



MEMORIAL MESSENGER

January 2017

It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:8-10

You’ve seen the bumper sticker slogan *Commit a random act of kindness today*. Do you know there’s even a *Commit-a-random-act-of-kindness* day? I think it’s in mid-February. The movement has gained new legs lately because Americans who fear for our nation’s future are using social media to urge everyone to make their New Year’s resolution for every day of 2017: *Commit a random act of kindness today*.

The following lines aren’t meant to scold anyone who is thinking, “That’s a great idea!” Why would a pastor, of all people!, discourage acts of kindness? The pastor isn’t. In fact, don’t we use God’s Word to encourage each other, as God’s people, to fill our lives with acts of kindness to others—not just one a day, but many acts of kindness a day? We do.

But the slogan has a word requiring caution: “random”. There’s nothing random in what we believers do to express our trust in our Savior and our love for the Lord who has so richly blessed us. The verses from Ephesians near the top of this page express that truth: *We are God workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, which God prepared in advance for us to do*.

We have just knelt with the shepherds at the crude first cradle of our newborn King. We have heard the good news of great joy from God through His angels that a Savior has been born for us. We are still basking in the joy of the real Christmas. How do we show our happiness? We do good works—good works which God has *prepared in advance for us to do*.

The words “good works” sometimes sound like dirty words or fingernails dragging across the chalkboard to our Lutheran ears. We don’t suppose the good works of kindness we do to others earn us points with God. We don’t commit acts of kindness to buy our tickets to a more comfortable spot in heaven—or a spot in heaven, period.

Our acts of kindness toward others, like all the good works we do, are done to send a living, loving “Thank You, Lord!” for His gifts of His Son as our Savior, for His gift of life in the world He created, for the countless blessings with which He showers us daily. Far from proving anything to God about how deserving we are (that’s impossible; due to our sins we don’t deserve anything good from Him), our good works give evidence of the faith in Jesus that fills our hearts and propels our lives.

Go ahead! Resolve to be more kind than ever to others every day in 2017. But don’t resolve to do so randomly! Do so consciously, conscientiously, spiritually, gratefully to give glory to our Savior, as well as to show others what His gracious blessings mean to us.

May God grant us a truly blessed year as we work together to do the work He has set before us!

Pastor Voss





SPECIAL SERVICES:

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)

There will be no Sunday School or Bible Class sessions on *Sunday, January 1.*

WE THANK YOU FOR your response to the toy drive and food bank in December! The presents donated by many of our members were greatly appreciated by the volunteers with the local food bank who distributed the gifts to children of needy families in the area.

Those volunteers informed us that they will no longer be distributing toys each December. They are directing us to use another area service to do so. We'll provide that information in November and December.

May we continue to remember that God has instructed us, "*Look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*" (Philippians 2:4)

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

Consider purchasing copies for your family and friends to show them why the birth of the Savior is so important for everyone on earth.

WE REMIND the re-elected board members and officers that their terms begin January 1 (their first official meetings will be in early January), and that they will be installed to office during the *services on January 8.*

LADIES FELLOWSHIP - Our group will meet this month one week later than usually scheduled. On January 9 at 7:00 PM we will gather to finish work on the church library and also take down church Christmas decorations. If you would like to, please bring your own snack and beverage this month.



YOUR 2017 THANKOFFERING ENVELOPES have been placed in your mail slot. Please pick them up at your earliest convenience.

Your thankoffering statement, reflecting your thankofferings for 2016, will be prepared and placed in your mail slot by the end of January.

WHEN FILLING OUT your thankoffering envelope, please be aware of the following:

- You *don't* need to write your name on the line provided. The identifying number in the upper corner is all that our financial secretary needs.

- We ask that you *do* list the amount placed inside the envelope on the line provided for that purpose. This information is needed by our financial secretary. If you do not list it, the counters will write it in when opening the envelope.

Some members are uneasy about others seeing the amount written on the envelope as the offering plate moves across the pews. *We suggest putting the envelope in the plate face down. That will allow you to provide the information needed by our financemen, yet keep your offering amount confidential.*

THE FLOWER CHART FOR 2017 is 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.

If you have questions about how to order flowers, please speak to Pastor Voss.

OUR GRAYCE GROUP will hold their next meeting on *Tuesday, January 31 at 11:30*. Watch for more information to be distributed later in January.



THE CHIME CHOIR will rehearse *Saturday, January 7 at 11 AM* to go through the music for the late service on Sunday, January 8. That will be the final chime choir rehearsal for January.

THE VOICE CHOIR will not rehearse until mid-February. At that time, music to be sung in mid-March and for Holy Week will be distributed and practiced. We urge new voices to join our choir for those services. We'll meet *Thursdays at 7:30 PM, beginning February 23*. Please consider joining us!

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!

FORWARD IN CHRIST - If you wish to renew your subscription to *Forward in Christ*, our Synod's magazine, or order a new subscription, you may use the envelope in your 2017 envelope packet that is marked for this purpose.

Subscription price will be **\$11.50** for this year, provided that enough families subscribe and we can take advantage of that bulk subscription rate. That price covers twelve monthly issues. If you subscribe through the congregation, your issue will be mailed to the church and placed in your box in the narthex.

Forward In Christ is an excellent periodical! It contains Bible studies, articles about how our Savior's love for us has affected people's lives, news from our Synod and religious information from around the world, and a number of other features. If you would like to see a few issues to get an idea of what the magazine is like, speak to Pastor Voss.

Please use your offering packet envelope for *Forward in Christ* (or a plain envelope labeled "*Forward in Christ*"), be sure to put your name on the envelope, fill it with a check for **\$11.50** made out to **Memorial Lutheran Church**, and give it to Pastor Voss. Please do so by **February 5!**

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORTS

PASTOR'S REPORT – Our thanks to all who worked on so many things for our congregation's float entry in the Williamston Light Parade on December 3, for our Live Nativity on December 10, and who continue to do so for weekend basketball games at our school.

Invitations to our Christmas festival worship services, as well as information about those services have been seen by more than 550 people via our congregation's website and Facebook pages. About 400 flyers inviting people to those worship services and our Live Nativity event were distributed along the Williamston Light Parade route. While that is encouraging, we remind you that what works best is for our members to invite personally unchurched friends and loved ones to worship the newborn Savior with us and to hear with us what He has done to save the world.

We thank our Sunday School staff for once again volunteering to host a meal for the children and their families after the first Christmas Eve service rehearsal.

We thank our out-going Church Councilmen Denis Hart and Bruce Painter for their faithful service. Installation of re-elected Church Councilmen will take place in the worship services January 8.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – We discussed the idea from last month’s council meeting that we look into targeted Facebook marketing. A board member has done some research and we are asking our office secretary to get some more information for us.

We thank Lena Loeffler for getting us the prices from 2012 yard signs, and we will consider ordering some more.

Grandparents’ Day went well. We thank our teachers, as well as our retired members who served as grandparents for students whose grandparents were unable to attend.

The PTO hosted the midweek Advent supper on November 30, and will host the Ash Wednesday supper on March 1.

The board decided to have two Sundays off from Sunday School around the Christmas/New Year season each year. We thank our faithful Sunday School teachers for their service to our Savior and His lambs.

We thank the donors who once again provided a Christmas gift for the children who are here Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

BOARD OF ELDERS – The 2017 usher schedule has been prepared and was distributed to our ushers.

The recipient of our annual December door offering this year will be Michigan Lutheran Seminary.

The Elders discussed the coming candlelit Christmas Eve service. The elders contacted a few men to assist with lighting candles.

We thank Denis Hart for his faithful service on our board.

BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND STEWARDSHIP – We thank those who distributed flyers at the parade earlier this month. The board members, with help from Andy Rusnak, put the float together.

After New Year’s Day, the board will see to it that the float display is taken from the front of the church building and stored in the shed at school.

As Financial Secretary, Dan Kasischke is meeting with our head thankoffering counters to inform the counters of what works best for our financial secretary in reporting thankofferings on the sheets that are used. The 2017 thankoffering counter schedule has been distributed. We thank our faithful thankoffering counters.

The 2017 thankoffering envelopes have been distributed.

The annual audit of the financial record will be conducted in the first part of 2017.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES – We have one brand new motor and one rebuilt motor for the boiler at school. One of the motors is leaking oil.

All the roof top units at school have new filters installed.

New requirements for water testing will now include E.coli testing.

The pass through door between the lobby and kitchen has been repaired.

The drain in school kitchen was clogged and has been fixed.

The kitchen sink at church was leaking and has been repaired.

SERVING OUR LORD FOR OUR JANUARY SERVICES:

<i>Ushers</i>		<i>Altar Guild</i>	<i>Greeter(s)</i>	<i>Cleaners</i>
<i>8:00</i>	<i>10:30</i>			
1/01 - #9 D. Fisher		S. Unruh	D. Steiner	F&N Mills
1/08 - #6 E. Ruhlig	#4 B. Grinnell	K. Unruh	L&K Ward	R&J Mosher
1/15 - #7 D. Kasischke	#8 D. Rector	M. Bennett	P&S Crandall	J. Muscott
1/22 - #2 V. Domke	#9 D. Fisher	C. Burris	A&J Rusnak	C&A Rhodea
1/29 - #5 S. Houser	#1 T. Marion	L. Voss	B. Carpenter	N. Russell