



December 2022

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

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.

& Fri. 9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

920-725-3956

Life Together 

Welcome to the season of Advent! Or in plain English, “Welcome to the waiting room.” We all know the feeling of being in a waiting room. You check in, find a seat, look around and wonder why others are there. You may scroll your phone, play a game, or check your news feeds. You wait expectantly for your name to be called. You may get frustrated if someone who came after you gets called before you. You may have anxiety as you wait. When your name is finally called, you pop up and are hopeful that whatever it is you are there for is taken care of. We are all waiting for something... aren't we?

Advent is the season of hoping, waiting, yearning, and preparing for Christ, our Emmanuel, to come among us in real and tangible ways that give us hope and healing in our lives. Our lessons each week during Advent reflect a promise of Christ's coming among us, whether that be the second coming or at our celebration of Christmas. The word “advent” is from the Latin “adventus”, which means “arrival” or an awaited coming.

My brother Steve and I have been in a waiting room as we tried sell my dad's pick-up with a plow on it. My mom gave it to us to sell after dad's death. We had a hard time agreeing on a price, deciding how to market it, and discerning who we can trust in the process. Selling a vehicle is fraught with danger. There are a lot of scams out there if you market it online. My insurance person told me to just put a sign on it and park it in a visible place. Recently, I washed it up real nice, drove it to church and put a sign on it on the corner of Lennox and Commercial. A few hours later, I received a phone call from a young man who happened to be in town with his girlfriend for a Dr's visit. He wanted to look at it. He used to have a truck just like it that he sold with two businesses in Oshkosh. He missed it. Long story short, an hour later I had the cash in hand. After a lot of waiting, doubt, and questioning, and wondering if we could or should even sell it, I believe God brought the best buyer for us.

As the wave of Christmas presses in on us, we are reminded to keep the main thing the main thing during Advent. This whole season, at least for us followers of Jesus, is about a God who put on flesh and came among us. I love to say “God con carne”... God with meat. You know, like chili con carne. God cares about us humans in every way... so much that God become one of us. God knows everything we go through in life, our joys and sorrows. In Jesus, God gave the most precious gift of all, and as a result, we give thanks.

And I know this season can bring great joy and great pain. My mom, who is in her season of firsts after my dad's death, didn't want to put her Christmas tree up and didn't want to come for Thanksgiving. She said it was too hard due to her grief. But thanks to my brother's persistence and offering to pick her up, she decided to come to Thanksgiving with her famous strawberry fluff. I still have hope that we can help her put up the tree.

I invite you to come and worship with hope and expectation during Advent. Come to our mid-week services on Wednesdays starting November 30 at 6:30PM. We will sing Holden Evening Prayer and I will do a series on “the waiting room”.

Blessed Advent,

Pastor Jon Strasman

Worship Services in December

**Join us for In-Person
Worship Every Week**
Saturdays at 5:00 p.m.
Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School at 10:00 a.m.

*No need to RSVP for in-person
services. Masks are optional*

**Or Join Us For Virtual/
On-line Worship**
Sundays – 9:00 a.m.
and all Special Services
on our Facebook and
You Tube Channels

Sunday School—Advent Season Idea

If you are looking for an alternative to Elf on the shelf, have I got an idea for you! Take out your favorite Nativity set. Have Mary and Joseph travel through the house on the way to Bethlehem. They enter the nativity set on Christmas Eve. Christmas morning, the baby Jesus is there! The shepherds arrive that evening. Then to add to the fun, have the Wise Men travel through the house until Epiphany. So, on January 6th, they arrive at the manger! Happy travels!



Save These Dates!

November 30—**Midweek Advent Worship** begins at 6:30 p.m. with Holden Evening Prayer.

December 7, 14 & 21—**Midweek Advent Worship** with Holden Evening Prayer at 6:30 p.m.

December 17-18—**Lessons and Carols** at both services.

December 18—**Children's Christmas Program** at 9:00 a.m.

December 21—**Winter Solstice Worship** (Longest Night) at 6:30 p.m.

December 23—**Church Office closed.**

December 24—**Christmas Eve Worship** Services at 1:00, 3:00, 5:00 and 9:00 p.m. (Note the change in time of last service.)

December 25—**Christmas Day Worship** at 9:00 a.m.

December 26—**Church Office closed.**

December 31—**New Year's Eve Worship** at 5:00 p.m.

January 1—**New Year's Day Worship** at 9:00 a.m.

January 2—**Undecorate the church** begins at 9AM. Come help take down Christmas decorations.

Photos for Advent

Advent season is about to begin. It starts December 3rd. As Christians, we are preparing for the coming of the Messiah. Neighborhoods start lighting up. We are buying presents, getting ready for families to come together.

We challenge you and your family to take photos for advent. One each day, if you can. I would love it if you would tag Our Saviors Lutheran Church Facebook page or on our Instagram. Or send them to me! I'll post them to our social media. Feel free to stray from the following list. Let me know why this is important to you and your family. I look forward to seeing the photos! Have fun.

Dec 3rd- Grinch

Dec 5th- Stocking

Dec 7th- Christmas package

Dec 9th- Nativity scene

Dec 11th- Nutcracker

Dec 13th- Garland

Dec 15th- Salvation Army bucket

Dec 17th- Ornament

Dec 19th- Smiling child

Dec 21st- Pine boughs

Dec 23rd- The color red

Dec 4th- Star

Dec 6th- Candy cane

Dec 8th- Burnt out bulb

Dec 10th- Lighted tree

Dec 12th- Candle

Dec 14th- Bells

Dec 16th- Snow

Dec 18th- Christmas Cookies

Dec 20th- Decorated house

Dec 22nd- Advent wreath

Dec 24th- Globe

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

Brigade Christmas Giving—

This Christmas, we will be collecting the following items to be distributed to families and kids at the Brigade. You may bring your items to church during office hours. The final day to donate is December 4. Gift cards or cash will be used to purchase items on the list.

ALL SIZES:

Socks
WARM gloves and mittens (Thinsulate)
Shampoo
Earbuds Wireless and Wired
Wrapping Paper Rolls and Tape

Underwear
WARM hats
Body Wash

We Want Your Opinions—

Are you interested in guiding the direction that Children, Youth and Family Ministry is going? Please feel free to join us for a meeting! We will be getting together on January 17th at 6 pm. I appreciate the support of the whole congregation. —Patty

Fox Valley Community Table/Pillars Adult Shelter -

Who has three hours one time per year to have fun with church friends and serve a meal to people at the Fox Valley Community Table or the Pillars Adult Shelter? Our Savior’s is generously providing a warm meal to over 100 people 12 times per year between the two Feeding Missions we currently support.

The meal at Fox Valley Community Table (FVCT) is led by Carol Swannell. In 2023, it will be the first Tuesday of the "even" months from 10 am - 1 pm at St Paul's Lutheran Church. 2023 dates are February 7, April 4, June 6, August 1, October 3, and December 5.

The meal at Pillars is led by Pam Garman. In 2023 it will be the second Thursday of the even months from 4:45 pm - 7 pm at Pillars Adult Shelter in Appleton. The 2023 dates are February 9, April 13, June 8, August 10, October 12 and December 14.

We welcome both experienced volunteers and new volunteers for fun, fellowship and doing God's work with our hands! Anyone over age 18 is welcome to volunteer. Watch the Voice and Informer for the Sign-up Genius link the month before the meal is being served. You may also call the church office to sign up!

Retirees and Friends meet on the first Monday of every month from 1-2:30. Contact is Joan Terry. Come join us.

Pickleball Players will be playing through the winter Monday, Wednesday & Friday mornings starting at about 8:30am. They will be collecting offerings for Missions rather than paying for building use. Come join them!

Sunday Bible Study will start up again on December 4 at 10AM. We will study the book of Acts. There will not be class on December 25 or January 1.

Mission Quilters meet every 1st & 3rd Thursday at 1pm in the gymnasium (December 1 & 15, and January 5). Sewing experience is not needed—everyone is welcome! Call the church office for more information 920-725-3956. Quilts made in 2021 were donated to Lutheran World Services, and more locally, the Bletzinger House and Harbor House. “Those who have nothing will at least have a quilt!”

Wednesday Bible Study is held every week from 10am to 11am. Please join us for a lectionary study on the lessons for the week. We meet in person and also have a virtual option (call the office for the link.)

Did you know that we are on Social Media? On Facebook, you can look up Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Neenah WI. On Instagram you can look for oursaviorslutheranchurch-neenah. Tag us or share things. Feel free to send photos and information to Patty at pkoplitiz@our-saviors.org

Special 'Longest Night' Service

On Wednesday, December 21st at 6:30 p.m. we will gather for **The Winter Soulstice**, a special Longest Night service. For all those who are carrying heavy loads this time of year, this service will offer solace for the soul.

The winter solstice, December 21st, marks the beginning of winter in the northern hemisphere. On this day the North Pole reaches its maximum tilt away from the sun, which causes the Sun to travel the shortest path through the sky. For this reason, that day has the least daylight and the longest night.

'Sundays and Seasons', our worship planning resource from Augsburg Fortress, offers these thoughts regarding the importance of creating a time and space of solace for our souls around Christmas time.

The holiday season offers many opportunities for celebration, generosity, feasting, hope, joy, love and peace. There are songs, parties, traditions, gifts and memories shared that hold space for these wonderful things. While Advent is a season of hope and Christmas is a season of joy, not everyone feels hopeful or like celebrating. Those who have experienced loss—of a job, a home, a relationship, their health—will be adjusting to new realities. Those grieving the death of a loved one (whether their passing happened recently or years ago) will feel the pain of empty seats at holiday parties. Those who are struggling with addiction at parties with fully stocked bars, miss a loved one deployed overseas or those struggling with illness might feel out of place during a time with so much celebration. Even those who are not struggling with losses may feel the stress of preparations and expectations around Christmas time.

On the Longest Night of the year, we will come together seeking healing and room to share grief, sadness, loneliness, or confusion when these emotions often feel out of place during the holidays. Please invite anyone you may know that will benefit from taking time for **The Winter Soulstice**.

Two Upcoming Family Events

Please join us for decorating the Church and Christmas trees on Saturday, December 3, at 9:00 a.m. We will meet in the Gathering Area. Many hands make light the work. Joan Terry will be supervising the group. Note that undecorating will take place on January 2 at 9:00 a.m.

Caroling is back!! Please join us Sunday, December 11 from 3:15-5:30 p.m. Meet at church in the Gathering Area. All caroling will be indoors. We will car pool to each facility. Jim Miller will lead us.

Sign up for these events on the clipboard in the Gathering Area. Questions? Contact Ardy Kreuter at 920-470-4701 or akreuter@new.rr.com.

Crossways Camping Opportunities

BYG -Beginning Youth Group at Imago Dei Village! This is an opportunity for kids in grades 2 through 6 to go to camp for the weekend with friends from church. The camp is March 17th through 19th. Patty will be attending with the kids and would like to have a male chaperone as well.

This weekend is filled with games, laughter, music and the best camp worship! Let Patty know if your child has an interest in coming along with me! The cost is \$175 per child. There are scholarships available!

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

*The Staff of Our
Savior's wishes you
and yours a very
blessed Christmas.*



Generous Congregation

YTD Totals Through October

	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Actual</i>
Income	\$369,417	\$340,346
Expenses	\$368,283	\$326,860
Balance	\$ 1,134	\$ 13,486

November Pastoral Acts

Funerals

Judi Klein
Steve Harwood

First Communion

Addison & Aiden Shadick
Charlotte Meyer



*Pastor Jon presents a check to the
Bletzinger House from the proceeds
of the BBQ Pork fundraiser.*

Memorials & Honorariums Received

*A special thank you to those
who remembered*

Larry Lancaster

Follow Us Online

Facebook: @oursaviorsneenah

Instagram: @oursaviorslutheranchurchneenah

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

Website: 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

Our Savior's Lutheran Church Council Minutes November 1st, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.

Pastor's Report:

I went to St. Mark's today to welcome Pastor Naveen Sarras on her first day as pastor.

Attended the middle school lock-in on Friday, 10/28

Presided at Confirmation Evening of Honor on October 29 and Confirmation Ceremony on October 30. Confirmed Aiden Baldauf, Drew Green, Jazlyn Hanson, Brendan Schilke, and Jaden Vondracek.

Upcoming Funerals

Judi Klein (Jennifer Baldwin's Mom) on November 18th @ 5:00 PM at Kessler Funeral Home.

Judi was a non-member

Steve Harwood (TBD)

Three students will be taking their first communion on November 6th (Addison and Aiden Shadick, and Charlotte Meyer)

I am planning to take vacation the weekend of November 19/20. We could use a video sermon from pastor Jen Pockat from the Synod Staff that weekend. I will ask Dewey Wisner to preside.

Wed, November 23 – Come and participate in the joint Thanksgiving Eve Worship at Gloria Dei at 6PM. This is put on by the 4 ELCA churches in Neenah. There will be a choir anthem for all who want to join in. You can get the music ahead of time from Jim Miller or Ardy.

Patty, Andrea, and I are currently doing some planning for a Baccalaureate Service for all High School and College Grads on Sat. May 20, and a Spring confirmation ceremony on Sunday, May 21. Dates are tentative right now.

Advent begins on November 27th. Our first midweek Advent worship will be Wed, November 30, with Holden Evening Prayer.

Christmas Eve Services will be at 1, 3, 5, and 9PM this year.

Treasurer's Report:

November meeting was moved up in the month due to November 8th being an election day. No report was ready at this time, October financials will be provided in December Notes.

Ministry Team Reports:

Building & Grounds – Kevin Schabo

Parking Lot: The parking lot is complete!

Building Heating: All of the boiler heating hookups are complete as well as the heater by the elevator entrance. The gym heat is also completed!

Learn & Grow/Youth – Marcus Shimon

A lock in was held over the night of October 28th and 9 youth showed up to have a blast!

Serve & Reach – Diane Wilfling

This past week OSLC served The Community Table on Tuesday for lunch and Pillars Adult Shelter Thursday night dinner. About 100 people total were served.

Christmas Giving wish lists are on the table in the overflow area ready for people to take and start shopping.

Noisy offerings begin in November with proceeds going to the Brigade.

Old Business:

Facility / Priority Funding

Finance Saving / Available Operating Reserves Account

Savings: \$50,000

Available: \$89,245.32

Allocated: \$77,014

Remaining: \$12,231.32

Rental Porch Update

Council Head Shot with Directory Pictures

Directory Pictures - October 25-29—Harmann Studios took pictures for a new directory.

New Business:

Budget Review

Budget review of projected expenses vs. income was completed.

Expenses are projected to go up 6.6%

Budget Changes

Workers Comp and Property Insurance budgeted was increased from \$8,500 to \$8,800, to reflect realized 2022 costs.

Rental house income: The rental property owned by OSLC across Meade Street from the church, has never had the yearly rent increased. A strategy was discussed to get this income back in line with the market rate.

Motion/Second/Carried Lochner/Strassman to raise the rent by 15% for calendar year 2023 with a recommendation for future councils to consider raising the rent at 15% per year until the rental income comes in line with the market value. All voting aye.

ELCA Benevolence giving:

Motion/Second/Carried Shimon/Timm to raise the benevolence giving by \$1,000 for the 2023 budget to a total of \$27,000 and a recommendation to future councils to increase the benevolence by 3.5% annually. All voting aye.

All budget changes lead to the following:

Total Proposed Income to \$485,560.00

Total Proposed Expenses to \$473,725.00

Operating Net profit at \$11,808.00

Motion/Second/Carried Timm/Bradley (via E-mail) to approve the 2023 operating budget that will be shared with the congregation during the annual meeting. All voting aye.

Annual Meeting Agenda / Forum Review

Respectfully submitted,

Marcus Shimon, Council Secretary

MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC! WE NEED YOU!



Hey everyone from 9th grade on up! WE NEED YOU! **Chancel Choir** is looking for more singers for the choir. We especially need sopranos and altos but we welcome all. If you can't commit to every Wednesday rehearsal, here are a couple of options: warmup with the choir 30 minutes before singing in worship and just jump in; meet with Jim after church and go through the music coming up. Or if you want to join us for just the Advent/Christmas season for a short-term commitment, that would be great. The same options would be offered Palm Sunday weekend through Easter.

Rehearsals are Wednesday from 7:00-8:00 pm in the music room. We usually sing two songs a month. Schedules are available in the choir area at church. Music will be available also.

Joyous Ringers also needs two or three more ringers to fill the hand bell choir. Reading music is helpful! We meet every Wednesday from 5:30-7:00 pm in the music room. We play twice a month in Worship. Contact Ardy Kreuter at akreuter@new.rr.com or 920-470-4701 with questions or to volunteer.

Annual Report Minutes...

Our Savior's Lutheran Church Annual Congregational Meeting November 13th, 2022

Meeting called to order at 12:07 p.m. by Graham Bradley.

Quorum needed 26. Achieved with 52 people in person.

Approval of Agenda: [Motion/Second/Carried Gary Lawell/Todd Stevenson to approve agenda. All voting aye.](#)

Approval of Congregational Meeting Minutes November 7th, 2021 and last years budget. **Motion/Second/Carried** Sue Shultz/Sue Englebert. All voting aye.

2022 Resolutions:

WHEREAS Our Savior's has been deeply blessed by God to be a blessing to our community, our country, our world, and each other:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we are grateful and blessed to have the Reverend Jon Strasman as our pastor. With grace and excellence, Pastor Jon is guiding Our Savior's into our next chapter. His contagious enthusiasm for our congregation continues to attract new members, guide us in our faithful walk with the Lord, and challenge us to again define this great church after realizing the influence of a pandemic.

BE IT RESOLVED that we appreciate the faithfulness and dedicated service of Vicar Kellie Escovy in supporting Our Savior's through participating in the Collaborative Learning Program with Wartburg Theological Seminary. Kellie brought a passion and energy to the church that was truly contagious.

BE IT RESOLVED that we are grateful to the following people who graciously served on our congregation council during 2022: Jennifer Baldwin, Graham Bradley, Ben Lochner, Kevin Schabo, Marcus Shimon, Pastor Jon Strasman, Carol Swanell, Cheryl Timm, and Diane Wilfling.

BE IT RESOLVED that we appreciate Andrea Long, Office Manager; Chris Swender, Property Manager; Dave Zernicke, Finance Manager; Jennifer Hurley, Communications Assistant; Ardy Kreuter, Joyous Ringers & Chancel Choir Director; and LuAnn Stensberg, Organist. We are truly blessed to have all of you!

BE IT RESOLEVD that we are grateful for the addition of staff members Patty Koplitz, Children, Youth & Family Director; and James Miller, Music Team Leader & Organist. We are blessed to align these talents with that of the current team, and provide the essential support that contributes toward Our Savior's success!

BE IT RESOLVED that we appreciate the faithfulness and dedicated service of our outgoing staff member, Roberta Golden. Our deepest gratitude goes out to you.

BE IT RESOLVED that we appreciate all members and friends of Our Savior's Lutheran Church who have donated their time and talent to make this a better congregation.

BE IT RESOLVED that the members of Our Savior's Lutheran Church continue to value and take care of each other, while at the same time making Christ known to all people in our community so that they may know the Good News that God loves them and offers them eternal life. This is as true today as it was in 1872.

Nominations and Vote for Delegates:

Appleton Conference Annual Meeting = Graham Bradley

Crossways Camping Ministries = Patty Koplitz

Fox Valley Lutheran Homes = Jennifer Baldwin

Synod Assembly = Marcus and Greta Shimon

Approved/second to cast unanimous ballot: Todd Stevenson/Diane Wilfling All voting aye.

Presentation of Proposed 2023 Budget (Todd Stevenson & Cheryl Timm)

Total Proposed Income to \$484,735

Total Proposed Expenses to \$473,725.00

Operating Net profit at \$10,983

Budget Clarifications:

Income was determined by projecting that giving from the congregation will go up by 6.6% from 2022.

Approval of 2023 Operating Budget: **Motion/Second/Carried** Gary Lawell/Kevin Hilgas to approve budget. All voting aye.

Building & Grounds Report: (Kevin Schabo)

Hot water heating system replacement is officially complete. Although most of the work was completed in 2021, all the remaining areas are now complete.

Parking lot updates were completed this year. The north lot has been completely redone and resurfaced, while the west lot was repaired and resealed.

Serve & Reach Report: (Diane Wilfling)

Lutheran World Relief – made 80 school kits, 50 personal care kits, 50 baby care kits, and many quilts.

Encouragement Team – sent out notes to community and church members.

Guatemala Mission Trip - 11 youth and adults went over spring break.

Neenah Animal Shelter Annual Spring Clean-up – Assisted cleaning up in preparation for upcoming fundraisers.

Good Neighbor Team- Welcomed and help support the Omari-Habibi family who fled Kabul, Afghanistan in August of 2021 and moved to the Fox Valley.

Pork BBQ Fundraiser – Raised \$2,000 for the local Bletzinger House

Pillars – serve meal every other month to people of need.

Learn & Grow Report: (Patty Koplitz)

Restarted Sunday School and have 20 kids regularly attending.

Confirmation class has 23 kids.

Looking forward to working with the Learn & Grow team to help shape her ministry.

Church Chat: (Pastor Jon)

Thank you to all the OSLC Staff. Excited to have a full staff to continue doing God's Work.

Upcoming year will focus on connection and bringing people back together.

Worship Assistants: Thankful for all involved in the process.

Motion/Second/Carried Ben Lochner/Todd Stephenson to adjourn. All voting aye. Meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcus Shimon, Council Secretary

Serve & Reach Minutes...

Minutes 11/8/22 OSLC Serve and Reach Committee via ZOOM 6 p.m.

Present- Rick and Barb Klamm, Ann Pokel, Ardy Kreuter, Sue Engelbert, Christa Sanders, Diane Wilfling

Food on the Fourth Thursdays (even months)

- We need a new tagline because we are changing our days to the 1st Tuesday and 2nd Thursday.
- FVCT – Carol Swannell - October 25 served 48 people. Ann Pokel provided cookies while Deb Hofer, Diane Wilfling and four friends of Carol prepped and served walking tacos and fruit salad. Our final meal for 2022 is December 27.
- Pillars – Pam Garman – On October 27, Joan Terry, Kris Oyler, Angela Jersild, Pam and Rich Garman served the leftover smoked pork, beans, coleslaw and cookies (Nancy Stevenson) to 60 persons experiencing homelessness and staying at the Pillars Adult Shelter. December meal is the 22nd.
- We discussed how to get more members to try volunteering at one of the feeding missions and we will put an article in the Voice and do a Temple talk in January. The change I schedule is to allow more people who might want to volunteer at both, to not be doing so in the same week.

Lutheran World Relief – Ann Pokel

Update – all is delivered and Ann (with Christa) will prep for the next group of items needed in 2023.

Christmas Giving – Sue and Ann

Update – We will emphasize the needs and request for items, which will be delivered December 6.

Encouragement Ministry – Ardy Kreuter

If anyone would like a note sent, please contact Ardy. In November they emphasized church leaders.

Food Box

Update – staff is taking care of it and doesn't need others to assist currently. Discussion about installing a solar light since it gets dark so early. Rich Garman will take care of this.

Good Neighbor Team

All family members are working and attending language school. They have internalized how important it is to learn English and are very motivated. We will schedule them to come to OSLC in January.

NEXT MEETING DECEMBER 13

December 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'.

Our Savior's Lutheran - Neenah							Dec 2022 (Central Time - Chicago)						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat							
<div>27</div> <div>9am - Worship</div> <div>1pm - AA Hispanic</div>	<div>28</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div> <div>6pm - AA Hispanic</div>		<div>29</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div> <div>10am - Bible Study - Virtual & In-</div> <div>6:30pm - Joyous Ringers</div> <div>6pm - Confirmation</div> <div>6:30pm - Midweek Advent</div> <div>7pm - Chancel Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>30</div> <div>1pm - Quilting</div> <div>6pm - AA Meeting</div>	<div>1</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div>	<div>2</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div>	<div>3</div> <div>5pm - Worship</div>						
<div>4</div> <div>9am - Worship</div> <div>10am - Adult Bible Study @ OSLC</div> <div>10am - Sunday School</div> <div>1pm - AA Hispanic</div>	<div>5</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div> <div>1pm - Retirees & Friends</div> <div>6pm - AA Hispanic</div>	<div>6</div> <div>11am - Staff Meeting</div> <div>6pm - Worship & Music Team</div>	<div>7</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div> <div>9am - Visitation/Homebound</div> <div>10am - Bible Study - Virtual & In-</div> <div>6:30pm - Joyous Ringers</div> <div>6pm - Confirmation</div> <div>6:30pm - Midweek Advent</div> <div>7pm - Chancel Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>8</div> <div>6pm - AA Meeting</div>	<div>9</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div>	<div>10</div> <div>5pm - Worship</div>							
<div>11</div> <div>9am - Worship</div> <div>10am - Adult Bible Study @ OSLC</div> <div>10am - Sunday School</div> <div>1pm - AA Hispanic</div>	<div>12</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div> <div>10am - Knitting</div> <div>6pm - AA Hispanic</div>	<div>13</div> <div>9:30am - Esther Circle</div> <div>6pm - Serve & Reach - VIRTUAL</div> <div>7pm - Council Meeting</div>	<div>14</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div> <div>10am - Bible Study - Virtual & In-</div> <div>6:30pm - Joyous Ringers</div> <div>6pm - Confirmation</div> <div>6:30pm - Midweek Advent</div> <div>7pm - Chancel Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>15</div> <div>12pm - Finance Meeting</div> <div>1pm - Quilting</div> <div>6pm - AA Meeting</div> <div>6:30pm - Women's Book Club @</div>	<div>16</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div>	<div>17</div> <div>5pm - Worship</div>							
<div>18</div> <div>9am - Worship</div> <div>10am - Adult Bible Study @ OSLC</div> <div>10am - Sunday School</div> <div>1pm - AA Hispanic</div>	<div>19</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div> <div>6pm - AA Hispanic</div>	<div>20</div> <div>11am - Staff Meeting</div>	<div>21</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div> <div>10am - Bible Study - Virtual & In-</div> <div>6:30pm - Joyous Ringers</div> <div>6pm - Confirmation</div> <div>6:30pm - Midweek Advent</div> <div>7pm - Chancel Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>22</div> <div>6pm - AA Meeting</div>	<div>23</div> <div>OSLC Office Closed -</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div>	<div>24</div> <div>5pm - Worship</div>							
<div>25</div> <div>9am - Worship</div> <div>10am - Sunday School</div> <div>1pm - AA Hispanic</div>	<div>26</div> <div>OSLC Office Closed -</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div> <div>6pm - AA Hispanic</div>	<div>27</div>	<div>28</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div> <div>10am - Bible Study - Virtual & In-</div>	<div>29</div> <div>3:15pm - Valley VNA Service</div> <div>6pm - AA Meeting</div>	<div>30</div> <div>8:30am - Pickleball</div>	<div>31</div> <div>5pm - Worship</div>							

Did you know that our congregation has served over 250 meals in 5 days to our Neenah Menasha Community? Thanks to your generous donations of money, food and time, we will continue this bi-monthly service in 2023. Enjoy this article on food service in the valley and consider joining our efforts to help nourish our community.

We have one more meal to provide on December 27 through the FVCT. Please contact me at carols-wannell1@gmail.com or 920-540-9598, or register at sign up genius. The Community Christmas Dinner sponsored by ten local churches is December 10. If you'd like to participate in this annual event, contact me directly. Thank you, *Carol Swannell*



Photo by Patti Lee

Chrissy Goethel is site director for the Fox Valley Community Table.

Meal programs serve community in big way

By Patti Lee
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

It has often been said that there's no such thing as a free lunch. That's definitely not the case in the Neenah-Menasha area.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of volunteers, corporations and local churches, area residents have access to hot, nutritious food and the warmth of fellowship and conversation.

Founded in 1991, the Fox Valley Community Table (FVCT) is housed – since

1997 – in St. Paul Lutheran Church at 200 N. Commercial St.

"It was a great place for us to land," said board member Helen Kurka.

That would be an understatement, since the facility includes a huge commercial kitchen sandwiched between two dining areas, and a second kitchen with even more stoves, creating the ability to serve as many meals as are needed. It even has an elevator in the back for those

Article continued on the next two pages.

Community table

FROM PAGE 1

who can't navigate the stairs.

"We do have some things of our own," Kurka said. "We have our own refrigerator, our own freezer, and we purchased a warming oven as well as a commercial dishwasher that's used by all."

Site director Chrissy Goethel describes Fox Valley Community Table as "a beautiful group of different churches and others. Everyone is welcome. Companies can form a group, organizations can form a group, individuals – virtually anyone can form a group and participate."

"A Group" is how the operation works. Dedicated volunteers provide the meal, serve the meal and clean up afterward. There is a calendar of rotating groups who come to provide meals every Tuesday and Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

"We, as a site, coordinate the meals, make sure that our guests are cared for, that the meal is happening correctly, and that our needs are being met," she said. "We have a lot of donations of different food products and items. Great Harvest Breads donates its 'day olds.' They are so generous and it's wonderful. The public library is doing a food drive for us right now, an elementary school will be doing one this winter, and Essity provides all paper products."

As to guests, Goethel stresses the inclusiveness of the program. "Everyone is welcome. No one has to prove residence or income; there is no paperwork. It's an open community where you're welcome to come and join in. We have regulars and we have others who come sporadically."

There are always new faces and people come for the food but also for all the other reasons people gather.

"There was a gentleman who came in a few weeks ago," Goethel related. "He was new so I welcomed him right away. He said he'd heard the food was good but he'd also heard that here he could talk to people. He was a vet and right away he connected to another guest, also a vet. They sat down and had the meal together and it was really lovely to see the support of one to another, having that time together."

"There are people who have become good friends because of the meals here. They go on to have relationships and support one another outside of lunch. It's community helping community and it's fantastic."

In addition to the meals, FVCT tries to give a donation to the guests at every meal. Items on the table range from Great Harvest offerings to laundry and hand soap, cereal, fresh fruits and vegetables.

"These additional items are important, especially with everything being so expensive these days," she said. "We know our guests appreciate it."

As to how people find out about the meals, FVCT has flyers at the public library, school counselors, churches, bulletins and other soup kitchens. They work cooperatively with Double Portion inside St. Thomas Church in Menasha. Double Portion is a soup kitchen and pantry, serving lunch every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Many guests eat lunch at both sites, according to Goethel.

"We make sure we're serving on different days and we've met several times to share ideas as to how we can better serve the community," she said. "It's a wonderful program."

According to Julie Last, Double Portion board member, treasurer, volunteer coordinator and lead cook, the program

feeds about 50 people per meal, with an additional 20 to 30 meals sent home to residents.

"We have regular volunteer cooks, a different one for each service day generally, plus a crew of six to 10 people to help with setup, service and cleanup," Last explained. "Most volunteers come the same day each week, so we tend to have a Monday, a Wednesday and a Thursday team. We also have some volunteers who come when they can and a few who come multiple times per week."

Double Portion welcomes all. There are no income restrictions and no identifying info is required except for a first name to use the pantry. This ensures a proper head count of individuals served for grant purposes only.

Dine-in meals are served from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and take-home meals are allowed from 12:15 to 12:30 for anyone unable or uncomfortable dining in person. Dine-in guests are also allowed to take a meal home after 12:15.

Closed on Thanksgiving, Double Portion will be serving both Dec. 26 and Jan. 2, which are the Christmas and New Year federal holidays.

Leading into the holidays, Uniting Faiths to Feed His Flock Community Christmas Dinner will take place Dec. 10 for the 14th year.

"It's a giant cooperative effort and it's a beautiful meal," Goethel said.

"It is going to be beautiful," agreed Kurka, co-chair of the event. "Our day begins at 10:30 a.m. in the St. Paul church sanctuary with a healing service of Christmas hymns and prayers. This is followed by the meal, served from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This dinner is a cooperative of volunteers from 11 churches in Neenah-Menasha, along with Fox Valley Community Table."

"They grill tenderloin and chicken. People are seated in the bigger dining room behind the kitchen. Guests receive a menu card and they get to pick their entree, and they can even pick both."

After choosing their options, the plated meal is served to them. "It's a festive holiday atmosphere. It's different than coming through the line," Kurka said.

In addition to the meal, attendees receive the gift of a hygiene bag containing deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo and soap. They are also welcome to choose from additional articles such as gloves, scarves, hats and socks.

During the pandemic, Uniting Faiths served carry-out meals.

"We're so glad to be back in-house," Kurka said. "The collaborative has historically served over 300 meals with each of the participating churches also delivering meals to their homebound members, which is about 100 extra meals."

Donations come from a variety of places. United Faiths partners with Essity, which donates paper towels, tissues and toilet paper for the gift bags. Each church then collects the other needed items, and additional donations come from grants, churches and generous individuals.

From top to bottom, these endeavors succeed because, as expressed by Goethel, "We can do big things when we work as one. We are all in it together. We're in this community together. We need to help each other out. This is how it works."

For more information on Fox Valley Community Table or the Uniting Faiths Christmas dinner, contact the office at St. Paul: 920-725-3961. For Double Portion information or to volunteer, email doubleportionsoupkitchen@gmail.com or visit doubleportionsoupkitchen.com.

Pictures From OSLC's 150th Anniversary...

Our Savior's celebrated its 150th anniversary last month with a special worship service and a luncheon featuring speakers, pictures, games and special prizes. Take a look at a few pictures from that day.

