

# VOICE

*Our  
Savior's  
Lutheran  
Church*

January 2023

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* 

Dear Our Savior's,

I am writing to you on the Winter Solstice - the longest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. I am looking forward to more light entering our days... beginning with the light we celebrate on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day... Jesus Christ... the light of the world. As John 1 says, Jesus, the Word made flesh, is the true light that entered the world that no darkness can overcome. Thanks be to God!

Speaking of light, Jeranna and I were blessed tonight at the Winter Soulstice/Longest Night worship in church. Thanks to staff members, Jim Miller and Patty Koplitz, Chris Swender, and Andrea Madsen, and worship assistants Sue Engelbert and Sarah Swender, I was able to take the night off, sit in the pew with Jeranna, and remember my dad while lighting a candle during the service. This is the greatest Christmas gift I received this year... to be able to sit in the pew with my spouse... and to worship and honor my own grief. I don't get many opportunities to sit among you in the pews. Thank you, staff, for your idea to allow me to take the night off and receive this worship experience.

This service was done beautifully. It was meant for those for whom Christmas might not be so holly and jolly. But I would argue that all of us are hurting in some way and need to hear the good news of Jesus entering our world of grief and pain. Jim selected some of our lesser-known Christmas hymns and Patty shared the message. It was perfect. I hope you have a chance to watch it on the Our Savior's YouTube channel (thanks to Ben Lochner for streaming it). It is about 30 minutes long. I hope this service becomes an annual tradition at our church. It is really for all of us.

I am blessed to be called to Our Savior's. I see the Holy Spirit continuing to lead us into a bright future. I am thankful for our incredible staff who have many and various gifts to share. And I am thankful to all of you and your generosity in giving and serving to keep our ministries active and relevant.

Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year!

*Pastor Jon Strasman*

## Worship Services in January

**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

## Save These Dates!

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.

January 28-29—Worship includes **The Order for Healing**

February 22—**Ash Wednesday** Worship at 6:30PM

## Let's Make Music!

Joyous Ringers Handbell Choir NEEDS YOU! Reading music is helpful, but we can train you or mark the music for you. We are a friendly bunch and enjoy playing the bells. Come and observe us if you'd like. We meet every Wednesday night from 5:30-7:00 pm in the music room. We play about two times a month. If you are in high school or older, you're invited! We encourage mother-youth, father-youth to join. During the Lent-Easter season you might want to make a short-term commitment.

## Photos Have Arrived

The box of photos is on the table outside the nursery. Photos are grouped alphabetically by last name. There are a few families who have larger orders which will be set to the side. Please reach out to the office if you have any questions! **If you are unable to pick up your photographs, let me know and I can arrange for them to be dropped off.**

Digital photos would have been sent to your email; please check your spam folder prior to contacting Harmann Studios at: [churchcustomer-care@harmann.com](mailto:churchcustomer-care@harmann.com) or call 920-983-6600 x 111.

Love to sing but not just in the shower?? Join the Chancel Choir and share your talents. Looking for more folks to sing with us, if you are high school and older. Can you just jump in a half hour before we sing in church?? We meet every Wednesday night from 7:00 -8:00 pm in the Music Room. We sing two times a month, the 2nd Saturday at 5:00 pm and the fourth Sunday at 9:00 am. During the Lent-Easter season you might want to make a short-term commitment. Contact Ardy Kreuter, Director, at [akreuter@new.rr.com](mailto:akreuter@new.rr.com) or 920-470-4701.

**"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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## **Lutheran World Relief Kits -**

Our congregation is truly amazing; we were able to send 50 Baby kits, 50 Personal Care kits, and 80 School Bags. Let's do it again! Here are the items for January:

- #1. 30 combs (new, large, and sturdy).
- #2. 35 new lightweight hand towels (any colors except white).
- #3. 60 small pencil sharpeners.
- #4. 50 baby socks (sizes from 6 to 24 months).

You can drop off your donations in the gathering area whenever the church is open (there are three black bins together, and they're labeled). You can also send an email to Ann Pokel if you'd like to have a pick up from your house or apartment. If you have any questions, simply connect with Ann ([wapokel@gmail.com](mailto:wapokel@gmail.com)).

## **Fox Valley Community Table/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. To volunteer:

- sign up on the Chart in the Gathering Area
- read the Informer for the Sign-up Genius link
- 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** has started again on Sundays at 10AM. We are studying the book of Acts.

**Mission Quilters** meet every 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 1pm in the gymnasium (January 5 and 19). Sewing experience is not needed—everyone is welcome! Call the church office for more information at 920-725-3956.

**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](https://www.instagram.com/oursaviorslutheranchurch-neenah). Tag us or share things. Feel free to send photos and information to Patty at [pkoplitz@our-saviors.org](mailto:pkoplitz@our-saviors.org)

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

## Noisy Coin

*Brigade*

\$601.38

## Generous Congregation

YTD Totals Through November

	<i><b>Budgeted</b></i>	<i><b>Actual</b></i>
<b>Income</b>	\$406,358	\$377,476
<b>Expenses</b>	\$405,111	\$361,718
<b>Balance</b>	\$ 1,247	\$ 15,758

## November/ December Pastoral Acts

### ***Funerals***

Bertha Koepke on 11-29

### ***Baptisms***

Luka Abeng Asante on 12-10

***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.***

## Memorials & Honorariums Received

*A special thank you to those  
who remembered*

Rasmus Radick  
Dan Evenson

## 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

# Wonderful World of Youth and Family Ministry

It's a  
Real  
Thing!

## Summer Service Trip

Where: OSLC

When: **January 21<sup>st</sup>, 11am**

Who: all families with middle school and high school kids. Families with 5<sup>th</sup> grade students too!

Why: I will be serving brunch and we will start planning our summer service trip.

## SPAM

Soda, pizza, and a movie night! I am inviting all kids ages 2<sup>nd</sup> grade through high school kids. We will eat, watch a movie, and then play games. Probably hide and seek! Or Sardines!!!

Join us Saturday **January 28<sup>th</sup>** from 6pm until 10 pm. Adults are welcome to join us!

## Crossways Camping Ministries is Coming!

They will visit on **JANUARY 29<sup>th</sup>**. Jess and her friends will provide the children's sermon and Sunday School. I am so excited! I love camp!

*Thank you, thank you, thank you to all the families and folks who helped with the Christmas Worship program for the kids! It was spectacular thanks to you!*

*-Patty*

## The Orbit

Shelley from Neenah High School showed me The Orbit the other day. Here is what I learned...

They mostly need personal hygiene products, especially feminine hygiene products.

She truly appreciated the check that the Wednesday morning Bible study sent. She is very grateful. With money, they can get odd clothing sizes or shoe sizes that they might not have available.

There is great need in our community. So, thank you for the support. Let's keep it going!

## BYG Camp

This fun retreat is for kids in grades 2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>. We will be attending

**March 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup>**. We will be attending with kids from throughout

the Synod. The cost is \$175 per child. We will pay \$75 of that per child.

So, **your cost is \$100 each**. Please, don't let this be cost prohibitive. We have scholarships just for this! Look for the brochure in the mail!



*Pictures from our Children's Christmas Program*

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## Our Savior's Lutheran Church Council Minutes December 13, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.

### Pastor's Report:

#### Pastoral Acts

- 11/10 Steven Harwood Funeral @ Our Savior's
- 11/15 James Jensen Death (no service)
- 11/18 Judith Klein Funeral @ Kessler Funeral Home (Jennifer Baldwin's Mom)
- 11/29 Funeral for Bertha Koepke @ Westgor
- 12/10 Baptism for Luka Abeng Asante @ Our Savior's

#### Recent activities

- Joined in the Brigade Christmas Giving project
- Homebound visitation team meeting, and Wednesday Bible Study
- Attended my colleague group at Samaritan Fox Valley with 5 other ELCA clergy
- Participated in an Ecumenical Healing Worship at St. Paul's
- Caroling with the congregation
- Had my first in-person Mutual Ministry Committee meeting with Tom Bervan, Ann Pokel, and Dewey Wisner.
- Delivery of Poinsettias to homebound folks and visitations.

#### Upcoming

- 12/14 Confirmation and Midweek Holden Evening Prayer
- 12/17-18 Lessons and Carols Worship & Children's Christmas program on Sun.
- 12/20 Staff Christmas Party in the office at 11AM
- 12/21 Winter Solstice worship. Longest night worship, for those who are hurting this time of year.
- 12/24 Christmas Eve Worship @ 1, 3, 5, and 9 PM
- 12/25 Christmas Day Worship 9 AM (Hymn sing with message and communion)
- Vacation 12/26-12/30 to spend time with family

### Treasurer's Report:

- November income = \$35,651, Year-to-date income = \$375,997 vs. YTD budget of \$321,075.
- November expenses = \$34,858, Year-to-date expenses = \$361,718 vs. YTD budget of \$405,111.
- Overall, November ended in the black by \$2,272 bringing year-to-date in the black by \$15,758.

### Ministry Team Reports:

#### a. Building & Grounds – Kevin Schabo

Thank you to all involved with helping out with things while Chris was out.

#### b. Retirees & Friends –Carol Swannell

Joan Terry hosted about 25 retirees and friends to a Christmas party at church. Everyone was to bring a 5\$ gift card and a dish to pass. The gym was beautiful, complete with table decor and gift bags! With the chicken, sides and Christmas cookies, nobody left hungry. We played a game of pass-the-gift to the poem "Twas the Night Before Christmas". Ardy Kreuter lead us in a game of "name that holiday tune in 4 notes ". A wonderful time was had by all!

Next meeting is Mon Jan 9 and will learn some new games.

#### c. TEC – Kevin Schabo

Meeting held on 11/2. Discussed how to replace the faulty speaker in the sanctuary. Discussed the streaming service and continued to pass along possible improvements.

#### d. Finance – Cheryl Timm

Reviewed/finalized the 2023 budget in preparation for the budget review meeting & Annual Meeting.



Tim Moe and Cheryl Timm worked together to finalize Pastor Jon's original draft of a stewardship letter and finalized a commitment "card" for 2023. They also prepared the mailing.

Thanks to Andrea for running copies and providing mailing labels.

e. Learn & Grow/Youth – Marcus Shimon

Had team meeting to discuss the progress of the Learn & Grow team and set expectations moving forward. Next meeting is January 17<sup>th</sup>.

f. Serve & Reach – Diane Wilfling

The noisy coin offering earned about \$1,300. We were able to purchase a case of hygiene products, 12 gloves, 6 mittens, 72 hats, 72 undies, 24 socks and 3 giant rolls of wrapping paper and tape, and 20 earbuds. In addition the congregation donated mittens, gloves, hats, undies and earbuds which Ann Pokel, Pastor Jon, Pam and Rich Garman and Patty Koplitz delivered on Tuesday. In January we will discuss continuing the Brigade support of switching to the Bletzinger House for 2023

The two feeding programs are changing dates to the First Tuesday and Second Thursdays.

The congregation's participation as volunteers has been very low and we are looking for an increase in interest and participation (especially for Pillars) - any ideas? It's only 2.5 hours 6 times per year for each event. We may try a bigger effort to promote in January.

g. Worship & Music – Graham Bradley

Anniversary Celebration went very well with Service, decorations & great food.

Usher need for worship has been well supported. Need to optimize process to include many.

Thanksgiving Eve at Gloria Dei was lightly attended by OSLC

Children's Christmas Program – December 18, 9:00 am

'The Un-Decorating' Jan 3

Upcoming Services:

Children's Christmas Program – December 18 with Lessons and Carols Services, 5:00 pm & 9:00 am – Patty and Jim and Amber O'Kray heading up the children's program.  
Christmas Eve – 1:00 -special music; 3:00 -Joyous Ringers; 5:00 – Chancel Choir;  
9:00 – Special Music: Jim is getting special music for 1:00 and 9:00 pm. Christmas Day – hymn sing 9:00 am –Using hymnals. New Year's Eve service back on – Dec. 31 at 5:00 PM. New Year's Day - January 1-9:00 service

## 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

## New Business:

Scrip Program

Request for the Scrip program to be dissolved. The program was opened in 2015 and has had declining profit since open with \$187 of profit in 2022 to date.

Motion to dissolve the scrip program and allow the remaining funds to be used at the church's discretion. **Motion/Second/Carried Swannell/Bradley** to dissolve program. All voting aye.

Renter's Notice to Vacate

The renters in the rental house across the street have given their notice to no longer rent the home. Discussion as to what the next steps for that property should be. Which lead to the idea that we need a group of people that can lead this discussion for our church. Ideas ranged from finding new renters to selling the house, demolishing the home, allowing Pillars Foundation to manage the property and use it for their service mission. **Motion/Second/Carried Strassman/Swannell** to form a team as to what to do with the property. All voting aye.

Budget Communication Strategy (Salaries)

Discussion was held over how the church chooses to communicate the employee's salary in the budget meeting. Currently employee salary is listed as a single line item within the

## *Council Minutes cont...*

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budget. Requests came from the congregation that they would like to see each employee's salary.

After discussion, the direction from council was that we maintain the status quo of how we share our annual budget. There have been and will continue to be budget review meetings prior to the annual meeting that the congregation may attend if they choose for more information.

### Personnel Committee

We are actively looking to bolster our Personnel Committee. The chairperson left this committee and we need a replacement.

### Council Picture Collage

We are working towards adding pictures of your council members to a wall in the church to create awareness of who is on church council.

### Pastor Dara visit in January

Respectfully submitted,  
Marcus Shimon, Council Secretary



*Thanksgiving Eve at Gloria Dei. Pastor Jon is shown with his daughter, Marcella, Pastor Niveen from St. Mark's and Pastor Amy from St. Paul's.*



*A few 'elves' from OSLC, along with Pastor Jon, delivered our gifts to the Boys & Girls Brigade last month. Thanks to everyone who donated to this program this year.*



# January Calendar...

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The OSLC calendar can also be found on our website by going to [our-saviors.org](http://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
Jan 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dave Zernicke - out of office Jim Miller - out of office Pastor Jon - out of office 9am Worship 10am Sunday School 10am AA Hispanic	11am Staff Meeting 6pm Worship & Music Team OSLC Office Closed - 8:30am Pickleball +2 more	8:30am Pickleball 10am Bible Study - Virtual & 5:30pm Joyous Ringers Rehe 6pm Confirmation 7pm Chancel Choir Rehears	8:30am Pickleball 10am Bible Study - Virtual & 5:30pm Joyous Ringers Rehe 6pm Confirmation 7pm Chancel Choir Rehears	1pm Quilting 6pm AA Meeting	Epiphany 8:30am Pickleball	5pm Worship
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9am Worship 10am Adult Bible Study 10am Sunday School 1pm AA Hispanic	8:30am Pickleball 10am Knitting 10am Rebekah Circle 6pm AA Hispanic	9:30am Esther Circle 6pm Serve & Reach - VIRTU 7pm Council Meeting	8:30am Pickleball 10am Bible Study - Virtual & 5:30pm Joyous Ringers Rehe 6pm Confirmation 7pm Chancel Choir Rehears	12pm Finance Meeting 6pm AA Meeting	8:30am Pickleball	5pm Worship
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
9am Worship 10am Adult Bible Study 10am Sunday School 1pm AA Hispanic	8:30am Pickleball 6pm AA Hispanic	11am Staff Meeting 6pm Learn & Grow Team Me	8:30am Pickleball 10am Bible Study - Virtual & 5:30pm Joyous Ringers Rehe 6pm Confirmation 7pm Chancel Choir Rehears	1pm Quilting 6pm AA Meeting	8:30am Pickleball	5pm Worship
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
9am Worship 10am Adult Bible Study 10am Sunday School 1pm AA Hispanic	8:30am Pickleball 6pm AA Hispanic	6:30pm Women's Book Club	8:30am Pickleball 10am Bible Study - Virtual & 5:30pm Joyous Ringers Rehe 6pm Confirmation 7pm Chancel Choir Rehears	6pm AA Meeting	8:30am Pickleball	5pm Worship
29	30	31	Feb 1	2	3	4
9am Worship 10am Adult Bible Study 10am Sunday School 1pm AA Hispanic	8:30am Pickleball 6pm AA Hispanic	11am Staff Meeting	8:30am Pickleball 9am Visitation/Homebound / 10am Bible Study - Virtual & 5:30pm Joyous Ringers Rehe 6pm Confirmation 7pm Chancel Choir Rehears	1pm Quilting 6pm AA Meeting	8:30am Pickleball	9am Appleton Conference A 5pm Worship



# *Pictures from December...*



*Some family volunteers helped set up our nativity scene out on Commercial Street. This scene has been popular with our neighbors and passersby for years.*



*Our Savior's held its annual caroling day a couple weeks before Christmas. They visited four local retirement communities and were well received.*

