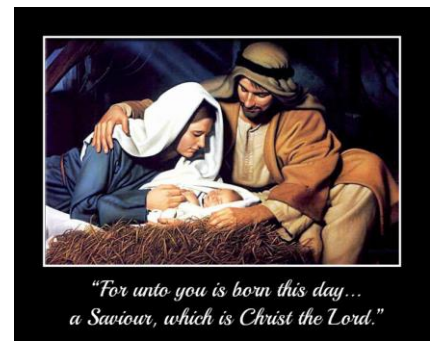


# MEMORIAL MESSENGER December 2016

*"You are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21*



You arrive early to get a good seat for the movie you've waited weeks to see, then someone quite tall sits in the row right in front of you. Though the theater has a sloping floor, you have to lean to the right then the left to see the screen. You want to say, "Hey, you're in my way! I can't see very well! Please sit somewhere else!"

That will happen to us spiritually these weeks before we celebrate the birth of the Son of God. So much of what our society does this month gets in the way of the *real* Christmas. Presents to buy, parties to plan and/or attend, cards to send, trees to trim, decorations to hang. Those threaten to block our view of the real Christmas.

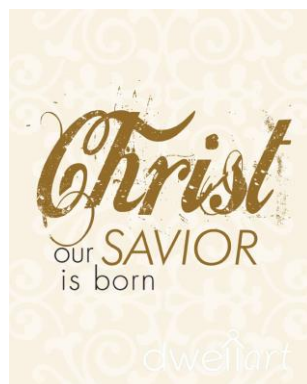
None of those are sinful in themselves. But anything that gets in our way of seeing who Jesus is, remembering what Jesus has done, trusting where Jesus will take us is something to limit—or eliminate. As we prepare our homes for the season we are just as diligent to prepare our hearts for the Savior. Jesus didn't come to earth as a little baby to be adored (though He was adored by shepherds, Magi, Simeon, Anna); He came to be the God of forgiveness. Jesus didn't enter our world to be a good example (though He was a good example every day He walked and talked among the people); He came to live a sinless life in our place and to carry our hell on Himself at the cross.

Those thoughts aren't found on most Christmas cards or captured in many songs of the season. But those truths are the real Christmas. God made sure Joseph knew those truths before Jesus was born. His message to Joseph through the angel was, *"You are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."* We want our Christmas guests to feel wonderfully welcome in our homes for Christmas. But if Jesus and the forgiveness of sins He came to deliver isn't the center of our Christmas, our Christmas isn't real.

Those who get the real Christmas are those looking for the Savior from sin. What good news the Messiah's birth was to the shepherds and the Magi! The real Christmas isn't a feeling or a season. During the evening worship services this month, we'll review our lives and our sins and long for the Savior's forgiveness. That's the real Advent and Christmas. During our home devotions around the Word (and maybe with an Advent wreath), we'll ponder the mission for which Christ came to earth and how successfully He completed it and what it means for us sinners. That's the real Advent and Christmas.

Enjoy the season. But don't hesitate to say to some things this month, "Get out of my way! I can't see the Savior!" May the real Advent and Christmas truth fill your home and heart! May the Savior grant you a truly blessed Advent and Christmas!

*Pastor Voss*





**FOREVER WITH THE LORD** The Savior called to Himself in heaven the soul of **Mark Light** on Thursday, November 3. We await word from family members who live a considerable distance from Michigan about a Christian memorial service.

May the Lord Jesus grant to Mark's loved ones and to his dear friends the peace of forgiveness and the sure hope of heaven through faith in Christ Jesus, born to take away the sins of the world and to open heaven to sinners!

★  
For  
God so  
loved the  
world He gave  
His one and only  
Son that whoever  
believes in Him shall not  
perish but have eternal life  
John  
3:16

### **SPECIAL SERVICES:**

Wednesday, November 30 - 7:00 PM - Midweek Advent Service

Wednesday, December 7 - 7:00 PM - Midweek Advent Service

Wednesday, December 14 - 7:00 PM - Midweek Advent Service

Sunday, December 18 - 8:00 & 10:30 AM - Choral Worship Services

Saturday, December 24 - 7:00 PM - Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 25 - **10:00** AM - Christmas Day Service

*(even though it's a Sunday, only one service at 10:00)*

Saturday, December 31 - **4:00** PM - New Year's Eve Service with Holy Communion *Note the time of the late afternoon service!*

Sunday, January 1 - **10:00** AM - New Year's Day Service

*(even though it's a Sunday, only one service at 10:00)*

**SUNDAY SCHOOL / BIBLE CLASS** There will be no Sunday School or Bible Class sessions on *Sundays, December 25 and January 1.*

**A SUPPER** will precede each of our midweek Advent services. The meals will begin at 6:00. Our hosts:

Nov. 30 - our school's Parent - Teacher Organization;

Dec. 7 - Board of Evangelism & Stewardship;

Dec. 14 - Ladies Fellowship.

A free will offering to help with meal expenses will be received each evening.

*By having a supper before the service, we hope that more members will come here for a meal and then to be fed with God's Word as we prepare to celebrate our Savior's birth.*

**CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE REHEARSALS** The children of our congregation will gather at church on *Saturdays, December 10 and 17* from 9:30 - 11:30 AM. There may also be a rehearsal on *December 6* at the same time.

Parents, for the children are to proclaim God's Word on Christmas Eve in word and song effectively, their attendance at these rehearsals are very important. Please plan now to have your children here those two mornings. If your child must miss a rehearsal, please speak with Pastor Voss ahead of time.

*We expect all children of the congregation to participate in the service (from those who attend the pre-school level of our Sunday School through children who are in 8th grade.)*

If travel plans will keep your child from being here Christmas Eve, please mention it to Pastor Voss as soon as you are aware of the conflict so that the necessary changes can be made in service assignments.

**LUNCH FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES** Our Sunday School teachers are once again providing a lunch for the children and their families *after the December 10 rehearsal*. The meal will begin at 11:30. We hope that all the children and their family members will join us!

**LEARNING SONGS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE** Parents, the Sunday School session each week begins with music and a brief devotion. In November and December, the music is including songs that the children will sing for the Christmas Eve service.

Bring your children to Sunday School regularly so that they can learn about what God has done to save sinners, while you come upstairs to do the same in our Bible Class! Please have your children here for the start of Sunday School each week so that they can participate in the music portion and hear the devotion.



**PARADE HELP** We urge members to sign up to volunteer to walk in costume alongside our float in the Williamston Light Parade ***Saturday, December 3 at 6:00***. The volunteers will pass out flyers about our Live Nativity event and Christmas Eve & Day worship services.

**LIVE NATIVITY UPDATE** We have word of our Live Nativity in papers, on community calendars, on our web site, and on our Facebook page. Please share these things with your family and friends. Use the invitation cards at church to remind them about the date and times. Those are: **Saturday, December 10 from 5:30-7:30.**

Our character roles being acted out more make for a more realistic setting. Let's make this as real as we can. With many members helping and participating, we can spread the Word of our Savior's birth.

**Costumes will be fitted on Sundays, November 27<sup>th</sup> and December 4<sup>th</sup>. If you haven't signed up yet, please, please consider doing so.** We eagerly look for more young families and teens to be a part of this event. Please watch bulletins or emails for future updates. An update letter will be in your box at church and emailed by December 3. Watch for the schedule for setting up that day in that letter. If you have any questions, speak with Laurie Voss.

Let's continue to show our community and the area that we know why Jesus was born. We know what the true meaning of CHRISTmas is. Jesus is our Savior!



**WE REMIND** the re-elected and newly elected board members and officers that their terms begin January 1 (their first official meetings will be in early January). The plan, for now, is to have installation for these men during the ***one 10:00 worship service on January 1***. That will be reviewed at the December Church Council meeting.

**THE LOCAL FOOD BANK CONDUCTS A TOY DRIVE** each December. We plan to participate once again.

The Food Bank is looking for new or unused toys and games for children in our area who might not receive gifts for Christmas. The gifts are distributed to infants and children through age 10. You may bring your donations to the church narthex through December 11.

As we celebrate the birth of the Christ-child, your gift to a less fortunate child could make this a special Christmas not only for that child, but for you as well.

**OUR GRAYCE GROUP** will hold their Christmas party on ***Tuesday, November 29 at 11:30***. Please bring a dish to pass and, if you so desire, a children's toy to be given to the Williamston Christmas Toy Drive. We plan to sing Christmas carols, play various games, and more. Everyone is welcome!

**CHOIR** will meet *Thursdays, December 1, 8, 15 at 7:30 PM* to rehearse music for *Sundays, December 4 & 18*. We welcome and encourage all our communicant members to consider joining our choir for those rehearsals and Sunday dates. The choir will not rehearse in January.

**CHIME CHOIR REHEARSALS** will be held *Thursdays, December 1 & 8 at 6:30 PM, then Saturday, January 7 at 11:00 AM*. These sessions will practice music to be rung on *Sunday, January 8*. New players are welcome! Please consider joining our chime choir.



**THE FLOWER CHART FOR 2017** will soon be posted on the bulletin board. You are invited to sign up to place flowers on the altar for any Sunday. If you wish, you may also indicate the occasion for which the flowers are being donated.

We ask your cooperation in filling only two or three Sundays for 2017 per family for now, allowing more of our families to sign up. In January please feel free to take as many Sundays as are still open.

If you have questions about how to use the chart or order flowers to be presented here in church, please speak to Pastor Voss.

**OUTREACH MATERIALS** The Board of Evangelism & Stewardship reminds members that we have copies of the *WELS DVD "My Son, My Savior"* are available for purchase (\$3 per copy; 2 for \$5).

As the Christmas season approaches, consider purchasing copies for your family and friends to show them why the birth of the Savior is so important for everyone on earth.

**WATCH FOR YOUR 2017** offering envelopes. They will be placed in the mail slots by December 18.

**USHERS** We will distribute the 2017 usher schedule, teams, and duties to you in your mail slot at church.



**LADIES FELLOWSHIP** - Gals, don't forget we will decorate the church for Advent and Christmas **November 29<sup>th</sup>**. We will meet at 9:30 AM.

We will also meet Monday, **December 5** at 7:00 for our annual Christmas party/ornament exchange. Please bring one, wrapped ornament (\$5.00 limit please.) for our ornament exchange.

We will also reveal our 2016 secret pals at the Christmas party, and then draw names for our 2017 secret pal. If you cannot make it to the party but would like to be part of the secret pal program, please speak with Laurie Voss before the party. We are always looking for more women to join in this fun activity. We send cards to our secret pal during the year (at least once a month). Then at our Christmas party we will give a gift to our secret pal as we reveal our names. This past year was the 28<sup>th</sup> year of our secret pal program. Wow!

Our hostess for our Christmas party Laurie. She will provide the beverage and paper products. We are asking everyone to bring their favorite appetizer, treat, or dessert for our snack table. It sure is a lot of fun sampling all these fun foods.

Our next meeting will be **January 9**. We will discuss our agenda for 2017, decide where to send our mission offerings, and talk about special activities and projects which we might do. We will also finish work on the church library.

Come to the Christmas party and have some fun with us! Learn more about our activities and join in the wonderful Christian fellowship we share.

A reminder to the members of our group: We will host the Advent supper on Wednesday, **December 14**.



**CANDIES IN TINS:** The Ladies' Fellowship group has available at church tins filled with homemade candies. We also have jams and jellies and Stollen. We prices are listed. *All proceeds from these items go to our Ladies' Fellowship mission projects.*

**WE THANK THOSE PEOPLE** who have donated and made pot holders to be kept at school.

**COLLEGE STUDENTS**, please submit your campus address, phone number, and e-mail address to Pastor Voss. If he has your e-mail address, he would be happy to send a copy of week's sermon to you electronically.

Even if you have previously submitted a college e-mail address to Pastor Voss, please do so once again so that we can be sure to have up-to-date information. Pastor Voss' e-mail address is revdavoss@gmail.com.

We wish you God's richest blessings on your studies!

**IF YOU HAVE ACCESS** to the internet and get this *Memorial Messenger* that way, please let us know and we will no longer print a copy for you.

## CHURCH COUNCIL REPORTS

**PASTOR'S REPORT** – WELS news: Through October WELS Congregation Mission Offerings totaled \$16,148,683. That's about \$80,000 more than the first 10 months of 2015. It's also nearly \$340,000 above 2016 subscriptions (when pro-rated for 10 months). We thank the Lord for moving His people to bring these thankofferings. The Michigan District portion of those mission thankofferings is above last year's levels and above what the 10-month subscription is for our district. It has also been reported that the WELS debt is almost entirely eliminated, as a result of special gifts to WELS the past 12 months, and a \$1.6 million payment from this year's WELS budget.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief is assisting with money donations and volunteer labor congregations and families in Louisiana and the Carolinas affected by flooding when hurricanes passed near those areas.

The schedule for midweek Advent services with area WELS congregations has not yet been finalized. However, I expect that I'll be here for the first service on November 30, then travel the next two Wednesdays to conduct the services at area WELS churches while the pastor of the congregation I am at conducts the service here that evening.

**BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION** – Enrollment: Figures are the same, though one four year old moved and one four year old enrolled.

Tardy policy is working; students and parents are aware of expectations and consequences.

The board thanks Denis and Nancy Hart and all of our hot lunch helpers.

The board thanks our library volunteers for their wonderful work.

PTO will host supper at church Wednesday, November 30 and Wednesday March 1.

We discussed having 2 Sundays off for Sunday School for the Christmas and New Year's holidays each year.

We will ask individuals to serve as Sunday School substitute teachers.

**BOARD OF ELDERS** – The Board of Elders recommends changing the summer evening worship schedule for 2017, switching from Monday evenings to Thursday evenings at 7:00.

The Board of Elders have set the time for the upcoming New Year's Eve service this year. The service will be at 4:00 PM.

The Elders reviewed the summer worship schedule. With holidays and other circumstances it seems the Monday services get canceled or re-scheduled more frequently than the Thursday evening services in the past. Therefore in an effort to maintain a more consistent worship schedule we recommend discontinuing the Monday services, and resume the Thursday evening services next summer.

As has been our tradition, we will again receive our annual December door offering this year. The dates the door offering will be received will be December 11 and 18. The board has designated Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw as the recipient of our door offering.

**BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND STEWARDSHIP** – We have a note in the bulletin to like our Facebook page, and we encourage members to use Facebook to promote Advent/Christmas services and the Live Nativity.

Another community dinner will be planned for some time after January 1.

We will distribute WELS DVDs at Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas services.

We thank Dan Kasischke for getting the third quarter statements out. He will prepare the 2017 thankoffering envelopes for distribution by December 18.

We will have a float in the Williamston Light Parade on December 3, and we ask member to walk the parade route in Live Nativity costumes and distribute flyers about our Christmas worship services and the Live Nativity.

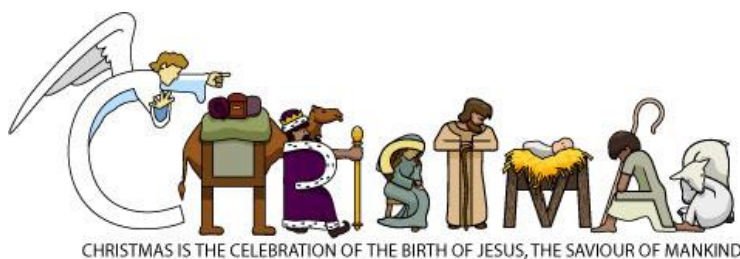
Advent suppers are set: November 30 – PTO; December 7 – Board of Evangelism and Stewardship; December 14 – Ladies' Fellowship.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES** – The heating system at the school has been turned on. We will get new filters installed shortly. Filters in the church and parsonage have been replaced already.

Snow throwers are ready for service.

The eaves trough on the east side of school has been repaired and redesigned.

Church ceiling tiles in the balcony will be looked at.



## **BADGER NEWS from SCHOOL -**

**FROM OUR PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN ROOMS:** November has come and gone swiftly for us. We started out with some fun events such as a costume and dress up day celebrating Reformation because we were not able to go on our field trip to the Apple Orchard due to bad weather. We also had so much fun with our grandparents visiting on Grandparents' Day.

We spent the month learning about the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags as well as what Thanksgiving is all about. We learned to be thankful for what we have and to thank God for all of that and mostly for Jesus coming, dying, and rising for us.

The three year olds continue to work on recognizing colors, shapes, letters, and numbers.

The four year olds continue to work on their names, letters, and numbers.

The kindergartners are working on blending the sounds of their letters together to make words. They are starting to work on addition, matching, comparing lengths, and measuring. In science they have started learning more about animals and how God made them all different for a specific reason so they could live in a specific place.

This month we are working on our Christmas service and learning more about the night of Jesus' birth. We will be of course having a birthday party for Jesus on the last day of school before Christmas break.

May you all be richly blessed this month as we reflect again on the birth of our Savior. Merry Christmas!

**FROM OUR GRADES 1-5 ROOM:** This month in our study of God's Word we have been hearing about Jesus' ministry after His baptism, but before His passion. Jesus has been preaching with authority about sin and forgiveness. He has been teaching the people how to follow God's commands and how to live a godly life. He has been healing and helping everyone He came into contact with. These true stories are so much more than a factual study of Jesus' life. They are a blueprint of how we are saved and how we live on this earth. Of course it is the most important of all we teach and learn! Continue to hear God's Word and receive the forgiveness won by Jesus. Continue to hear God's Word and hear how to live each day.

We had a whole lot of fun last month when we celebrated the fall season. We had a Reformation study, a Halloween dress-up, and Fall games and treats. It was all because we got rained out twice at the apple orchard. Who

knew that a rain-out day could be so much fun? We may do it again next year! Thanks to those who came to help and shared treats, time and gourds!

The day we spent with grandparents was a blast, too. We enjoyed presenting our skit, "The Shoemaker and the Elves" and playing Bombardment with grandparents and guests. We also wrote cinquains, played and ate. All in all, a great day!

We have begun our Advent devotions and will soon be decorating to celebrate the birth of our Savior. What a fantastic time of year as we look at what God did so long ago to ensure our salvation.

### **SERVING OUR LORD FOR OUR DECEMBER SERVICES:**

<i>Ushers</i>		<i>Altar Guild</i>	<i>Greeter(s)</i>	<i>Cleaners</i>
<b>8:00</b>	<b>10:30</b>			
12/04 - #2 V. Domke	#9 D. Fisher	J. Vogt	C. Douglas	B. Janecke
12/07 - #4 B. Grinnell		J. Vogt		
12/11 - #5 S. Houser	#1 T. Marion	S. Rector	R&J Mosher	J&S Janecke
12/14 - #2 V. Domke		S. Rector		
12/18 - #6 E. Ruhlig	#3 J. Janecke	M. Zoran	L. Voss	D&C Kasischke
12/24 - #7 D. Kasischke		M. Zoran		
12/25 - #6 E. Ruhlig		K. Ward	F&N Mills	T&L Loeffler
12/31 - #5 S. Houser		K. Ward		

**Let us worship the Lord our Savior!**



*May you have a blessed  
Christmas in the joy of  
our Savior's birth.*

