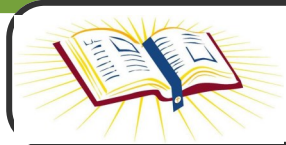


Good News

December 2023



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

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Do you know that song “Grown Up Christmas List”? It is a song about a list of Christmas wishes an adult might have. So the list includes things like the following:

No more lives torn apart
That wars would never start
That time would heal all hearts
That everyone would have a friend
That right would always win
And love would never end

I could get behind a Christmas wish list like that. But I have another Christmas wish for all of us, and that is this. That we would come to appreciate why we do what we do during this season of Advent and Christmas. I mean why do we put up stockings by the fireplace? Why do we hang lights all around our homes? Why do we bring a pine tree inside and decorate it? Why do we give gifts to one another?

So, allow me to answer these questions with the hope that in understanding why we do what we do at this time of year, it will help us appreciate the meaning of Christmas that much more.

First, the hanging of stockings. There is story/legend that a bishop named Nicolaus was walking by the window of a poor father who had three daughters, for whom the father could not provide dowries so that they could get married. And Nicolaus threw gold coins in through the window of their home, and the coins landed in the stockings that were hung by the fire to dry. The story then is meant to remind us to be generous to the poor as well.

Second, all the lights. The winter solstice, of course, is the darkest time of year. And to cope with all that darkness we resort to more and more illumination. But those lights are also to remind us that Jesus Christ is the light of the world. Jesus is the light no darkness can overcome. And we, as followers of Christ, are also little lights in the world. We are to help dispel the darkness of the world by sharing the light of Christ’s love with others.

Third, the pine tree. Why bring a pine tree into our homes? Trees are to remain outside. But the importance of pine trees for religious purposes goes back as far as the 600s B.C. and the pagan religion associated with the god Mithras. An evergreen tree appears to have been part of their worship practice during the winter solstice. It symbolized eternal life because a pine tree is always green (evergreen). And that same symbolism is carried over into Christianity. The evergreen tree is symbolic of Christ’s life in the midst of death, as represented in the green of the tree amidst a barren, hibernating landscape. This is also why we hang green wreaths and other greenery during the holidays.

Fourth, the gifts. The gifts we give and receive on Christmas are certainly to remind us of the gifts the wisemen brought with them to pay homage to Jesus. But the gifts also remind us that the greatest gift we have received is God’s Son who comes to be among us to show us God’s love for all Creation, such that Christ will die and rise again. So Christmas is connected to Easter. The manger is connected to the cross. And as followers of Jesus, we are called to give ourselves for the sake of others, too. Not that we die on the cross, but we do offer the sacrifice of our time, our talents, and our treasure.

So that is my Christmas wish. All that we do in this season, in terms of traditions, have a purpose and a meaning behind them. And when we understand that purpose and meaning better we come to appreciate the season of Advent and Christmas all the more.

Merry Christmas, *Pastor Joel Petruschke*

Lessons for December 2023

December 3 - Advent 1

Isaiah 64:1-9
 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
 1 Corinthians 1:39
 Mark 13:24-37

December 10 - Advent 2

Isaiah 40:1-11
 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
 2 Peter 3:8-15a
 Mark 1:1-8

December 17 - Advent 3

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
 Psalm 126
 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
 John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24 - Advent 4

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
 Luke 1:46b-55
 Romans 16:25-27
 Luke 1:26-38

December 25 - Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7
 Psalm 96
 Titus 2:11-14
 Luke 2:1-20

December 31 - Christmas 1

Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3
 Psalm 148
 Galatians 4:4-7
 Luke 2:22-40



Christmas Eve Worship

Please join us for worship on

Christmas Eve:

7:00pm - Family Service with Holy Communion



Thank You

"To my church family & friends,
 I was overwhelmed at all the Happy Birthday Wishes. You sure made the 102nd a special one.
 Thank you & bless you all.

Love,
 Ada Heberle"



Parish Staff

Rev. Dr. Joel D. Petruschke, pastor
 Barbara Johnson, administrative assistant
 Mitchell Sensenig, organist

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 Sunday of each 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

The worship schedule for this month is a bit interesting. Why do I say that? Because Christmas is on a Monday this year, which means Christmas Eve is on a Sunday, more specifically the Fourth Sunday of Advent. So this year, we will be having Sunday morning worship on December 24th at 9:00am, our regular time. And then, we will be having Christmas Eve service that same day at 7:00pm. If you are wondering how our worship schedule that day will jive with St. Stephen, well, they will have worship in the morning at 11:00am, their regular time. And then, they will have their Christmas Eve service that same day at 5:00pm. So, it will be a busy day but it will be fun.

Now with that said, please note that our morning service on December 24th will focus on the Fourth Sunday in Advent. So, you won't get a "Christmas" service on Sunday morning. The hope, however, is that you will attend worship both in the morning and in the evening. Also, please note, that you are welcome to attend Christmas Eve service at St. Stephen at 5:00pm, if you prefer an earlier service time that evening. St. Stephen would welcome you to join them, just as we are making our service time in the evening available to them, in case some of their members find the 7:00pm time more suitable.

I should also mention that December 31st (New Year's Eve) falls on a Sunday this year as well. And, I thought we would do something a little different on that day. We will have our regular worship time at 9:00am, but instead of doing a Christmas Lesson and Carols service, I thought we would do a Lessons and Carols Service for the whole year. In other words, we will "Sing Through the Year," by singing a hymn from each of the Church seasons: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost, accompanied appropriate scripture readings and prayers.

Also, please note, during this month, we are invited to attend Midweek Advent services either at Good Shepherd or St. Stephen. Both churches will hold their series of Midweek services on Wednesdays, December 6, 13, and 20. Good Shepherd will have their soup supper at 6:00pm followed by worship at 7:00pm. St. Stephen will have their soup supper at 6:30pm followed by worship at 7:00pm. Both churches will be using Holden Evening Prayer. My wife Kathy will be leading the services at Good Shepherd. I will be leading the services at St. Stephen.

So, this month promises to be filled with much worship and praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we welcome Him as the Christ child in Bethlehem.

Manna Food Pantry

Our "2nd Sunday" food collection is still ongoing. During this time of continuous rising food prices food pantries are seeing a greater demand of their services. If you would like to make a donation you may bring your items into the church & place them on the table in the Narthex at any time. There is a list of suggested items now on the table. If you would like to make a monetary donations, please mark your envelopes "Manna Food Pantry" and place it with your regular giving envelope.



Jesus Said, "Let the Little Children Come to Me."

We have Children's Sunday School on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month during the service. At each session the children complete a craft and enjoy a snack. **Classes for December will be held on December 3rd & 17th!!** Children will be excused for their lesson after the children's message. Please share our news with anyone you know who may be interested. We welcome every child to join us and learn!



A Word on Stewardship

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus this month, the typical greeting we share with one another is “Merry Christmas.” But I propose another greeting we might share, “Blessed Incarnation.” We often forget that December 25 not just marks the birth of Jesus but it also is the celebration of the “Word made flesh,” better known as the Incarnation.

And the Incarnation is an important event in our Christian lives. Yes, it is about God coming to be among us, that is, the Word becoming human and dwelling among us. But, it is also a reminder that words have power. In the New Testament, when Jesus says things and they happen like healing a person or calming a storm, it is because Jesus is the Word made flesh. His speech then has power. It is the same power that we see at the dawn of Creation, when God speaks the Cosmos into being. “Let there be light,” and there was light. “Let there be seas, and sky, and land,” and there was. That is the power of the Word doing God’s will, just like Jesus is the Word made flesh and so what he says comes to be.

Now, I was doing some research, and I could not find anywhere a day on the calendar year where we celebrate words. We have all sorts of days designated for all sorts of things: Waffle Day (March 25), and National Drive-In Movie Day (June 6), and my favorite, Lost Sock Memorial Day (May 9). But still, no Word Day. There is a WORD Day, but it is an acronym for World yOung Rheumatic Diseases Day. So the closest thing we have to an official Word Day is Christmas Day and the celebration of the Incarnation.

So why am I making such a big deal about all this? Because not only does the Word spoken by God and Jesus Christ have power to do what it says, but our words, too, have power. Words like “I love you,” have power. Words like, “I’m sorry,” and “I forgive you,” have power. Words like “May I help you,” and “May I pray for you,” have power. Words like “Thank you,” and “I appreciate you,” have power. And so, the Incarnation reminds us to be good steward of our words.

The Incarnation reminds us also that just as the Word became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, so, too, can the Word become flesh in us. Not that we become the Son of God. But we can embody the words we choose to en flesh. For, instance, we can choose to embody words like peace, hope, love, joy, generosity, and so forth. We can become living embodiments of those words if we so choose. Often times, however, we choose to embody other words like cynicism and indifference, or contempt and anger.

So again, I say, to you “Blessed Incarnation.” As Jesus came to embody the Word and dwelt among us, so then, I ask you, “What word or words will you choose to embody as you live out your daily life?”

Susquehanna Chorale to Perform Traditional Candlelight Christmas Concerts

The Susquehanna Chorale, a nationally acclaimed adult chamber ensemble of 40 auditioned singers, will present its *Candlelight Christmas* concert series on Dec. 15-17, under the direction of Linda L. Tedford.

The series begins on Friday, Dec. 15 at the Calvin and Janet High Center for Performing Arts, Messiah University, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 16 at Leffler Chapel, Elizabethtown College, 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 17, at Market Square Presbyterian Church in Harrisburg, 4 p.m.

This year’s *Candlelight Christmas* concerts will include Pachelbel’s *Magnificat*, *Gloria* by Randol Alan Bass, the music of Bob Chilcott, John Rutter, Mack Wilberg, and Stephen Paulus, as well as delightful settings of traditional carols including *Jingle Bells*. A pre-concert recital by Susquehanna Chorale accompanist, Daniel L. Dorthy will be presented 15 minutes prior to each performance.

For tickets, information about group discounts, and our new livestream option, visit www.susquehannachorale.org/performances or call the Messiah University Box Office at 717.691.6036 and choose option 1.



Dear Padre,

What is your favorite Christmas tradition?

Signed, Just Curious

Dear Just Curious,

I remember a specific tradition growing up. The tradition was to go to church on Christmas Eve...no surprise there, right? But then afterwards, my family would drive around various housing developments looking at the luminaries.

Now, for those who may not know, luminaries are lights that line streets. They are brown paper bags illumined from the inside by a candle. A luminary is made by putting sand in the bottom of a brown paper bag to weigh it down so it doesn't blow away. And then a candle is lit and placed in the bag. But an individual or household does not just make one luminary, but several luminaries to line one's entire curb. And hopefully all the neighbors do the same, so that all the streets in a whole development are lit by luminaries. And the houses then turn off all their outdoor lighting, so all you see as your drive around is one street after another lit up by rows of luminaries on both sides.

Now, I remember driving around with my family with the headlights of our car turned off thinking this probably isn't the safest thing, because of course there other cars driving around with their headlights turned off. But everyone drove slowly and it really was not at all dangerous. And it was just such a wonderful experience.

And the luminaries do have a purpose. There is a meaning behind them. They are meant to guide the spirit of the Christ child to one's home, but I just think they are very pretty. Now, I have seen some luminaries along the curb by Paxtang Cemetery, but those are the few I have noticed. So if you know of whole housing developments that participate in the luminary tradition, please do let me know. I would love to drive around and enjoy again this tradition from my childhood.

Thanks for your question.

Signed, *Padre*

**Family Promise Host Week.**

Our Saviour, along with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, will be hosting Family Promise Sunday, evening, January 7 through Sunday morning, January 14, 2024.

Won't you **please** consider providing a meal, driving the van, or sleeping overnight at the Church? sheets are posted in the Narthex.

Other weeks in 2024 that we and Good Shepherd are scheduled to host Family Promise are as follows:

Week of April 7

Week of June 9

Week of November 3

This program can only exist with the help of our volunteers. Your volunteering does make a positive impact for these families!

If you have any questions about the mission of Family Promise or would like more information on volunteering opportunities through Family Promise, please feel free to talk to me.

Thank you.

Nadine Martin

(717) 497-1200 NadineLMartin@verizon.net



Council Minutes

Please Note: *Council Minutes cannot be included in the newsletter until after Council has approved them.*

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting Wednesday, October 11, 2023

Members Present: Pastor Joel Petruschke, Brad Neil, Vice-President, Jim Lubrecht, Treasurer, Jeanette Logan, Secretary, Penny Zimmerman, Steve Barron and Joel Haines.

Members Absent: Anneke Fleming, President

At 6:40 pm, the meeting opened with a word of prayer by Pastor Joel.

Brad Neil, Vice-President led tonight's meeting due to Anneke's absence.

Pastor Joel made a motion to accept the minutes from the September 13, 2023 Council Meeting. Penny seconded the motion and the motion carried.

As far as the Congregational Meeting Minutes are concerned, Pastor Joel believes those minutes need to be accepted and voted on by the congregation. This will be done at the Congregational Meeting in January 2024.

Penny had a question about the number of people present at the September 2023 Congregational Meeting and the number of votes that were collected. These numbers don't match. There is a possibility that people came in late and weren't part of the initial quorum count. Jeanette made a suggestion that next time we have an issue to vote on, a Council member should stand at the door and make sure any people who come in late are added to the count. It is important to note that this difference in numbers does not change the outcome of the vote that was taken at this meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Jim reviewed the Financial Report with Council. Looking at the Previous Year Comparison document, he noted that the January 2023 to September 2023 deficit is \$11,793.88 in comparison to the January 2022 to September 2022 deficit which was \$25,484.93. The difference can be attributed to the income of \$16,000.00 from the pastoral contract with St. Stephen's.

Scholarship Mutuals: Jim reported that the funds in this account have decreased by \$9,790.89. This is due to the market.

The Treasurer's Report is filed for Audit.

Secretary's Report: Jeanette will send a thank you note to Pam Day for her donation of the grill.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education: No Report. Sunday School has resumed as of October 8th. Classes will be held on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. Pastor Joel said he will contact Tara regarding her clearances in the event she is needed as a substitute to lead a Sunday School class.

Child Protection Policy: No Report

Fund Raising: A report was provided and reviewed by Council. The Net Profit of the German Fest event was a

little over \$4,900.00.

Mutual Ministry: No Report

Property:

Brad reported that Sensinig is coming to check out the Fellowship Hall roof on Friday. He mentioned that the roof was installed in 2002. His call to Sensinig was due to finding a ceiling tile in the Fellowship Hall that has been damaged due to water. There is a leak that will need to be fixed.

Brad has made phone calls about a shed purchase. We currently have received \$5,900.00 in donations to be used for this purchase.

The sink in the kitchen is dripping and he will check into this.

Brad will check out the situation with the 2nd far light in the parking lot. He has Mike working on the outside light's issues. It was a breaker that kept tripping. They corrected this. Mike will continue to work on these issues.

Brad will need to get someone out to look at the parking lot lights again. The far light is not working. Herb came out and set the timer to 6:30 pm. Brad needs to find someone that has a lift to reach the light.

Brad informed Council that to date we have made about \$4,000.00 in church rentals.

Scholarship BOT: No Report

Social Ministry: No Report

Stewardship: Not an active committee

Welcome: No Report.

Worship and Music: No Report

Finance Committee: Jim reported that the Budget for 2023 will be used as a reference for the 2024 budget. A Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2023. A deficit analysis report of the past 8 years will be provided at the meeting. This analysis explains why we have had a growing deficit and what we could do to reduce our deficit. This will be discussed at the Finance Meeting.

Council Terms: Anneke will talk with Dawne to ask if she is able to continue to participate as a Council member.

Pastor's Report: Report was reviewed by Council. Pastor advised Council that there will be a picnic held at St. Stephen's this Sunday and our congregation is invited. Family Promise starts this Sunday. He mentioned that the Welcome Committee will host a Share the Word luncheon on Sunday, November 12, 2023. He spoke with St. Stephen's and they have agreed to hold their service at 9:00 am that day so we can hold our service at 11 am with the Share the Word luncheon immediately following the church service. We will invite St. Stephen's to the luncheon. Pastor Joel mentioned that St. Peter's church in Mechanicsburg has gotten some grants to do a community garden. He asked if any of the Council members might be interested in going to see their garden. He shared St. Stephen's calendar of events and noted that all are welcome to attend their events.

Election Day Bake Sale: Sandy Moritz and Jeanette will set up the bake sale table on Monday, November 6th. Barb put the sign-up sheets for baked good donations and volunteers to sell the items in the Narthex. Discussion ensued about selling soup and possibly hot dogs. We would sell the soup cold. Brad will bring ice. Brad will close up at 7pm. Jeanette will make an announcement at church on Sunday.

Old Business:

Update to Bylaws: Changes to the quorum needed for meetings? Discussion ensued about keeping it at 30. It was agreed that we will leave the number at 30.

Electronic Sign: Brad mentioned that the sign needed to be shipped from another state and we would need to have someone install it. The price is very expensive and we should wait on this.

Part time vs. full time pastoral position: Jim mentioned that the Finance Committee will address this at their meeting.

New Business:

Council Meeting Length: Discussion ensued. We should have a cut off time for the length of the meeting. We would like to revisit having meetings for no longer than 2 hours.

Also, moving our start time to 6 pm would be better. All agreed that they could attend meetings starting at 6 pm.

At 8:07 pm the meeting adjourned with The Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 8th at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeanette Logan/Council Secretary

***Time To Plan Our Next Egg Making Event***

An egg planning meeting was held at 6:30 pm on November 29, 2023 at the church. If you are not able to attend, please let us know your availability to help with egg making. Also please think about any suggestions for the egg making.

Thank you,
Nadine Martin, Alice Lubrecht and Donna Miller

***Upcoming Christmas Caroling Event***

The Social Ministry Committee is inviting church members to go to several nursing homes for Christmas caroling on December 9, 2023. We will meet at the church at 1:30 and car pool together. A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex or you may call the church office to sign-up. Any questions, please see Donna Miller.

***Christmas Brunch & Pageant***

On December 16, 2023 at 10:00 am Our Saviour will be hosting a Congregational Brunch and Christmas Pageant. The Pageant format is casual and includes lots of Christmas Carols. All are welcome to attend and participate in both singing and/or acting out the Christmas story. We will have some extra costumes available for anyone interested or you are welcome to come dressed the part. Participation is encouraged, but not required. A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex, so please sign-up or call the church office if you plan to attend or would like to contribute to the brunch. We hope you can join us and get into the Christmas Spirit!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Yolanda Barron	12/6
Savannah Bechtel	12/11
Caleb Guldner	12/22
Kathy Kreischer	12/23
Alex Parson	12/23
Margie Minnich	12/26



Pastor Joel, Mitchell, and Barb would like to wish everyone a very Blessed, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



**OUR SAVIOUR
FINANCIAL REPORT
through October 31, 2023**

ENVELOPES AND PLATE	\$	98,445.45
FUND RAISING	\$	28,412.37
FELLOWSHIP HALL RENTAL	\$	4,490.00
ST STEPHEN'S MISSION	\$	19,716.68
TOTAL INCOME	\$	<u>151,064.50</u>
EXPENSES	\$	<u>161,407.07</u>
DEFICIT	\$	<u>-10,342.57</u>

PNC BANK STATEMENT BALANCES
as of October 31,2023

CURRENT FUND CHECKING ACCOUNT	\$	4,134.90
MEMORIAL FUND MONEY MARKET#	\$	14,429.42

THRIVENT ACCOUNTS

	10/31/2023	9/30/2023	difference
CURRENT FUND MONEY MARKET	\$48,477.05	\$48,263.39	\$213.66
SCHOLARSHIP MUTUALS	\$149,038.49	\$158,991.07	-\$9,952.58
MEMORIAL FUND MONEY MARKET*	\$82,129.99	\$81,768.01	\$361.98

*\$61,000 of Memorial Fund Mutual is from the Neidich estate

\$1,310.57 of Memorial Fund is from the Ruth Knerr estate to be used for Christian Ed expenses.





Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

						1 office closed - vacation day for Barb	2
3 - Advent 1 9 am - Worship  w/Children's Sunday School 1st Sunday Social	4 Pastor Joel @St. Stephen's office closed - vacation day for Barb	5	6 Advent Mid-Week Soup & Worship 6 pm - @Good Shepherd 6:30 pm - @St. Stephen's	7	8	9 1:30 pm - Christmas Caroling	
10 - Advent 2 9 am - Worship	11 Pastor Joel @St. Stephen's	12	13 Advent Mid-Week Soup & Worship 6 pm - @Good Shepherd 6:30 pm - @St.	14	15	16 10 am - Christmas Pageant & Brunch	
17 - Advent 3 9 am - Worship w/Children's Sunday School newsletter	18 Pastor Joel @St. Stephen's	19	20 Advent Mid-Week Soup & Worship 6 pm - @Good Shepherd 6:30 pm - @St. Stephen's	21	22	23	
24- Advent 4 & Christmas Eve 9 am - Advent 4 Worship 7 pm - Christmas Eve Worship w/ holy communion	25 - Christmas Day  office closed	26 office closed	27 Advent Mid-Week Soup & Worship 6 pm - @Good Shepherd 6:30 pm - @St. Stephen's	28	29	30	
31 - Christmas 1 9 am - Worship 					 Merry Christmas!		

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

9:00 am.

Please join us!
Holy Eucharist is celebrated every Sunday.

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.