



St. John's Newsletter

December 2020



All According to Plan

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son to be born of a woman, so that he would be born under the law, in order to redeem those under the law, so that we would be adopted as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5 – EHV)

How are your holiday traditions looking right now? As I write this newsletter the week before Thanksgiving, many of you may have altered your traditional Thanksgiving get-togethers. What about your plans for Christmas or New Year's Eve—are you still planning on getting together with your family and friends? Not getting together with a large group of people seems like a wise choice in the eyes of many and so they make the difficult decision to 'cancel' their traditional celebrations. Others are going forward with life as normal (as normal as things can get this year), while still others are in a wait-and-see mode as far as Christmas with family and friends is concerned.

No matter how you look at it, it seems that the one sure thing of 2020 is uncertainty. Everything has been turned upside down, no one knows what news will break tomorrow let alone what things will look like a month from now. It's hard to make plans with a pandemic affecting our entire country. As they say, "the best laid plans of mice and men..." But here is one certainty this year: Christ was born for us and for our salvation! And, unless the Lord comes before December 25, we'll have another opportunity to celebrate the birth of God's one and only Son and our Savior!

And that birth of Jesus happened just as the Lord had planned! It wasn't how God's people had planned at all. There are some indications that Adam and Eve thought that Cain was going to be the seed promised to them who would defeat the devil—but he was anything but that. And so, God's people waited, and waited, and waited some more. For about 4000 years God's children waited until at just the right time, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law. And Jesus' birth didn't happen as most would expect—God sent his one and only Son not to be born in a magnificent palace to great fanfare, but in a lowly stable to a poor virgin. And yet it took place just as God planned it.

At times it may have seemed to God's children that he wasn't going to keep his promise; at times it may have seemed as if it would have been impossible for all the prophecies about the coming of the Messiah to come true. But it all worked out just as God planned it and at just the right time Jesus was born to redeem us—to buy us back. And some thirty-odd years later, as God planned it, that Son would shed his blood on the cross to purchase us to be his own! In the same way, it may seem as if God is not in control, that nothing is going according to plan—and yet God will make it all work out for our good (Romans 8:28).

So, even with all the uncertainty this year, we do know a few things for certain: Jesus our Savior was born for us, just as God planned, and he died for us, just as God planned; and through faith we will sing his praises forever, just as God plans!

Pastor Frey

December 2020

ALTAR GUILD

Kathy Bluma 920-475-1140
Elaine Springstroh 920-739-0807
Wendy and Natalie Raschka 920-460-9373

BIBLE CLASSES Pastor Gartner will be starting a new Bible Study on Sunday November 29th at 9:15 am entitled: **“Catholicism Today — A Study of What the Catholic Church Teaches and How It Measures Up to God’s Word.”** Join us as we look at some of the key teachings of the Catholic Church in light of God’s Word, and we will also look at ways on how we can share the truths of God’s Word with those in the Catholic Church who may be struggling in their faith.

Pastor Frey is leading a Bible Study on Mondays and Tuesdays called, **“Counterfeit Christianity.”** The devil is called the Father of Lies (John 8:44); he uses his web of lies to lead Christians away from God’s Word and thus away from the one true faith. This study, based on the book, Broken: 7 “Christian” Rules that Every Christian Ought to Break as Often as Possible by Jonathan Fisk, will examine these lies of the devil and their antidotes from Holy Scripture.

If you would like to receive a recording of these Bible Classes, please contact one of the Pastors and we will send you the link for these recordings.

MID-WEEK ADVENT SERVICES Our Advent mid-week services will be on December 2, 9, and 16 at 10:30 am and 6:30 pm. Plan to attend these mid-week services as we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of our Savior. This year’s theme will be “The Songs of Advent.” Each week we will be looking at one of the three songs from Luke.

December 2 — The Song of Mary.

December 9 — The Song of Zechariah.

December 16 — The Song of Simeon.

CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS Due to the pandemic we are not going to hold an in-person Christmas for Kids (God’s Greatest Gift) this year. Instead we will be offering Christmas for Kids to-go kits. These packages will include interactive opportunities for your children to learn about our Savior’s birth. Please sign up by November 29th on the sheet in the entryway or online so that we know how many to prepare. A pick-up date will be announced shortly.

CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS SERVICE Due to the ongoing pandemic it has been decided to alter our format for our Children’s Christmas Service this year. After surveying parents and discussing it among our Sunday School Teachers and Council members, it has been decided to have our children sing parts of two Christmas hymns and recite a few Bible Passages together as one large group at the beginning of the service before sitting back in the pews with their parents. The date will be the same as it always is—the Sunday before Christmas—December 20th. The children will sing and recite during both services.

Because of the uncertainty of how many will attend these services (and we still want to be able to socially distance), **we are requiring everyone to sign up ahead of time.** If both services are too full, we’ll add another service. The sign-up will go ‘live’ on our website December 1st.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP We are still planning on holding our normal Christmas Eve Worship services— at 3:00, 5:00, and 7:00 pm. However, like the Children’s Christmas Service, because of the uncertainty of how many will attend (and we still want to socially distance), **we are requiring everyone to sign-up ahead of time,** either online or by calling the office. If all three services are too full, we’ll add another service. The sign-up will go ‘live’ on our website December 1st.

TIMES OF WORSHIP FOR CHRISTMAS

Sunday 12/20 8:00 am Children’s Christmas and Advent Service

10:30 am Children’s Christmas and Advent Service

Monday 12/21 6:30 pm Advent 4 Service

Thurs. 12/24 3:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

5:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

7:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Friday 12/25 9:00 am Christmas Day with Lord’s Supper

Sunday 12/27 8:00 am Worship Service w/Lord’s Supper

10:30 am Worship Service w/Lord’s Supper

Monday 12/28 6:30 pm Worship Service w/Lord’s Supper

Thurs. 12/31 6:30 pm New Year’s Eve w/Lord’s Supper

CHRISTMAS DECORATING We will decorate the church for Christmas on Saturday, December 12th at 9:00 am. All are welcome to come and help. Please contact Pat Gowey if you have any questions.

December 2020

CHRISTMAS CARDS are available for purchase. The boxes of cards will be on a table in the narthex, along with a container for your payment. All boxes will be \$5 each and it will be self-serve. There will also be individual cards in the spinner rack for 50 cents each. The cards will be out everyday if you'd rather look at them on a day other than Sunday. All the cards we have will be on the table so when they are gone, they are gone.

ADOPT-A-FAMILY Our congregation will be adopting families for Christmas from our congregation. If you would like to give a monetary gift, the money will be used to purchase appropriate gifts. Please give any money to Pastor Frey or Pastor Gartner by **Friday, December 4.**

WELS APPLE VALLEY FOOD PANTRY The pantry thanks everyone who donated to or prayed for the pantry this year. For December, the pantry needs: canned vegetables (corn, green beans, peas), jam, cookies, all crackers, canned tomato products, cake and brownie mixes and frostings, hamburger, tuna and chicken helper meals, hand and body lotions, men's and women's deodorants, household cleaning products (toilet bowl cleaners and kitchen and bathroom cleaning products), Kleenex and paper towels. Please drop items off at church by **Friday, Dec. 11, 2020.**

WOMEN OF FAITH All ladies of the congregation are invited to join us Tuesday, December 8 at 1:00 pm for Bible study and LWMS updates.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY All men of the congregation are invited to join us on Tuesday, December 15 at 9:00 am for Bible study.

SHUT-INS Following is a list of St. John shut-in members if you would like to send them a Christmas greeting card.

Ann Bruneau, 721 E. Bronson Road, Seymour, WI 54165

Carol Dalke, Parkside Senior Living, 2330 Bruce St. #16, Neenah, WI 54956

Arlene Hahn, 5800 Pennsylvania Ave. #238, Appleton, WI 54914

Darley Holtz, 425 W. Kennedy Ave, Apt. 139, Kimberly, WI 54136

Marvin Kamke, 5117 N Cherryvale Ave #19, Appleton, WI 54913

James Main, N5086 Rexford Road, Shiocton, WI 54170

Verna McGlin, 410 E. Mary Street, Black Creek, WI 54106

Sandra Peterson, W6298 Midway Road, Hortonville, WI 54944

David Rahmlow, N4135 Meade St., Appleton, WI 54913

Pastor Gerhard and Lois Schapekahm, 825 E. Greenfield Drive, #109, Little Chute, WI 54140

Doris Scheibe, N3254 County Road A, Black Creek, WI 54106

Nancy Schroeder, 1781 Copperstone Pl, Neenah, WI 54956

William and Darlene Schroeder, W3497 County Road O, Freedom, WI 54913

Roland Stuedemann, 131 E North Water St, #4413, Neenah, WI 54956

Marcie Wright, W4271 Wege Road, Appleton, WI 54913

GIFTS TO OUR LORD DURING OCTOBER:

		<u>Expenses</u>
General Fund	\$22,968.00	\$27,429.00
General Fund YTD	\$312,544.00	\$283,828.00
Building Fund	\$835.00	
Land Development Fund	\$116.00	
Missions (WELS)	\$1,372.50	
Christian Family Solutions	\$405.00	
Institutional Ministry	\$305.00	
FVLHS Operational	\$710.00	
FVLHS Let the Children Come	\$765.00	

"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income."
1 Corinthians 16:2

AN OPTION FOR GIVING YOUR OFFERING: VANCO, the company we use for online giving through our website, now offers an app that allows you to give directly to St. John through your smart phone, VANCO Give Plus. Simply download the app, login/create a username, and then find St. John. This app will allow you to give to whatever fund you so desire, as well as set a one-time offering, or a recurring offering with a specific frequency. For more information, contact Tim Springstroh or one of the pastors. Below are the links for the app.

Google Play:



Apple App Store:

