking oil, 39 cans of vegetables, 10 tubes of toothpaste, 13 bars of soap, 14 cans of fruit, 25 boxes of cereal, 18 cans of beans, 10 packages of paper plates, 9 cans of sweet potatoes, 5 containers of jelly, 37 cans of soup, 29 cans of tuna, 16 cans of meat and 11 boxes of breakfast bars. The items will be weighed by the pantry and filled a pallet. Everything was picked up by the pantry on January 2, 2020.

We are so proud to be members of Our Saviour Lutheran Church!!!! Thank you again for your generous support of our projects!!!!

Council Minutes

Please Note: Council Minutes cannot be included in the newsletter until after Council has approved them. Here are the minutes from the meeting in December

**Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour
Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting
Wednesday, December 11, 2019**

Members Present: Pastor Joel Petruschke, President John Zimmerman, Secretary Jessica Burigana, Treasurer Jim Lubrecht, Brad Neil, Andrea Faber, Arno Miller, Marlee Zimmerman, Anneke Fleming

Members Absent: Vice-President Herb Logan and Kathy Sheetz

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm. Pastor lead the group in an Advent devotion.

Minutes: Arno made a motion to approve the November minutes. The motion was seconded by Andrea. Without objection, the motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Jim reviewed the Treasurer's report with the council. Jim feels we will break even this year. John made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by Arno. Without objection, the motion carried.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education - No report. Pastor reported that our Christian Ed committee has been reestablished to focus on the elementary/middle school ages. This committee consists of Jessica Logan, Jenna Neil, Marcia Schreffler, Tiffany Landis and Kathy Sheetz. They plan to formally meet as a committee in January. Currently two children are in this class.

Fundraising - No report. The Egg Committee will hold a meeting in early January to plan for the year.

Property - No report. Snow removal company to be contacted in preparation for the year. The shingles on the roof have been repaired. It was noted that we should buy Fantastic or some type of disinfectant for spot cleaning the church.

Welcome - No report. Directory update: The final changes have been made. Printing should begin soon. We are hoping to have the final copies for members by the end of the year or soon after the beginning of the new year.

Worship and Music - No report.

Child Protection Policy - No report. A few corrections and the policy should be ready for the Congregational meeting in January.

Social Ministry - Christmas caroling to take place this Friday (12/13) at Kindred Place and the Manor at Oakridge.

Stewardship - No report.

Pastor's Report - Report attached and made a part of the record. Pastor highlighted a few events.

A motion to approve all reports was made by Andrea. The motion was seconded by Brad. Without objection, the motion carried.

Old Business:

Leadership List - Will be reviewed at January's meeting.

Organist Search Update - No applicants yet. The search continues. We have a substitute organist scheduled for 12/22, but not 12/15. As of now we do not have anyone scheduled for the Christmas Eve services. Hope will continue to search for substitute organists for the new year.

Roomba Usage - Is the Roomba being used? If not, it should be programmed. We will check on this.

Facility Update - We are looking to increase the rent for the martial arts group to \$200 per month. Brad will verify this change with the group.

Jan. 12th there will be a Temple Talk to review the increased rental fee and the rules/regulations for renting the facility.

Remaining Items from Church Clean-Out: Cooler was donated to Nawakwa and the stereo system was sold for \$25. That money will be given to the church.

New Business:

HANNA Hope Garden - Has been rescheduled for the January meeting.

New Heaters - The Youth Room and Choir Room are in need of new heaters. We are looking for donations and sponsors to possibly cover the cost of the heaters.

2020 Budget - Jim provided the proposed budget for 2020 for council to review. With revisions, Andrea made a motion to approve the 2020 Budget. Anneke seconded the motion. Without objection, the motion carried.

Scholarship Program - Scholarship packet was provided to Council; however, considering the length of the meeting, we tabled reviewing and approving until our January meeting. All council members have the information and are encouraged to review in advance of our next meeting.

Proposed January Congregational Meeting Dates and Agenda -

January 26 (Snow Date 2/2/2020)

Approval of September and January Congregation meeting minutes

Constitution Approval (needs to be distributed to congregation by Dec. 26)

Synod Assembly Member Volunteers

Review of new policies:

Memorial Fund

CPP

Facility Use

Scholarship Update

Organist Search Update

Property Committee Structure

At 8:20pm the meeting was adjourned. A motion was made by Arno and seconded by Andrea. Without objection, the motion carried.

The next regular council meeting is to be held on January 8, 2020 at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Burigana (Secretary)

The Harrisburg Area Youth Initiative Fall 2019

The Harrisburg Area Youth Initiative (HAYI) got off to a great start earlier in the fall! The group has meetings centered around scripture with an emphasis on building relationships, service, and living out our Christian identities in everyday life. Meeting topics for the first half of the year included seeing God in the world, the importance of keeping good friends, and having trust in others.



We were also fortunate enough to help St Peter's congregation with their annual Christmas dinner. The youth served food and enjoyed fellowship with members of the church.

For those interested in attending, all are welcome! Meetings are the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of each month from 5:30-8:30pm. Contact Zach Hartman for more details. (717)839-1222



In-Betweeners Event

Ever enjoyed dinner prepared on a volcanic hot rock? If not join us and cross this one off your bucket list ***The Hot Rock Meal*** is a very unique and exciting new dining concept. Each diner cooks their own meat on a volcanic stone! The idea of cooking on rocks has been used for centuries by all different cultures. The evolution of this cooking process has been captured by Hot Rock to meet the needs of today's sophisticated diners in a world of imaginative food preparation. No oil or fat is required to be used. It is ideal for meat and vegetarian dishes. Hot Rock meals are quick, entertaining, healthy and sensationally delicious. Our first event together in 2020 will be Dinner at Flinchy's in Camp Hill on **Saturday, February 22 at 6pm**. Please see the sign up sheet in the Narthex or let Lisa Neil know (717-343-8870 or lbnjneil@gmail.com) that you will be joining us so we can make reservations. Deadline to sign up is **February 16th**. Looking forward to a great evening together! Bon Appétit



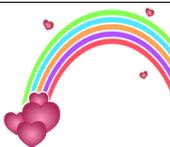


Aaliyah Armstrong	2/8
Merle Beachell	2/8
Jonah Petruschke	2/10
Renee Gibson	2/11
Mike Balas	2/13
Arryus Hanton	2/18
Dottie Koppenhaver	2/27
Pastor Joel	2/29

FEBRUARY



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

							1 8 am - Egg Making
2 - Presentation of Our Lord 8:30 am - Word & Sacrament 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:45 am - Word & Sacrament "Souper" Bowl Sunday 	3 9 am - Egg Making 6 pm - Praise Him Singers Rehearsal 6:30 pm - Welcome Committee	4 1:15 pm - Bible Study 5 pm - Martial Arts Class	5 8 am - Egg Making 1 pm - Egg Making 6 pm - Mutual Ministry Lions Club	6 5 pm - Martial Arts Class	7	8 8 am - Egg Making	
9 - Epiphany 5 8:30 am - Word & Sacrament 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:45 am - Word & Sacrament 1st Sunday Social 12-3 pm - Private Event	10 9 am - Egg Making 6 pm - Praise Him Singers Rehearsal	11 5 pm - Martial Arts Class	12 8 am - Egg Making 1 pm - Egg Making 6:30 pm - Council	13 5 pm - Martial Arts Class	14 <i>Happy Valentine's Day</i>	15 8 am - Egg Making 1-5 pm - Private Event	
16 - Epiphany 6 8:30 am - Word & Sacrament 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:45 am - Word & Sacrament newsletter deadline	17 9 am - Egg Making 6 pm - Praise Him Singers Rehearsal	18 1:15 pm - Bible Study 5 pm - Martial Arts Class	19 8 am - Egg Making 1 pm - Egg Making	20 5 pm - Martial Arts Class	21 Barb on vacation	22 8 am - Egg Making 6 pm - In-Betweeners' Dinner @Flinchy's	
23 - Transfiguration 8:30 am - Word & Sacrament 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:45 am - Word & Sacrament	24 9 am - Egg Making 6 pm - Praise Him Singers Rehearsal	25 5 pm - Martial Arts Class	26 8 am Egg Making 1 pm - Egg Making 7 pm - Worship <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	27 5 pm - Martial Arts Class 	28	29 8 am - Egg Making	

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