

# VOICE

## Our Savior's Lutheran Church

January 2022

809 South Commercial Street  
Neenah, WI 54956

### Service Times

Saturday 5:00 pm. & Sunday 9:00 a.m.  
Office Hours: M-Th 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.  
Wed 4—8:00 p.m.  
& Fri. 9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.  
920-725-3956

*Life Together* 

### **Merry Christmas!**

Without Jesus' birth and the cross, these words might feel empty to you if you have experienced any sort of loss this past year. But because Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection are all wrapped up in the gift of Christmas, we can still find reasons to be "merry". After all, Jesus was fully human, and he understands all the ups and downs of life. He journeys with us.

So, as we deal with how to gather with family and friends safely, reassess our life commitments, and wonder about the pain and growing problems in our world, the third verse of *O Holy Night* always gives me comfort:

*"Truly He taught us to love one another.  
His law is love and His gospel is peace.  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother.  
And in His name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
Let all within us praise His holy name."*

"His law is love and his gospel is peace." I am choosing to think on these things this Christmas. Love and peace. So much is out of our control, but what can we control? Loving our neighbor and sharing the good news of Jesus in word and deed is something we can do. To me, one way of loving my neighbor means getting our whole family vaccinated and boosted, so we can reduce our chance of hospitalization. I do not want to take up precious ICU beds and tax our health care system beyond what it already is. Thank you to our health care workers. We need you and love you.

You may accuse me of being political in that statement, but keep in mind that Jesus came into a real world with real problems. He came when Quirinius was governor of Syria and the Roman Empire dominated the world (Luke 2:1-2). Jesus challenged the power structures that kept people down through his own words and deeds. He demonstrated love and the gospel of peace for all.

Therefore, after all the packages are unwrapped, the cookies are eaten, and the online shopping has ceased, let us look to the law of love and the gospel of peace as our center this Christmas and beyond.

On a personal note, I am truly looking forward to Christmas with our family and all of you. After a marathon of services on Christmas Eve, I will preach on Christmas day at 9AM, and then get my cold weather gear on to head up to Lambeau for the Packers/Browns game with my brother and all the big cousins. My parents bought tickets for all of us as our gift. We may be able to see Aaron break Brett's record for TD passes.

I just got back from picking up Annika, our college kid, at MKE at 11 at night. It was an absolute joy listening to her talk the whole way home. Marcella has learned the game Uno, and she is a card shark. Eli is swimming for Neenah and finishing up college stuff. Ezra is off his crutches and going to PT twice a week. He is doing great. Thanks for the prayers. Jeranna and I are just happy to have all the kids home and rejoice in between our daily worries.

Thank you for being flexible with the church and adjusting to our safe worship protocols. Come Lord Jesus Come!

In Christmas Joy,

*Pastor Jon*

### Family Sunday School

Thanks to Andrea Long, who agreed to fill an interim role working with our children and families.

She and Pastor Jon are committed to doing an online family Sunday School every 2nd and 4th week, and one low commitment activity on the opposite weeks for families to plug into (e.g. blessing of the backpacks). The first video is now live on our Facebook and website, and coming soon on our Youtube channel. Check it out!

Our goal is to stay connected to our families during this time and ramp up once the pandemic allows us to bring back more programming and hire someone with more hours.

### Confirmation

We will resume classes on January 12 at 5:30. Meanwhile, please continue attending Sunday worship as part of your confirmation requirement.

We are currently setting up the **Remind app** for confirmation communication. If you get an invite, please respond. We hope to coordinate acolytes this way. Speaking of acolytes, we currently have a number of openings for help during worship. Please sign up in the lobby on the sheets by the nursery, or contact [officemanager@our-saviors.org](mailto:officemanager@our-saviors.org), or respond to the Remind app.

Students are required to complete 10 Sermon Notes by May. In January we will have a spreadsheet available for students to see their progress.

## Worship Services in January

### Join us for In-Person Worship

**Saturdays** at 5:00 p.m.

**Sundays** at 9:00 a.m.

Interactive Family Worship Starts Again in February

*No need to RSVP for regular in-person services.*

*Masks are required. Social distancing applies.*

### Or Join Us For Virtual/On-line Worship

**Sundays** – 9:00 a.m.

on Our Facebook and You Tube Channels

### Want to Attend Worship But Nervous About Coming Inside?

Tune into 88.5FM from any OSLC parking lot to listen to Saturday or Sunday worship from the comfort of your car!

## Thank You!

Christmas Giving participation was so heartwarming!! We literally had piles of gifts for the Brigade which were taken last week for donation. Thanks to all who helped out! Check out the picture.



The OSLC staff would like to thank everyone for the cards and Christmas goodies dropped off at church during the holidays. We loved all of it and appreciate all of you!

**“God’s Work. Our Hands” - Yes, YOU can make a difference! Here are some opportunities to share God’s love in our community.**

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## Food on the Fourth (Thursday)

Starting in 2022 we are initiating **Food on the Fourth** (Thursdays that is!) Our congregation will be providing and serving meals on the fourth Thursday of every other month to 120+ persons combined from both the Fox Valley Community Table (FVCT) and the Pillars Adult Shelter.

We hope to initiate an online sign-up system for both food donations and volunteers so please keep watching for information about that sometime soon. We won’t eliminate calling in to sign up! If the interest in the food mission is high, we will be able to consider expanding our participation.

The first Food on the Fourth will be February 24, 2022.

## Food on the Fourth Matching Funds Challenge

Anonymous members of Our Savior’s are willing to provide matching funds of \$3,600 through a challenge to the congregation to match their donation. This donation will provide 12 meals per year (and maybe more) to the FVCT/Pillars organizations. If we can do it, we will have funding for TWO years and the possibility to expand our mission! Please watch the Informer/Voice and announcements for upcoming information. The FVCT/Pillars envelopes are available in the Gathering Area and the match starts now!

## Looking for Lay Worship Assistants

In order to include more people in worship leadership, we are looking for lay worship assistants to help at each service. This could include people who have gone to the Lay School of Theology in our Synod or anyone who has an interest in worship leadership.

Let Andrea Long in our office know if you are interested. Pastor Jon will do some training after the first of the year and set up a schedule for helpers.

Lay worship assistants will help with worship set-up, leading liturgy, the prayers of the people, and helping with the logistics of worship. Please consider this if you want to grow in your serving.

## Thanks to our Decorators

Thanks so much to this team of decorators who pitched in to make our church and trees look so fabulous for Christmas. Thanks to Martin Haanstad, Sue Kueck, Adam Kreuter, Tim Moe, Steve Kueck, Cheryl Timm, Rich Garman, Joan Terry, Pam Garman, Carol Swannell, Sue Englebert, and Chris Swender.



## Misc. Church Notes

- Our **Chancel Choir** is still looking for additional members. Practice is Wednesday evenings from 7:00pm to 8:00pm. All skill levels embraced, anyone 9th grade or older.

- Call out for **yarn** for baby sweaters. Needed for the layettes we provide to LWR (Lutheran World Relief). No wool or cotton. *Worsted weight* (regular) or sport yarn is good. Can use up your extra skeins if they are sizable. Donations can be dropped off at the church office.

- Replenish the **Prayer Pantry** Blessing Box on Lennox Street with items that *won't freeze!* Please donate dry food products such as cereal, dry meal mixes like "Helpers", Soup Mixes. Drop them in the bins at church on the weekend or during office hours during the week. Many thanks!

## Meat Raffle

Mark your calendar for the first ever Meat Raffle to support the Guatemala Mission Trip. It will be held on **February 6 from 2:00 to 4:00PM at the DOME** in Neenah. The event will include a silent auction.

## Bible Study Continues

Pastor Jon Strasman is teaching a Bible Study on the Gospel of John in the library after church on Sundays. It is open to all. It will continue each Sunday around 10 AM (or sooner). Come when you can! We will be masking for this study until the Rise Again Team lets us know otherwise.

SILENT AUCTION  
RAFFLE PRIZES  
MEAT RAFFLE

**SOME MEAT AGAIN**

**MEAT RAFFLE**

Sponsoring the Guatemala Mission Trip from Our Savior's Lutheran Church

For more info, call Royal at 920-213-0229

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6**  
2:00 - 4:00 P.M.  
**THE DOME, COMMERCIAL STREET**  
**NEENAH**

There's no football that day, so come join us and have some fun!

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## Council Meeting Minutes December 14, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

### **Open Forum:** Steve Gries

New lighting in gym – suggested to be done same time as heating/air conditioning in spring. Cost \$9,000-\$10,000 bid by Steve Kuehl. If we don't pursue this option, at least we need to replace/repair 10 fixtures/light bulbs/metal grates in gym at a cost of \$400-\$700. Dimming system in church also needs to be done – cost \$26,000-\$30,000. Other items that need to be repaired are parking lot and exterior of church to be maintenance free. Further discussion is needed and was tabled until next council meeting in January.

### **Pastor's Report:**

Staff Christmas party was held December 14. Gift exchange and lunch.

Mid-week Advent Worship on four Wednesdays in December at 6:30 PM.

Sunday, December 19 – Lessons and Carol Service

Christmas Eve worship will be at 1, 2, 3, 5, and 10 PM. Reservations are needed but will leave a few pews open for walk-ins.

Andrea Long is leading Christmas Program. Her hours have been extended from 20-26 hours. She has picked up 6 hours per week to help with Children's Ministry.

Pastor's son and wife has offered to watch kids in gym while parents are in adult bible study Sunday morning.

Three funerals in the past week.

Staff – Working on setting goals.

9:00 church service the day after Christmas – December 26.

**Treasurer's Report:** November total income was \$45,682 (\$26,827 income + \$18,855 net assets released). November expenses were \$32,520. YTD in black is \$105,460 which includes \$59,000 PPE which will be used for heating system replacement.

**Membership/Attendance Reports:** 816 baptized and 671 confirmed. November attendance was 509.

### **Ministry Team Reports:**

**Retirees and Friends – Joan Terry:** Delivered 24 Advent bags to Retirees and Friends in December. Will plan to meet in person once COVID status in Neenah is green.

**Evangelism, Marketing, Communication & Technology: Kevin Schabo:** Chris, Ben, and Kevin met. Looking for volunteers to help with Christmas. Tech booth computer to be updated with Microsoft office or Google Doc. Mini mic cords and headphones need to be replaced. Look to upgrade iPad and software. All computers have been upgraded with antivirus and current Windows.

**Finance – Sue Schultz:** Stewardship campaign ongoing – temple talk planned.

**Learn and Grow/Youth – N/A:** Andrea Long is helping in this space currently. In future will look for intern to help.

**Security and Safety – Ben Lochner:** Yearly update has been completed by Aaron Zemlock.

**Serve and Reach – TBD:** Dec 11 St Paul's Community Table served 113 meals. OSLC donated cookies and shaving cream.

**Worship and Music – Graham Bradley:** Items discussed were: Decorated church, Christmas program, Lessons & Carol, Church attendance – adding additional services TBD, Bishop recommendations review.

**Next Council Meeting:** January 11, 2022

Respectfully submitted, Joan Terry, Council Secretary

- Our Mission Statement -  
*Gather and grow with God's spirit in order to love and serve others.*

## December Pastoral Acts...

### **Baptisms**

Teagan Marie Prah

### **Funerals**

Elaine C. Thomas  
-December 3

Jackie Hartman  
-December 4

Richard Luft  
-December 10

Lani Dordel  
December 11

Timothy Laflin

### **Deaths**

Linda C. Gryzb

## Generous Congregation...

YTD Totals Through November

	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Income</b>	\$383,717	\$441,124
<b>Expenses</b>	\$404,122	\$335,664
<b>Balance</b>	(\$ 20,405)	\$105,460

***Check out our online donation feature through [Tithe.ly](http://Tithe.ly) on our website at [www.our-saviors.org](http://www.our-saviors.org). Simply click the **GIVE NOW** button to see the different ways you can give.***

## Schedule a Meeting With Pastor Jon

Pastor Jon Strasman - [jstrasman@our-saviors.org](mailto:jstrasman@our-saviors.org)  
OR  
[pastorjonstrasman.youcanbook.me](http://pastorjonstrasman.youcanbook.me)

## Follow Us Online

**Facebook:** @oursaviorsneenah

**Instagram:** @oursaviorsneenah

**TikTok:** @our.saviors

**Spotify, Apple, and Google** (podcasts): OSLC - Neenah, WI

**Website:** [our-saviors.org](http://our-saviors.org)

**OSLC Phone App:** In the App Store, search 'Church App' and 'Tithe.ly'. Download the app and then search for Our Savior's - Neenah

## **WE ARE CHURCH!**

We have just celebrated God's coming to us in the birth of the Christ Child. This Emmanuel, God with us, is at the heart of the Gospel Good News. God comes to be present with us in all of life, times of great joy and times of heartbreak. Last month we witnessed some heartbreak when tornadoes ripped through states and cities, especially in Kentucky.

While we are thankful for the homes we live in and the businesses where we're employed, we are so aware that those affected by these December twisters are not so fortunate. We may be asking, "What can we do? How can we help? How can we bring the Christmas Gospel to those who have lost everything? How will Emmanuel be present to them and to those who have experienced the death of family members and friends?" Even though we may not be present in person, we, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, are there! We are the Church, doing God's Work through the hands of others because of the Lutheran Disaster Relief fund.

Lutheran Disaster Response brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.



If you are so moved to offer help and assistance through the ELCA, you need to know that 100% of any and all contributions are used for real relief, not one cent is used for administration. There are many ways to make a contribution. Here are your choices:

1. Give securely by phone directly to the ELCA at 800-638-3522, Monday-Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm central time;
2. Make checks payable to "Lutheran Disaster Response" and mail to: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009
3. Make checks payable to Our Savior's, write "Lutheran Disaster Response" in the memo line, and place your gift in the offering boxes or mail it in.

Thank you for being CHURCH, and for doing God's Work with Our Hands!

# *Confirmation Pictures*

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# January Calendar

The OSLC calendar can also be found on our website by going to our-saviors.org and clicking the 'News & Events' button in the navigation bar, and then clicking 'Monthly Calendar'.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 9am Worship 1pm AA Hispanic	27 6pm AA Hispanic	28	29 10am Bible Study - Virtual & 6pm AA Meeting	30	31	Jan 1 5pm Worship
2 9am Worship 1pm AA Hispanic	3 1pm Retirees & Friends 6pm AA Hispanic	4 5:30pm Worship & Music Tea	5 10am Bible Study - Virtual & 1pm Quilting 6pm AA Meeting	6 Epiphany	7 5pm Worship	8
9 9am Worship 1pm AA Hispanic	10 6pm AA Hispanic	11 9:30am Esther Circle 7pm Council Meeting	12 10am Bible Study - Virtual & 12pm Finance Meeting 6pm AA Meeting	13	14 5pm Worship	15
16 9am Worship 1pm AA Hispanic	17 6pm AA Hispanic	18 11am Island Shores Service	19 10am Bible Study - Virtual & 1pm Quilting 6pm AA Meeting	20	21 5pm Worship	22
23 9am Worship 1pm AA Hispanic	24 6pm AA Hispanic	25 6:30pm Women's Book Club	26 10am Bible Study - Virtual & 6pm AA Meeting	27	28 5pm Worship	29
30 9am Worship 1pm AA Hispanic	31 6pm AA Hispanic	Feb 1 5:30pm Worship & Music Tea	2 10am Bible Study - Virtual & 6pm AA Meeting	3	4 9am Appleton Conference A 5pm Worship	5