



MEMORIAL MESSENGER

December 2020

Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said."
Luke 1:38

Current coronavirus concerns and limitations mean some changes for our Advent and Christmas season worship services. We will have only one midweek Advent service, not three. No choral service the Sunday morning before Christmas. No children in the chancel area proclaiming the good news of great joy that will be for all the people. There won't be dozens of poinsettias providing a festive setting.

And all of that is just at church. You're already thinking about what might have to be different at home for your Christmas celebration. Will the extended clan get together – or stay in their respective homes? Will it be safe to exchange cookies? To have the friends over for a few hours? To crowd into stores to buy gifts?

In a number of ways, things – sadly – won't be the same this month.

But in *the most important ways*, things will – blessedly – remain the same this month.

The timeless message of the coming Savior will be presented in lessons and sermons at church and on-line, and in devotions at home. Hymns will be sung about the Savior's birth, and spiritual songs of the season will direct our hearts to something far more reliable than snowfall and someone far more real than Santa. We will hear the message from God Himself about God Himself come to earth. He took on our flesh and blood – yet remained true God! He entered our world to remove the curse from us sinners. We will hear that Christ was born in utter humility to fulfill Old Testament promises. Those truths of His eternal love will fill our hearts with joy.

Joy for the holidays in 2020? Yes! A good way to deal with the changes for this year's Advent and Christmas is to go back to the preparations for the first Christmas. The angel's announcement to Mary startled her. She was engaged to Joseph, and was preparing to begin her life as his wife. Then the Lord used Gabriel to tell Mary she would miraculously be pregnant by the power of God, and graciously give birth to the long-awaited Messiah.

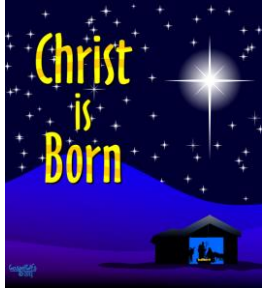
Mary's attitude when receiving the news that God had chosen her to be the mother of our Lord was expressed with a very humble confession. "*I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said.*" And later, "*My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior*" (Luke 1:47).

No parties? No extended family? No trips to the mall? No choir? No children's service? Mary and Joseph and the shepherds didn't have any of that for the first Christmas. But what they had we have: the Son of God born as man to deliver all sinners from the curse of hell. Maybe the restrictions will give us a chance to slow down this month and ponder more deeply the true essence of Christmas. May the Holy Spirit bless your Advent preparation and your Christmas celebration!

Pastor Voss

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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

SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 27 The Board of Elders has decided that again this year we will have only ***one service at 10:00 on the Sunday between Christmas Day and New Year's Day.*** There will be no Bible Class session that Sunday.



SPECIAL SERVICES:

Wednesday, December 9 - 7:00 PM - Midweek Advent Service
Thursday, December 24 - **7:00 PM** - Christmas Eve Service
Friday, December 25 - **10:00** AM - Christmas Day Service
Sunday, December 27 - **10:00** AM – Worship service
Thursday, December 31- **7:00 PM** - New Year's Eve Service with Holy Communion

ALTERNATING PEWS So worshipers don't use the same pews for the 10:30 service that were used for the 8:00 service, the Board of Elders has decided that ***each week*** we will use

- ***orange sheets to mark pews for seating in the 8:00 service,*** and
- ***pews with no sheets for seating in the 10:30 service.***

Thank you for observing this arrangement! ***Please don't remove the orange sheets from any pews.***

ON-LINE WORSHIP To provide worship opportunities for our members who are at risk and do not yet feel it's safe for them to gather in larger groups, and for an unknown number of non-members who access our web site, we continue to record a service each week. We normally record the 8:00 service each Sunday. ***Because of that timing and the work required to edit and process the video and audio files, the recorded service is usually uploaded to our YouTube channel Sunday afternoon, though some weeks it may not be until late Sunday night.***

Our Board of Evangelism & Stewardship urges you to let unchurched family members and friends know where to find our worship services on-line!

COMMUNION OFFERED Those who are at risk and/or are not yet comfortable with gathering in church for worship are encouraged to contact Pastor Voss for receiving Communion privately – either at home or at church. He will be delighted to do so at our earliest mutual convenience.

BIBLE CLASS sessions continue in person at church 9:15 Sunday morning, and on-line ***Tuesday morning at 11:00.*** Contact Pastor Voss for the link to use in joining the Tuesday morning Zoom Bible Class.

We are studying in detail the Apostles' Creed. Our sessions are opportunities to review from God's Word what the only true God reveals about Himself, His work for us sinners, and the tools He uses to do His work among us. Join us!

SUNDAY SCHOOL sessions continue to be conducted on-line. Lessons taught by experienced WELS teachers are available free via YouTube. To view the lessons, visit the web site nph.net/ss-at-home.

In addition, our Sunday School teachers invite children to join them via a Zoom Sunday School session each week. For now the sessions are **Wednesday evenings at 7:00.** This provides a way for the Sunday School students to interact with each other, begin with a devotion led by our Sunday School staff, and then discuss the lesson seen on YouTube. If you want an invitation to the presentation by our Sunday School staff, please contact Kathy Fedewa or Pastor Voss to get an invitation to the online sessions.

May God bless our children as we together continue to teach and share His love! We thank our Sunday School teachers for providing the opportunity for our children to meet virtually!

A BRIEF, SPECIAL VOTERS MEETING will be held after the late service ***Sunday, December 6*** for an election to the Board of Trustees.

WE REMIND the re-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 worship services on ***January 3.***



LADIES FELLOWSHIP – This year we won't be having a Christmas party or have items we have made for sale for our mission project funds. We thank those of you who continue to remember that mission work with your free-will gifts.

We will meet, for those who feel comfortable doing so, to decorate the church on Tuesday, December 1, at 9:30. We are sure members will be surprised at the difference in decorations this year.

We give thanks that we can serve our newborn Savior in so many ways and look forward to when we can start meeting together regularly.

THE FLOWER CHART FOR 2021 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 2021 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.

WATCH FOR YOUR 2021 offering envelopes. They will be ready by December 20, if not before.

USHERS We will distribute the 2021 usher schedule, teams, and duties to you in your mail slot at church.

A NEW CHURCH CLEANING schedule will be distributed this weekend. We thank all our faithful church cleaning volunteers for their service!

FOOD BANK At the present time, the local food bank is not accepting food donations. When that changes, we will inform our members via the monthly newsletter or weekly church bulletin.

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: Congregation Mission Offerings to WELS across the Synod through the end of October are now about \$450,000 above last year at this time, and are almost \$90,000 over the pro-rated subscription for 2020. Michigan District congregations have submitted about \$40,000 more than the subscribed amounts, but are nearly \$77,000 below last year's amount at this time.

With one of our teachers testing positive for COVID the end of October, remote instruction took place for our preschool-fifth grade students through November 13. We resumed in person classes at school November 16. I commend our teachers for what they have done to make that transition. The parents of our students have been very supportive and cooperative.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – Two students received speech help via computer with a Williamston schools specialist. That changed to in-person sessions November 16.

Mrs. Leitz and Mrs. Domke planned for remote instruction and it went well.

Pastor will start 10-15 minute computer sessions with our K-5 students (7 at a time). Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes will be used.

Zoom sessions are held with our SS staff. WELS ChristLight books were ordered.

Mulch was purchased and put under and around the new playground equipment. Mrs. Leitz reports that the preschool inspector was here in mid-October and ruled that the playground must pass an inspection (\$200?) before students can use it.

Mrs. Leitz and Mrs. Domke have done a wonderful job of having the students wear masks in compliance with new orders and be understanding of the discomfort we all have with masks. Parents have been very cooperative.

Due to current circumstances, there will be no children's service this Christmas Eve.

BOARD OF ELDERS – The new hymnals and supporting materials will be ordered early in 2021. Payment will be due when hymnals are shipped later in the year. Members will be invited to order their own hymnals with the church's order, saving on shipping costs.

The 2021 usher schedule is being prepared and usher duties are being reviewed.

The Elders continue to monitor our worship services and review our efforts to worship safely.

The annual December door offering will be received December 13th and 20th. The Elders will recommend a recipient of the offering in December.

BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND STEWARDSHIP – We still urge members to share service links with others.

We suggest setting Sunday, December 6 as the date for a special voters meeting to elect a man to the Board of Trustees. (The incumbent candidate informed us after last month's voters meeting that he is willing to serve another term, if elected.)

We will be purchasing extra batteries to have on hand to make sure the audio quality is better for the recording of services. The plan is to use 4 new AA batteries at the beginning of each month for the two units that are battery-powered.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES – Victor is planning on replacing burned out parking lot lights at the school.

We discussed school cleaning when Pat is unavailable.



BADGER NEWS from SCHOOL

FROM MRS. LEITZ AND PRESCHOOL-KINDERGARTEN: In our Bible lessons we have continued to learn about Jesus' ministry. In this part of His life we are learning about how He used His almighty power to heal the sick and also to show us how He came to help with our biggest problem of all which, of course, is sin.

This past month we did not have a lot of new things happening in our classroom. We learned a little about the Reformation and then Thanksgiving with the Pilgrims and Wampanoag's. During our quarantine we were able to do some things virtually, but we were all very grateful and thankful to be back together again with everyone being happy and healthy.

Praise be to God that we have so many things to be thankful for this Thanksgiving season. We pray that all of you are also Happy and Healthy.

May you have a Blessed Thanksgiving!

FROM MRS. DOMKE AND GRADES 1-5: Despite the weird days we are living in, we continue to study the one truth that crushes all human concerns: that Jesus lived a perfect life for us, suffered for us, died for us to take away our sins, and rose victorious for us! We are so blessed! We thank God for each day we can study and learn the truths of the Bible together.

Grades 3-5 are continuing to study American history. We are now learning about the Jamestown colonies and all the troubles that they had. We know that learning about the past will help us understand the future.

In science, grades 3-5 are beginning a study of invertebrates. We have watched some teaser videos on the different groups and can't wait to get busy! There is so much to learn.

Grades 1-2 are working hard as well, reading like crazy and writing as well. We are working hard on good sentence construction and writing a paragraph with supporting sentences.

After Thanksgiving we are going to begin lots of Christmas preparations! We'll have our usual devotions, but also lots of singing, drawing, cutting and decorating. Covid can't stop our Christmas joy!



SERVING OUR LORD FOR OUR DECEMBER SERVICES:

<u>8:00</u>	<u>10:30</u>	<u>Altar Guild</u>	<u>Greeter(s)</u>	<u>Cleaners</u>
12/06 - #2 V. Domke	#3 J. Janecke	T. Wood	P&S Crandall	J. Douglas
12/09 - #5 S. Houser		T. Wood		
12/13 - #7 D. Kasischke	#4 J. Zoran	K. Unruh	A&J Rusnak	K&K Fedewa
12/20 - #5 S. Houser	#9 D. Fisher	S. Unruh	B. Janecke	D&S Fisher
12/24 - #3 J. Janecke		S. Unruh		
12/25 - #4 J. Zoran		S. Unruh		
12/27 - #8 D. Rector		K. Ward	D&T Wood	D&L Fortin
12/31 - #7 D. Kasischke		K. Ward		

Let us worship the Lord our Savior!



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

