

Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church

February 2021 Newsletter

Moving Toward Celebrating New Life

As we move into Lent we anticipated Christ's victory over sin, evil and death on Easter. It's a six week journey of preparation waiting for new life. Lent has not taken on the level of meaning for me like it has this year. We are waiting, longing, aching for new life, for freedom, for hope. We have endured a year long exile from life as we know it, often staying at home or sequestered alone. Some say it feels like a form of house arrest. It has been a trip to the wilderness.

I am reminded by the history of God's people who endured confinement and wilderness; 400 years as slaves in Egypt, wandering 40 years in the wilderness after escaping slavery, and much later, spending 40 years in exile in Babylon after Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed. In all of those wilderness times they experienced that God was with them all the time. In the moment of separation and isolation it may not have felt like God was with them, but God was with them the whole time, guiding, comforting, listening to them.

One of the things God's people discovered was God is portable. God travelled with them no matter where they were. Most ancient people believed their gods were associated with a particular place. If they defeated in battle, they assumed it meant their god had been defeated as well.

Our God is different. God is not defeated or beaten. God is victorious even if it doesn't look like it in the moment. God is portable and eternal, God is ALWAYS with us. As we find ourselves on the cusp of a new time it is important to look for how God has carried us through this AND how God is leading us into a new time.

In this season of Lent we move through one kind of wilderness; the wilderness of our sinfulness and the ways we separate ourselves from God. But the journey does not end there. Instead we are called to name how we are separated, to confess the ways we have fallen short or fallen away from God. We repent, meaning we try to undo the impact of our sinfulness and separation so that the guilt and regret of the past can be removed. In this journey we are led from our own wilderness into a new promised land that Jesus calls the Kingdom of God. Its not a place. It is heaven on earth breaking into our

lives here and now.

This year in Lent we focus on a theme of Waiting for the Light of Christ. It recalls words we use in the Easter Vigil service when we gather outside around a fire. We light the Paschal (Christ) Candle and follow it into a dark sanctuary singing "The Light of Christ! Thanks Be to God"

May your Lenten journey this year lead you from a time of darkness to the Light of Christ. May the Light of Christ guide and lead you on your journey bringing you peace as the center of your life. Imagine, the Light of Christ as the center of your life. With Christ in us we are never lost in the dark.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Tom

A Dollar A Day for the Hungry in Lent

Each year we are invited to set aside \$1 each day to help feed those who struggle to get enough to eat around the world. Your hunger offerings are shared with the ELCA Hunger appeal which is active locally in our metro area, around our nation and around the world. Every cent you give goes to direct food aid because our regular ELCA support covers all the overhead costs.

Set a bowl on your dinner table and place a dollar in it each day. If you have children at home this is a great teaching opportunity. Invite them to participate taking turns putting your family's hunger offering in the bowl.



On Holy Week you can bring it to church when we are able to gather together for worship, drop it off in the new drop box in the east entrance or mail it in.

2020 Annual Congregational Meeting Report

The 2020 annual congregational meeting was held at both services on January 10th. There were two motions on the agenda. Michele Marsh was confirmed as Congregational Secretary. The 2021 proposed budget was approved as presented.





Greater Milwaukee Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's Work. Our Hands.

Important Message on Returning to Church Considerations

Bishop Paul Erickson, Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA

January 26, 2021

(full statement available at www.milwaukee-synod.org)

Friends in Christ:

As we pass the one-year anniversary of the first case of COVID-19 in the United States, it's safe to say that most, if not all, of us are weary from the many changes and restrictions the pandemic has brought about. Our congregations, communities, and leaders have worked diligently and tirelessly to find new ways to worship, learn, connect, and serve. We have sought to stay true to our mission while following the guidance of our public health professionals. We have tried to find the right balance between the desire to gather with the need to do so safely. Through it all, we have been guided by our call to love our neighbor as ourselves. I am deeply grateful for all your efforts to continue faithful ministry in these unprecedented times.

You may recall that, on November 11, 2020, I encouraged the congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod to discontinue indoor gatherings for worship or other activities until at least January 2021. In recent weeks, we have seen the number of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths in Southeast Wisconsin plateau and decline a bit. We have also witnessed the release of two COVID-19 vaccines, which give us hope that the pandemic may someday come to an end.

In light of these developments, I know that many congregations are reviewing their plans for whether, when, and how to return to their buildings for worship and other activities. While I am also encouraged by recent trends and developments, I want to encourage congregations to continue refraining from holding in-person, indoor gatherings. I offer this recommendation based on the guidance provided by our partners in the Wisconsin Council of Churches. They have recently released an update set of recommendations, "Returning to Church 2.0" (<https://www.wichurches.org/2021/01/14/returning-to-church/>). These recommendations are based on an extensive review of the scientific data and public health wisdom. The WCC documents include references to reliable sources of updated information that will allow you to track the numbers of vaccinations, infections, and positive test results in your area. Based on current trends, it is likely that we are still several months away from being able to consider safely returning to indoor gatherings.

I recognize that the prospect of yet another Lent and Easter season without worshipping and gathering in person may be discouraging. I encourage congregations, leaders, and rostered ministers to work together to make decisions in a collaborative manner, acknowledging the heightened levels of stress and weariness we are all experiencing, grounded in hope.

I continue to be grateful, proud, and hopeful for our congregations and our communities as we confront and respond to the many challenges of this pandemic. We're in this together, and I look forward to the time when we will be able to come together, in person, to discover what the next chapter of God's story will look like for us.

In faith and hope,

Bishop Paul D. Erickson

Public Worship Resumes Holy Week

After almost a year we will finally resume public worship. We plan to be able to gather for outdoor worship starting in Holy Week with Palm Sunday on March 28th, and gathering for outdoor worship every Sunday following. We will have the opportunity to either gather on the north lawn or stay in cars as we have done for drive in worship last year. Look for more details in the March newsletter and online.



Ash Wednesday and Midweek Lent Worship

We hope this is the last Lent we need to limit worship to online options.



Ash Wednesday worship will premier on Wednesday, February 17th at 6:30 p.m. Instead of using ashes this year we ask you prepare by placing an unlit candle in front of you for this worship time as a symbol of waiting for the Light of Christ. We will lead you through a rite of remembrance as we move into this season of confession and repentance.

Wednesdays in Lent at 6:30 p.m. online.

Preparing to Receive the Light of Christ

Every Wednesday in Lent we will host a 20 minute reflective worship time online focused on the theme of [Preparing to Receive the Light of Christ](#). The journey of Lent is marked by confession and repentance. Confession focuses on naming, admitting and owning our sinfulness in all the ways it shows. Repentance focuses on intentional acts of undoing the impact of our sinfulness.

Join us for this time away from the world as we prepare to receive the Light of Christ.

Outreach for Hope

2021 Lenten Devotions

Our ministry partners at Outreach for Hope will be releasing daily video devotions (Monday-Saturday) beginning on Ash Wednesday (February 17th). This year's theme is "What does it mean to give?" We will have a link to these devotions on our website and Facebook page to make it easy to access them.

From Outreach for Hope, "We hope these devotions will inspire you to reflect deeper on the gifts Christ has given us even in these difficult times, and how we might in turn give to our siblings in need. May our savior's spirit of abundant grace and generosity be with you this Lenten season!"

Check out these Lenten devotions [HERE](#).

Your Memories Are Needed!

As part of our history gathering, we need you and your memories (happy, sad, informative, anything works) from the past 30 years. If you would like to submit a memory or story about COS, please include at least the approximate year of your recollection. If you would like to be anonymous, please let us know.



Submit memories in the church office, by mail, or by email at office@coslc.com.

Thank you,
Maria, and the Church Council

"SOUPER" Bowl of Caring - SOS Can Drive & Monetary Donations

February 1st thru February 7th (1 Week Only!!!)

Hey all you NFL Football Fans! This event is for you! We are having our own Souper Bowl event at Christ Our Savior. Let's see which team wins. YOU decide!

Bring your soup cans to church by Sunday February 7th (Superbowl Sunday) and place them on the table for the team you want to win. The team with the most cans wins our Souper Bowl of Caring Event. We will announce the team winner in our Constant Contact next week. Let me remind you, no cheating allowed! We have a superior surveillance system in place, God is watching you!

We will also be collecting monetary donations. Please either mail in donations or drop off donations in our lockbox at church. The soup cans and monetary contributions will be donated to the SOS Food Pantry.



FebrU-WEARy "Brief Appeal"

Let me briefly appeal to you to help provide kids and adults with the basic need of clean underwear. No one should be reduced to wearing soiled, stained, or torn underwear. You can make this happen by dropping off a pair or two of NEW underwear this February. We will be collecting NEW underwear for all ages, genders, and sizes at church inside the east doors (under the canopy). Underwear collected will be donated to our ministry partners. Thanks in advance for dropping off your drawers!



Bread of Healing - To Go Meal

Wednesday, February 10th

Our next Bread of Healing meal at Cross Lutheran is on Wednesday, February 10th. With Valentine's Day right around the corner, we are looking for bags of individually wrapped heart-shaped chocolates such as Dove Chocolates or Nestle Crunch, or any Valentine Hershey Kisses (NO NUTS), so we can add a few sweet treats to our to-go bags, along with a message to share God's love. Also needed are two volunteers to help with meal prep (Tuesday evening) and two volunteers to assemble bags (Wednesday morning). If interested in helping, please reach out to Chuck Liedtke at chuck.liedtke@sodexo.com.



Palm Sunday Family Easter Egg Hunt

Please join us Sunday, March 28th for a modified Egg-Extravaganza immediately following the 10:00 a.m. drive-in worship service for a story, games and an egg hunt! Please watch for more information in the weekly COS Happenings email and the Sunday School Newsletter as March approaches! For questions, please contact Kim Lewin at kim@coslc.com.



Megan Pfeifer

Our Nursery Care Provider

For those of you who do not know, our sweet Megan who has loved and taken care of our children for so many years is going to be a mom!

If you are interested in showing her some love and thanks for all of the years she has loved your children please consider blessing her with a card. If you would like to give a gift you can include a gift card to Amazon or Target, she is registered at both of these online stores. Please drop them off at church at the drop box located inside of the east entrance before Sunday, February 28. If you have questions, please contact Kim Lewin at kim@coslc.com.



Serenity Inns

Tuesday, February 16th

Tuesday, February 16th is our next meal at Serenity Inns. It may not feel like you are making a big difference by providing a dessert or side item, but you really are! This meal lets the men at Serenity Inns know that you care and that they do not face the HUGE challenge of recovery alone. Please keep the men at Serenity Inns in your prayers this month and know that YOU are making a difference! Items for Serenity Inns can be dropped off at church inside the east doors (under the canopy) by 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday. If you would like to help with the meal, contact Hank Wallenkamp at 262-525-1211.



Mac-n-More- Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who donated food for our annual Mac-n-More drive. The food collected will be donated to Cross Lutheran Food Pantry where hungry children and families facing food shortages will be fed thanks to your love in abundance!



Food Pantry Delivery Needed

We are looking for volunteers to pick up and deliver donated items from church to the SOS Food Pantry. The items need to be picked up once a week, but you can choose a time that works for you. The SOS Food Pantry drop off times are Monday - Saturday 10AM-NOON. Please select the month you would like to serve on SignUpGenius [HERE](#).



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5th Grade First Communion Classes

This is the time of year we usually begin instruction to prepare our children to receive Holy Communion, often called First Communion. In an effort to live out our baptismal promise we ask that one or more parents participate in this this four-week long learning event with your child.



As you already know, we are not open for in person worship, confirmation, Sunday school or any other gatherings. In years past, we have typically met on Wednesday evenings after the 6:30 p.m. Lenten worship service at church. Since we are still restricted when it comes to large groups meeting indoors, First Communion class will be held via Zoom. Just like our in-person classes, at least parent attends the zoom meeting with their child. I have provided a Google link for a survey regarding times and dates for our class and how you felt about gathering in small groups so your child can make their chalice. There is also a take home option to make the chalice. I ask that you fill out the questionnaire as soon as possible so I can set up the class and our class date and time. Class will begin On Wednesday, February 21st at 7 p.m. You must be registered to receive the Zoom link for the class. For questions, contact Kim Lewin at kim@coslc.com and for registration click [HERE](#) or go to <https://www.coslc.com/first-communion-reg/>

TACOS

Stay up to date on all things TACOS through TACOS Virtual Mode! TACOS continues to be active on our website, social media platforms, and email and text. We provide weekly activities for you and your youth to take part in. You can find all you need to know about our activities on our website, racosoutreach.com.



Also! Throughout the month of February TACOs is helping the confirmation program with prepping snack packs for the Guest House of Milwaukee. TACOS is looking to supply the packs with positive notes for the clients receiving the snack packs. You can make positive notes of any kind and drop them off in the eastside entrance of COS, just label them as "Guest House Notes."

We hope you enjoy getting creative to help our confirmation friends with the snack packs and see you online through the TACOS Virtual Mode!